
COMBINED SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
QUARTER 2 2008/09

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor John Williams, Leader and all Cabinet

Responsible Directors – Ada Burns, Chief Executive and all Directors

SUMMARY REPORT

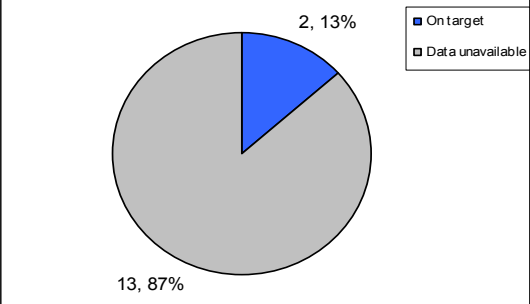
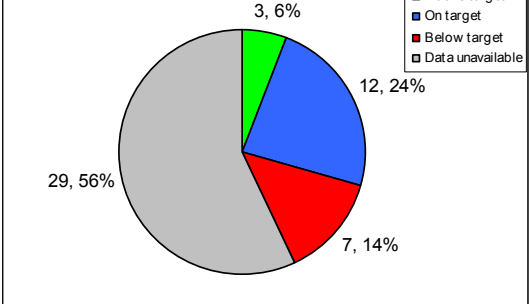
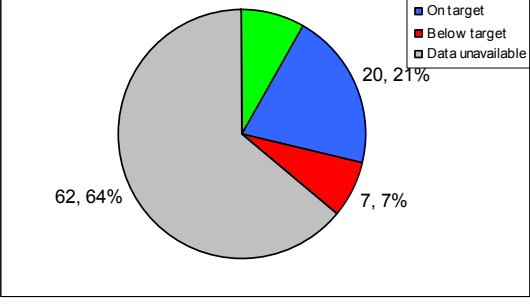
Purpose of Report

1. To report the Council's service and financial performance at the end of the second quarter of 2008/09.

Summary

2. This report is the first in a revised approach to provide a combined quarterly overview of the position on service and financial performance and to show progress against the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) One Darlington : Perfectly Placed, the Local Area Agreement and the Council's corporate plan.
3. Performance and delivery achievement headlines since the last report include:
 - (a) overall satisfaction with the council remains stable at 62% (2008 Community Survey);
 - (b) Darlington pupils achieved the borough's best ever GCSE results in the summer, with 69% achieving at least 5 A*-C grades including Eastbourne Academy;
 - (c) school attendance improved from 16th worst in the country in 2006 to 49th best in spring 2008 out of 150 authorities, an improvement of 85 places in 3 terms;
 - (d) the total number of crimes per 1000 population fell by 18.6% in 2007/08;
 - (e) the Financial Times reported in September 2008 that Darlington is the second most improved area nationally for competitiveness, after Newham (benefiting from both its London location and investment in the 2012 Olympics);
 - (f) the Audit Commission judged the Council to be performing well and providing excellent value for money in the 2008 corporate assessment and in the Joint Area Review the Council was said to be providing good services to children and young people and a good ability for future improvement;
 - (g) Seven of the 16 Local Area Agreement statutory early years and children's services indicators are currently below target, detailed within the main report.
 - (h) As other reports describe the economic downturn has created additional new pressures.
4. Due to the introduction of a new national indicator set (replacing Best Value performance indicators) from 1 April 2008, many indicators are new and collected annually. This means that at this stage of reporting, some gaps in performance reporting are unavoidable.

5. The following table provides an overview of service performance progress against target for the SCS, LAA and corporate plan where data is available. The pie charts show the number of indicators and then the percentage of the total, e.g. for the Number of NIs by alert symbol for the LAA 51 there are 3 indicators above target, which is 6% of the total number of PIs :

