

Cabinet Agenda



**5.00 pm Tuesday, 5 March 2019
Committee Room No. 2, Town Hall,
Darlington. DL1 5QT**

Members and Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting.
2. Declarations of Interest.
3. To hear relevant representation (from Members and the General Public) on items on this Cabinet agenda.
4. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of this Cabinet held on:-
 - (a) Tuesday, 5 February 2019 (Pages 1 - 8)
 - (b) Tuesday, 12 February 2019 (Pages 9 - 14)
5. Matters Referred to Cabinet –
There are no matters referred back for reconsideration to this meeting
6. Issues Arising from Scrutiny Committee –
There are no issues referred back from the Scrutiny Committees to this Meeting, other than where they have been specifically consulted on an issue and their comments are included in the contents of the relevant report on this agenda.
7. Key Decisions:-
 - (a) Local Transport Plan 2019/2020 –
Report of the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services.
(Pages 15 - 40)
 - (b) SEND High Needs Review - Home to School Transport –
Report of the Director of Children and Adults Services.
(Pages 41 - 166)

- (c) Special Educational Needs Strategy and Funding –
Report of the Director of Children and Adults Services.
(Pages 167 - 382)
8. Children Services Capital Programme –
Report of the Director of Children and Adults Services.
(Pages 383 - 390)
9. Heighington Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Boundary Review –
Report of the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services.
(Pages 391 - 426)
10. Membership Changes - To consider any Membership Changes to Other Bodies to
which Cabinet appoints.
11. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this
Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting.
12. Questions.



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Monday, 25 February 2019

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

Councillors Crumbie, Harker, C L B Hughes, McEwan, S Richmond, A J Scott and Wallis

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Lynne Wood, Elections Manager, Resources Group, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays (e-mail Lynne.Wood@darlington.gov.uk or telephone 01325 405803).

**DECISIONS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE
MONDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2019**

CABINET

Tuesday, 5 February 2019

PRESENT – Councillors Harker (Chair), Crumbie, C L B Hughes, McEwan, S Richmond, A J Scott and Wallis

INVITEES – Councillors Coultas, Curry, Haszeldine and Mrs H Scott

APOLOGIES – Councillor Nicholson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Knowles

C103 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

In respect of Minute C115 below, Councillor Harker declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was Cabinet Member on Tees Valley Combined Authority and Councillor McEwan declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was Member of Durham Tees Valley Airport Board.

C104 TO HEAR RELEVANT REPRESENTATION (FROM MEMBERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC) ON ITEMS ON THIS CABINET AGENDA.

In respect of Minutes C107 and C111 below, representations were made by a Member and a member of the public in attendance at the meeting.

C105 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS CABINET HELD ON 8 JANUARY 2019

Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Cabinet held on 8 January 2019.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

REASON – They represent an accurate record of the meeting.

C106 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET

There were no matters referred back for re-consideration to this meeting.

C107 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - AUTISM REVIEW GROUP - FINAL REPORT

The Chair of the Autism Review Group submitted a report (previously circulated) presenting the outcomes and findings of the Review Group established by the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee, to look at the support and advice services available

in Darlington for adults with autism, and requesting that consideration be given to the recommendations contained within the final report.

In presenting the report to Cabinet, the Chair of the Review Group stated that the work of the Review Group had focussed on the employment and employability of those people living with autism and that overall the Review Group were relatively satisfied with the support services available in Darlington for people with autism.

Discussion ensued on the work undertaken by the Review Group; the diagnosis of people with autism; and the availability of respite facilities for families living with an adult with autism.

RESOLVED – That the recommendations of the Review Group, as contained within the final report, as appended to the submitted report, be endorsed.

REASON – To ensure that all partners work together to support and improve services for people living with autism.

C108 KEY DECISIONS:-

(1) PRIVATE SECTOR ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME ENFORCEMENT - UPDATE

Pursuant to Minute C128(20/Mar/18), the Cabinet Member with the Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (previously circulated), providing Cabinet with an update on the pilot entered into with Kingdom Services Group with regard to enforcement services for litter and dog fouling offences.

The submitted report stated that the Council had been running a pilot with Kingdom Service Group for the enforcement of litter and dog fouling offences; officers' experience of working with the Kingdom Service Group had been poor; due to changes in senior management Council staff had had to support Kingdom Service Group staff on a regular basis; and that the Council had recently established a Civic Enforcement Team, which had responsibility for environmental enforcement, including litter and dog fouling.

References were made to the number of fixed penalty notices (FPN's) issued during the first three months of the contract; the number of appeals received against those FPN's; feedback received from residents and town centre traders in respect of the pilot; and the options available following the completion of the pilot at the end of March 2019.

Discussion ensued on the difficulty of enforcing littering and dog fouling; the importance of education in tackling litter and dog fouling; and the need to continue enforcement of littering and dog fouling to improve the environment of the town.

RESOLVED – That notice be issued to Kingdom Service Group, to terminate the contract for litter and dog fouling enforcement, at the end of the pilot period on 31 March 2019.

REASONS – (a) The poor experience and service provided by Kingdom Service

Group to date, as well as the feedback from residents and traders.

(b) To end private sector enforcement for litter and dog fouling across the Borough, allowing time for Kingdom Service Group to wind down the contract.

(2) SCHOOLS ADMISSIONS 2020/21

The Cabinet Member with the Children and Young People Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Children and Adults Services (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Local Authority's Admission Arrangements (also previously circulated) for the 2020/21 Academic Year, for maintained schools in the Borough.

The submitted report stated that, in line with the Schools Admission Code, an Admission Authority was required annually to determine the admission arrangements used to allocate places for schools for which it was the admission authority; once approved, there was a statutory duty on the Local Authority to forward a Co-ordinated Admission scheme for both primary and secondary schools to the Secretary of State by 28 February 2019; and that the oversubscription criteria had been amended to include children who had been previously in state care.

RESOLVED – (a) That the Local Authority's admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools, as appended to the submitted report, be approved.

(b) That the Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for both primary and secondary applications for the 2020/21 academic year, as appended to the submitted report, be adopted.

REASON – (a) The Authority is under a statutory duty to determine admission arrangements for primary schools for which it is the admission authority for the academic year 2020/21.

(b) If the co-ordinated scheme is not adopted and returned to the Department for Education by the 28 February 2019 the Secretary of State may impose a scheme on the Authority.

(3) PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER DARLINGTON TOWN CENTRE

Pursuant to Minute C29/Jul/18, the Cabinet Member with the Community Safety Portfolio introduced the report of the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services updating Members on the responses received to the consultation undertaken on the introduction of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in Darlington Town Centre and requesting that consideration be given to formally making the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).

The submitted report stated that the PSPO aimed to address certain types of anti-social behaviour in the town centre which had a detrimental impact on the public and businesses; the range of anti-social behaviour included alcohol related incidents, youth nuisance and begging; the Council had worked closely with partners and the Youth Offending Team to tackle anti-social behaviour; officers would only utilise the powers of a PSPO when necessary; outlined the benefits of a PSPO; the responses

received to the consultation, which were generally supportive of the Order; the legal, financial and equality implications of its introduction; and stated that the Council had worked with partners in developing a begging strategy to deal with begging entitled 'Begging in Darlington – A Multi-agency Strategic Approach' (also previously circulated).

The Chair, More in Common Darlington, addressed Cabinet in respect of the groups concerns, regarding the introduction of the PSPO; its perceived negative impact on the vulnerable people that may be affected by its introduction, including those people who may be either begging or sleeping rough in Darlington; its enforcement; and the area covered by the PSPO. The Cabinet Member with the Community Protection Portfolio responded thereon and in doing so stated that the PSPO was aimed at those people begging for financial gain; making the Town Centre a safer place; and stated that it would be implemented in a proportionate manner and should anyone be identified as vulnerable they would be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Discussion ensued on the issue of begging within the Town Centre; homelessness; and the use of the powers contained within the PSPO.

In reaching its decision Members considered the Equality Impact Assessment (also previously circulated).

RESOLVED – (a) That the feedback received following the consultation undertaken on the introduction of the Public Spaces Protection Order - Darlington Town Centre, as detailed at Appendix 5 to the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the Public Spaces Protection Order – Darlington Town Centre, as detailed at Appendix 2 to the submitted report, be approved and formally made.

REASONS – (a) To enable officers, including Police, PCSO's and Civic Enforcement Officers to effectively deal with various types of anti-social behaviour with an extended range of powers.

(b) To improve the quality of life of persons visiting and working in the area covered by the PSPO.

C109 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS

The Cabinet Member with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Managing Director (previously circulated) updating Members on issues relevant to the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000; developments that have taken place since the last report to Cabinet in July 2018 (Minute C34/Jul/18 refers); and requesting that consideration be given to approving a revised RIPA Policy (also previously circulated), taking into account recent developments.

The submitted report stated that the RIPA Policy had been amended to account of revised Home Office Codes of Practice dealing with RIPA; legislative changes affecting authorisations for juveniles used as Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS); and to reflect the change of the strategic regulator for RIPA.

RESOLVED – (a) That the developments that have taken place since July 2018, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the RIPA Policy, as appended to the submitted report, be approved.

(c) That further reports on the use of RIPA and associated issues, be submitted to further meetings of Cabinet.

REASONS – (a) In order to ensure that the Council complies with the legal obligations under RIPA and national guidance.

(b) To ensure that the RIPA policy and procedures remain up to date and reflect legislative change and revised Codes of Practice.

(c) To help in giving transparency about the use of RIPA in this Council.

C110 CALENDAR OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2019/20

The Leader introduced the report of the Managing Director (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Calendar of Council and Committee Meetings for the 2019/20 Municipal Year (also previously circulated).

In presenting the report the Leader reported that a revised calendar had been revised and circulated at the meeting to include meetings of the Health and Well Being Board for the 2019/20 Municipal Year and a change to one of the Audit Committee dates.

RESOLVED – That the amended Calendar of Council and Committee Meetings 2019/20, as circulated at the meeting, be approved, and the proposed dates for the meetings of Council be referred to the Annual Council meeting scheduled to be held on Thursday 23 May 2019, for approval.

REASON – To ensure that the calendar of meetings is approved for the forthcoming municipal year.

C111 PROJECT POSITION STATEMENT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - QUARTER 3 2018/19

The Leader and the Cabinet Member with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Managing Director and Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (previously circulated) providing a summary of the latest Capital resource and commitment position, to inform monitoring of the affordability and funding of the Council's capital programme; an update on the current status of all construction projects currently being undertaken by the Council; and requesting that consideration be given to a number of changes to the programme.

The submitted report stated that the projected outturn of the Capital Programme was £186.368m against an approved programme of £186.385m; the investment was delivering a wide range of improvements to the Council's assets and services; the programme remained affordable within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2018/19 to 2021/22; there were 29 live projects currently being managed by the Council with an overall value of £69.819m; the majority of those projects were running

to time, cost and quality expectations with no foreseeable issues; and that the projects were managed either by the Council's in-house management team, a Framework Partner or by Consultants sourced via an open/OJEU tender process.

RESOLVED – (a) That the status position on construction projects, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the projected capital expenditure and resources, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(c) That the adjustments to resources, as detailed in paragraph 19 of the submitted report, be noted.

REASONS – (a) To inform Cabinet of the current status of construction projects.

(b) To make Cabinet aware of the latest financial position of the Council.

(c) To maintain effective management of resources.

C112 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2018/19 - QUARTER 3

The Cabinet Member with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Managing Director (previously circulated) providing an up-to-date forecast of the 2018/19 revenue budget outturn as part of the Council's continuous financial management process.

The submitted report stated that the latest projections showed an overall improvement against the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) of £2.689m, an increase of £1.573m from the position reported at Quarter 2; Adult Services had reported an improvement of £1.193m; Corporately Managed Resources showed a £0.653m positive movement; and that the projected balances at 31 March 2019 showed an increase to £18.179m which would be reflected in the revised MTFP to Cabinet and Council in February.

