
DARLINGTON TOGETHER
Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Andy Scott,
Health & Partnerships Portfolio

Responsible Director – Murray Rose, Director of People

Purpose of Report

1. To present proposals for a *Darlington Together* model for supporting democratic engagement and social inclusion.
2. To recommend ways forward in developing and embedding this support across the organisation.
3. To seek agreement for a *Darlington Together* implementation plan to be developed.

Summary – Key Messages

4. *Darlington Together* is a way of facilitating shared solutions to local needs during challenging times. It will do this by mobilising and making the most of the hidden wealth of skills, experience and resources within the community. The principles are set out in paragraph 15.
5. *Darlington Together* is more about ‘doing with’ and less about ‘doing for’ in the relationships between the Council and citizens. The model proposed is set out in paragraph 20.
6. The changes will impact on both Members and officers and so will require input into scheduled reviews (including organisation development strategy, HR strategy, member training plan, review of planning and commissioning arrangements, and influencing the review of Darlington Partnership) in the light of the emerging *Darlington Together* vision.
7. *Darlington Together*:-
 - (a) supports the existing One Darlington vision;
 - (b) builds community resilience;
 - (c) supports the delivery of the Council’s business model;
 - (d) reduces demand on council services or mitigates the loss of some services.
8. The approach reinforces the community leadership role of Cabinet and ward councillors.

Recommendation

9. It is recommended that Cabinet:-
- (a) Agree the principles of *Darlington Together* as a model for future working;
 - (b) Authorise the reviewing and alignment of related plans and strategies in the light of the emerging *Darlington Together* vision;
 - (c) Authorise the development of a *Darlington Together* implementation plan.

Reasons

10. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
- (a) *Darlington Together* is an essential part of the Council's response to provide leadership and to protect the vulnerable at a time of declining public resources;
 - (b) to be effective the *Darlington Together* approach needs to be embedded across key Council reviews, plans and strategies;
 - (c) ensuring broad member support for the approach will be important if it is to be sustainable.

**Murray Rose,
Director of People**

Background Papers

'From Social Welfare to Social Productivity: A Vision for 2020 Public Services'; 2020 Public Services Trust

'What is Restorative Practice'; International Institute for Restorative Practices at <http://www.iirp.org/whatisrp.php> (source for 'Social Window' model in paragraph 20)

Peter Roberts : Extension 2713
David Plews: Extension 2023

S17 Crime and Disorder	Whilst the report is not directly focused on crime and disorder, the proposals set out in the report have longer-term implications for potential new approaches to the management and reduction of crime and disorder through community-based initiatives.
Health and Well Being	As above, the report is not directly concerned with Health and Wellbeing. However, <i>Darlington Together</i> would influence ways of working around strategic planning for health improvement through the Health and Wellbeing Board, bringing community resources to bear more strongly on health improvement. The overall direction is towards encouraging more active participation and involvement in the community and, whilst this is less tangible, there is much evidence that there are benefits for people's health and wellbeing from being active in the community.
Carbon Impact	There is no direct impact arising from this report.
Diversity	<i>Darlington Together</i> will strengthen our approach to responding to diversity issues through the 'doing with' principle highlighted in the report.
Wards Affected	The report affects all wards equally.
Groups Affected	The report affects all groups equally
Budget and Policy Framework	The report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	Yes – <i>Darlington Together</i> would lead to proposals and programmes that would affect more than one ward and would impact on citizens in establishing ways of working that require citizen engagement in delivering outcomes.
Urgent Decision	No.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Positive Impact – <i>Darlington Together</i> will establish new ways of working that will have a positive impact on the delivery of One Darlington : Perfectly Placed outcomes.
Efficiency	Positive Impact – the overall purpose of <i>Darlington Together</i> is to establish new ways of working that will deliver effective services and solutions to meet local needs within a reduced MTFP.

MAIN REPORT

Setting the Scene

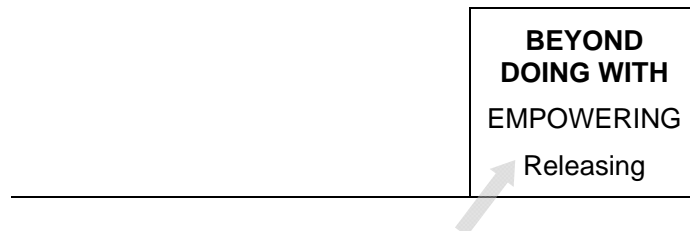
11. *Darlington Together* is an essential part of the Council's response to the need to show leadership and create the right conditions for people to take collective responsibility for their futures in a climate of declining public resources.
12. There are a number of reasons for the proposed approach:
 - (a) the high expectations of consumers used to a digitally-enabled 24 hour society;
 - (b) the inability of local authorities to sustain previous patterns of service delivery with fewer resources;
 - (c) the recognition that Darlington residents can be a key resource in ensuring that the commitment to One Darlington is fulfilled;
 - (d) the local authority has a proven track record and is well-placed again to provide clear leadership during a period of change;
 - (e) resilient communities are more likely to withstand external shocks (economic or otherwise).
13. A number of the policy provisions within the Localism Bill are also important in setting the context for *Darlington Together*. These include:
 - (a) provisions relating to community empowerment, including the Community Right to Challenge local authorities on service delivery, the Right to Buy public or private assets of community value, and the power to instigate local referendums;
 - (b) strengthening of local democracy, including a general power of competence for local authorities to act on behalf of their communities, democratic provisions enabling a return to the committee system and a commitment to the creation of more directly elected mayors, and the freeing-up of councillors to campaign and express views on local issues;
 - (c) reform of the planning system, including a right for communities to develop neighbourhood plans and permit development without the need for planning applications, and the Community Right to Build locally-supported development without planning applications.
14. *Darlington Together* is the Council's approach to meeting our shared local challenges.

