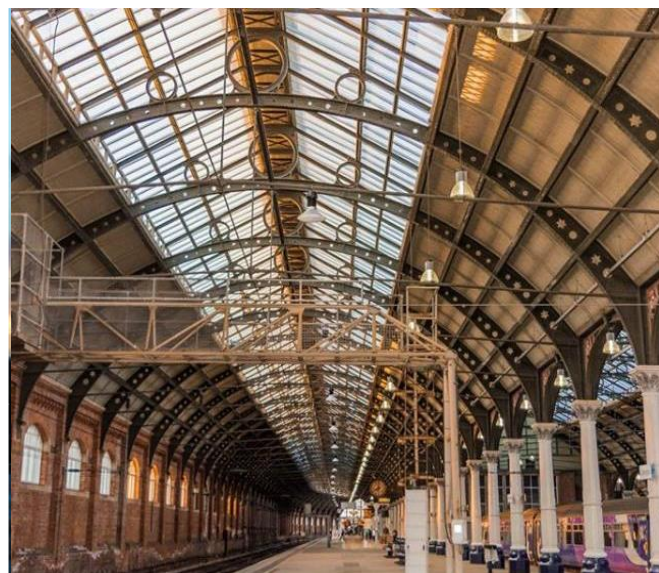
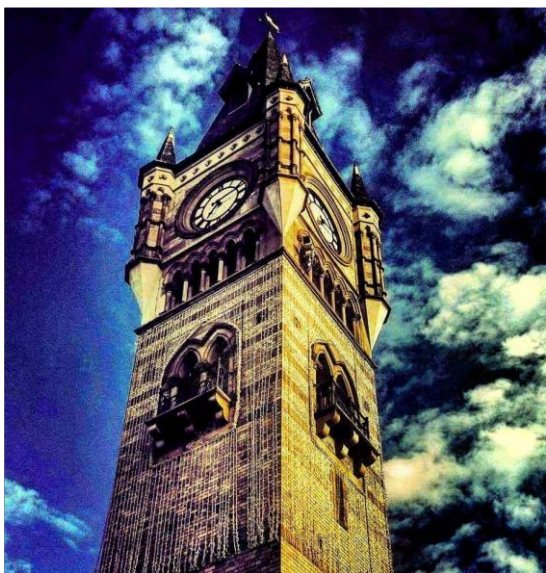




**DARLINGTON  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## Corporate Plan 2017-2021



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## INTRODUCTION

Darlington is a great place to live, work and visit, with a proud heritage and strong sense of community. By supporting the creation and maintenance of a vibrant economy and working hard to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents, the council has endeavoured to ensure this remains to be the case. In the current environment, however - of unprecedented cuts to local government funding, the continuing impacts of the financial crash and the uncertainty surrounding the effects of Britain leaving the European Union, among others - the council must make changes to the way it delivers services if it is to continue to support these outcomes at a time of tighter finances and increasing service pressures.

The Plan reinforces the council's continuing commitment to the goals and ambitions set out within the Sustainable Community Strategy. Refreshed by the Darlington Partnership in 2014, One Darlington Perfectly Placed articulates the borough's determination to work together to narrow inequalities and capitalise on our assets to grow and share wealth. Although an approach underpinned by council financing is no longer an option, to the same level as previously and as reflected in the strategy, the council will continue to play a leading role in its implementation, by supporting and influencing the delivery of the three conditions and eight outcomes, identified by partners.

The Plan uses this framework, as set out in Table 1, to set out what the council aims to achieve over the next four years, in partnership with residents, the community, and voluntary and private sectors, resourced through our Medium Term Financial Plan and in line with those longer term ambitions set out in One Darlington Perfectly Placed.

The three conditions which must be met in order for the borough's vision to be achieved are outlined and reaffirmed. The eight outcomes are then set out, with an overview, key achievements, examples of partnership working and relevant plans and strategies highlighted. The council's objectives for each outcome are displayed alongside what we will be doing over the next 4 years to maintain and improve our services. Initially focussing on the coming year, thereafter the Plan will be refreshed on an annual basis.

The Plan brings together a number of existing plans and strategies, and aligns the reporting and progress monitoring in a consistent and coherent way. A separate performance monitoring framework will show how progress is being made by the council towards achieving the One Darlington Perfectly Placed ambitions.



**Table 1 – One Darlington Perfectly Placed framework**

**Our vision**

**One Darlington: Perfectly Placed**

**What we need to enable:**

We will improve the quality of life for all and reduce inequality by ensuring we have:

More people healthy and independent

Children with the best start in life

A safe and caring community

More people active and involved

More businesses and more jobs

More people caring for our environment

Enough support for people when needed

A place designed to thrive

**What we need to do:**

**Build strong communities**

**Grow the economy**

**Spend every pound wisely**

**One Darlington**

Outlines our approach to people, and specifically the need to make sure that people do not miss out on the opportunities arising from living and working in Darlington on account of a lack of income, where they live, or by any other potential disadvantage.

**Perfectly Placed**

Describes our approach to shaping and improving Darlington as a place by helping to guide investment decisions, spatial planning and care for the environment; strengthening the economy; and making sure that Darlington has the right homes, jobs, facilities and transport to enable it to thrive.

[http://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/362819/one\\_darlington\\_perfectly\\_placed.pdf](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/362819/one_darlington_perfectly_placed.pdf)

## DARLINGTON – ABOUT OUR BOROUGH

### Population



As of 2016, Darlington's population is estimated to be 105,600: a significant increase from 97,900 in 2001.

By 2034 it is estimated that the proportion of Darlington's population aged 65 or above will exceed 25% (currently 20%).

### Demographics



Most of the population are long-term residents:

- 64.9% are owner-occupiers
- 15.5% live in social housing

However 7.8% of the population moves to or leaves Darlington every year.

Darlington has a higher than average proportion of children and older people, compared to the North East and England.

### Diversity



In comparison to other areas in the UK, Darlington's population is not very ethnically diverse with just 6.2% of residents defining themselves as being non-white UK in the 2011 Census, compared to 20.3% for England as a whole.

People from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities comprise the largest ethnic minority grouping in Darlington.

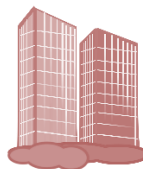
### Income



Darlington residents, on average, are estimated to have the highest wages in the North East, with median gross annual earnings calculated to be £22,814.

Gross Disposable Income (GDHI) per head, which takes into account all forms of incomes not just earnings, in Darlington is estimated to be £16,139 per year, which is slightly above the regional average.

### Economy



Over £500 million of public and private sector investment has been attracted into Darlington over the last 5 years.

In terms of employment concentrations against National and Tees Valley averages Darlington has comparative advantage in a number of sectors, such as Manufacturing and Engineering, Specialised Construction, Logistics and Financial Services.

### Your Council



Darlington Borough Council has a gross budget of over £210 million and employs around 2,200 staff.

The council provides a wide range of services, including; maintaining 552km of roads and over 14,900 street lights, managing over 5,000 council homes, and delivering in excess of 1400 adult social care packages.

50 councillors represent 20 electoral divisions: 29 Labour, 17 Conservative, 3 Liberal Democrat and 1 Independent.

## **ONE COUNCIL, PERFECTLY PLACED: A SUSTAINABLE COUNCIL STRATEGY**

The One Darlington Perfectly Placed framework sets out the council's, and wider partners', vision for the borough. The council also, however, has organisational objectives which fall outside of this framework, including those for a wide range of back office and support services which, whilst not directly delivering the outcomes as set out in One Darlington Perfectly Placed, underlie everything we do as an organisation and are therefore vital to the overall vision. This section therefore outlines our organisational objectives for the council.

The council's priority is always to deliver effective services that offer residents and businesses good value for money. We have reduced our planned expenditure by £46.6M since 2010 and, whilst we have preserved frontline services wherever possible, the impact on the organisation cannot be underestimated: our workforce alone has been reduced by 698. The need to become as efficient as possible is becoming ever more important as we strive to continue providing high quality services in the face of ongoing significant cuts to funding.