RESOLVED – (a) That the forecast revenue outturn for 2018/19, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the proposed carry forward of resources referred to in paragraphs 14 to 19 of the submitted report, be noted and approved.

(c) That further regular reports be made to monitor progress and take prompt action if necessary.

REASONS – (a) To continue effective management of resources.

(b) To continue to deliver services to agreed levels.

C113 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - TO CONSIDER ANY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO OTHER BODIES TO WHICH CABINET APPOINTS.

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.

C114 DURHAM TEES VALLEY AIRPORT

(URGENT ITEM) With the prior approval of the Leader to the matter being treated as urgent to enable a decision to be made at the earliest possible date, the Cabinet Member with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Managing Director (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to waiving the pre-emption rights the Council has, as a shareholder in Durham Tees Valley Airport Limited, in order to facilitate the transfer of shared controlled by Peel Holdings Limited to a company established by the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), and to consider maintaining its existing minority shareholder protections under the current shareholders agreement, with some minor modifications and clarifications.

The submitted report stated that on 24 January 2019 the TVCA had agreed to acquire the shareholding of Peel Holdings Limited in Durham Tees Valley Airport Limited; Peel Holdings Limited had the majority shareholding (89.09 per cent) in the Airport; the Council and the other minority shareholders, namely the four other Tees Valley Councils and Durham County Council, had pre-emption rights to buy any shares being disposed of by Peel Holdings Limited before they were offered for sale to another person or entity; none of the minority shareholders intended to exercise their pre-emption rights but they were supportive of the proposals; and that the minority shareholders had to give a waiver to indicate that they did not intend to exercise their pre-emption rights.

RESOLVED – (a) That consent be given to waive the Council’s rights of first refusal (pre-emption rights) relating to the proposed transfer of the shares by Peel Holdings Limited.

(b) That the continuance of the shareholder protections for the minority shareholders, be agreed, subject to the modifications as set out in the submitted report.

(c) That the Managing Director be authorised to implement the decision, as set out at paragraph (a) and (b) above, with authority to make any minor changes that may be required to give effect to this decision, in consultation with the Leader.

(d) That the Assistant Director Law and Governance be authorised to complete and sign the required documents and agreements.

REASONS – (a) To enable the transfer of the shares held by Peel Holdings Limited to be implemented.

(b) To support the proposal of the Tees Valley Combined Authority to invest in the future of Durham Tees Valley Airport

**DECISIONS DATED –
FRIDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2019**

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CABINET

Tuesday, 12 February 2019

PRESENT – Councillors Harker (Chair), Crumbie, C L B Hughes, McEwan, S Richmond, A J Scott and Wallis

INVITEES – Councillors Coultas, Curry, Haszeldine and Johnson

APOLOGIES – Councillors Nicholson and Mrs H Scott

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Knowles

C115 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

C116 KEY DECISIONS:-

(1) MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Pursuant to Minute C85(2)/Dec/18, the Leader introduced the report of the Chief Officers Executive (previously circulated), proposing a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2019/20 to 2022/23, including setting a budget and council tax increase for 2019/20 and a Capital Programme for 2019/20 to 2022/23, for Council approval on 21 February 2018.

The submitted report stated that the Council had faced unprecedented financial challenges between the financial years 2010/11 to 2019/20, following reductions in public sector spending, leading to an overall decrease in real terms in government funding of £45.7m, which was anticipated to increase to £50m by 2022/23. The reductions in funding resulted in the Council agreeing reductions to planned expenditure of £57m and a reduction of 747 in the Council's workforce.

It was reported that since the draft MTFP had been proposed in December 2018 there had been a number of changes that affected the Council's financial position, namely the receipt of the Local Government Finance Settlement, which confirmed the reduction in the revenue support grant of £2.8m; extra one off funding for social care of £0.856m that had been announced in the 2018 budget; additional funding of £0.346m that was allocated to Darlington following the distribution of surplus levy funding; and increases in Top up Grant and New Homes Bonus of £0.020m and £0.038m respectively.

The submitted report also stated that £1.5m had been saved over the MTFP life following the repayment of two Lender Option Borrower Option loans as part of a Treasury Management initiative; that a Core Offer budget was agreed following a significant consultation exercise undertaken in 2016 (Minute 11(h)/Jun/16 refers); delivering the Core Offer continued to be extremely challenging with significant pressures arising from Children's social care; and that although further pressures had arisen, the Council could still deliver the agreed plan.

Discussion ensued on the risks to the Council associated with the MTFP; contingencies to mitigate those risks; Council Tax; and the Library Service.

RESOLVED – That it be recommended to the Special Meeting of Council scheduled to be held on 21 February 2019, that the Revenue Medium Term Financial Plan, as set out in Appendix 7 of the submitted report, and the proposed Capital Programme as summarised in Appendix 9 of the submitted report, be approved, including the following:-

- (a) a Council Tax increase of 2.99% for 2019/20; and
- (b) the Schedule of Charges, as set out in Appendix 3 of the submitted report.

REASONS – (a) The Council must set a budget for the next financial year.

(b) To enable the Council to continue to plan services and finances over the medium term.

(c) To ensure decisions can be made in a timely manner.

(2) HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - MTFP 2019/20 TO 2022/23

Pursuant to Minute C85(4)/Dec/18, the Cabinet Member with the Housing, Health and Partnerships Portfolio presented the report of the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, requesting that consideration be given to the proposals for the revenue budget, rent levels, and service charges for the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the financial year 2019/20 in the context of the HRA Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 and the 30 year Business Plan.

The submitted report stated that through the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015, the Government had implemented a compulsory one percent reduction in Social and Affordable rents for a four year period commencing in 2016/17, and that as a result all Council tenants would receive an average 61p reduction in weekly rent; the Council had been able to increase the housing capital programme by £12m as a result of the HRA borrowing cap being lifted, which could be further supplemented by the Homes England grant; the Council planned to build 100 affordable homes per annum, over the next ten years, as a result of the HRA borrowing cap being lifted; and that the proposals contained within the submitted report had been considered and supported by the Joint Tenants Customer/Scrutiny Panel.

Reference was made at the meeting to the priorities identified through the Housing Business Plan to be funded from the estimated capital resources for 2019/20, and in particular the funding available to replace windows.

RESOLVED – That it be recommended to the Special Meeting of Council scheduled to be held on 21 February that:-

(a) an average weekly social rent reduction of one percent for 2019/20 be implemented, giving an average social rent of £70.53 and affordable rent of £77.92;

(b) garage rents and services charges be increased, as shown in Table 3 of

the submitted report;

- (c) the budget, as set out in Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be approved; and
- (d) the Housing Business Plan, as set out in Appendix 2 of the submitted report, be agreed.

REASON – To enable the Council to deliver an appropriate level of service to tenants to meet housing need and to support the economic growth of the Borough through housing development.

C117 MID YEAR PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT 2018/19

The Leader and Cabinet Member with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Managing Director (previously circulated), requesting that consideration be given to the revised Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators and providing a half-yearly review of the Council's borrowing and investment activities.

The report stated that the mandatory Prudential Code, which governed Council's borrowing, required Council approval of controls, called Prudential Indicators, which related to capital spending and borrowing. The indicators were set out in three statutory annual reports and the key objectives of those reports were set out in the submitted report, together with the key proposed revision to the indicators which related to a reduction in the Operational Boundary and the Authorised Limit to allow for any additional cashflow requirement.

The Audit Committee, at its meeting on 30 January 2019, examined the mid-year prudential indicators and treasury management activity and were satisfied with the Council's revised prudential indicators and limits and the revised Treasury Management Budget (Financing Costs).

RESOLVED – (a) That it be recommended to Council, that the revised prudential indicators and limits, as detailed within Tables 1 to 6, 8 and 15 to 18 of the submitted report, be approved.

(b) That the reduction in the Treasury Management Budget (Financing Costs) of £0.590m, as shown in Table 12 of the submitted report, be noted.

REASON – (a) In order to comply with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

(b) To inform Members of the performance of the Treasury Management function.

(c) To comply with the Local Government Act 2003.

(d) To enable further improvements to be made in the Council's Treasury Management function.

C118 PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT 2019/20

The Leader and Cabinet Member with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Managing Director (previously circulated), requesting that consideration be given to the Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2019/20 to 2021/22, relating to expenditure and Treasury Management activity; a policy statement relating to the Minimum Revenue Provision; and the Treasury Management Strategy 2019/20, which included the Annual Investment Strategy for 2019/20.

The submitted report outlined the Council's Prudential Indicators for 2019/20 to 2021/22 and set out the expected treasury operations for that period and reported that the expenditure plans, Treasury Management and Prudential Borrowing activities indicated that they were within the statutory framework and consistent with the relevant codes of practice, were prudent, affordable and sustainable and were an integral part of the Council's Revenue and Capital Medium Term Financial Plans.

The submitted report also included a Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20, covering the Council's debt and investment projections estimates and limits on future debt, expected movements in interest rates and the Council's borrowing and investment strategies for future years. Key objectives of the investment strategy were outlined noting that the primary objective was the safeguarding of the repayment of principal due to the Council, ensuring adequate liquidity of those investments and finally the rate of return on the investment.

It was reported that the Council's Audit Committee, under their responsibilities for ensuring effective scrutiny of the Treasury Management Strategy and its policies, had considered the report and resolved that they were satisfied with the Prudential Indicators, the Treasury Management Strategy and Minimum Reserve Position, as presented therein.

RESOLVED – That it be recommended to the Special Meeting of Council scheduled to be held on 21 February 2019, that:-

- (a) the Prudential Indicators and limits for 2019/20 to 2021/22 as summarised in Tables 1 and 2 of the submitted report, be approved;
- (b) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement as detailed at paragraphs 37 to 41 of the submitted report, be approved;
- (c) the Treasury Management Strategy 2019/20 to 2021/22, as summarised in paragraphs 45 to 70 of the submitted report, be approved; and
- (d) the Annual Investment Strategy 2019/20, as contained in paragraphs 71 to 112 of the submitted report, be approved.

REASONS – (a) In order to comply with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) guidance on investments.

(b) To comply with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003.

(c) To approve a framework for officers to work within when making investment decisions.

C119 DARLINGTON CAPITAL STRATEGY

The Leader and Cabinet Member with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Managing Director (previously circulated), requesting that consideration be given to the Council's proposed Capital Strategy (also previously circulated) for 2019/20,

The submitted report stated that following the publication of the revised Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2017, all Councils were required to produce a Capital Strategy from April 2019. It was reported that the strategy provided an overview of how capital expenditure and financing plans were decided upon; provided the framework for the development, management and monitoring of the Council's capital investment plans; focused on core principles that underpinned the Council's four year capital programme and governance framework that were in place; and that it maintained links to the Council priorities and to its key strategy documents, including the Treasury Management Strategy, Medium Term Financial Plan and the Corporate Plan.

RESOLVED – That it be recommended to Council that the Capital Strategy for 2019/20 to 2022/23, as appended to the submitted report, be approved.

REASON – (a) To ensure the Council adopts the Prudential Code for Capital Finance 2017.

(b) The Strategy is approved by Council.

**DECISIONS DATED –
Friday 15 February 2019**

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**CABINET
5 MARCH 2019**

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2019-2020

**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Nick Wallis
Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – Ian Williams
Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides members with an annual update on highways and transport from a national, regional and local perspective. It outlines performance, public satisfaction and reports on delivery in 2018/19. It provides an update on the development and consultation for the Tees Valley and Darlington transport plans. The report also seeks approval of the 2019/20 programme of schemes and seeks Members approval for the release of funding for these local and regional transport priorities.