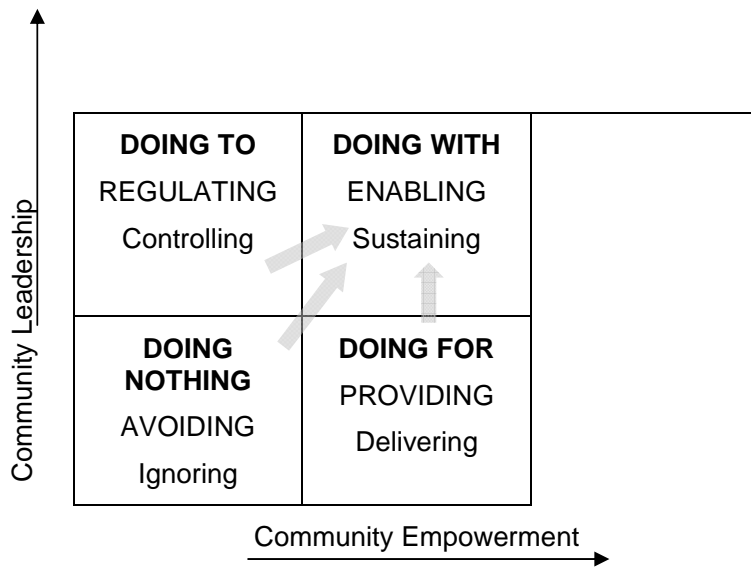
Darlington Together Principles

15. The overall purpose of *Darlington Together* is to create a sustainable platform for community resilience in Darlington. The approach will:
 - (a) put active citizenship at its core.
 - (b) progress through empowerment and collaboration, whilst the Council continues to fulfil its leadership role in mediating competing demands, prioritising and making decisions.
 - (c) create value through citizens and partners working together and co-production.
 - (d) mobilise the hidden wealth of social resources.
 - (e) engage with ideas of fairness and efficiency, and pursue the One Darlington principle of social inclusion and justice.
16. *Darlington Together* is about a repositioning of the Council from delivering top-down services, to a recognition that communities, with the Council and other partners working collaboratively, can develop services and solutions in response to local needs, which can also lead to additional capacity.
17. The Council is responsible for promoting and guiding change but the model set out in this report requires collaborative working across all sectors. Therefore Darlington Partnership will also be an important player in realising this shift.
18. This report sets out an approach to Members, staff, partners and communities about how needs and issues are addressed and services and solutions are developed and delivered.
19. The style of working proposed in this report is not new in Darlington. For example, we have worked with town centre traders to build capacity and resilience rather than dependency on the Council's Town Centre Management service; the Third Sector, led by eVOLution, are increasingly able and expecting to be service providers; schools, through their commitment to schools@onedarlington, have taken on responsibility for many services previously run the local authority.

'Doing With'

20. A helpful way of thinking about this cultural shift is illustrated below. The figure consists of four domains that, collectively, describe the way a traditional public service works. The proposed approach, Darlington Together, adds a 5th way of working – empowering.





21. Much of the traditional delivery of public services falls into the ‘doing for’ domain. The ‘doing for’ mode of delivery traditionally sees citizens in a more passive role and one which encourages a culture where citizens expect their local authority to play a significant role in meeting their needs. This way of working can be expensive and wasteful of resources, may be relatively unresponsive to changing needs and does not necessarily empower citizens. It is also no longer sustainable.
22. ‘Doing with’ is more about collaboration and encourages citizens and communities to become more involved. It places people at the heart of service design and delivery and can bring the innovation, efficiency and sharing of responsibility and risk that comes with the most effective collaborations. It involves a culture change that will help to strengthen Darlington’s resilience. ‘Beyond doing with’ is about both strong community leadership, engagement and empowerment.
23. This change requires stronger rather than looser leadership and decision making from the Council. *Darlington Together* will see the Council acting as both strong leader in decision making and as an enabler of community action to build resilience, increase self sufficiency and, consequentially, reduce demands on services.
24. The Council will continue to use all of its knowledge of communities, informed by data to continue to identify and prioritise needs, deciding what to do to address prioritised needs, and mediating between competing demands to make the best use of available resources.
25. It is important to recognise that the ‘doing with’ and ‘beyond doing with’ are not without risks:
 - (a) whilst the Council retains its leadership and decision making role about what to do, ‘doing with’ implies a loosening of control for the local authority in favour of empowerment and collaboration in relation to how we act;
 - (b) there may be some initial public uncertainty about any differences that develop between the community leadership role of councillors, envisaged in the *Darlington Together* approach, and their role as elected representatives;
 - (c) empowering others creates a space where mistakes may be made and we will need to be flexible to allow for reflection on this;