### **Objectives:**

#### **Transparent**

*As a public body, we want to be as open and transparent as possible to ensure we are accountable to our residents.*

- Continue to publish spending data including senior staff pay and all transactions over £500
- Where possible, continually benchmark our spending against other comparable councils
- Publish our service standards so residents know what they should expect from us
- Work on making it clearer what services and resources are available across Darlington for residents

#### **Accessible**

*We want to make it easy for people to self-serve where possible, in order for both residents to be able to get the information or service they need as easily and quickly as possible in a way that suits their lifestyle, and also to manage demand and ensure the council's resources are targeted where most needed.*

- Increase the number of transactions undertaken online by making it easier for residents to access services and information online
- Reduce the need for residents to have to call or visit the Town Hall
- Continue to develop My Darlington+ so residents have one personalised account for a wide number of council services

#### **Efficient and Quality Services**

*We want to ensure we make the best use of our limited resources whilst delivering the services residents want.*

- Use creativity and innovation to ensure we make the best use of resources to deliver quality services
- Strive to get it right first time
- Continue to implement our transformation programme and challenge inefficiency in both back office and front-facing services

- Use learning from customer feedback to improve services
- Invest in our high-quality workforce, which recognises the challenges faced by the council and is committed to tackling them
- Maintain an evidence-based approach to ensure our commissioning decisions and arrangements are intelligence-led

### **Maximise Income**

*As the amount of funding we receive from central government shrinks, it becomes more and more vital to ensure that we maximise income from other sources, including council tax, business rates and rents, as well as the efficient management of our assets.*

- Maintain high levels of council tax and business rates collection
- Maximise rent collection
- Support residents and tenants in arrears
- Ensure the council's property and assets are managed efficiently, generating income wherever possible
- Continue to seek opportunities to generate income wherever possible, including trading activities and applying for external funding

### **Engaged**

*We want to develop in collaboration with residents, partners and service users; by continually encouraging residents to feedback on our plans and performance.*

- Use social media to engage with residents and explain what the Council is up to
- Hold public meetings and roadshows to engage with residents when consulting on proposals
- Enable the public to access and ask questions at Cabinet and Council meetings, including via a live stream for those meetings with high levels of public interest
- Enable opportunities for residents to have direct contact with the Leader
- Support Councillors to engage their residents and respond to enquiries
- Undertake a wide range of consultation methods, including surveys
- Maintain a constructive relationship with the media

### **Networked**

*We want to continue to work closely with outside partners to help ensure our services are as effective and efficient as possible.*

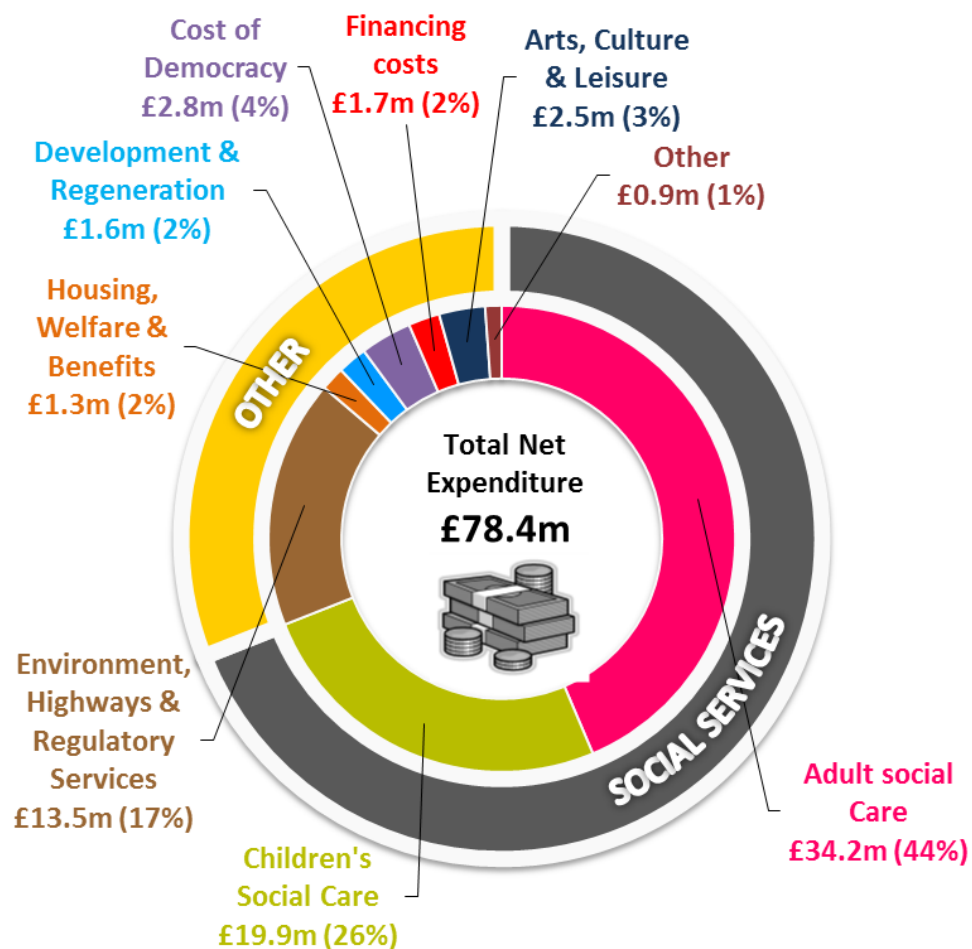
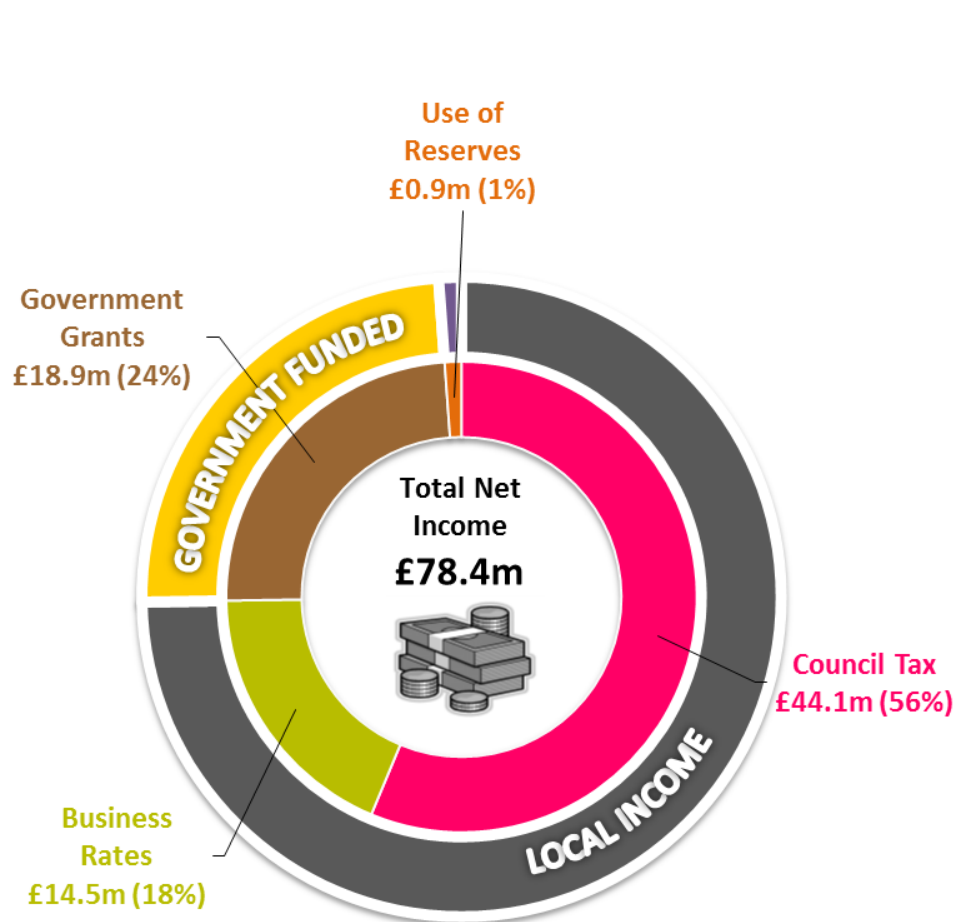
- Use our membership of the Local Government Association to share good practice, publicise the work of the council and press the Government for support to deliver good services
- Continue to work with other local authorities, with our MP's, and with other public services, to:
  - identify and utilise opportunities for shared working
  - share best practice
  - combine resource to achieve shared objectives
  - brief on our progress and challenges

## Our Budget

Our 2017/18 net revenue budget (the gross revenue budget less any income and grants which the Council passes directly to other agencies for services, and therefore has no control over) is set out below:

Where the money will come from in 2017/18?