Summary

2. Transport for the North (TFN) is England's first Sub-National Transport Body. It was formed to transform the transport system across the North of England, providing the infrastructure needed to drive economic growth. TFN has consulted upon a Strategic Transport Plan which is due for publication early 2019. Key Strategic Priorities for Darlington and the Tees Valley are within the programmes. For example, Darlington Station, Darlington Northern Link Road and A19 New Tees Crossing.
3. Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) is also developing a Statutory Local Transport Plan as the Transport Authority for the Tees Valley. The Plan will be consulted upon in spring/summer 2019. The plan will identify a strategy to bring together investment to deliver a more effective and efficient integrated transport system across the Tees Valley. The Investment Plan for the Tees Valley (approved by TVCA Cabinet in January 2019) identifies £256.7m investment in transport over the next ten years. Both Darlington Station and Darlington Northern Link Road remain priorities in both TVCA and TFN Plans and TVCA has committed £25m contribution Darlington Station to lever national investment in the redevelopment programme.

4. Each Tees Valley local authority will continue to have a Transport Plan or Local Implementation Plan that drives local transport priorities but also connects to the priorities of TVCA and TFN. The Darlington Transport Plan (Local Implementation Plan) will be drafted and consulted on after the consultation on the Tees Valley Strategic plan is completed.
5. Darlington has secured significant additional funding over and above the Local Transport Plan formulaic allocations from the Department for Transport. The transport capital programme for 2019/20 is £6.405m, circa £3.830m above LTP allocations. This will help to facilitate economic growth and improve transport. This includes:
 - (a) DfT Access Fund monies for a Tees Valley wide travel behaviour programme including personalised travel planning, travel marketing, pedestrian training for children and support of Active Travel Hubs including Bike Stop in Darlington;
 - (b) National Productivity Investment Funds to improve McMullen Road/Yarm Road roundabout (currently on site); Lingfield Way/Yarm Road junction; and Tornado Way/Haughton Road throughabout;
 - (c) Sustainable Access to Employment funding for a walking and cycling route along Allington Way and a scheme to improve sustainable travel to Darlington Station on Victoria Road, following a consultation exercise with residents and businesses;
 - (d) Additional Council capital funding to continue the Roads for Residents programme, maintaining circa 100 residential streets with a micro asphalt programme to tackle potholes; and
 - (e) Additional Council capital funding to repair bridges and structures following additional inspections in 2018/19.
6. The Council is working in partnership with TVCA, Durham County Council and Stockton Council to develop a 26-mile walking and cycling route along the alignment of the original Stockton and Darlington Railway. This forms part of the wider Heritage Action Zone and 2025 celebrations. This will be a combination of improving existing routes and creating new ones.

Recommendations

7. It is recommended that:
 - (a) Members note the progress in delivering the Local Transport Plan and agree to release £0.866m Integrated Transport Block and £1.689m Highway Maintenance Funding (£1.398m plus £0.291m incentive funding) to deliver the 2019/20 transport programme;
 - (b) Cabinet approves the release of Pothole Fund monies awarded by the Department for Transport (DfT). The amount is yet to be announced by DfT;
 - (c) Cabinet releases £500k for maintenance of unclassified roads and £500k for bridge maintenance for each year, in line with the capital programme approved in April 2017, for both 2018/19 and 2019/20;

- (d) Members agree to the submission of due diligence forms for the next tranche of TVCA Single Pot Sustainable Access to Employment funding for schemes on Allington Way and Victoria Road; and if successful to release the funding;
- (e) Note the delivery of transport schemes in 2018/19 and current performance in relation to road safety, highway maintenance, network management and public satisfaction; and
- (f) Note the timetable for consultation on the TVCA Strategic Transport Plan and the proposed framework for consultation on the Darlington Transport Plan.
- (g) Delegate authority to the Director of Economic Growth, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Leisure and Local Environment to agree bidding on external funding opportunities to implement the required schemes. The first opportunity is a bid for £170k to the Rural Payments Agency for European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development to improve the route between the A66 and Middleton St George; and if successful, release the funding.

Reasons

8. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons: -

- (a) To continue to deliver Darlington's Transport Strategy and deliver against the objectives set out in the Third Local Transport Plan;
- (b) To maximise the opportunities to maintain the highway asset for the benefit of road users;
- (c) To address the deterioration in the unclassified road network and an increased bridge maintenance programme following a robust inspection regime of all structures;
- (d) To maximise the potential for investment in Darlington and to underpin our economic growth priorities, specifically supporting improved access to Darlington Station and sustainable travel to the Eastern Growth Zone.
- (e) To evaluate the delivery of schemes and the progress of transport investment against performance; and
- (f) To ensure that the Strategic Transport plans for the Tees Valley meet the economic aspirations of the Tees Valley Combine Authority and seek to maximise the benefits for Darlington residents, visitors and businesses; and to enable local people, businesses and organisations to shape the Darlington Transport Plan.
- (g) To maximise the Council's opportunity to bid for external funds to deliver the Stockton and Darlington Railway walking and cycling route.

Ian Williams
Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Background Papers

- (i) Third Local Transport Plan; 2011-2026
- (ii) Advanced design, highways maintenance, northern link road, Darlington Station and the town centre; Cabinet Report; 11 December 2018

Sue Dobson: Extension 6207

S17 Crime and Disorder	Crime and disorder implications were considered in the preparation of the Third Local Transport Plan and will be considered in the development and delivery of specific transport schemes or measures.
Health and Well Being	Health and wellbeing implications have been considered in the preparation of the Third Local Transport Plan and its implementation. The transport strategy seeks to achieve better health and longer life expectancy for everyone by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness from transport and by providing travel options to keep people active and independent.
Carbon Impact	Carbon emissions and their impact have been considered in the preparation of the Third Local Transport Plan and its implementation. The transport strategy seeks to tackle climate change through quantified reductions in greenhouse gas emission from transport. The programme includes schemes to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport.
Diversity	<p>Multi-strand Equalities and Disability Impact Assessments were undertaken in the preparation of the Third Local Transport Plan. The Plan seeks to achieve a fairer society by enabling people to access jobs, education, training, health, food and green spaces; and to achieve a better quality of life for all by improving the journey experience and minimising the negative impacts of transport such as noise, air pollution and accidents on the natural environment, heritage, landscape and people.</p> <p>As highway schemes have an impact on the built environment disability groups are consulted to ensure the needs of disabled people are considered.</p>
Wards Affected	All wards
Groups Affected	There are no proposals that impact on specific groups
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a Key Decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent Decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	One Darlington: Perfectly Placed set the wider context for the development of the Third Local Transport Plan. This programme will enable Darlington to have more businesses and jobs; be a place designed to thrive; and will grow the economy.
Efficiency	The transport strategy seeks to implement schemes that demonstrate value for money and/or deliver the greatest outcomes at a local level. An evidence-based approach is used to identify schemes that have higher benefit cost ratios, reduce maintenance liabilities and/or seek to reduce revenue

	costs. Maintaining the highway network will reduce traffic disruption in the longer term and improve network management. Vehicle delay has a negative impact on the economy, including logistics and freight.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

National, Regional and Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA)

9. Transport for the North (TFN) is England's first Sub-National Transport Body. It was formed to transform the transport system across the North of England, providing the infrastructure needed to drive economic growth. Their vision "is of a thriving North of England, where modern transport connections drive economic growth and support an excellent quality of life".
10. TFN has consulted upon a Strategic Transport Plan which is due for publication early 2019. This is a 30-year plan and outlines how transport connections across the North of England need to be transformed over the short, medium and long term to drive sustainable economic growth by 2050.
11. The plan is built up of several programmes: Northern Powerhouse Rail, Integrated and Smart Travel, Major Roads, Rail Franchising Investment, Freight and Logistics, International Connectivity and Strategic Development corridors. These programmes will help drive investment and improved connectivity across the North. Being a Statutory Transport Body means TFN will be able to influence Government spending priorities in the North. Key Strategic Priorities for Darlington and the Tees Valley are within their programmes. For example, Darlington Station, Darlington Northern Link Road and A19 New Tees Crossing.
12. TVCA is also developing a Statutory Local Transport Plan as the Transport Authority for the Tees Valley. The Plan will be consulted upon in spring/summer 2019. The plan will identify a strategy to bring together investment to deliver a more effective and efficient integrated transport system across the Tees Valley. The Investment Plan for the Tees Valley identifies £256.7m investment in transport over the next ten years. This will include the development of major projects to inform and lever national and TFN investment; schemes to improve the infrastructure on the local rail network; improved traffic management on the local road network; schemes to improve local journeys including travelling by bus, bike and walking; and vehicle emission reduction management. Both Darlington Station and Darlington Northern Link Road remain priorities in both TVCA and TFN Plans and TVCA are committing development funding to lever investment from National Programmes. In relation to Darlington Station TVCA has committed £25m contribution to lever national investment in the redevelopment programme.

13. There will now be three tiers of Transport Plan across Darlington:
- (a) TFN Strategic Transport Plan – setting the priorities and programmes for International, National and Regional improvement.
 - (b) TVCA Strategic Transport Plan – setting the priorities and programmes for the sub-region connecting to the priorities and programmes for TfN.
 - (c) Darlington Transport Plan (or Local Implementation Plan) – each Tees Valley authority will continue to have a plan that drives local priorities but also connects to the priorities of TVCA and TFN.

Darlington Transport Plan (Local Implementation Plan)

14. The framework to develop a Transport Plan for Darlington was set out in last year's Cabinet report. It will be developed in parallel with the Tees Valley Strategic Plan and the results of the Tees Valley wide consultation will inform the strategic context for the Darlington Plan. The emerging vision statement that will be subject to consultation will seek *"To provide Darlington with the safest, most reliable, easy to use transport network which is also affordable and accessible to all people"*
15. The ambitions for the plan will focus on economic, social, environmental and health outcomes to:
- (a) Assist economic growth – by opening new development sites for employment and housing; by providing better access to jobs and a larger pool of labour for employers through better transport connections; and by providing attractive alternatives to car use that reduce congestion.
 - (b) Create opportunity – by helping people (whether they have access to a car) to access employment or training places both in the Borough and across the wider region.
 - (c) Monitor the impact of traffic and seek to improve air quality – by reducing car journeys through encouraging the use of public transport, walking and cycling; and encouraging the use of lower emission vehicles.
 - (d) Improve public health – by encouraging healthy, active travel; and by maintaining a good road safety record through engineering, education, encouragement and enforcement.
16. This will be achieved through a focus on the *transport* network (infrastructure, including roads, pavements, bridges, street lights, bus stops and so on) and the people using it to *travel* (information, training, support and assistance).
- (a) Transport
 - (i) Maintaining the transport network;
 - (ii) Managing movement on the transport network; and
 - (iii) Improving sustainable and accessible transport infrastructure and options.

- (b) Travel
 - (i) Engage with people to help them make travel choices
 - (ii) Provide information on travel
 - (iii) Improve the travel experience

17. Some of these require working with other organisations such as DfT, TFN, TVCA, bus and rail operators, Network Rail, Highways England, utility companies, the voluntary sector and local businesses.
18. The current Darlington Transport Plan is still valid (until 2021) but it is necessary to review and align it with the emerging TFN and TVCA strategic transport plans. Following consultation across the Tees Valley in summer 2019, the Darlington Transport Plan will be drafted and consulted upon and then considered by Cabinet and Council for adoption as part of the policy framework. This report seeks approval to develop and consult upon the plan.

