

---

**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.

**Project Position Statement**

2. Cabinet has received information on the current position of the Council's capital commitments and resource together with all the live construction projects currently being managed by the Council. The projects are either managed by the Council's in-house management team, a Framework Partner or by Consultants sources via an open/Official Journal of the European Community (OJEU) tender process.
3. The Council has a substantial annual construction programme of work. The current position statement showing that there are 30 live projects currently being managed with an overall project outturn value of £87.482 million. The majority of projects are running to time, cost and quality expectations with no foreseeable issues.
4. The investment is delivering a wide range of improvements to the Council's assets and, more critically, to Council services.

**Revenue Budget Monitoring 2017/18 – Quarter 2**

5. Cabinet has considered the quarter 2 forecast of the 2017/18 revenue budget outturn. The Council's projected revenue reserves at the end of 2017/18 are £18.804, which is £3.792 million better than the initial 2017-21 Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) position and includes a brought forward amount of £0.698 million from 2016/17.
6. The improved position is mainly due to Corporate resources showing an improvement of £2.321m following the release of a number of Contingency budgets and Earmarked Reserves balances deemed to be no longer required.
7. Further savings of £0.416 million have also been achieved in financing costs due primarily to the investments in property funds as noted in the Treasury Management Strategy at Council in February 2017, and that the Council-wide budget was forecast to be underspent by £0.264 million, with the departmental position improving by £0.451 million.

**Land at Neasham Road – Darlington Arena**

8. Officers have been in discussions with Darlington Mowden Park (DMP), the owners of the Darlington Arena, to secure the future of that arena as a multi-purpose

sports village.

9. DMP have approached the Council with a request to work collaboratively on a proposal to create a sports village, that will have an improved arena as a centrepiece asset with an artificial pitch and reconfigured concourse for events, together with a centre of excellence for sports, a new sports and leisure complex, village green, appropriate sports retail centre and a neighbourhood centre primarily to support local housing proposed on land to the west of Neasham Road.
10. The proposal, which will involve 23 acres of land owned by DMP and up to 42 acres of adjacent Council-owned land, will enable the arena to have a long-term sustainable future and offer additional facilities for sport and leisure serving Darlington and the surrounding area.
11. Cabinet has agreed for Officers to work jointly on the production of a business plan to assess the feasibility and viability of the proposals and a further report on the business plan, together with recommendations on the next steps will be submitted to a future meeting of Cabinet.

### **Hurworth Parish Council By-Election – Thursday 30 November 2017**

12. Subsequent to the resignations of Councillors Paylor and Wood, a by-election was held on 30 November 2017, to fill the resultant two vacancies on Hurworth Parish Council. Councillors N Prior and M Middlemiss were duly elected.

### **Electoral Registration**

13. The Elections Team have been engaged in the process of refreshing and publishing the electoral register for 2017/18. This has involved issuing Household Enquiry Forms to every household in the Borough, additional publicity and door knocking. The return rate for the Household Enquiry Forms, upon publication of the new Electoral Register on 1 December 2017, was 85.31 per cent, which is an increase of just under 2 per cent on last year's return rate.
14. Electoral registration staff have also subsequently undertaken a large amount of 'data mining' work to identify electors at properties from which a response was not received.

### **Absent Vote Signature Refresh 2018**

15. The Elections Team recently wrote to 5342 electors, whose Postal Vote was over five years old, in order to request that a fresh specimen signature be provided as part of the security measures in place to ensure that their Postal Vote cannot be used by anyone else.

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