Where the money will be spent in 2017/18?





## **THREE CONDITIONS FOR CHANGE**

The three conditions describe what needs to be achieved in Darlington in order for it to have the necessary resilience and capacity to thrive in the current environment of reduced public spending. This section of the corporate plan sets out, in turn, how the council intends to contribute to each of these conditions being met. Specific examples of how the council is working to ensure these conditions are being met and recent achievements can be found across the eight outcomes, outlined later in the Plan.

### **Building Strong Communities**

As the public sector downsizes, communities across Darlington need to work together, to ensure that Darlington is a better place to live and meet their aspirations.

Each of the eight outcomes outlined in One Darlington Perfectly Placed relies upon the existence of significant, strong and resilient social capital in Darlington: both in terms of requiring local residents and community groups' support, cooperation and input, but also, in general, on people taking more personal responsibility for themselves, their families and neighbours and their environment. This is about investing in the social infrastructure of the borough. We want to work with residents, communities and the voluntary sector to establish self-sustaining positive outcomes through supporting volunteering and building capacity in our communities.

Darlington has already hosted many pioneering initiatives based on this principle, including Good Friends, Darlington Cares, Street Champions, Creative Darlington and Foundation for Jobs, all of which employ a partnership approach to tackle local problems. Volunteers are a core feature of this theme, helping ensure sustainability and incorporating the principle of community development. Furthermore, volunteers themselves benefit from improved health, wellbeing and confidence and training opportunities.

The Red Hall estate, in no small part due to the impact of Darlington winning Healthy New Town status, has become something of a pilot site over the past few years for partners, including the council's Housing and Public Health services. A number of initiatives to motivate and empower the local community to come together to tackle local challenges, take ownership and help shape their local environment have been implemented and are underway. Lessons learned already include that in many instances, coordination of existing work and organisations can have a significant impact.

Partners across sectors are already committed to improving residents' quality of life; the key is to galvanise the energies of local people and organisations, listen to their needs and aspirations and help them to grow their capacity to achieve them.

### **Every Pound Well Spent**

Every resident, business or visitor to Darlington is served by the council in some way and, as with any service provider, our customers expect high quality and value for money. We remain committed, despite the tough financial climate, to delivering a positive user experience, whether we directly provide services ourselves or commission others to do so on our behalf.

The council has to date been proactive in adapting to an environment of significant service pressure and resource reductions. During the period 2010/11 to 2016/17 there has been a £28.5M cash reduction in government grant which in real terms (after taking inflation into account) equates to £37.3M, a 47% real reduction with more cuts to come. This is in the context of rising demand for services, in particular social care where the increasing older population and high profile child cases are putting strain on

the already financially challenged services.. In response, two programmes of cuts have now been agreed and, whilst in the former 80% of cuts fell on back office services or were achieved via efficiency savings, in the latter, agreed in 2016, 80% of budget reductions were to frontline services. The impacts of central grant funding cuts that hitherto were less obvious will therefore now inevitably become more obvious to the public.

Despite this challenging background, however, we are optimistic that residents have and will continue to see many areas of our business where outcomes are improving. The ingenuity and creativity of our staff mean the council has responded to the challenge with innovative solutions and a strong drive to make every pound count. We will continue to make sure our services work for residents, provide genuine value for money, and ensure that those who need support receive just enough, at the right time, in the right place to maintain their independence. Continuing to work collaboratively with partners to plan and commission services, redesigning services from the perspective of the citizen, and utilising support from all sectors are just some of the approaches we are following to ensure the resources we have are spent where they are most needed and to maximum effect. We are also committed to maximising the resources we have – our Revenues and Benefits team, consistently recognised as top performing, have responsibility for collecting all owed Council Tax and Business Rates. Owed fees and charges for services are likewise collected by officers from across the council, and different teams regularly apply and win funding for projects and initiatives, often in collaboration with partners. Our Housing team supports tenants to maximise their incomes and ensures rents are collected, which can then be reinvested back in our housing stock and communities.

### **Growing the Economy**

We know that poverty and inequality leads to outcomes that are antithetical to the vision of One Darlington – growing the economy creates the conditions that help tackle these issues and therefore underpin the overall vision. We want to create the conditions for businesses, both new and existing, to be able to succeed in Darlington. We want to understand business needs and use this knowledge to develop the skills of our workforce so that they are better able to gain local quality employment and, ultimately, ensure that investment and growth in the borough is to the benefit of all residents.

All of the ambitions outlined in this plan, depend, to a greater or lesser degree, on the success of Darlington's economy. More jobs and businesses increase the council's revenue, and therefore its ability to resource the services and initiatives which will deliver this plan. The economic situation also impacts on demand for council services – residents and households in work (particularly those in well paid, skilled occupations) are typically less reliant on public services and have higher levels of health and wellbeing. Furthermore, children who do not grow up in poverty have better life chances and are significantly more likely to grow up healthy, safe and achieve more at school.

We have already made a good start on meeting this condition; the Darlington economy has proven itself to be resilient in many regards, despite the wider challenging environment. Darlington has outperformed regional and national growth trends since 2012 on many indices. The Economic Strategy for Darlington 2012-2026 was created by Darlington Partnership, with input from hundreds of local stakeholders, both big and small, and illustrates the solid relationships already cemented between the public and private sectors. The success of work to expand corporate social responsibility and encourage more apprenticeships demonstrate our ability, collectively, to deliver positive outcomes in this regard. The priority going forward is to maintain this positive performance, and ensure that its benefits are shared across the borough: reducing inequality is fundamental to the vision of One Darlington.

## THEME 1: MORE PEOPLE HEALTHY AND INDEPENDENT

### Overview

Given the Sustainable Community Strategy's core vision of improving the quality of life for all and reducing inequality, its strong focus on tackling the wider determinants of health inequalities is not surprising. This is achieved by assessing health needs of different communities in Darlington and responding by ensuring that reducing health inequalities becomes a key focus of all council strategies, policies and services. Positive health outcomes are also achieved by preventing ill health through protecting the population from a range of potential risks including communicable and preventable diseases, from noise and air pollution, to poor housing conditions such as damp and excessive cold, and unsafe products, in addition to preventing and investigating notifications of infectious diseases.

Ensuring that Darlington remains 'perfectly placed' is key to providing an economy, environment and infrastructure that are able to maximise the opportunities for improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities in the long term. Perfectly Placed is key to a of the work undertaken across the whole council and includes providing good quality jobs, income, housing and environmental conditions to enable residents to live a good quality of life, fulfil their potential and make positive lifestyle choices that support their health and independence. Many of the actions listed in all the other domains of this plan reflect the contribution of the whole authority in tackling the determinants of health.

Maintaining and enhancing relationships with partners in the NHS, voluntary sector, Police, Fire Service and private industry in Darlington is key to achieving the Sustainable Community Strategy outcomes and ambitions. The 'Life Course Approach' describes the opportunities that exist to promote health and reduce inequalities at every stage of an individual's life. Whilst the council cannot address all of these contributory factors on its own, by providing leadership and working with others, it can enhance the Public Health outcomes for Darlington.