Darlington's Local Plan

19. Consideration of the Transport implications of the Local Plan is well developed, and Cabinet will consider the submission of the Local Plan in June 2019. If approved the plan will be placed on deposit to allow representations prior to independent examination which will occur towards the end of 2019 or early 2020, dependant on the workload of the Planning Inspectorate.
20. The Plan has been the subject of extensive traffic modelling. This has involved assessing the impact of development trips across the whole network using the Tees Valley Combined Authority's strategic model. This identified corridors that required further detailed modelling:
 - (a) A167 North Road/A1150 Whinfield Road
 - (b) A68/A67 Carmel Road South
 - (c) A66/B6280 Yarm Road
21. Micro simulation models have been developed for these corridors and adjacent roads to assess the impact of potential development trips on individual junctions. This has identified the need for several infrastructure projects to support the Local Plan, both on the strategic highway network and the Council's local road network. The identified mitigation schemes will form part of an infrastructure delivery plan which will set out details of the schemes, their indicative cost, potential funding sources and timeframes for delivery.
22. The Local Plan encourages the development of sustainable communities with local facilities such as schools and shops within walking distance and employment, training and health facilities connected by good public transport and cycling facilities.

Highways and Transport Performance

Performance Indicators

23. In developing the Transport Strategy in 2011 the Council adopted several performance measures, to be used to assess the impact of the LTP on achieving the objectives. All the performance data is set out in **Appendix A**. Some key points to note are:
- (a) The road safety data for calendar year 2018 is still provisional and needs to be confirmed by the Police. However, initial results show that the total number of people injured on Darlington's roads is at its lowest level with a total of 248 people injured in road traffic accidents. However, the number of people killed or seriously injured has increased. Analysis will take place on these accidents to establish if there are any physical measures can be put in place to reduce the risk of further accidents.
 - (b) It is estimated that bus patronage could fall approximately 1.1% by the end of March 2019 and this trend is mirrored nationally. There is also a reduction in the number of bus journeys made by concessionary pass holders. The Tees Valley has a strategic priority to develop the bus network and services which will look at this trend in more detail.
 - (c) Rail patronage continues to grow, by 1.1% in 2018/19.
 - (d) Highway condition data is not available yet for the A, B and C class roads as the scanner data, provided by an external testing contractor has not yet been received. However, a full survey of the unclassified road network has been undertaken to establish the impact of the Council investing additional funds in the unclassified road network over the period of the MTFP (an additional £500k p.a. until 2021). The percentage of the network requiring investigation for maintenance action is now confirmed at 16% in 2018/19, a reduction of 6% on 2017/18. It is proposed to assess 100% of the unclassified network again in 2019.

Public Satisfaction

24. Darlington participates in the National Highways and Transportation Survey to measure public satisfaction with transport related themes.
25. There continues to be good representation in the Survey across England with 109 English Authorities taking part and three Scottish Authorities. IPSOS MORI conducts the survey across a sample of residents to seek views on a range of themes – accessibility, public transport, walking and cycling, tackling congestion, road safety and highways maintenance – and the results are presented by authority area.
26. These are benchmarked against other local authority areas to assess ongoing performance and can be rated against the importance people place on them. The historical results from the NHT survey are summarised in **Appendix B**.

27. The results show that:

- (a) Overall satisfaction rated at 54%, with national average 53%, with the highest being 64% and lowest 45%.
- (b) Accessibility (how easy or difficult is it to travel to a range of facilities e.g. post office, by any form of transport) rated at 73%, with national average 70%, the highest being 81% and lowest 68%
- (c) Public Transport rated at 62%, with national average 61%, the highest being 82% and lowest 47%.
- (d) Walking and Cycling rated at 56%, with national average 54%, the highest being 65% and lowest 48%
- (e) Tackling Congestion rated at 49%, with national average 47%, the highest being 62% and lowest 29%
- (f) Road Safety rated at 60%, with national average 55%, the highest being 66% and lowest 45%
- (g) Highway Maintenance rated at 49%, which is the national average, the highest being 56% and lowest 43%

28. In all themes public satisfaction is just above the national average figure. However, within the themes there are some points to note:

- (a) Within the Road Safety theme, Road Safety Education in Darlington achieved the highest score nationally, for the second year running.
- (b) Satisfaction with highways maintenance overall has fallen over the last three years. Satisfaction with the condition of highways has a relatively low satisfaction rating of 30% (compared to the national average of 31%). The satisfaction levels are at odds with the actual condition of the highway (independently inspected and measured). It is believed that this is in part affected by the condition of the streets where people live (mainly unclassified roads) and the media focusing on potholes. To address both public satisfaction results and performance data, additional funding has been made available to implement a maintenance programme on unclassified roads over the term of the MTFP. In the first two years this has improved the condition of the roads as measured by independent Course Visual Inspection (CVI). In 2018/19 more information will be provided to residents to highlight this investment and the level of improvement, and hopefully this will increase their satisfaction with maintenance of the highway network.

Delivery in 2018/19

29. The following section outlines the capital and revenue investment in transport in Darlington over the last 12 months:

- (a) The vision for Darlington Rail Station and plans for the remodelling of the station and the surrounding area were launched for public consultation in

September and development work continues to secure this into national investment programmes;

- (b) The Darlington Northern Link Road is being developed to produce a business case to try and secure delivery in national investment programmes;
- (c) Work has started on improving McMullen Road roundabout on Yarm Road, providing two-lane approaches on the four main approach roads (excludes the retail park). The initial work has included the diversion of utility services and realigning the kerb lines. The scheme also includes a new walking and cycling route alongside Salters Lane. This is funded in part with National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) monies, secured through a successful bid to DfT;
- (d) Preliminary works have started to construct a new access road to open up Ingenium Parc on land to the rear of Cummins on Yarm Road;
- (e) Design work, trial holes and utility service searches have started for major improvement schemes at Lingfield Way/Yarm Road junction and Tornado Way/Haughton Road junction (both NPIF funded);
- (f) A new cycle route alongside Rotary Way was completed in December 2018. This additional 1.2km of cycle network, links the northern side of Faverdale Industrial Estate to West Auckland Road (A68);
- (g) Parkgate Bridge, a new pedestrian and cycle bridge, has been lifted into place over Parkgate, creating a link between Darlington Station and Central Park;
- (h) Consultation has taken place with residents and businesses in the Victoria Road area to develop ideas to improve sustainable travel to the station, whilst identifying other ideas that could help to support the local economy and improve the quality of the urban environment;
- (i) Bus stop improvements have continued, providing raised kerbs to improve access onto buses, including at bus stops in Westmoreland Street, North Road, Willow Road, Cleveland Avenue, Elton Road and Abbey Road. Dropped kerbs have also been provided to improve walking routes, including a number requested by residents;
- (j) Hird Street car park has been improved, with new drainage, resurfacing and a new layout, including a new pedestrian route linking Parkgate with Hird Street and Park Place car parks;
- (k) A new 20mph zone was introduced in the town centre, covering all the roads within the inner ring road. Once the Traffic Regulation Order was confirmed signs were erected and Variable Messaging Signs erected at key locations to remind drivers to keep their speeds below 20mph;
- (l) Church Row in front of St Cuthbert's Church was widened and resurfaced. At the same time a new walking route was created on the church side to help people walk safely between Tubwell Row and Feethams;
- (m) Pedestrian training, Bikeability Plus and Junior Road Safety Officer activities have been delivered into primary schools as part of the Tees Valley Access

Fund programme. A wide-reaching programme of Personalised Travel Planning and marketing have also been delivered across the Tees Valley to promote and support sustainable transport under the Let's Go Tees Valley brand. The work has focussed on helping people access employment and training;

- (n) 4686 pot holes have been reported and repaired up to the end of November which is a significant increase from the same period last year (3160). A greater emphasis is now being placed on preventing potholes and the DfT's Pothole Fund has been used to target surfacing works. A programme of Micro Asphalt works has been carried out on unclassified roads and footways, in approximately 100 residential streets. A full list is available on the Council's website;
- (o) A programme of carriageway structural maintenance schemes was carried out including Houghton Green/Stockton Road, Faverdale, Grange Road, Carmel Road, Firthmoor Estate, A67 Elm Ridge to Borough boundary, A68 West Auckland Road, Croft Road and Redworth;
- (p) Highways England has started on site at Morton Palms to deliver a £450k pinch point scheme to provide an additional approach lane to the roundabout on the A66; and
- (q) The developer of Symmetry Park has started construction of a new road linking Tornado Way to Yarm Road via Morton Road. This scheme will include a new signalised junction on Tornado Way and a walking and cycling route. The route is due for completion in July 2019. The construction of the new Darlington Farmers Auction Mart site at Hambleton Farm is now underway and work is programmed to begin in 2019 on a new roundabout on the A68 to provide access.

Financial Implications - Funding in 2019/20

30. Transport funding is allocated to TVCA by DfT and is based on a formulaic approach and performance (efficiency). This is then devolved to each local authority. This provides the LTP maintenance and integrated block funding. Other funding is bid for as part of a competitive process, usually from DfT but is administered by TVCA. This includes National Productivity Investment Plan (NPIF) and Access Fund monies, both of which Darlington Council will receive in 2019/20, but which have already been released by Cabinet. The following is a summary of the transport capital funding:

Funding source	Basis of allocation	2018/19 £'000	2019/20 £'000
LTP highway maintenance	- Formulaic - DBC via TVCA	1,398	1,398
Maintenance Incentive Fund	- Performance - DfT direct to DBC	291	291
Pothole Fund	- Formulaic - DfT direct to DBC	185	TBC
Local Highways Maintenance –	- Formulaic - DfT direct to DBC	770	

Funding source	Basis of allocation	2018/19 £'000	2019/20 £'000
October 2018 Budget			
LTP Integrated Transport Block	- Formulaic - DBC via TVCA	886	886
Sustainable Access to Employment (LGF/single pot)	- Successful bid - TVCA to DBC	Parkgate Bridge 886	Allington Way 250
		Rotary Way cycle route 218	
		Victoria Road feasibility 50	Victoria Road sustainable transport 375
National Productivity Investment Fund	- Successful bid to DfT - TVCA to DBC	1519	1855
DBC capital for bridge programme	Maintenance programme based on inspections	500	500
DBC capital for unclassified road and footway maintenance programme	Maintenance programme based on inspections (CVI)	500	500
Total		7,203	6,055

31. Darlington is allocated some funding from DfT but other funding is secured through bidding processes. In summary the funding for 2019/20 can be summarised as:

Funding source	£'000k
DfT direct award (based on formula)	2,575
DfT - bid	1,855
TVCA - bid	625
DBC capital	1,000
Total	6,055

32. The Local Transport Plan programme comprises a programme of schemes to manage and improve the highway network funded from the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) and several maintenance schemes from the Maintenance funding block. Details are included in **Appendix C**. The maintenance programme is based on road condition data and an independent inspection regime of bridges and other structures. Integrated Transport includes small scale schemes to address road safety, network and speed management, parking and sustainable travel.
33. As part of driving continuous improvement the Department for Transport (DfT) introduced the Local Highways Maintenance Incentive Element Fund. This is a self-assessment questionnaire used by the DfT to allocate funding based on a scoring system. The amount of funding depends on which band the authority has reached with band three being the highest. Combined Authorities are currently automatically awarded band three level of funding. This means Darlington and the

other Tees Valley authorities receive the maximum funding automatically. However, we still assess ourselves and aim to improve. Darlington have moved from band two to band three (highest) in the 2019 submission.

34. DfT has yet to announce the Pothole Fund but it is anticipated that the funding will be in the region of £100k-£200k.
35. In April 2017 the Council committed additional resources for highway maintenance on unclassified roads, equating to £500k in 2019/20. Initial results from the additional expenditure in 2018/19 has shown that the condition of the unclassified roads has improved, and the number of potholes has declined on these roads.
36. Following the Budget in October 2018 DfT allocated an additional £770,000 to Darlington Council for highways maintenance. Cabinet released this funding in December 2018. Details of the programme to use this funding is in Appendix C.
37. Atkins (Consulting Engineers) has completed the inspection work on the parapets of 104 bridges and a programme has been developed to undertake required maintenance work. An additional £500k was made available in the MTFP to undertake this work.