Plan	Status	Chart															
One Darlington : Perfectly Placed – Sustainable Community Strategy	●	<p data-bbox="869 414 1401 436">Number of NIs by alert symbol for the SCS</p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="869 459 1401 761"> <thead> <tr> <th>Alert Symbol</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>On target</td> <td>2</td> <td>13%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Data unavailable</td> <td>13</td> <td>87%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Alert Symbol	Count	Percentage	On target	2	13%	Data unavailable	13	87%						
Alert Symbol	Count	Percentage															
On target	2	13%															
Data unavailable	13	87%															
<p data-bbox="188 790 608 813">Local Area Agreement (overall)</p> <ul data-bbox="240 864 608 1081" style="list-style-type: none"> Local Area Agreement – Negotiated targets only; Local Area Agreement – Statutory children’s services and early years targets 	<p data-bbox="703 797 730 819">●</p> <p data-bbox="703 909 730 931">●</p> <p data-bbox="703 1010 730 1032">▲</p>	<p data-bbox="869 795 1401 817">Number of NIs by alert symbol for LAA 51</p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="869 840 1401 1142"> <thead> <tr> <th>Alert Symbol</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Above target</td> <td>3</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>On target</td> <td>12</td> <td>24%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Below target</td> <td>7</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Data unavailable</td> <td>29</td> <td>56%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Alert Symbol	Count	Percentage	Above target	3	6%	On target	12	24%	Below target	7	14%	Data unavailable	29	56%
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Data unavailable	29	56%															
<p data-bbox="188 1171 507 1193">Corporate Plan (overall)</p> <ul data-bbox="240 1245 632 1424" style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Plan – Delivery of Community Priorities; Corporate Plan – Delivery of Organisational Improvements 	<p data-bbox="703 1178 730 1200">●</p> <p data-bbox="703 1290 730 1312">●</p> <p data-bbox="703 1391 730 1413">★</p>	<p data-bbox="869 1176 1401 1220">Number of NIs by alert symbol for the Corporate Plan</p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="869 1243 1401 1545"> <thead> <tr> <th>Alert Symbol</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Above target</td> <td>8</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>On target</td> <td>20</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Below target</td> <td>7</td> <td>7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Data unavailable</td> <td>62</td> <td>64%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Alert Symbol	Count	Percentage	Above target	8	8%	On target	20	21%	Below target	7	7%	Data unavailable	62	64%
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Medium Term Financial Plan 2008-2012	●																

High level views of performance as at 30th September 2008

Conclusions

6. The picture of performance across all areas is on target, although the status of the statutory element of the LAA is currently below target. This is detailed further in the main report. At this stage of reporting there is limited data available.

Recommendations

7. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - (a) note the areas where targets have not been met including the children's services and early years element of the LAA and ensure action planning is taken to address these key areas of under performance;
 - (b) note the overall on target performance against the Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement and Corporate Plan where data is available for reporting;

Reasons:

8. The recommendations are supported to maintain appropriate management arrangements for the Council's finances, make effective use of the Council's resources and to continue to effectively manage services and improve value for money.

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Corporate Services

Lorraine O'Donnell
Assistant Chief Executive

Background papers

Financial reports and *Agresso* computer system

Performance management reports and *PerformancePlus* computer system

David Hall – Financial performance sections, Ext: 2303

David Goodchild – Service performance sections, Ext: 2015

S17 Crime and Disorder	Indicators reported here include those concerned with reducing crime and disorder
Health and Well Being	Indicators reported here include those concerned with improving health and wellbeing
Sustainability	Indicators reported here include those concerned with sustainability
Diversity	There is no specific diversity impact other than that measured by the indicators.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally, although specific indicators measure the impact on 'One Darlington'.
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally, although specific indicators measure the impact on 'One Darlington'.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not classed as a key decision.
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Data is reported here to assess progress against meeting the objectives in the SCS.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

9. The content of this report covers the following:
 - (a) Background information;
 - (b) Performance information and analysis:
 - (i) One Darlington : Perfectly Placed, the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS);
 - (ii) Local Area Agreement (LAA);
 - (iii) Corporate Plan – both improvement actions and performance information.
 - (c) Proposals for performance monitoring of the One Darlington and Perfectly Placed priorities;
 - (d) Financial information (to be included in future reports);
 - (e) overview of services' position on budgets and performance indicators;
 - (f) overview of complaints.