### Recent Achievements

- More than 3,400 individual NHS Health Checks were provided in Darlington in the last year, successfully reaching over 30% of the total eligible population.
- The rate of alcohol-related admissions to hospital has reduced by more than 6% since 2012.
- The Central Heating Project, part of the wider Warm Up North, has invested £270,000 in Darlington and installed 84 central heating systems in homes to help tackle fuel poverty.
- A new Community Contraception service, which complements the existing commissioned Specialist Sexual Health service (GUM), has been successfully commissioned.
- £3.2m has been invested in Red Hall on improving the energy efficiency of properties, as part of the Warm Up North campaign and Healthy New Towns initiative.
- The Recovery and Wellbeing service, which supports people to overcome substance misuse dependency via a "recovery-orientated" approach, has been commissioned with a local provider.
- The council has led on successful multi-agency campaigns to highlight harm from alcohol and tobacco in Darlington, including Stoptober and Dry January.
- A new Darlington Stop Smoking service, which focusses on support for pregnant women who smoke, their families and those people who would benefit most from stopping smoking, has also recently been commissioned.
- The council has worked with partners to develop and deliver a suicide prevention plan for Darlington.
- The council has continued to tackle the harm from tobacco, alcohol and illicit substance in Darlington.
- Public Health's reach across the council has been further cemented by the achievement of Healthy New Towns status in 2016.

We will:	By taking actions such as:
<b>Improve the health of the population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitoring population health and evaluate services with partners</li> <li>▪ Delivering the Future in Mind Transformation Plan with partners</li> <li>▪ Reducing the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol</li> <li>▪ Working with the NHS on the diabetes prevention programme</li> <li>▪ Working with partners to produce a Healthy Weight action plan</li> <li>▪ Improving access to health services for young people</li> </ul>
<b>Protect the health of the population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Targeting all enforcement activity using a risk rating system</li> <li>▪ Ensuring public health and safety via inspection, regulation and licencing</li> <li>▪ Working with partners to mobilise the Suicide Prevention Plan</li> <li>▪ Supporting local care homes with infection prevention and control advice</li> <li>▪ Working with Public Health England to respond to health threats, including outbreaks, and contribute to the planning for health emergencies</li> <li>▪ Improving the uptake of immunisation and screening with NHS England</li> </ul>
<b>Narrow the gap in outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Doing a Health Equity Audit of sexual health and contraceptive services</li> <li>▪ Working with partners and communities to ensure parity of esteem for people with severe mental health problems and/or learning disabilities</li> <li>▪ Working with partners and residents to reduce fuel poverty</li> <li>▪ Reducing hazardous housing conditions in the private rented sector</li> <li>▪ Publishing the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment</li> <li>▪ Developing an Oral Health plan to promote dental registrations and reduce tooth decay</li> <li>▪ Delivering an integrated 0-19 service to ensure that we provide mandated services and enhanced services for vulnerable populations</li> </ul>

### Relevant Strategies

- One Darlington Perfectly Placed: Darlington’s Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026
- Darlington Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2022 (in development)
- Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2016
- Darlington Licensing Policy in relation to the Licensing Act 2003
- Suicide Prevention Plan (in development)
- Future in Mind Transformation Plan
- Alcohol Declaration
- Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment
- Air Quality Annual Status Report
- Housing Strategy
- Darlington Community Safety Plan-One Darlington Perfectly Safe
- Children and Young People’s Plan
- Childhood Healthy Weight Action Plan for Darlington (in development)

### Partnership working through:

- Health and Wellbeing Board
- One Darlington Partnership
- Mental Health Network
- Darlington Older Together
- Darlington Ageing Well Network
- Learning Impairment Network
- Community Safety Partnership
- Regional Housing Group

## THEME 2: CHILDREN WITH THE BEST START IN LIFE

### Overview

This outcome is focussed on supporting all children and young people – irrespective of background or circumstances – to achieve their potential and benefit from the opportunities that living in Darlington affords. A good start in life provides the foundations for better outcomes in adulthood, including long-term sustainable health independence, active citizenship and economic wellbeing.

The borough's ambitions for its children and young people are articulated in the emerging Children and Young People's Plan 2017, which outlines how various agencies in Darlington will work together to ensure all children get the best start in life. In terms of the council's role, Children's Services lead on ensuring that children and young people are safe and supported; working directly with families experiencing difficulties to help build resilience, protecting children at risk of abuse or neglect, and supporting children with disabilities and young carers. The conversion of local schools to academies and free schools, which the council has no legal relationship with, means our contribution to supporting children to thrive academically is now primarily via working with the regional schools commissioner and supporting local educational institutions to deliver this outcome.

Embracing the old mantra that it takes a village to raise a child, wider council services also play a role in delivering this outcome. The Transport team provide 3,000 schoolchildren a year with road safety training, and a further 800 with cycle training, to ensure they are safe when travelling. Our Move More team encourage children and young people to be active, while wider Community Services offer other opportunities for development, including maximising the usage of libraries and educational activities. Public Health tackle health-related issues which can severely impact on children's life chances, from smoking during pregnancy, to child obesity, to educating young people about healthy relationships and behaviours. Our Housing team also tackle child poverty by working in partnerships on initiatives such as holiday hunger clubs.

### Recent Achievements

- The percentage of children achieving a good level of development in early years is above regional and statistical neighbours.
- The proportion of 16 to 24 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEETs) are continuing to fall, although Darlington is still higher than the national average for this measure.
- Between 2013/14 and 2015/16 all age Apprenticeship starts for Darlington residents grew by 38% from 1,230 to 1,700, compared to only 16% growth nationally. Over the same period starts for under 19 year olds grew by 13% from 210 to 250, compared to only 10% growth nationally. For 19-24 year olds growth was 10% from 390 to 430, compared with a 3% decline nationally.
- The educational achievement gap, between pupils eligible for free school meals and those not, at Foundation Years and Key Stage 2 has narrowed
- The under 18 conceptions rate are falling.
- Levels of family homelessness in Darlington are significantly below average.
- The Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board has taken on the role of Children's Trust, in order to ensure a strong focus on the actions required to embed the children's agenda within its wider remit.
- Building on the work in Red Hall, £60,000 from the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund has been won to develop 'holiday hunger' projects in four areas of Darlington which will include activities as well as the provision of food.
- Significant progress has been made against the Children's Service Improvement Plan, including a strengthened leadership team, improved performance management and timeliness of reviews and visits reduced caseloads, and an increased focus on Looked After Children's education. The Minister for Children and Families has acknowledged this progress and, in February 2017, reduced the Improvement Board to bi-monthly. The



Improvement Plan has now been updated to focus on the remaining priorities

and work continues to meet these new targets.

We will:	By taking actions such as:	Relevant Strategies
<b>Ensure children and young people are safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identifying, supporting and protecting vulnerable children and young people</li> <li>▪ Identifying, intervening and diverting children and young people from crime and anti-social behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One Darlington Perfectly Placed: Darlington’s Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026</li> <li>▪ The Best Start in Life: Darlington’s Children and Young People’s Plan 2017-22 (in development)</li> </ul>
<b>Improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improving breastfeeding rates</li> <li>▪ Reducing smoking during and after pregnancy</li> <li>▪ Supporting children and young people to maintain a healthy weight</li> <li>▪ Continuing to reduce under 18 conceptions</li> <li>▪ Improving social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing</li> <li>▪ Increasing the number of children and young people involved in physical activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Darlington Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2022 (in development)</li> <li>▪ Childhood Healthy Weight Action Plan for Darlington (in development)</li> <li>▪ Early Help Strategy (in development)</li> <li>▪ Participation Strategy (in development)</li> <li>▪ Darlington Children and Young People Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015-20</li> </ul>
<b>Improve achievement and academic attainment of children and young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supporting the reduction of the number of 16 – 24 year olds out of work</li> <li>▪ Contributing to the creation of work experience opportunities</li> <li>▪ Increasing the participation of disabled children and young people in the school curriculum</li> <li>▪ Ensuring looked after children and care leavers can access learning opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2016</li> <li>▪ SEND Strategy (<i>in development</i>)</li> <li>▪ Looked After Children Strategy and Sufficiency Statement</li> </ul>
<b>Empower families to be resilient and achieve economic wellbeing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitoring and, where possible, mitigating the impact of welfare reforms on children</li> <li>▪ Increasing the take up of early education places</li> <li>▪ Ensuring sufficient free 30 hour child care places</li> <li>▪ Improving participation by children, young people and families in the development and design of services</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partnership working through:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health and Wellbeing Board</li> <li>▪ Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub</li> <li>▪ Community Safety Partnership</li> <li>▪ Internet Safety Partnership</li> <li>▪ “Future In Mind” Partnership</li> <li>▪ Joint Headteacher Meetings</li> <li>▪ 11-19 Partnership (Secondary Headteachers)</li> </ul>
<b>Work with families with multiple problems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Working closely with partner agencies to identify earlier individuals and families experiencing difficulties</li> <li>▪ Supporting vulnerable families and high impact households</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Behaviour and Attendance Partnership</li> <li>▪ Joint Commissioning Group for Children’s Services</li> <li>▪ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Steering Group</li> <li>▪ Local Safeguarding Children’s Board</li> <li>▪ Primary Forum</li> </ul>

- Children's Services Improvement Board
- SEND Parent Carer Forum

## THEME 3: A SAFE AND CARING COMMUNITY

### Overview

Central to our vision of ensuring a good quality of life for residents is that people are, and feel, safe. Much of the work undertaken to achieve this aim is via the Community Safety Partnership, comprised of the five 'responsible authorities' – the council, the police, health, probation and fire and rescue – to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, environmental crime and reoffending.