TVCA and Third-Party Funding

38. Darlington has successfully bid into the TVCA Local Growth Fund Sustainable Access to Employment programme over the last three years delivering schemes such as the John Street cycle route and the new pedestrian/cycle bridge over Parkgate. Development funding awarded in 2018/19 has supported consultation with residents and businesses on Victoria Road. The results of the feedback to concept plans developed by Groundwork will be presented in March and will be the basis of design work in 2019/20. Following further consultation, a business case will be submitted to TVCA for confirmation of funding. The amount of funding which is currently in the programme is £375k but a request will be made for additional funding if required to ensure that a scheme can be delivered. Darlington's local contribution will increase from £100k to £300k (from the LTP ITB).
39. From the TVCA programme a request has been made to change the Investment Proposal from a cycle route alongside Lingfield Way to a cycle route alongside Allington Way. This is because of securing NPIF funding for the Lingfield Way element of the cycle network. A business case for £250,000 will be made to TVCA to fund this scheme. This will provide a comprehensive cycle network in the eastern growth zone.
40. A request has also been made to TVCA to remove the Woodland Road scheme from this programme as it needs to be integrated into improvements at the Staindrop Road/Woodland Road junction and this scheme has been deferred, with the Cockerton roundabout taking precedence.
41. Work will continue on delivering the three key schemes that are being funded by the National Productivity Investment Fund, increasing capacity at McMullen Road/Yarm Road roundabout (currently on site); signalising Yarm Road/Lingfield Way junction and creating a new walking and cycling route; and the redesign of the throughabout on Tornado Way/Haughton Road into a roundabout.

42. In 2019/20 the third (and final) year of the successful Access Fund programme will be delivered. This is revenue funding and administered by TVCA. Darlington delivers a travel behaviour programme across the Tees Valley to increase the number of trips made by sustainable modes. This will include the Let's Go Tees Valley Personalised Travel Planning and marketing programmes. Travel Advisors continue to deliver travel advice in Job Centres to help people access employment where travel is a barrier to work. Over the last 12 months the Advisors have worked with 1098 Jobseekers and 188 have started work or training. They also work with local businesses to reduce the amount of traffic coming to site and tackle parking issues; assist staff in saving money by reducing the costs of travel; and support staff in being more active by walking and cycling.
43. In addition to Council schemes, there are several major highway schemes funded from other parties including the completion of a pinch point scheme Morton Palms/A66 roundabout (Highways England); Blands Corner junction improvement scheme (Highways England); Symmetry Way, new road linking Tornado Way and Yarm Road via Morton Road to open up Symmetry Park (developer); A68 Humbleton Farm roundabout (Darlington Farmers Auction Mart) and new roundabout on Newton Lane to open up access to Stag House Farm and West Park Garden Village housing sites (developer).
44. Following a successful Expression of Interest, a full bid will be submitted to the Rural Payments Agency for £170k of European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development monies. This will be used to improve the stretch of walking and cycling route between A66 and Middleton St George as part of the wider programme to create a 26 mile walking and cycling route along the alignment of the original Stockton and Darlington Railway.

Legal Implications

45. There is a statutory duty for a transport authority to have a Local Transport Plan (LTP). Darlington currently has an adopted LTP (Third) which covers the period until 2026. This forms part of the Council's policy framework.
46. The statutory duty for the Local Transport Plan has now moved to the TVCA as part of the devolution deal, with each of the five constituent local authorities developing a Local Implementation Plan (to be known as Darlington Transport Plan). However, transport plays a key role in many aspects of Darlington including economic growth, public health, road safety, maintenance of the local road network, impact on the environment and access to services, schools and employment. It provides a key element in the quality and use of space in the urban and rural environments.
47. Darlington has local transport priorities that support the strategic transport plan, but which also link to other local policies on parking, asset management, traffic management, Rights Of Way Improvement Plan as well as other corporate plans. The Darlington Transport Plan also needs to support the delivery of One Darlington: Perfectly Placed and is an integral part of the Local Plan, linking land use planning and transport.

48. Therefore, the Darlington Transport Plan which is under development and which will be consulted on in 2019 will be adopted as Council policy as part of our constitution.

Corporate Landlord and Estates Advice

49. The maintenance programme will be works within the adopted highway and does not require corporate landlord advice. Any modifications to the adopted highway will be notified to the highway asset management team.
50. Any individual schemes that involve a land requirement outside of the adopted highway, whether that be Council owned land or land in third party ownership, will involve the Estates Team to negotiate land acquisition or other legal agreement. If a scheme cannot be implemented within the adopted highway or permitted rights, the required planning permission will be sought at an early stage in the process.

Procurement Advice

51. All procurement activity will be in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulation 2015. Where a suitable Framework is available for a procurement this will be used in the first instance. In addition, all procurements will be in line with requirements of the grant funding agreements, and applications to TVCA for funding will be subject to a robust due diligence process which includes procurement, legal and value for money considerations.

Consultation

52. At a strategic level the Third Local Transport Plan underwent significant consultation during its development, the results of which were integrated into the final strategy. Consultation on the Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan, which was programmed for April 2018 has been delayed several times and is now expected in June 2019. A Darlington Transport Plan which will form the Local Implementation Plan for the strategic plan will be consulted on subsequently.
53. At a delivery level the amount of consultation that is carried out will vary by scheme type and scale. Maintenance schemes by their nature are not proposing significant changes, they just upgrade what already exists. Therefore, little consultation is required. Whereas network management, road safety or sustainable transport schemes require more consultation, with residents and key stakeholders. There are also several statutory consultees including the Police.
54. All transport improvement schemes and major maintenance schemes are discussed with Darlington Association on Disability.
55. Any schemes that have a significant impact on traffic movement on our main routes are the subject of advanced notification through the press and on site signs prior to the work commencing. This notification gives details of the extent and timescales of the highway scheme including details of the diversion route.

Outcome of Consultation

56. The consultation for the current transport strategy resulted in a set of priorities – maintains, manage and improve – and this has been followed during a period of limited funding. As funding opportunities have increased this has enabled more money to be spent on improvement schemes, using Local Growth Fund monies, and additional maintenance money from the Department for Transport has been invested in asset management.
57. The outcome of the consultation on the Strategic Transport Plan will be reported to the TVCA Cabinet later in 2019 following a 12-week consultation starting in June 2019. The outcome of the consultation on Darlington's Transport Plan will be reported to this Cabinet later this year and then considered by Council for adoption as part of the Council's policy framework, in line with the Council Constitution.

Equalities considerations

58. This report is to release funding and therefore there are no equalities impacts to consider currently. Equalities impacts will be considered as the projects are brought forward.

APPENDIX A

Performance Measures	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Peak period traffic count (average) (data from traffic counters on inner cordon on the approach roads to the Inner Ring Road)	20,417	20,587	20,092	19,528	19,514	20,287	20,419	19,417	19,090	Not yet available
24 Hour traffic count (average) (data from traffic counters on inner cordon on the approach roads to the Inner Ring Road)	129,651	126,340	127,306	126,032	125,642	123,847	124,764	126,801	125,519	Not yet available
Bus Punctuality average excess waiting time, target < 1.25mins	2 m 13 sec	42 sec	52 sec	45 sec	42 sec	1 m 26 sec	12 sec	12 sec	Not available	Not available
Bus Punctuality % on time	48%	67%	62%	64%	64%	63%	87%	89%	Not available	Not available
Bus Patronage (all operators)	8,281,489	7,825,000	7,164,000	6,605,517	6,604,117	6,505,849	6,422,947	6,240,594	5,972,163	5,906,111*
Concessionary fares patronage			2,907,515	2,750,929	2,744,792	2,673,485	2,627,062	2,607,611	2,450,526	2,443,926*
Rail Patronage (all four Darlington stations)	2,202,125	2,256,063	2,320,360	2,241,390	2,279,159	2,322,927	2,337,809	2,368,780	2,417,328	2,444,504*

Performance Measures	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Number of cycling trips (automated cycle counters)	1,738.25	1,663.75	1,635.75	1,224.50	1,450.00	1,556.50	1,315.75	1,618	1,585	Not yet available
No. of walking trips in the town centre			121,948	119,163	121,876	133,983	126,687	124,608	120,359	Not yet available

**estimated*

Roads and Footway Conditions												
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
% of principal roads where maintenance should be considered ('A' class)	5%	5%	5%	6%	5%	3.3%	4%	3.4%	1.6%	1.1%	Not yet available	
% of non-principal roads where maintenance should be considered ('B' and 'C')	15%	13%	10%	11%	12%	14%	11%	9%	6%	6%	Not yet available	
Condition of unclassified roads	10%	8%	6%	7%	9%	10%	10%	12%	15%	22%	16%	
% of footways which are structurally unsound						10%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%	
Cost to restore the highway network and assets to original condition (Accumulated depreciation Whole of Government Accounts)					£59.3 million	£74.2 million	£81.7 million	£92.2 million	£84.0 million	£90.3 million	£88.1 million	
Street Lighting												
% of street lighting columns over 40 years					29%	26%	20%	24%	3.8%	Not available	0.015%	
% of street lighting columns 20-40 years old					56%	51%	45%	44%	14%	Not available	15.36%	
Bridges												
Bridge Condition Index (average across all bridges; work programme developed from individual inspection reports)							85%	85%	Not available	71%	Not yet available	
Bridge Condition Index (Critical Elements i.e.							74.6%	74%	Not available	71%		

relating to structural integrity) (average across all bridges; work programme developed from individual inspection reports)												Not yet available
Inspections												
Number of potholes repaired						9,490	8,004	6,611	6,246	6,582		4,684 (data up to 30 Nov 2018)
Public Rights of Way												
% of rights of way open and available for use – urban fringe leisure routes				63%	75%	67%	84%	79%	86%	75%		90% (data up to 31 Dec 2018)
% of rights of way open and available – more remote paths				70%	75%	72.8%	70%	78.7%	Not available	Not available		Not yet available

Road Safety and Sustainable Transport (figures in brackets are the 3 year rolling average)											
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 Provisional Data
Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	34	43	33 (37)	36 (37)	35 (35)	41(37)	21(32)	32 (31)	39 (31)	45 (38)	47 (44)
Number of people slightly injured in road traffic accidents	346	365	303 (338)	296 (321)	309 (303)	285 (297)	283(292)	242 (270)	256 (260)	226 (241)	201 (228)
Number of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	1	2	2 (1.7)	4 (2.6)	3 (3)	7 (4.6)	3(4.3)	2 (4)	4 (3)	5 (3)	5 (5)
Number of children slightly injured in road traffic accidents	46	42	34 (41)	32 (36)	45 (37)	34(37)	64(48)	32 (43)	27 (41)	24 (28)	28 (26)
% of children taking part in pedestrian training from participating schools *	91.15	92.06	90.60	80.44	84.60	91.23	88.60	85.80	89.55	86.75	Not yet available
% of children taking part in cycle training (Year 5) from participating schools**	57.34	66.73	65.00	45.30	53.93	55.50	51.13	50.00	51.70	66.27	Not yet available

* the measurement has changed from % of all eligible children across all schools to % of eligible children in schools that participate in pedestrian training. This has been applied to all previous years. In 2017/18, 26 out of 28 schools participated.

** the measurement has changed from % of all eligible children across all schools to % of eligible children in schools that participate in cycle training. This has been applied to all previous years. In 2017/18, 24 out of 28 schools participated.