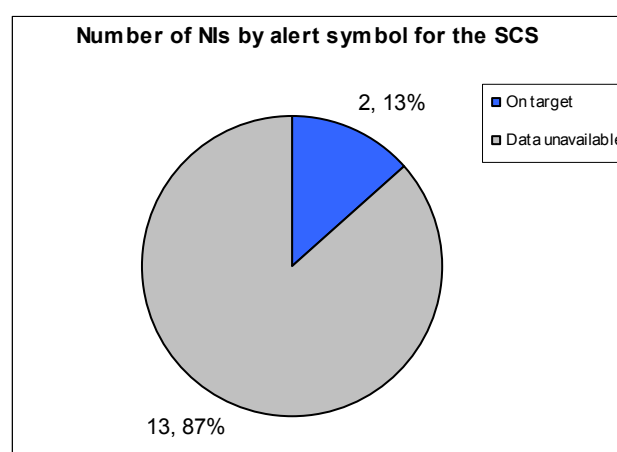
Background Information

10. This is the first full performance report to Cabinet since the approval of the new long-term (to 2021) vision for Darlington, One Darlington : Perfectly Placed and the adoption of the new Local Area Agreement as the first three year (2008-11) delivery mechanism for the vision.
11. The adoption of the new SCS and LAA accompanied by the restructuring of Darlington Partnership's planning and delivery structures and the introduction of a new national indicator performance set by Government (replacing the previous set of Best Value Performance Indicators) has necessitated a wholesale review of the performance management framework (PMF) both for the Council and for the Partnership. Some BVPIs were carried forward into the new NI set and are continuing to be collected seamlessly through the period of change. However, many NIs are completely new in definition, including those to be collected through the new biennial Place Survey.
12. To accommodate the need for timely information and effective monitoring, first quarter reporting was deferred (although the data is available on *PerformancePlus* and is being utilised by service areas). As such, this report covers the period April 2008 to September 2008; however future reporting will be presented on a quarterly basis.
13. Detailed financial information is not presented here and Cabinet is referred to the separate report which provides detailed financial information. This report considers high level financial information and provides both a financial and service performance assessment against service plan areas.
14. This report aims to give a high level view of performance, and report by exception any areas of contra performance. All performance information is available for viewing via *PerformancePlus*, with more detailed information available from the Council's Corporate Policy Unit.

Performance Information and Analysis

(i)	One Darlington : Perfectly Placed – Sustainable Community Strategy	●
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15. The SCS itself incorporates 15 performance indicators (three for each of the five delivery themes). These indicators focus on long-term outcomes that are unlikely to shift significantly within the short-term but over the 13-15 year lifespan of the SCS they will provide a high level overview of progress in delivering the vision.

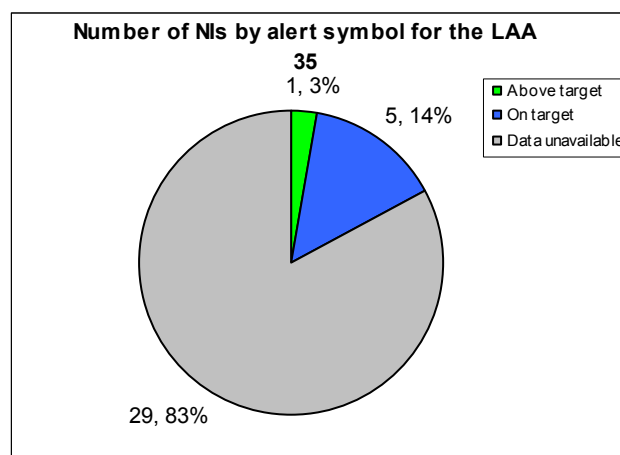


16. The overall status of the SCS is currently ‘on target’, as shown above. However, data is available for only 2 out of the 15 indicators at the end of quarter 2. Of those 2 indicators for which data is available, both are on target overall. However, one of the indicators for which data is available is made up of two components. NI 102 measures the gap in achievement between school pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers, achieving the expected level at key stage 2 and at key stage 4. Performance at key stage 2 is 38% better than the agreed target, but at key stage 4 it is 22% worse. Whilst this gives an overall picture of being ‘on target’ for NI 102, steps are being taken to address the key stage 4 position by improving tracking of vulnerable pupils through the introduction of the Assessing Pupil Progress initiative across all Darlington schools.