Risks to our safety, however, are not exclusively from crime, and the council also works hard to ensure residents are safe in a much broader sense. Regulatory Services, for example, advise and enforce a wide range of legislation to protect the rights and interests of people in relation to their environment. From licensing taxis and premises; to enforcing and advising on building control, dangerous structures, trading standards and animal health, welfare and feed laws; protecting consumers from unsafe products and unfair trading; undertaking food safety inspections; dealing with contaminated land and pollution; and tackling rogue landlords. Our Highways team regulate and inspect roads to ensure they are safe, and proactively promote road safety via engineering, education, enforcement and encouragement. CCTV and street lighting make a significant contribution to our sense of safety when we are out and about in the borough, whilst our Lifeline service provides users with reassurance that they can get help when they need it in their own homes.

In addition, our Safeguarding team support the functions and priorities of the Darlington Safeguarding Children and the Darlington Safeguarding Adults Boards, which are responsible for ensuring effective multi-agency arrangements, are in place to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of residents at risk. The Boards develop multi-agency policy and procedures, provide training, undertake quality assurance activity, scrutinise partner agency data, commission statutory reviews, promote a learning culture and improve practice. The Boards also work together where appropriate on 'Domestic Homicide Review'.

### Recent Achievements

- The Community Safety Partnership has been restructured to strengthen ties with the Health and Wellbeing Board and a new Multi-Agency Partnership has been created to allow for quick, operational responses to incidents of anti-social behaviour.
- Darlington has the highest percentage of eateries with top marks for food hygiene standards out of 360 council areas across the UK.
- The council won funding for a cost-effective LED street lighting programme, which is now in the final year of implementation.
- The council won a National Highways and Transport Network award in 2015 for road safety.
- The 'Neighbourhood Resolution Hub' has been launched, which has become one of the most successful in the UK. The service is delivered by specially trained volunteers, who undergo an intensive 3 month programme in restorative approaches, conflict resolution and solution-focused mediation.
- The Trading Standards Team has strengthened working relationships with partners to deal with the supply of illegal tobacco and counterfeit goods and to reduce incidences of rogue trading.
- A new, more strategic approach to tackling domestic abuse locally has been implemented: the County Durham and Darlington Domestic Abused and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) seeks to make progress against partners' shared objectives.
- The Trading Standards Animal Health Team continues to participate in a national animal feed inspection and sampling programme to ensure the safety of the food chain.
- The Commercial Environmental Health team has carried out a large number of advice visits relating to the new requirements for allergen information.

We will:	By taking actions such as:
<b>Reduce offending and re-offending</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Working with young people aged 0-17 to minimise the number of first time entrants to the court system</li> <li>▪ Continuing to deliver and promote restorative approaches, using volunteers</li> </ul>
<b>Tackle anti-social behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reducing the damage and impact of anti-social behaviour through effective problem solving e.g. contribution to MAP</li> <li>▪ Improving public confidence that partnership agencies are effectively tackling ASB</li> <li>▪ Contributing towards a victim-centred approach to ASB in Darlington e.g. restorative justice</li> <li>▪ Using CCTV to both deter potential ASB and supporting police in enforcement of it</li> </ul>
<b>Reduce the harmful effects of drugs, alcohol and tobacco</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expanding and developing community integration and partnership working such as with the police on the Blue Light project, the fire service on the Safer Homes initiative, and the local Community Rehabilitation Company – ARCC – on desistance</li> <li>▪ Protecting residents from unsafe, illicit alcohol and tobacco by enforcement by the Trading Standards team and wider Regulatory Services</li> <li>▪ Proactively inspecting and regulating licensed premises</li> </ul>
<b>Target vulnerability relating to domestic, sexual violence and hate crime</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continuing to deliver educational programmes about healthy relationships in schools</li> <li>▪ Supporting the victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence via refuge and floating support services, as well as target-hardening the properties of council tenants at risk</li> <li>▪ Tackling hate crime via partnership working</li> </ul>

### Relevant Strategies

- One Darlington Perfectly Placed: Darlington’s Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026
- One Darlington Perfectly Safe: Darlington’s Community Safety Plan 2015-2020
- Darlington Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2022 (in development)
- Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy
- Darlington Licensing Policy in relation to the Licensing Act 2003
- Darlington Safeguarding Boards’ Joint Communication and Engagement Strategy 2016-2019

### Partnership working through:

- Darlington Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group
- Community Safety Partnership
- Troubled Families Board
- Darlington Domestic and Sexual Abuse Network
- Darlington Substance Misuse Forum
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
- Domestic and Sexual Violence Executive Group
- Darlington Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board
- Darlington Children Safeguarding Board
- Public Events Safety Advisory Group
- North East Trading Standards Association
- North East Public Protection Partnership
- Licensing Partnership Group
- County Durham and Darlington Tackling Hate Crime Group

## THEME 4: MORE PEOPLE ACTIVE AND INVOLVED

### Overview

We want to encourage more active residents, both in terms of physical activity and in terms of engagement with the council, its services and local democracy. From libraries and museums to cultural events and parks, we want more people to have access to and take up the opportunities living in Darlington afford. Encouraging volunteering amongst communities and businesses falls under this definition, as does engagement in the council's decision-making process.

A raft of work is undertaken across the council, in many instances in partnership with others, to encourage residents to be more physically active, in recognition that sedentary lifestyles have a myriad of negative consequences for health, wellbeing and quality of life. The Healthy Darlington Move More team encourages residents to 'Eat Well, Move More and Live Longer'. The Local Motion campaign support residents to travel "sustainably" – be it walking, cycling, public transport or car sharing - to improve health and wellbeing and the local environment. Services such as maintaining the public rights of way network with the Community Give Back Team also encourage walking and cycling.

Encouraging and enabling active involvement of residents is all about building stronger communities. A core part of this ambition is promoting and supporting volunteering, from Friends of Parks Groups and Street Champions, to the employer-supported volunteering led by Darlington Cares. Here Darlington Partnership takes a leading role: recruiting volunteers, matching them to placements, and developing new volunteer-led initiatives to address local issues. More broadly, teams across the council work hard to boost involvement in a wider sense. Our Community Services team encourage take-up of council-provided amenities, from libraries and leisure services to parks and theatres. Leisure and Culture officers work with residents and communities to develop and deliver events, exhibitions, festivals and participatory programmes, as well as support work to develop cultural assets and promote Darlington's heritage.

### Recent Achievements

- Darlington has the highest proportion of adults participating in 3 or more 30 minute sessions per week of moderate intensity sport in the North East, as measured by the Sport England Active Survey.
- Since 2012 Darlington Cares has recruited 22 member organisations, delivered 75 successful projects and 15,000 hours of employer-supported volunteering, trained 120 Busy Reader volunteers to work with over 3,000 children, and worked with more than 850 young people on an employability skills programme.
- 166,136 people attended Civic Theatre events in 2015-16.
- The Healthy Darlington Move More team has been awarded Leadership Academy status by Sport Leaders UK.
- A volunteering fair in February, organised by Darlington Partnership, hosted 57 voluntary and community groups. Twelve of the groups surveyed after the fair reported they collectively had 103 new potential volunteers.
- Theatre Hullabaloo has been included in the Arts Council's National Portfolio of Organisations for 2018-22 and will receive over £250,000 per year to deliver a high quality programme of theatre and creativity.
- Darlington Dance Festival Association's Annual Mass Dance, organised by volunteers, regularly attracts more than 700 people to take part, including local public service workers and children.
- The Bridge Centre for Visual Arts recorded 26,756 visits, organised 9 exhibitions, 2 events and 68 artist-led courses over 8 months, in 2016
- IncludFEST Tees Valley, an inclusive and fully accessible family arts festival, attracted 2,500 visits to South Park in 2016.
- Darlington Libraries celebrated 2017 National Bookstart Week with a big outdoor event in South Park. Working with partners the event attracted around 400-500 people, and each child received a free goodie bag from the Library.