NHT Satisfaction Survey Results

Public Satisfaction – National Highways and Transportation Survey (NHT)										
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Overall public satisfaction	57.4	56.1	56.3	55.7	54.9	55.1	56	56	54	54
Public transport overall	57	57	56	54	-	-	59	59	60	62
Local bus services	59	60	57	54	58	60	60	62	60	62
Local bus services (BVPI 104)	55	59	51	47	53	55	60	61	64	66
Public Transport Info (BVPI 103)	46	43	46	39	41	48	48	51	47	51
Taxi/Mini cab services	68	68	68	67	68	70	69	67	66	68
Community Transport	60	58	57	57	57	58	56	55	55	55
Walking and Cycling overall	58	57	59	58	-	-	57	58	56	56
Pavements and footpaths	57	55	56	56	55	55	55	55	54	53
Pavements and footpaths (aspects)	58	58	57	57	58	57	61	61	58	58
Cycle routes and facilities	58	57	60	59	55	53	54	55	55	54
Cycle routes and facilities (aspects)	58	57	60	60	57	55	58	58	55	59
Rights Of Way	59	59	60	57	60	58	58	60	57	58

Rights Of way (aspects)	57	55	57	56	55	52	58	56	56	56
Tackling congestion overall	48	48	51	52	-	-	53	51	48	49
Traffic levels and congestion	43	44	49	49	49	44	47	46	44	46
Management of Road works	49	49	49	54	53	51	56	50	51	53
Traffic management	52	52	53	55	54	54	56	56	55	57
Overall road safety	57	57	60	59	-	-	62	58	57	60
Road safety locally	61	60	61	62	59	61	63	60	57	58
Road safety environment	58	58	59	58	56	57	61	57	57	59
Road safety education	55	55	58	58	57	56	61	58	58	61
Overall highways maintenance	55	52	51	50	-	-	52	53	50	49
Condition of highways	43	37	32	34	28	31	34	38	34	30
Highways maintenance	53	50	48	48	48	48	54	53	51	51
Street lighting	72	70	71	69	69	71	70	69	66	65
Highway enforcement/obstructions	52	51	52	49	49	48	51	50	48	49

LTP Programme 2019/20

Maintenance Block

Allocation	£'000
Bridge structural maintenance	308
Highway structural maintenance	922
Incentive funding	291
Fees	168
Total	1689

Schemes identified as a high priority include stretches of highway on the following roads:

- McMullen Road
- Parkgate
- Victoria Road (including Grange Road)
- Carmel Road
- Faverdale Industrial Estate
- Redworth
- Whinfield Road
- Harris Street
- Bishopton to Redmarshall
- Middleton St George to Neasham

In addition, 100 Unclassified Roads have been identified for the next phase of the micro asphalt programme. This uses the Course Visual Inspection data to prioritise the schemes. These are mainly residential streets and a full list will be available on the Council's website - £500k.

In 2018/19 Atkins undertook an inspection of all bridge parapets. This was in addition to the ongoing bridge inspections that assess the condition data and risk assessment reports. A programme of bridge repairs is being prepared - £500k.

In December 2018 Cabinet released an additional £770,000 for highways maintenance which was allocated by Government following the October Budget. The amount was based on the highways maintenance funding formula and was for the repair of roads and bridges. This funding is to be used for:

Scheme	£'000k
Structural maintenance	200
Repairs on two structures	185
Deep Patching on numerous roads in advance of an extensive Micro-Asphalt Programme on unclassified roads	255
Surface Repairs arising from winter damage identified by our Highway Inspectors	130
Total	770

Integrated Transport Block

Manage Improve	Scheme	2019/20 £'000	Notes
Network management			
Manage	Cockerton roundabout	100	Major improvements to the roundabout, including pedestrian facilities
Manage	Traffic monitoring	20	
Public transport			
improve	Bus stop improvements	50	Including raised kerbs and bus shelters
Sustainable transport / access improvements			
Improve	Dropped kerbs	40	
Improve	Public Rights Of Way	10	In line with the ROWIP
Improve	Allington Way cycle route	38	Contribution to Sustainable Access to Employment scheme - £250k funding from TVCA
Improve	Widen and light cycle route north of Albert Road and Redmire Close	75	Feasibility work has identified additional drainage work
Improve	Victoria Road – sustainable access to Darlington Station	300	An Investment Proposal has been submitted to TVCA for £375k. Consultation is underway with residents and businesses. If required, additional funding will be requested as part of the business case. DBC committed £100k LTP in 2019/20 but this is being increased to £300k to leverage in additional resource and to ensure a quality scheme can be delivered.
Travel safety			
Manage	Speed management and road safety	150	Local safety improvements including possible 20mph speed limits
Sub total		783	
Fees		103	
Total		886	

Feasibility work is ongoing for cycle routes on North Road (Corporation Road junction); Salters Lane (between Thompson Street east and Whinbush Way); and Faverdale Industrial Estate.

An Access Audit is being commissioned for a walking and cycling route along the route of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (funded by TVCA, DCC, SBC and DBC). This will identify schemes that will require detailed feasibility and design going forward.

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CABINET
5 March 2019

SEND HIGH NEEDS REVIEW - HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Cyndi Hughes,
Children and Young People Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
Suzanne Joyner, Director of Children and Adults Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the outcome of the recent public consultation, and to seek Members approval for the introduction of a Travel Assistance Policy (**Appendix 1**) for pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Summary

2. This report recommends the introduction of a Travel Assistance Policy following the outcome of a public consultation exercise. The proposed changes will help to ensure that travel assistance support can continue to be provided to all eligible children and young people in line with increasing demand and budgetary pressures. They also provide the opportunity to offer a more flexible range of options to families and improve the quality of the service provision. It will ensure children and young people with SEND do not miss out on the opportunity to develop independent travel skills. Independent travel skills gained in adolescence can be taken forward into adult life.
3. In accordance with Cabinet's decision in October 2018 the council completed a public consultation with service users, stakeholders and the wider public on the key principles around future service provision and how travel assistance arrangements may be allocated and determined for pupils with SEND. Responders were asked to give their views on an annual review of travel assistance, the option of transport assistance being given through a personal budget, the development of an independent travel training offer and a proposal that transport not be provided where there is a nearer suitable provision.
4. In the consultation the largest group of responders (48.28%) agreed with the introduction of an annual review of transport assistance. A majority of responders (53.57%) agreed with the introduction of a travel training offer. The majority of respondents (58.62%) stated they would not agree to a personal travel assistance budget. The majority of responders (64.29%) did not agree that transport should not be provided if there is a nearer suitable placement.

5. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and this is included in **Appendix 2**. The Equalities Impact Assessment identifies both positive and negative impacts. The introduction of travel training and the widening of choice for families is likely to have positive impacts. There may however be some negative impacts for individual families who currently receive transport support. Some young people and children who are currently transported to their education provision may no longer receive this level of support following an assessment of their needs. Members are asked to read the Equalities Impact Assessment in full before making a decision.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Cabinet:
- (a) Consider the feedback from the public consultation.
 - (b) Read and note the Equalities Impact Assessment that has been undertaken.
 - (c) Approve the new Travel Assistance policy.

Reasons

7. The recommendation is supported for the following reasons:
- (a) To address pressures on the school transport budget.
 - (b) To utilise travel assistance funding in a way that provides assistance that is suitable and appropriate to the needs of children and young people and provides a range of transport assistance options.
 - (c) To provide assistance, where appropriate, that helps children and young people to adequately prepare for adulthood by encouraging and enabling them to develop their potential to travel independently.

**Suzanne Joyner,
Director of Children and Adults Services**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Tony Murphy: Extension 5637

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Health and Well Being	The Travel Assistance Policy will contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability in the borough.
Carbon Impact	There are no issues which this report needs to address.
Diversity	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken. This identifies both positive and negative impacts from the changes being proposed, but with appropriate support being

	available for children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability in the borough.
Wards Affected	Children and young people with SEND may live in any ward.
Groups Affected	Children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision.
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The report contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy Priority 'the best start in life'.
Efficiency	There are no direct efficiencies to the Council from the information contained within this report.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The Travel Assistance Policy will contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability in the borough a number of these children are Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

Current Arrangements

8. Darlington Borough Council has a statutory responsibility to assist eligible children and young people of statutory school age to travel to school. Transport assistance is currently allocated at the point a pupil becomes in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The mode of travel assistance is commonly in the form of door to door minibus or taxi.
9. The current Home to School Transport policy does not adequately address the needs of pupils with SEND as it does not support pupils to develop independent travel skills. Once transport support is allocated it usually remains in place until the end of the young person's schooling. This approach does not support young people in preparing for an independent adulthood.
10. This policy has been drafted therefore to promote independence and to enable mobility for children, young people with additional needs and disabilities who may not be able to access mainstream transport without assistance. This policy has been drafted to support wider policy imperatives of independence, personalisation and self-reliance and to ensure that all children, young people and adults are empowered to be as independent as possible.
11. This policy offers the opportunity to support a key aim of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Reform 2014 which is preparing children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities for adulthood. Being supported towards greater independence and employability can be life-transforming for children, young people and adults with SEN. Preparing for adulthood includes preparing for independent living and being as healthy as possible in adult life.
12. There are two key consequences of current practice. Firstly, children and young people who have the potential to travel independently are not given the opportunity to do so and thereby are not equipped with the necessary skills to independently access their community and the workplace in adulthood. Secondly, a reliance on minibus and taxi provision has meant transport spend has exceeded the planned budget.
13. The aim of this policy is to support all children, young people and adults with significant SEND to lead lives that are as independent and as free from restriction as possible. The criteria for granting travel assistance will be based on what is best for each person in supporting their development to achieve independent travel.

National Context

14. National policy initiatives have supported the introduction of independent travel training for young people with SEND.
15. The Department for Transport's "Travel Training-Good Practice Guide" (2011) states "Travel training has proven to be beneficial in enabling all users of public transport, not just disabled people, to have equality of access and independence. It assists in overcoming challenges, removes barriers to independent travel and gives people greater access to jobs, services and social networks. It empowers people

to take greater control in their lives, enabling them to learn new skills and take advantage of opportunities in their communities.”

16. The Department for Education “Home to school travel and transport guidance Statutory guidance for local authorities” (2014) states “The arrangements or requirements for children with special education needs (SEN) or disabilities should also be considered and whether, for example, some might benefit from independent travel training which can result in a skill for life.”
17. In 2016, the Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS) contacted all Directors of Children’s Services to request information on home to school transport spend in 2015/16. The data received showed that local authorities across England spent approximately £1 billion on home to school transport during 2015/16.
18. The main findings of the ADCS survey were:
 - (a) Local Authorities (LAs) are transporting an increasing number of children with SEND (partly because of the 2014 SEND reforms and the extension of support to young people aged up to 25), many of whom have highly complex needs (health and behaviour) so require individual transport, escorts and specialist vehicles.
 - (b) There is a shortage of local mainstream school places and specialist educational provision and, as a result, LAs are required to transport children to educational facilities out of area. In addition, a lack of local foster care capacity is resulting in an increased number of out of area placements which require transport to school.
 - (c) The geographical nature of some local authorities mean that a significant number of children live outside of the ‘statutory’ walking distance. This is coupled with a lack of public transport so local authorities must provide other, more costly forms of transport.
 - (d) Differences in start and finish times for post-16 provision results in transport being designed around individual timetables, which is not cost effective. Similarly, where siblings attend different schools with the same start and finish times, parents are unable to transport both children and so look to the LA for transport support.
 - (e) The lack of capacity in the transport market is driving up costs - a lack of providers and therefore competition, a lack of specialist vehicles and an increased focus on quality.