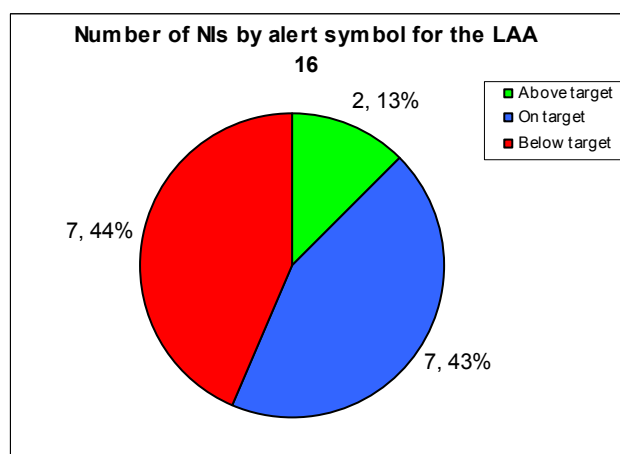
(ii)	One Darlington : Perfectly Placed – Local Area Agreement	●
	- Local Area Agreement – Negotiated Targets	●
	- Local Area Agreement – Statutory Education Targets	▲

17. The LAA consists of a set of 35 performance indicators (selected from the NI set) and associated targets, negotiated and agreed with government as the delivery plan for in the short term progressing One Darlington : Perfectly Placed over the period 2008-2011. The LAA also includes 16 statutory indicators/targets relating to children’s services and early years that must be included in all LAAs.

18. The symbols above show that, overall, the LAA is ‘on target’ at the end of the second quarter. This overall position is calculated from the available data on both the negotiated and statutory indicators. However, as with the SCS, this overall view is limited, with data available for only 6 of the 35 negotiated indicators at this stage of the year. Data is available for all 16 statutory indicators
19. Of the 6 negotiated indicators for which data is available, 5 show performance to be on target, whilst one (NI 020 – assault with injury crime rate) is currently 23% better than target. The overall combined position on these 6 negotiated indicators is ‘on target’, i.e.:



20. The 16 statutory education indicators show an amalgamated position of below target by 11.5% at this stage of the year. Of the 16 indicators:
- (a) 7 indicators are within target tolerance;
- (b) 2 are above target tolerance:
- NI 087 – secondary school persistent absence rate is performing 32% above target, and;
 - NI 099 – children in care reaching level 4 in English at key stage 2 is performing 20% above target, i.e.:

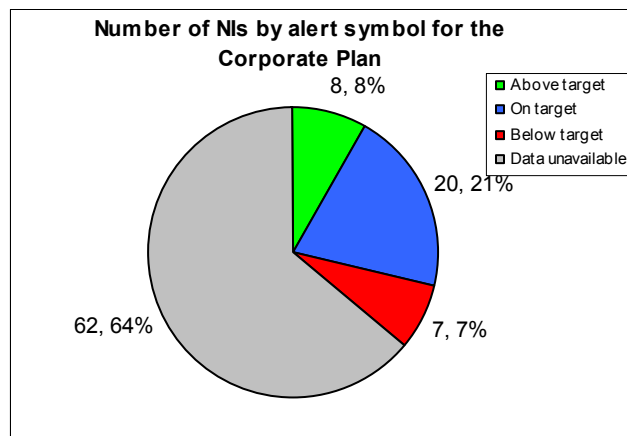


- (c) The seven indicators ‘below target’, as detailed as follows:

Indicator	Target	Actual
<p>NI 072 – (Achievement of 78+ points across Early Years Foundation Stage with 6+ in each scale of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy)</p> <p>Reasons – The gap between Threshold Target and achievement in 2007 was 22.6%. The gap between Threshold Target and achievement in 2008 is 14.4%, meaning that Darlington is closer to meeting Threshold Target than in 2007. Action is around targeted activity regarding improving in-school/setting moderation, linkages to School Improvement Planning and the use of on-entry data to track progress and to measure improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage period.</p>	62.5	48.1
<p>NI 074 - Achievement at level 5 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 3 (Threshold)</p> <p>Reasons - Assessing pupil progress programme is only just embedding in English and recently introduced in Maths. This is projected to have an impact on standards at KS3 in 2010.</p>	78	63
<p>NI 077 - Schools where under 50% of pupils achieving level 5+ in both English and Maths at KS3</p> <p>Reasons - National Challenge plan accepted by DCSF and a National Challenge advisor has been engaged.</p>	0	2
<p>NI 095 - Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3</p> <p>Reasons - Assessing pupil progress programme is only just embedding in English and recently introduced in Maths. This is projected to have an impact on standards at KS3 in 2010.</p>	39.0	20.6
<p>NI 096 - Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3</p> <p>Reasons - Assessing pupil progress programme is only just embedding in English and recently introduced in Maths. This is projected to have an impact on standards at KS3 in 2010.</p>	70.0	53.9
<p>NI 097 - Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4</p> <p>Reasons - Despite missing target there has been an 8.2% increase overall, demonstrating a significant improvement in this area. Further improvement will follow the roll out of 'assessing pupil progress', a structured enabling teachers to track pupils' progress through Key Stage 3 and use diagnostic information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses</p>	69.0	58.4
<p>NI 098 - Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4</p> <p>Reasons - Further improvement will follow the roll out of 'assessing pupil progress' as above.</p>	34.0	21.1
<p>NI 100 - Looked after children reaching level 4 in maths at KS2</p> <p>Reasons - Large variance are experienced due to low number of looked after children, and movement within this cohort, i.e. target set 18 months prior to exams, and was based on a cohort of 6 children whereas only 5 children in the actual cohort</p>	33.3	20.0

(iii)	Corporate Plan 2008-12	●
	- Corporate Plan - Part A: Delivery of Community Priorities	●
	- Corporate Plan – Part B: Delivery of Organisational Improvements	★

21. The SCS and LAA do not cover everything that is important to the effective running of the council, and so additionally both actions and performance in the Council’s Corporate Plan are also presented. The Corporate Plan contains a prioritised basket of indicators and actions which are reported against SCS themes and also corporate objectives.
22. The Corporate Plan is on target overall at the end of the second quarter. A total of 97 performance indicators are attached to the improvement proposals set out in the plan to measure progress against delivery. Of these 97, including both NIs and local indicators, data is currently available for 35, i.e.:




23. Improvement proposals are set out in the plan in two sections or parts – part A contains proposals for delivering outcomes that will contribute to the vision for Darlington; part B sets out proposals for the council’s organisational development. Of the indicators measuring progress against SCS themes, 29 currently have data available and show performance to be on target. Of the indicators measuring progress against the council’s corporate objectives, 6 have data available and show performance above target.
24. The ‘Part A: Delivery of Community Priorities’ basket includes 7 indicators that are currently performing below target. Some of the indicators are repeated in the LAA and are described earlier:

Indicator	Target	Actual
NI 060 – percentage of core assessments for children’s social care carried out in less than 35 days Reasons – This is the six month position. It is anticipated that this target will be met by yearend. Additional capacity has been developed by re-allocating core assessments from the Duty Team to the Childcare Planning Team.	86.0	74.7
NI 072 – see section on LAA	62.5	48.1
NI 095 - see section on LAA	39.0	20.6

NI 096 - see section on LAA	70.0	53.9
NI 097 - see section on LAA	69.0	58.4
NI 098 - see section on LAA	34.0	21.1
NI 117 – percentage of 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) Reasons – The figure quoted (for September) is higher than target due to numbers peaking between June and September due to the turbulence caused by the final destinations of college leavers being unknown at this time. From October the figure will reduce. The target is based on the average figure for the three months November 2008 to January 2009 inclusive which is reflective of a more stable position unlike the September count when a high number of students are awaiting confirmation and/or acceptance of university places.	6.40	12.40

25. The Corporate Plan identifies 168 improvement actions:

Number of corporate plan improvement actions	168
Percentage of corporate plan improvement actions on or above target	92% (154)
Status of corporate plan delivery	