- The Darlington-based Jabberwocky Market pop up theatre events won Best Event Teesside at the Journal Culture Awards 2014.

We will:	By taking actions such as:
<p><b>Increase participation in sport and physical activity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring all public facing staff use every opportunity to promote the benefits of physical activity</li> <li>▪ Ensuring there is sport and physical activity provision for children and young people, particularly those who traditionally experience the most barriers, such as girls, those who are disabled and those from minority ethnic groups</li> <li>▪ Working with partners to support and encourage groups to be active</li> <li>▪ Encouraging healthy, active travel</li> </ul>
<p><b>Narrow the gaps in the participation between different communities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring programmes and methods of support are available to those who require additional help to be active</li> <li>▪ Empowering and mobilising local community leaders to help to promote and run community sport and physical activity</li> </ul>
<p><b>Offer clear pathways for individuals to reach their potential in sport</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintaining and developing a comprehensive, high quality, pathway for sport and physical activity throughout the life-course, which is widely recognised and used by all partners</li> </ul>
<p><b>Provide a sustainable, accessible and inclusive library service</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improving access to learning and library services so residents can fully engage in education, employment and community activities</li> <li>▪ Creating a modern, sustainable, cost-effective and innovative model for the delivery and development of the public library service, which responds to community needs</li> <li>▪ Providing opportunities and pathways for people to other learning and cultural activities</li> <li>▪ Promoting the value of learning and the enjoyment of culture</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure arts, culture and heritage are central to Darlington's future identity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Celebrating and promoting Darlington's rail heritage, particularly the upcoming bi-centenary of the Stockton &amp; Darlington Railway</li> <li>▪ Supporting and championing cultural inclusion and engagement and offering great festivals and events</li> <li>▪ Opening Darlington Hippodrome and The Hullabaloo – a new flagship children's theatre venue - to build awareness of Darlington as a fantastic theatre town with a nationally recognised offer</li> <li>▪ Developing a strong and successful proposal, with partners, for Tees Valley as UK city of Culture in 2025</li> </ul>

### Relevant Strategies

- One Darlington Perfectly Placed: Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026
- Darlington Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2022 (in development)
- Darlington Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2014-2019
- Local Transport Plan 2016-36 (in development)
- Darlington Library Plan 2017-21 (in development)
- Creative Darlington Culture Strategy (in development)
- Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2017-20 (in development)
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan (in development)
- Allotments Strategy for Darlington 2009-2019

### Partnership working through:

- Health and Wellbeing Board
- One Darlington Partnership
- Darlington Cares Board
- Tees Valley Sport
- Creative Darlington

## THEME 5: MORE BUSINESSES MORE JOBS

### Overview

The recent Tees Valley devolution deal, worth £15m per year for the next 30 years, and subsequent formation of the Tees Valley Combined Authority means that the council will enhance its already strong working relationships with other Tees Valley local authorities to tackle key strategic economic challenges, including supporting more businesses and more jobs to be created locally. Work undertaken to achieve this outcome, such as encouraging investors to the borough, will therefore largely focus on working with TVCA to ensure that Darlington benefits from the significant resources and opportunities afforded by devolution.

Our Economic Growth team take the lead on ensuring this outcome, directing work to market and brand the borough to prospective investors, visitors, and residents via initiatives such as Ingenious Darlington and Experience Darlington. They also provide tailored support and advice to local existing, newly-formed and prospective businesses, including social enterprises and cooperatives, to support their development. Businesses are also supported by our Regulatory Services team: Trading Standards promote a fair trading environment by engaging with businesses to deliver the support they need, providing advice on how to comply with trading standards, animal health and welfare laws, and tackling unfair trading practices to ensure a level playing field for compliant businesses.

Work focussed on improving the number and quality of employment opportunities to young people, those out of work, and those in employment but on low wages and/or with little to no progression opportunities, is also a key outcome. Our Education team supports children, young people, and adults to obtain the skills they need to enjoy the economic opportunities in Darlington. Our Economic Growth team foster links between businesses and educational institutions to ensure local employment and growth opportunities and the skills needs of employers and other stakeholders are understood, and that potential employers and residents can develop their skills to meet demands.

### Recent Achievements

- The number of VAT or PAYE registered enterprises in Darlington increased by 80 between 2015 and 2016.
- Since 2012 Darlington businesses have created an additional 4,000 jobs
- Darlington's employment rate is 75.0%, higher than both the North East and England averages.
- Darlington's GVA per head is now £24,585, an increase of 10.7% since 2012 compared to the national average of 7.0%.
- The council won the national LGC prize for the Best Performing Council in Driving Economic Growth in 2017. The award acknowledged the strength across all council departments in driving economic growth and the strong partnerships with the private sector that have delivered initiatives such as Foundation for Jobs, Darlington Cares, and Darlington a Most Ingenious Town.
- Unemployment has fallen from a peak of 10.5% in December 2012 to 6.4% in March 2017, above the national average but below the regional figure of 7.1%.
- As of 2016, Darlington is home to 3,100 businesses and 52,000 jobs.
- The £30M Feethams cinema, hotel, and leisure complex which opened in 2016 has delivered approximately 500 new jobs to the town centre.
- A recruitment fair held in March 2017 was attended by 487 people, with 15 businesses recruiting for more than 360 live vacancies, 340 of which are based in Darlington.
- Planning permission continues to be granted to for strategic projects across the town to support business and jobs growth, recent examples include:
  - A significant extension to the Aldi Distribution Centre, which will create up to 200 new jobs and secure the site's long-term future,
  - Three new retail developments on Yarm Road.

We will:	By taking actions such as:	Relevant Strategies
<b>Promote Darlington as an outstanding business destination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Raising the profile of Darlington by marketing, influencing, and informing</li> <li>▪ Continue communicating and building momentum on brands such as Ingenious Darlington, Invest in Darlington and Darlington for Culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One Darlington Perfectly Placed: Darlington’s Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026</li> <li>▪ Local Plan 2016-2036 (in development)</li> <li>▪ Economic Strategy for Darlington 2012-2026</li> </ul>
<b>Support education, skills and employability initiatives that match the needs of the local economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maximising the opportunities to link residents to employment opportunities</li> <li>▪ Working with the Tees Valley Combined Authority to create opportunities to retrain or up-skill the existing workforce</li> <li>▪ Working with stakeholders to develop good relations between industry and education providers in supporting growth sectors and opportunity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan</li> <li>▪ Experience Darlington Strategy (in development)</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership working through:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tees Valley Combined Authority</li> <li>▪ Youth Employment Initiative</li> <li>▪ Foundation for Jobs Board</li> </ul>
<b>Encourage business growth by targeting Darlington’s high growth SMEs, building on existing sector strengths and supporting emerging growth sectors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attracting investment and employment opportunities through the development of clusters of activity in subsea, biologics, logistics, advanced engineering, public service sectors, and other emerging sectors</li> <li>▪ Raising the local economy’s competitiveness by increasing business formation and survival rates, and supporting business growth in areas where there is the greatest potential</li> <li>▪ Encouraging new/existing businesses to develop new products and markets, exploit innovative technologies and ways of working, and develop supply chain opportunities</li> <li>▪ Offering clear, accurate and practical compliance advice to help businesses navigate their way through the complex web of regulatory services laws</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Darlington Partnership</li> <li>▪ Darlington Cares</li> <li>▪ North East Chamber of Commerce (NECC)</li> <li>▪ The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)</li> <li>▪ Darlington Business Club and private networks</li> <li>▪ TEDCO Business Support</li> </ul>
<b>Access public and private sector investment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Targeting opportunities including the Government-funded Local Growth Deal and EU structural funds</li> <li>▪ Working with the TVCA to utilise Strategic Economic Funding</li> <li>▪ Influencing Network Rail and Highways Agency investment decisions impacting on strategic infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Encouraging private sector investment</li> </ul>	

## THEME 6: MORE PEOPLE CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

### Overview

Our environment is a vital asset; it contributes to quality of life in Darlington, sustains nature and attracts visitors and investors in jobs and facilities. The challenge is to protect and enhance our environment whilst reducing the cost to the public purse of maintenance.

