

---

**OVERVIEW OF EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

---

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work under my Efficiency and Resources Portfolio.

**Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Reports 2015/16**

2. Cabinet has been provided with details of complaints, compliments and comments which have been received by the Council during 2015/16 under the Council's Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure and those representations made under the Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and the Public Health Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedures.
3. For the first time since 2012/13, there has been a decrease in the overall number of representations made under the complaints, compliments and comments procedure which is largely due to the reduction in complaints and comments received in relation to problems people were initially experiencing with their refuse and recycling collections.

**Xentrall Shared Services Annual Report 2015/16**

4. It has been eight years since the establishment of Xentrall Shared Services, the partnership between Darlington and Stockton Councils to provide ICT, transactional finance and HR and design and print, and Cabinet has received the eighth annual report which shows that the service has now delivered all the efficiencies and main benefits as outlined in the original business case, plus additional efficiencies and is now on target to make £13.6 million savings over the 10 years of the partnership which is nearly double the original target. In addition, both the quality and performance of the services delivered by the Partnership have also improved, with both customer and staff satisfaction increasing.
5. Cabinet previously approved a revision to the ten-year partnership agreement which makes the partnership a rolling agreement with no defined end date, allowing it to operate as a going concern and provide stability for the services and staff.

**Regulation of Investigatory Powers**

6. Cabinet has received an update on developments in relation to the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, which enables Councils to carry out certain types of surveillance activity, as long as specified procedures are followed, and that any information obtained as a result of surveillance activity can be relied upon in Court proceedings provided that the provisions of the Act are complied

with.

7. Following the departure from the Authority of the Licensing, Parking and Trading Standards Manager, Cabinet has approved the reduction in the number of Designated Authorised Officers for RIPA applications to four Officers and has also, following the departure of the Head of Housing, approved the appointment of the Assistant Director, Housing and Building Services as the Designated Authorised Officer for RIPA directed surveillance applications.
8. The Council's approved RIPA Policy has been reviewed and amended to take into account these staffing changes, together with a number of other amendments and changes as directed.

### **Write-off of Former Housing tenant arrears, Housing Benefit Overpayments, Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax**

9. Cabinet has written-off debts, subject to steps for recovery being taken, wherever possible, if and when contact is made in relation to former tenant arrears, Housing and Council Tax Benefit overpayments, Non-Domestic rates and Council Tax.

### **Treasury Management Annual Report and Outturn Prudential Indicators 2015/16**

10. In accordance with the Council's reporting procedures, we have received information regarding the regulation and management of the Council's borrowing, investment and cash flow and seeking approval of outturn Prudential Indicators for 2014/15 in accordance with the Prudential Code. The financial year 2015/16, has presented similar circumstances to 2014/15 with regard to treasury management and activity during 2015/16 has been carried out in accordance with Council policy and within legal limits. Financing costs have been reduced during the year and a saving of £3.384 million achieved from the original Medium Term Financial Plan as a result of not providing the Minimum Revenue Provision due to over provision in previous years as reported in a previous Council report and a mixture of reduced interest costs arising from the continued resilience on internal borrowing, the timing of capital expenditure and increased income from investments.

### **Revenue Budget Monitoring 2016/17 – Quarter 1**

11. Cabinet has been provided with an early forecast of the 2016/17 revenue budget outturn as part of the Council's continuous financial management processes. Early indications are that the Council's projected revenue reserves at the end of 2016/17 are £14.673 million, which is £1.588 million better than the initial 2016-20 Medium-Term Financial Plan position and includes a brought forward amount of £1.510 million from 2015/16. Departmental reserves are forecast to be overspent by £0.150 million with corporate reserves projected to be underspent by £0.228 million compared to the 2016-20 Medium Term Financial Plan.
12. Of the £14.673 million projected reserves, we have a risk reserve balance of £4.330 million, leaving £10.343 million one-off funding to further support the general fund moving forward. Members may recall that £6.132 million is already

planned for usage in 2016/17 and is included above.

### **Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring Outturn 2015/16**

13. Cabinet has received information on the delivery of the Council's Capital Programme, together with the financial outturn position as at 31st March, 2016, and the proposed financing of the 2015/16 capital expenditure.
14. In addition, Cabinet has also received information on the current position, at quarter 1, of the Council's capital commitments and resource together with all the live construction projects currently being managed by the Council.
15. The Council has a substantial annual construction programme of work, with the current project position statement showing that there are 36 live projects currently being managed with an overall project outturn value of £82.630 million. The majority of the projects are running to time, cost and quality expectations with no foreseeable issues.

### **Blackwell Meadows Community Sports Hub Expansion**

16. Cabinet has received an update on the progress of the Blackwell Meadows Community Sports Hub expansion and have given authorisation to Officers to progress the Council's contribution to enable the project. The estimated cost for the car park has increased since the original report to Cabinet and the additional funding required will be met by increased funding from Sport England and by the Council, through a leasing arrangement over a ten-year period with the Darlington Rugby Football Club.
17. The Sports Hub is an important sporting infrastructure within the Borough as it is one of the hub sites identified in the recent Darlington Borough Council Playing Pitch Strategy and, in addition to the car park, the project will deliver stadium works and changing room updates.

**Councillor Stephen Harker**  
**Cabinet Member with Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**