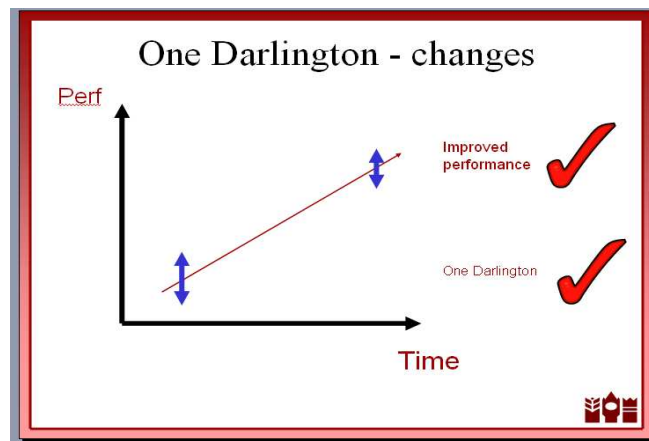
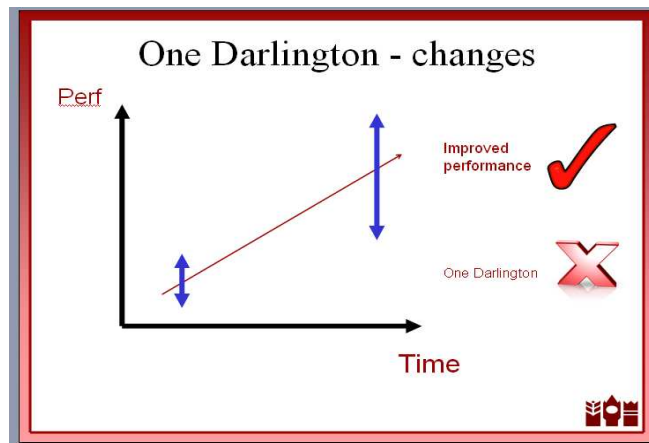
26. A total of 14 corporate plan actions out of 168 (8%) are showing red triangle status, indicating that implementation is currently not achieving approved timescales or targets. In all cases the reasons for actual and planned implementation being out of step relate to changes in circumstances or priorities.
27. Proposals to create a Darlington identity or branding were deferred for further consideration of resource implications, but are now being considered by the LSP prosperous Theme Group as a priority for its action plan. Progress on various components of the Local Development Framework has been delayed by the need for a Congestion Study to be factored into the programme, and by government delays in issuing revised regulations relating to Planning Obligations. Work on the various components of the organisational development strategy is on track, but revisions have delayed work on linking them together into an overarching delivery plan. Progress on spend analysis was delayed by the departure of the consultant appointed through RIEP to model our spend data, whilst further work has been required to establish the means of identifying department savings to support work towards shared contracts. Work on accessibility planning has continued on track, but red triangle status reflects a slight deterioration in the related performance indicator despite this work, and the need to establish the reasons for this.

Proposals for performance monitoring of One Darlington and Perfectly Placed Priorities

28. In order to monitor our contribution to One Darlington, there is a need to focus on narrowing the gap between priority wards and all others, although it is also important that overall ‘conditions’ improve in all wards. The key challenge for the Council and partners is around tackling deprivation and narrowing the gap in life chances. In practice, a draft basket of indicators has been selected from the national list, with performance assessed

against all wards and priority wards. This can then be reflected by way of a *PerformancePlus* scorecard but also by a graph.

29. The graphs below do not reflect actual data, but instead represent a scenario whereby the first graph shows service performance improving over time. However, although performance is improving for all areas (and groups) the gap between the best and worst performance has increased, therefore not delivering against the One Darlington priority. By contrast in the second graph, a scenario is shown where performance has also increased over time but this time the range of performance is reducing over time in a way that not only increases average performance but also improves performance at the bottom of the range more than it has extended performance at the top. In other words, the service is narrowing the gap in such a way that it gives larger benefits to people experiencing lower performance.