The council, due to government grant reductions, has had to make significant reductions in budgets for the “Street Scene” services which are responsible for maintaining our parks, cleaning our streets and collecting our waste, so it is more important than ever that we all – whether we are councillors, community groups, volunteers or the general public - take responsibility for caring for our environment.

Over the lifetime of this plan, we will continue to work in partnership with local communities and businesses to effect behaviour change, encourage collective ownership and increase participation in environmental activities. We will also seek to reduce environmental crime through campaigns and enforcement to tackle specific issues, such as fly-tipping.

Much good work is already being undertaken across the borough in this regard by residents, the council and partner organisations, both to keep our streets clean and to ensure that the broader definition of a clean environment such as good air quality is met, including campaigns to encourage greater take up of sustainable transport, friends of groups who adopt and maintain green spaces and initiatives urging people to pick up litter. We need to build on these foundations to broaden participation.

The council is also working closely with developers who are bringing forward new housing and commercial schemes to ensure that high quality, diverse, green and open space is provided that is sustainable, and that funding for ongoing maintenance is provided through a levy or similar scheme.

### Recent Achievements

- There are now 55 active Street Champions who are helping keep various areas of the town clean at least once a month.
- Reuse, recycling and composting rate has increased from 33% in 2014/15 to 38% in 2016/17 following the implementation of alternative weekly collections.
- Darlington Cares have dedicated more than 800 hours to environmental activities across the borough.
- Agreement has been secured to transfer 3 nature reserves to Durham Wildlife Trust, and we are working on further transfers to ensure the sustainability and enhancement of our green and open spaces.
- Middleton St George station patronage has doubled in 3 years, due to its “adoption” by the Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership volunteers who have undertaken improvement works.
- Working with other councils, Darlington has secured three years of funding to continue delivering Local Motion across the Tees Valley, to focus on improving local bus services, improving access to workplaces and schools, and encouraging adoption of train stations by community groups.
- The 2017 Litter Free Durham and Darlington campaign involved 1,070 volunteers spending 1,560 hours collecting 1,099 bags of litter and 3 tonnes of bulky items
- Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company continue to help maintain and improve the natural and open spaces across the borough.
- Members are involved in a pilot to develop the Street Scene Member’s Toolkit for Volunteering, developing particular approaches that meet the requirements of their Wards. It is intended to roll out this approach to all Members.
- The Volunteer Habitat Team was successful in winning the Best of Darlington Award for ‘Contribution to the Environment’.
- Community engagement work led by the council’s Housing team in Red Hall has inspired residents to take more pride in and responsibility for their environment.
- Green flag status has been awarded for South Park, West Park and West Cemetery.



We will:	By taking actions such as:	Relevant Strategies
<p><b>Support and work with Darlington communities and partners to maintain a clean and green environment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developing a Member-led approach to active volunteering</li> <li>▪ Increasing the number of active Street champions</li> <li>▪ Developing an approach for asset transfer</li> <li>▪ Encouraging residents to pick up a piece of litter a day</li> <li>▪ Evaluating the work undertaken at Red Hall and, if effective, rolling out to other areas</li> <li>▪ Utilising the skills, expertise, knowledge and volunteering resources of local businesses and employees via Darlington Cares</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One Darlington Perfectly Placed: Darlington’s Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026</li> <li>▪ Local Plan 2016-2036 (in development)</li> <li>▪ Darlington’s Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013-2026</li> <li>▪ Darlington Playing Pitch and Sports Facility Strategy</li> <li>▪ Tree and Woodland Strategy</li> <li>▪ Parks and Open Spaces Strategy</li> <li>▪ Allotments Strategy for Darlington 2009-2019</li> <li>▪ Local Transport Plan 2016-2036 (in development)</li> <li>▪ Air Quality Annual Status Report</li> </ul>
<p><b>Remodel service delivery, working with communities and volunteers to target resource</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reviewing existing work programmes and develop new working relationships with communities within resources allocation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partnership working through:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Darlington Cares Board</li> <li>▪ Darlington Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group</li> <li>▪ Enhancing Open Spaces Group</li> <li>▪ Darlington Open Spaces Volunteer Environment Scheme</li> </ul>
<p><b>Focus on fly tipping, back lanes and abandoned vehicles</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restructuring and refocusing the environmental crime service</li> <li>▪ Considering options to enhance the capacity to deal with environmental crime</li> <li>▪ Supporting Members to address these issues in their wards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ West Park Steering Group</li> <li>▪ Tees Valley Waste Group</li> <li>▪ Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reduce contamination and increase recycling rates</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reviewing existing collection and process arrangements to understand contamination</li> <li>▪ Developing a targeted campaign to reduce contamination in problem areas</li> <li>▪ Developing a borough-wide campaign to encourage residents to separate waste</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Monitor the impact of traffic and seek to improve air quality</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reducing car journeys through encouraging the use of public transport, walking and cycling; and encourage the use of lower emission vehicles</li> </ul>	

## THEME 7: ENOUGH SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WHEN NEEDED

### Overview

This theme reinforces the council's continued commitment to ensure that residents requiring help to live independent lives are supported, including those in crisis and those with care and support needs. The challenge, in the current environment of diminishing resources and increasing demand, is to ensure that services are delivered in a way so that people's needs are met in the most cost-effective way possible, and in a way that maintains their independence.

A significant programme of transformation is already underway in Adult Social Care to ensure that care and support is provided in a way that focusses on people's strengths and abilities, and that avoids generating a dependency on council services into the future. The overall vision of this programme is that in 2022 Darlington residents will be living independent lives, with those in need of help having access to just enough of the right support in the right place at the right time. In addition, the Better Care Fund is being used in Darlington to develop intermediate care services and a multi-agency approach to supporting frail elderly people, improve services around care homes and nursing homes, and implement schemes to help people leave hospital and return home as soon as they are medically fit.

Our Housing team also support residents to live independently in their own homes for longer – including via a range of extra care and sheltered housing, and the provision of assistive technology – as well as support those at risk of homelessness to remain in their property or find new accommodation. The Community Support Scheme, commissioned by the council, also ensures residents in crisis or in need of support are able to move to or remain in the community.

More broadly, the Local Resilience Forum regularly meet to plan and train for emergencies, so should a situation arise, they are best placed to provide an effective response and protect residents.

### Recent Achievements

- 86% of adults with a learning disability live in their own home or with their family, significantly higher than both the regional and national averages and increasing.
- The Good Friends scheme, set up in 2014 to reduce social isolation by matching up volunteer 'befrienders' with at risk residents, has, to date, received over 700 referrals, engaged around 1,400 individuals and recruited over 600 Good Friends.
- Despite significant budget cuts, the council continues to perform above average, both regionally and nationally, in terms of preventing homelessness.
- A consistently low level of delays for people ready to leave hospital being able to do so has been maintained by working closely with health partners.
- Between December 2016 and May 2017, a pilot Rapid Response Service, commissioned by the council but funded by additional monies from the NHS, either prevented a hospital admission or facilitated an early discharge for 152 individuals by responding to requests for home care support within two hours.
- The council's Life Stages service, which supports disabled children, young people and adults with a learning disability in Darlington, which has been restructured to a progression model focussing on people's strengths has delivered cost efficiencies whilst simultaneously enabling individuals to become more independent and effectively set and achieve goals that improve their quality of life.
- The local voluntary and community sector established a new Strategic Implementation Group (SIG) in 2015; supported by the council, the group aims to improve capacity and representation and identify opportunities for joint working.

- A social prescribing scheme to help people find ways to improve their wellbeing, outside of medical or social care interventions, has been

introduced.