- (d) experience in some areas has shown that the proposed approach may have the unintended effect of empowering articulate and confident people at the cost of those whose needs may in fact be greater. Given our commitment to One Darlington, we will ensure that this is managed to protect disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and communities.
26. *Darlington Together* and the ‘doing with’ perspective is not a completely new proposal so much as a continuing shift into ways of working that have been taking shape recently. It is a response to the need to harness existing energy and activity in different ways.
 27. The *Darlington Together* approach would require clarity about how the Council would work with citizens, what citizens can expect from the Council and partners in terms of support, capacity building and collaborative working, and the responsibilities of citizens and communities if the approach is to be effective.
 28. The relevance of the ‘Beyond Doing With’ dimension is because the Council in the future will usually be involved with new community initiatives on a time-limited basis. ‘Doing with’ must generate the self sufficiency that leads projects and services into an independent and sustainable state - called ‘beyond doing with’.
 29. Officers will be expected to develop their understanding of how to motivate and incentivise participation. This might look like:
 - (a) opening up strategic partnership arrangements to give citizens opportunities for active participation; and
 - (b) creating conditions through changes in our organisational and individual thinking, attitudes, actions and culture, which will open up opportunities for ‘quick wins’ in areas where citizens are already active and seeking change, and which then generate momentum for further change.
 30. The examples below demonstrate that the Council already works with the *Darlington Together* philosophy, and that the approach has been developed across the organisation.
 - (a) **Allotments**
 - (i) In recent years there has been a shift away from Council management of all allotment sites towards self-management by independent allotment associations. The self managed sites tend to be more successful and vibrant, able to secure funding for improvements, holding competitions and open days, and generally regarded as more cohesive communities. They are good examples of the enabling and empowering ‘doing with’ approach.
 - (b) **Parks and Open Spaces - Friends’ Groups**
 - (i) There are 13 Friends groups contributing in a variety of ways to the care and running of parks and open spaces. Two are moving towards a formal lease and one is discussing a SLA with the Council. They provide surveillance and monitoring and are particularly effective in participating in project development. The Friends have generally formed around the purpose of holding the Council to account for

the care of their local park or open space, but some are becoming increasingly action-focused, carrying out practical work.

(c) Recycling and Local Motion

- (i) These are two examples of a different perspective on ‘doing with’. The Council provides facilities and promotional programmes and citizens utilise them to take action to contribute to the achievement of shared targets in a kind of implicit delivery partnership. The introduction of the kerbside recycling service and refurbishment of the household waste recycling centre brought about a step change in recycling rates. The Local Motion social marketing programme combined with a wide range of facilities and programmes achieved a 9% reduction in car driver trips and a huge increase in cycling.

(d) Personal Budgets

- (i) The move to introduce personal budgets in Adult Social Care is yet another perspective on the shift from ‘doing for’ universal services, provided directly by the Council, to ‘doing with’ empowerment of citizens in which the Council assesses need and allocates the budget, and individuals choose how to use the budget to meet their needs.

- 31. These examples illustrate a range of characteristics that we can expect to find in the *Darlington Together* culture; greater diversity of approaches, ways of working with communities will not be static, collaborative working must be based on clear understandings of how the partners will work together, what each will do and deliver, and for how long.

Implications for Ways of Working

- 32. The *Darlington Together* approach has implications for the way officers and Members work in future. The required cultural changes affect everybody, and is not the preserve of a particular team or portfolio holder.
- 33. The role of Ward Members within their communities has always been vital to the work of the Council and is critical to the success of *Darlington Together*. Members already act as champions for their wards and this can be delivered through channelling issues back to officers and by working with constituents to identify needs and issues and then to develop solutions and deliver outcomes. The proposal in *Darlington Together* would be in embedding the second role and in providing resources and a model to help Members in the enhanced leadership role.

Resources

- 34. An implementation plan is being developed to deliver outputs in four workstreams to support the development of *Darlington Together*. The plan will follow from an analysis of current practice in this area. The workstreams are set out in Appendix 1.
- 35. Most aspects of *Darlington Together* have no additional cost. For example, Member and officer training already takes place but some of the content can be reviewed. There is

already a community development team in place and work around *Darlington Together* will be their service priority.

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Appendix 1

The workstreams in the implementation plan

37. An implementation plan is being developed to deliver outputs in the following four workstreams. These will form the Council's contribution to the outcomes above.
- (a) How might the Council change in order to best facilitate *Darlington Together*?
 - (b) How could the role of councillors change?
 - (c) What might the role of the LSP be in order to best facilitate *Darlington Together*?
 - (d) How might our understanding of social capital within communities be developed and used?