Note – Graphs are not reflective of actual performance data

30. Although it is an acknowledged national issue that the quality and quantity of timely and publicly available data at neighbourhood level for most mainstream services remains severely limited, work is ongoing to refine the set of indicators through the LSP Lead Officers Group. It is proposed that the first reporting of the One Darlington priority will be for year-end 2008/09. Whilst it can be reported quarterly thereafter, the indicators concerned are long term by their very nature. As such, there may be only gradual movement within quarters, with a paucity of data in the first instance and for this reason it is proposed that an end of year assessment with trend information be implemented, commencing with the quarter 4 report at the end of 2008/09.

31. The Perfectly Placed assessment will take the form of a narrative, highlighting indicative plans on Darlington developments, with key projects and major milestones listed with indicative progress shown.

Financial information

32. Detailed financial information continues to be available separately and an up-to-date summary will be included in future reports.

Overview of service position on budgets and performance indicators

33. The table below shows the position regarding delivery of service plans. For financial information the analysis is a projection as to whether the budget is likely to be achieved by the end of the year, within a tolerance dependent on the size of the budget. For services progress is assessed at the six month stage:

Department/Service Plan (▲ below target , ● on target ★ above target)	Finance		Service	
Chief Executive's				
Communications	●		●	
Connecting with Communities	●		●	
Health Improvement	●		No data	
Regeneration	●		▲	
Safer Communities	●		●	
Strategic Planning and Improvement	★		●	
Children's Services				
Children and Families	●		●	
Partnerships	●		●	
Planning and Resources	●		●	
School Improvement & Development	●		●	
Community Services				
Adult Social Care	●		●	
Building Services	▲		●	
Cultural Services	●		●	
Environmental Services	●		●	
Highways	▲		▲	
Housing Benefits	●		★	
Housing Services	●		★	
Supporting People	●		●	
Corporate Services				
Customer Services	●		▲	
Human Resource Management (HRM)	●		★	
Information and Communications Technology (ICT)	●		●	
Legal and Democratic	●		●	
Public Protection	▲		●	
Resources	●		●	

34. Three service plans are currently below target for service performance: Regeneration, Highways and Customer Services. For Regeneration this is based on only five indicators reporting out of a possible 49, with only one local indicator below target (the percentage of planning appeals allowed, where the number of appeals is small). In the Highways service plan (6 out of 19 indicators report at quarter 2) the targets for the two indicators measuring the time taken to repair streetlight faults were not achieved (industrial action at the network distribution company is the principal reason for the shortfall) nor was satisfaction with road maintenance. For Customer Services, of the 13 indicators only 3 are the reported at quarter 2 and the target for the local indicator which measures the percentage of call centre targets being answered within 20 seconds is not being achieved. Action planning is underway to address these areas.
35. In financial terms, for Building Services the budgeted increase in workload, turnover and therefore, profit, built into the 2008/09 MTFP in Building Services is not now expected to be achieved in 2008-09 due to a significantly lower than anticipated level of construction turnover. With regard to Highways, global markets have seen a dramatic down-turn in both development and housing growth. This is directly felt within the Highways Service. Income generated by design, supervision and adoption has not materialised to the levels that existed in previous years. It was also anticipated that some major transport projects would materialise, attracting significant fee levels, but this does not look probable during this financial year. For Public Protection, car parking is projecting a significant reduction in lost income which is directly related to the downturn in the economy.

Overview of complaints

36. The following table shows the number of complaints proceeding through the 3 stages of the corporate complaints system broken down by department:

Department	Compliments	Comments	Complaints	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Chief Executive's	5	10	243	241	2	2
Children's Services	5	0	36	34	1	1
Community Services	167	16	291	287	4	1
Corporate Services	0	0	2	2	0	0
Darlington BC	177	26	572	562	7	4

37. The Corporate Complaints Unit is now established and is developing and implementing new procedures to ensure complaints handling in the authority is improved, with regard to speed of handling, improved access to the complaints procedure and improved performance data and learning.
38. Implementation of the new process involves moving from the current three stage approach to a more streamlined two-stage procedure. This will be accompanied by a refreshed policy and guidance notes for users along with the roll out of a training programme and improved performance management arrangements and effective learning mechanisms established. Full implementation of the new systems will be completed by April 2009.

Consultation

39. Officers within the council and partners have been consulted over the contents of this report and are supportive of the approach taken to reporting performance.