Proposals

19. The key principles of the proposed new policy are outlined below.
 - (a) PROPOSAL ONE (Definition of Travel Assistance)

- (i) It is proposed that the transport needs of pupils with SEND be addressed by the introduction of a "Travel Assistance Policy". The title reflects the fact that travel assistance can be provided in a variety of ways, not just through the provision of 'transport' e.g. a bus or a taxi.
- (b) PROPOSAL TWO (To formalise the annual application and review process)
- (i) Currently transport arrangements for children and young people are assessed and determined at the time they start at a new education setting. This means, for example, that a young person starting in Year 7 may have their travel assistance arrangements rolled forward until they finish in Year 11.
 - (ii) This approach does not always take account of the personal development of individual children and young people, opportunities to promote independence and any changing individual or family circumstances e.g. medical needs.
 - (iii) In allocating SEND home to school travel assistance, the approach of offering the least restrictive option is key to supporting independence and the best way of achieving this will be an annual review process. This approach will also ensure that any important information in relation to health needs, medication and emergency contact details is kept up to-date. In the majority of cases where there has been no substantial change in circumstances, existing arrangements will carry forward, but the process will facilitate more effective scrutiny and review of individual travel assistance arrangements. It will also enable families, currently in receipt of 'transport' to consider more flexible arrangements through a cash allowance or Direct Payment.
 - (iv) It is therefore proposed that transport assistance is reviewed on an annual basis with effect from the September following implementation of this policy. The Admissions and Transport Service will review all new applications and any other existing arrangements which have been identified for changes in circumstances or requiring a review.
- (c) PROPOSAL THREE (Personal travel assistance budget and cash allowance)
- (i) Where a child or young person is eligible, care will be taken to ensure that travel assistance is provided in the most appropriate and least restrictive way possible. In the case of high volume routes, shared transport arrangements are likely to continue to be the most cost effective and sustainable solution under most circumstances. However, in the case of solo or ad-hoc arrangements a cash allowance or direct payment in the form of a Personal Travel Assistance Budget may provide greater flexibility for families and carers to make their own arrangements.
 - (ii) This would mean that every new application for travel would be considered for a cash allowance or, in cases of complex or exceptional needs, a direct payment in the form of a Personal Travel Assistance Budget. Other direct support may also be considered. Such support may be provided in the form of a travel pass for public transport, mileage allowance for parent / carer or shared transport.

(d) PROPOSAL FOUR (Circumstances when travel assistance is not provided)

- (i) Where a parent has requested an out of area placement for a pupil with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and the Council considers there is a nearer suitable placement which can meet the child's needs it is proposed that travel assistance will not be provided.

(e) PROPOSAL FIVE (Independent Travel Training)

- (i) Travel training gives people with special educational needs or disabilities the confidence and skills to travel on buses and trains. Help can also be provided for walking routes. Being able to travel on public transport is a key life skill. It lets you make choices about how you live, go about your daily life and fulfil your potential. Training can be individually tailored to the needs of the young person and include aspects like:
 - (a) Confidence in using buses or trains
 - (b) Personal safety
 - (c) How to use timetables and buy tickets
 - (d) Road safety, including how to cope with traffic on major roads
 - (e) What to do when things go wrong (e.g. the bus is late) and
 - (f) Money skills
- (ii) Darlington Council has recruited through external grant funding a travel trainer to support young people to access independent travel where families and carers consider this to be appropriate to their needs.
- (iii) It is recognised that it will be important to work with parent/carers and education settings to identify suitable young people for travel training and to work within the young person's time frame.

Consultation

20. Following approval from Cabinet on 9th October 2018, a public consultation commenced on 17th October 2018 and ran to 28th November 2018. The general public and interested parties were invited to participate in the consultation. To reach as many people as possible, a range of consultation methods were available. Full details of the consultation process and analysis of the results are detailed in **Appendix 3**.
21. Of the 29 respondents to the online survey, 27 identified the capacity in which they were responding to the survey. 55.56% of respondents identified as a parent/carer and 37.04% identified as an educational professional.
22. Responders to the online survey were asked to answer questions in relation to the implementation of a Travel Assistance Policy. The table below outlines the responses received through the formal surveys.

Table 1: Summary of responses to Travel Assistance Policy

Question:	Total agreed	Neither agree nor disagree	Total disagree
To what extent do you agree that there should be an annual review of transport arrangements?	48.28%	13.79%	37.93%
To what extent would you agree to a personal travel assistance budget?	27.58%	13.79%	58.62%
Should the placement not be the nearest appropriate, to what extent do you agree that transport should not be provided?	28.57%	7.14%	64.29%
To what extent would you agree to independent travel training?	53.57%	10.71%	35.71%

23. Support was expressed for the introduction of an annual review for travel assistance, with almost half (48.28%) of respondents agreeing.
24. When asked “Should the placement not be the nearest appropriate, to what extent do you agree that transport should not be provided?” A majority of respondents (64.29%) disagreed. Many respondents commented that this approach should not be implemented as it would take away parental choice. The council has considered these views but are recommending that this proposal is supported by members to address the pressure on the transport budget. The council is working with partners to develop more local SEND provision to mitigate the need for pupils to be educated out of area.
25. Whilst the majority of respondents stated they did not agree with the introduction of a personal budget, it is important to note that under the proposals, this would be an option which some families might wish to take up and would not be obligatory.

Voice of Children and Young People

26. In addition to the online survey and open consultation events, specific consultation was undertaken with children and young people. Nine events were held in which 50 children and young people participated. During these sessions there was strong support shown for the introduction of independent travel training and the further benefits that being educated in Darlington could bring.
27. In the consultation sessions for Darlington Association with Disabilities, young people stated that they spent a long time travelling to school on the bus. Waiting on it for others to finish lessons before beginning journeys and the number of drop offs on route meant it could take several hours to get home. Many young people expressed an interest in walking to school and getting bus into town to meet friends, but didn’t do so, as their parents thought it was too far to travel.
28. One young person with a learning disability who attends a further education college said they wanted to develop their independence by having travel training to increase their confidence in accessing and making the most of public transport. Another young person said they’d like to get a bus to college but didn’t do so because their parents didn’t think they would manage, despite the fact that they did get the bus into town with friends during free periods.

29. One secondary age pupil who has attended two secondary schools in Darlington, was able and happy to walk or bike with friends. They are now attending a school outside of the borough and are therefore collected by a bus and transported to school and home.
30. Another secondary age pupil responded that they would like to bike to school but is currently collected by the schools' mini bus. The pupil stated that they have never been given any other option than going on the mini bus but would like to explore other options.
31. Many young people expressed their desire to live independently and access the workplace. Some young people stated that they were happy with the current transport arrangements and would not benefit from any changes.

Financial Implications

32. The home to school transport budget has been consistently overspent in recent years. The budget in 2017/18 was £1,512,031 and there was an overspend of £413k. The budget in 2018/19 is £1,810,162 and is currently projected to be overspent by £274k.
33. There is likely to be an additional pressure on this budget arising from the September 2018 intake. The chart below shows the increase in spend by type of placement since 2013/14.

Placement	17/18	16/17	15/16	14/15	13/14
Beaumont Hill Academy	796,341	713,583	647,102	632,365	627,790
Primary	123,560	123,015	117,004	118,588	154,071
Secondary	226,210	273,760	422,419	486,505	474,250
Primary SEN	107,691	97,156	122,189	119,803	95,130
Secondary SEN	97,148	63,135	43,691	37,321	40,821
Out of borough SEN	359,320	149,663	101,712	64,689	63,088
Further Education	150,922	140,540	159,979	186,146	212,463
Marchbank	64,343	29,816	21,527	0	0
Total Spend	1,925,535	1,590,668	1,635,623	1,645,417	1,667,613

34. The table illustrates the rise in the number of pupils with SEND transported to specialist settings over the last three school years.

Placement	17/18	16/17	15/16
	No. of Pupils	No. of Pupils	No. of Pupils
Beaumont Hill Academy	177	161	153
Primary SEN	21	18	15
Secondary SEN	23	15	13
Out of Borough SEN	39	23	19
Further Education	38	21	60
Marchbank	21	21	19

35. Operational and service delivery changes are therefore imperative if services are to be effectively delivered and sustained within budget in future years.
36. Meeting the local authority's statutory duty is putting increasing pressure on the council's budget, as the number of eligible children requiring travel assistance, the complexity of their needs and the cost of providing travel assistance increases.
37. It is therefore important that the council works closely with parents, carers, schools and transport operators in the coming years to provide the best possible value for money in providing this support and to ensure that travel assistance is provided through the least restrictive means in line with the strengths and abilities of the child or young person being supported.

Projected Savings

38. It is difficult to undertake accurate projections from the introduction of the travel assistance policy as the process of assessment and review is not currently in place. Other Local Authorities which have introduced similar schemes have a reported a saving of between 12% and 16% on their SEND transport spend in the first year of the scheme. If a similar reduction resulted in Darlington, this would lead to a saving of £189k.

Legal Implications

39. Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that, for eligible children and young people with special educational needs, suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. The legislation governing this duty is Section 508B of the Education Act 1996. The introduction of a Travel Assistance Policy will need to be in accordance with the Act and the statutory guidance for post 16, published by the Department for Education 2014.
40. All local authorities have a statutory duty to have in place arrangements for the provision of home to school travel assistance and transport for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who meet the published eligibility criteria.
41. Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the responsibility of the parent of every child of compulsory school age, to ensure their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The duties and powers of local authorities to provide home to school travel assistance are covered in other sections of the Act and its amendments. The provision of travel assistance support incorporates consideration for children from low-income families.
42. Sections 508B and 508C of the Education Act 1996 (as amended) set out the local authority's duties and powers respectively, to make such suitable travel arrangements as the local authority considers necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school.

Equalities Impact Assessment

43. The Local Authority has an Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 and an obligation to make reasonable adjustments for disabled persons when exercising

its functions, including transport. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and this is included in **Appendix 2**. Members are asked to read the Equalities Impact Assessment in full before making a decision.

44. The Equalities Impact Assessment has identified some potential negative impacts that may result from the introduction of this policy.
45. There is a potential for negative impact in the short term on children and young people and their parents/carers who have been used to the traditional transport services, as change can be seen as challenging. However, it is anticipated that the benefits afforded by greater choice will mitigate the impact on a longer-term basis. No changes will be made without consultation with families, parents/carers and children and young people through a formal process.
46. A 'potential' negative impact has been noted as there is a chance that the new policy may mean that on an individual basis, some young people and children who are currently transported to their education provision may no longer receive this level of support, following an assessment of their needs. The impact of this change is likely to be greater on parents and carers who have a low income.
47. There are some children in mainstream schools who attend 'resource bases' that do not have EHCPs. These children could be negatively impacted, as only children/young people with EHCPs would be eligible for transport assistance under the new policy. Transition arrangements will be put in place for any pupils currently receiving transport support in these circumstances.
48. It is not possible at this stage to estimate how many children/families with SEND the new policy may identify as being no longer entitled to the same level of support, however where children with SEND are identified as still in need of this support, this will continue to be provided.
49. There is also a potential negative impact about apprehensions that parents and children may have about the move to an annual review of transport provision. It is recognised that the review process will need to be handled sensitively. Suitable transport will continue to be provided when the child or young person is in need of assistance.
50. Concern was expressed about personal transport budgets, but these will not be mandatory, and this type of change will only happen when parents agree to being awarded a personal budget.
51. There may be additional administrative burdens on parents and carers from the annual review process and also if they take on responsibility for a personal budget.
52. Concern was expressed about removing parental choice over placements. Parental choice is a legal right and placements will always be based upon the needs of the child or young person.
53. Some parents were apprehensive about independent travel training for very vulnerable children or young people. The concern was about safeguarding implications and also the potential for harassment/victimisation of vulnerable children or young person who travels independently. Through the annual review, it will be identified if a child or young person would benefit from independent travel

training, this will not be limited to the child or young person's age, SEN, distance or route. A comprehensive training consultation involving parents/carers, school/college and the child/young person will determine this. Training will be tailored and relevant to build confidence and independence skills. As with all the proposals this will be reviewed annually.

54. We will continuously monitor the impact of the changes on individual children and young people. We have a communication plan which should help in ensuring that children and young people, parents and carers and schools have a clear understanding of the changes and way that they will be affected. It is hoped this will contribute to reducing any anxiety that may be caused by the changes.