We will:	By taking actions such as:
<b>Make sure people are able to source universal services in the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Providing an online community directory to enable effective information, advice and signposting</li> <li>▪ Developing an online self-assessment and screening tool</li> </ul>
<b>Help people maintain or regain their independence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring a strengths-based approach is applied to assessments</li> <li>▪ Ensuring effective intermediate care is provided</li> <li>▪ Developing housing options to maximise independence</li> </ul>
<b>Make self-directed support available</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintaining a self-directed and strengths-based approach, maximising the use of community options</li> </ul>
<b>Develop an effective, responsive and best value provider economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identifying future service needs, agreeing commissioning intentions and what outcomes are desired</li> <li>▪ Reviewing current commissioned services and providers</li> <li>▪ Developing a brokerage function to support care package development</li> </ul>
<b>Build community capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engaging partners, the voluntary and community sector, residents and communities to coordinate and maximise resources</li> </ul>
<b>Support a vibrant voluntary community sector, groups and networks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Working with the CCG and public health to review spend across the sector and governance arrangements</li> <li>▪ Undertaking collaborative training and development work with partners as part of 'Developing Darlington', to develop a shared approach to training and staff/volunteer development</li> </ul>

### Relevant Strategies

- One Darlington Perfectly Placed: Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026
- Darlington Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2022 (in development)
- Darlington Better Care Fund Plan 2017-2019
- Homelessness Strategy (in development)
- Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2017-20 (in development)
- Adult Social Care Market Position Statement (in development)
- County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Risk Register

### Partnership working through:

- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Integration Board
- Strategic Implementation Group (SIG)
- Darlington Partnership
- Provider Forums across commissioned services
- Darlington Cares Board
- Red Hall Liaison Group
- Darlington Organisations Together
- Darlington Ageing Well Network
- Mental Health Network
- Learning Impairment Network
- County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum
- Carers' Strategy Steering Group
- Life Stages Carers' Network

## THEME 8: A PLACE DESIGNED TO THRIVE

### Overview

The borough's physical foundations – from transport, housing and schools to parks, leisure facilities, museums and theatres – are imperative to ensuring that Darlington remains a great place to live, work, invest and visit. This outcome outlines our commitment to ensuring residents' needs for housing, a thriving economy, community facilities and infrastructure are met– as well as to safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good design. The council's ambitions for new development, as set out in the emerging new Local Plan, are to promote sustainable economic growth and new housing to meet needs, and to protect and enhance Darlington's distinctiveness, including its greenery and open spaces, historic buildings and heritage and attractive villages.

To ensure the borough has the necessary infrastructure to thrive, the council maintains, manages and improves existing assets, and supports the creation of new infrastructure. Our Planning team take a strategic approach to meeting future economic, environmental and social aims in terms of the development and use of land. Estates bring forward and facilitate land for investors to encourage development. Highways, Design and Projects provide initial infrastructure for key sites, work with developers to incorporate design principles that support health and wellbeing outcomes for residents, secure external funding for works, and manage capital projects, including building roads, streetlights and housing.

The priority is to pursue physical regeneration and infrastructure developments that support the wider outcomes and conditions in this plan; by enabling better access to jobs, skills, culture and leisure, health and education opportunities. We will create great places by protecting, enhancing, and positively utilising Darlington's built, natural and historic environment. We will deliver new development that is capable of facilitating local and strategic infrastructure, and we will contribute to residents' satisfaction, fulfilment, health and wellbeing.

### Recent Achievements

- Investment in significant cultural assets such as the Darlington Hippodrome, Theatre Hullabaloo and the Dolphin Centre has been secured.
- £100,000s of investment across the Eastern Growth Zone, via the winning of Healthy New Towns status in 2016 (one of only 10 areas), has been secured, with significant work already undertaken e.g. Red Hall regeneration.
- More than £230,000 of government funding to support estate regeneration in Red Hall has been won.
- 166 new affordable homes have been built in Darlington since 2015, and bidding for further funding to support the building of a further 170 over the next 3 years is underway.
- The future of the 120 year old Stonebridge has been safeguarded by winning funding from the Department for Transport to strengthen the bridge.
- Investment has been secured to improve local sport and leisure facilities and services, including £412,000 to redevelop an artificial sports pitch at Eastbourne Sports Complex, £150,000 to develop a sand-based artificial grass pitch at Carmel College and £285,000 that facilitated Darlington Football Club's (DFC) return to the town by helping fund a new stadium at Blackwell Meadows.
- 2,000 premises including businesses now receive superfast broadband.
- £15m has been invested into improvements to the inner ring road.
- £300,000 of Local Growth Fund money has been won to develop a HS2-ready business case and regeneration master plan for Darlington Rail Station.
- Funding from the Homes and Community Agency has been won for two new Gypsy caravan sites, Rowan East and Rowan West, providing a safe location for members of the Gypsy community with 42 modern pitches and amenity blocks.
- The Central Park development, comprising Darlington College and Teesside University buildings, Business Central, the National Biologics Manufacturing

Centre, a hotel, an iconic park, and housing, has been facilitated by the council.

- A new multi-storey car park in the Feethams area has been constructed to meet increased demand and support the Town Centre's future viability.

We will:	By taking actions such as:	Relevant Strategies
<b>Facilitate sustainable economic growth of new jobs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Developing a range of strategic employment sites</li> <li>▪ Supporting clusters of economic activity</li> <li>▪ Promoting Darlington town centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One Darlington Perfectly Placed: Darlington’s Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026</li> <li>▪ Local Plan 2016-2036 (in development)</li> <li>▪ Economic Strategy for Darlington 2012-2026</li> </ul>
<b>Enable the development of new homes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintaining a supply of land for new housing developments that meet local needs</li> <li>▪ Providing types and tenures of homes for all people</li> <li>▪ Maintaining a portfolio of different sized sites, housing products and delivery rates for the short, medium and long term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan</li> <li>▪ Local Transport Plan 2016-2036 (in development)</li> <li>▪ Transport for the North Strategy</li> <li>▪ Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan (in development)</li> <li>▪ Rail North Long Term Rail Strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Capitalise on existing transport connections and improve regional connectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring new development is reasonably accessible by public transport, cycling and walking</li> <li>▪ Maintaining and improving transport links</li> <li>▪ Supporting development that enhances important transport links</li> <li>▪ Delivering communication infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Partnership working through:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tees Valley Combined Authority</li> <li>▪ Creative Darlington</li> <li>▪ Local Plan Steering Group</li> <li>▪ Railway Heritage Board</li> <li>▪ Healthy New Towns Programme Board</li> <li>▪ Tees Valley Nature Partnership</li> </ul>
<b>Protect and enhance the environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Protecting, and adding to, where appropriate, existing Green Infrastructure and spaces</li> <li>▪ Protecting and enhancing bio-diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tees Valley Sport</li> <li>▪ Tees Valley Culture and Tourism Stakeholder Group</li> <li>▪ Transport for the North</li> <li>▪ Tees Valley Access Forum</li> <li>▪ Town Centre Board</li> </ul>
<b>Respond to climate change and reduce energy consumption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Managing flood risk from all sources</li> <li>▪ Improving generation and use of renewable energy</li> <li>▪ Encouraging energy and water efficient design</li> <li>▪ Locating development in areas not susceptible to flooding and encourage flood resilient design where necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Darlington Partnership</li> <li>▪ Tees Valley Asset Management Group</li> <li>▪ North East Cultural Partnership</li> </ul>
<b>Create and support cohesive communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensuring convenient access to local goods and services, education facilities and green spaces</li> <li>▪ Building healthier homes and environments</li> <li>▪ Creating connected, walkable neighbourhoods and improved infrastructure for accessible public transport; safe, active travel; and inclusive public spaces</li> <li>▪ Supporting the creation of healthy workplaces, schools and leisure facilities</li> </ul>	



## **CONTACT DETAILS**

The Darlington Borough Council Corporate Plan sets out our intended destination and our starting point but much of the journey depends on partnership working with other organisations and residents. We welcome any comments on our proposed approach, or suggestions about how we can achieve the ambitions set out in this plan.

If you would like to give us your views, you can contact us via the following methods:

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