SEND Travel Assistance Policy

Introduction

1. Darlington Borough Council recognises the pressures faced by the parents of children with Special Educational Needs and undertakes to provide statutory transport services in accordance with the Department for Education Guidance on Home to School Travel.
2. This Policy has been written with the intention of removing ambiguity and reassuring parents that they will receive the services to which they are entitled. The Policy also aims to clarify eligibility, when and how transport may be provided, and what to do if parents do not agree with an outcome.

Scope

3. Children with an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP), medical needs or disabilities.
4. Children aged 5-16 without a Education Care & Health Plan (EHCP) and with medical needs or disabilities.
5. Please note that whilst there is no statutory entitlement to travel assistance for children under 5, this Policy takes statutory school age to include those children who have taken up the legal right to start schooling from the start of term after a child's fourth birthday.

Core principles

6. Darlington Borough Council is committed to ensuring that each child can fulfil their potential and is supported to do so. The aim of this policy is to support all children with Special Education Needs (SEN) to lead lives which are as independent as possible. Where possible, children will be supported to achieve greater independence through the development of independent travel skills and the use of public transport. The Council will work closely with parents and schools and expects all parties to play a supportive role in the development of this key life skill.
7. The Council promotes sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling and use of integrated public transport and aims to reduce traffic congestion, the environmental impact of vehicle journeys and improve road safety. Where agreed, travel assistance for 'eligible children', will be provided in a safe manner that will take into account: the Council's statutory duties, the specific needs of the child, the legally recognised walking distances and appropriate use of its resources. Travel solutions provided will support initiatives that lead to reducing the volume and length of vehicle journeys.
8. The legal responsibility for ensuring that a child attends school lies with the parent or carer and this includes accompanying a child to school

where necessary. In the event that parents are working or otherwise unavailable at the time their child travels to and from school it remains the parents' responsibility to make arrangements to ensure that their child attends school.

9. If both of the child's parents are, by reason of disability unable to ensure that their child attends school, or are unable to make suitable alternative arrangements, eligibility for travel assistance for the pupil will be considered on the individual circumstances, with regard to the Equality Act 2010.
10. The Council takes statutory school age to include those children who have taken up the legal right to start schooling from the start of term after a child's fourth birthday. Compulsory school age ceases on the last Friday in June in the school year in which the child reaches the age of 16.
11. Under the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006, local authorities have a duty to provide assistance with travel to and from qualifying schools/college for children aged 5-16 in certain circumstances. The Council has no duty to provide transport but 'shall make such arrangements for the provision of transport and otherwise as they consider necessary'. This gives the Council discretion to provide travel assistance. A duty only arises if transport is referred to on a child's EHCP or the Council requires a child to attend a school which is not within the DfE walking distance of the child's home.

Eligibility

12. Some children with SEN may experience problems with mobility or have other needs such that they are unable to access public transport safely. This policy is intended to provide clarity regarding eligibility for travel assistance.
13. The Council will assist parents with travel assistance in accordance with its statutory duties where children have significant SEN, a disability or mobility restrictions such that travel assistance is essential to access their specialist provision.
14. Having an EHCP does not mean that a pupil is automatically eligible for education travel assistance. Eligibility is assessed based on the individual needs of the pupil (taking into account their age and mobility).
15. In assessing any application for travel assistance, eligibility will be based on the needs of the eligible child, accompanied as necessary by a parent and will not normally take into account work or other family commitments such as the attendance of siblings at different schools.
16. No dispensation can be made for personal domestic arrangements or parents who are working at the time their children travel to and from school. Parents are expected to make full use of the separate legislation

introduced to ensure flexibility for working parents or utilise the support of others to accompany their children as necessary.

17. Support services (such as pre and after school clubs at some schools) may be available to families to manage the conflicting priorities of their domestic arrangements. It is expected that parents will have explored alternative support services to assist them in meeting any conflicting priorities that may arise.
18. All decisions will be based upon clear medical/specialist advice and evidence of need for the eligible child only. Eligibility criteria will be kept under review and subject to legislative change; consultation with user groups from time to time and as services are developed.

Travel Assistance for Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

19. Transport assistance will be provided where the pupil has an EHCP plan and;
 - a. has been assessed as requiring transport assistance to access their specialist provision and / or;
 - b. the Council has determined and named the special provision in the EHCP as being the nearest available special provision that is able to meet the child's needs and / or;
 - c. the child's health needs are such that upon written medical advice, (date within the last twelve months) travel assistance is necessary to access their specialist provision
20. Travel assistance can only be provided at the beginning and end of the normal school day, and only to the special provision named on the EHCP.
21. Where a child's health needs are such that upon written medical advice, (date within the last twelve months), the pupil is unable to attend the standard school day, consideration will be given to providing assistance outside of the standard school day. It is expected that parents will support the facilitation of these additional journeys as necessary.

School Travel Assistance Options

22. Options that may be offered where travel assistance is agreed include:
 - a. Reimbursement of agreed public transport costs, (where concessional fares or free transport appropriate for the age and disability of the young person is not available)
 - b. Supported travel training and use of public transport
 - c. Payment of a personal budget at the Council's standard rates for parents to transport their children to the special school
 - d. Travel assistance via the Council's contracted transport providers with or without a passenger assistant. This may be on a shared basis and from a designated collection point which may or may not be the home address.

23. Darlington Borough Council supports the development of Children's travel skills and confidence to make journeys safely on their own. Darlington Borough Council currently offers an Independent Travel Training Programme in partnership with schools and parents to train and support some young people (for whom this could be a viable option) to access public transport and travel independently.
24. Assistance will be provided for as long as the child's needs are such that given all the circumstances they continue to require travel assistance to access their specialist provision. All transport assistance will be regularly reviewed and at least annually.

Circumstances when Travel Assistance is not provided

25. Please be aware that, in accordance with national guidelines, travel assistance is not provided in the following situations:
 - a. Where parents choose a school which is not the nearest suitable provision which the Council considers to be appropriate to meet the needs of the child or young person
 - b. In the event a child has to be taken to or from school outside of their normal school attendance times due to illness, any type of appointments including Doctors or any other specialists, interviews, assessment days, exclusion or for any other reason
 - c. Amended timetables due to behavior or suspension issues arising or a later collection following any form of detention or attendance at out of school time clubs
 - d. Attendance at school outside of the published School Term Timetable and daily timetable regardless of whether the pupil is travelling on their own
 - e. Parental attendance at annual reviews, meetings or any school events
 - f. Transport to and from work placements or any off-site provision.
26. It is the responsibility of the School to organise and provide pupil's transport for curriculum activities including examinations, during the school day. In these cases travel assistance will be provided at the beginning and end of the normal school times only.

Passenger Assistants

27. Following an assessment of need passenger assistants are provided where applicable. Any exceptional requirements will be based on evidenced need and discussions with schools and parents.
28. Where it would be unsafe for a child to travel without one, a passenger assistant will be considered subject to written medical / professional advice dated within the last twelve months. This is usually where a child exhibits severe challenging behavior or where the child has a severe or complex medical condition requiring continuous support.

29. Where a passenger assistant is necessary for complex health reasons, the Local Authority will work with health services to secure the appropriately qualified carer for transport purposes.
30. Parents or their nominees may be expected to accompany their child and undertake the role of passenger assistant where the pupil is the sole pupil attending a specific provision.
31. For all residential school placements parents will be expected to undertake the role of passenger assistant if necessary.

Young People Aged 16 - 19 with Special Educational Needs

32. Most pupils of this age would be expected to use public transport and travel independently in view of the beneficial effects of developing the pupil's life skills.
33. The Council accepts that for a small minority this may not be possible. Applications will be considered against the following criteria and the eligibility criteria outlined above:
 - a. The student is aged between 16 and 19 and is on a course of further education at a school or designated further education college recognised by the Department of Education
 - b. The course is deemed to be suitable and will provide an educational benefit to the student - as assessed by the student's transition worker/ adult placement officer, nominated by the local authority
 - c. Where the need and reasons for specific travel assistance has been identified / evidenced in the student's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Transition Plan

Students over the age of 19 with SEN attending Further Education Colleges

34. There is no duty for local authorities to provide travel assistance to students over the age of 19 except where they are completing a course that they have already started before their 19th birth date.

Travel Assistance Reviews

35. All children and young people's eligibility for travel assistance will be regularly reviewed and at least annually. In most circumstances the review will take place at the child or young person's school and parents/carers must attend the review in order for travel assistance to continue. Non-attendance may result in travel assistance being ceased.
36. Travel assistance will also be reviewed at Key Stage reviews and when there is a significant change in circumstances, such as a change in home address or a change in the child or young person's needs. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to notify the Council immediately of any changes that may affect the provision of travel assistance.

37. Any changes will be implemented from the beginning of the next school term, or sooner by mutual agreement following the completion of the assessment stage.

Cessation of Support

38. The Council may review and remove travel assistance from students where it is established that details within the application were inaccurate or where the child or young person's individual circumstances have changed. Confirmation of the reason for any change would be made in writing. Transport assistance may also cease at the written request of the parent who may have made alternative arrangements for their child or young person's travel to school.

Appeals

39. There may be instances where some applications are declined or where a needs assessment has led to a change to support and parents may not agree with the Council's decision. In these cases the Council offers parents a formal 2 stage appeal process.
40. Please note that parents are responsible for ensuring their child's attendance at school during any appeal period.

Complaints

41. Darlington Borough Council welcomes and responds positively to all comments, compliments and complaints as a means of demonstrating its commitment to working in partnership with all stakeholders.
42. The complaints process is comprised of three stages after which the complainant should be advised to refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.
43. Although complainants can refer their complaints from the outset, or at any stage, to the Local Government Ombudsman, they will not normally be investigated until the Council has conducted its own investigation and made a response.
44. A copy of the Complaints Procedure is available on request and further information is available from the Darlington Borough Council Intranet.

Initial equality impact assessment screening form

This form is an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to an activity, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.

Directorate:	Children and Adults Services
Service Area:	Education
Activity being screened:	SEND Transport Assistance Policy for Children and Young People (CYP) with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND)
Officer(s) carrying out the screening:	Eleanor Marshall School Forum Monitoring and Support Officer
What are you proposing to do?	<p>Implement a new SEND Transport Assistance Policy.</p> <p>The Policy will offer families, parents/carers and children and young people with SEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A formalised annual application and review process - A personal travel assistance budget and cash allowance - Independent Travel training <p>The Policy will outline the circumstances that the Council considers the most appropriate to provide transport.</p> <p>This Policy was the focus of a public consultation in October-November 2018.</p>
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	<p>A new Transport Assistance Policy for Children and Young People with SEND has been developed. This policy offers the opportunity to support a key aim of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Reform 2014 which is preparing children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities for adulthood.</p> <p>Currently the home to school transport budget has been consistently overspent and this is likely to increase as has been the 5 year trend.</p> <p>Adoption of a new SEND Transport Assistance Policy will provide families, children and young people with opportunities to independent travel training, ensuring an effective preparation for</p>

	adulthood, access to work and leisure activities. Options for travel will be considered on an annual basis to ensure appropriateness for children and young people's needs which may change over time.
Does the activity involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details	It is likely that through the implementation of this Policy savings can be made to an already overspent budget.

Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or any other socially excluded groups?

As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:

- **To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics?**
- **Does the activity relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important?**
- **Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the activity relates to?**

If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be a significant adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate.

Protected characteristic	Yes	No	Don't know/ Info not available
Age			X
Disability			X
Sex (gender)		X	
Race		X	
Sexual Orientation		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage or civil partnership		X	
Other			
Does the activity relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	Yes – this activity relates to children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities 0-25 and therefore will have potential impacts relating to age and disability.		
Will the activity have a significant effect on how other organisations	Whilst the implementation of a new SEND Transport Assistance Policy		

operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.		provides a more flexible range of options to families it may impact on transport operators who are contracted to provide current transport, most commonly in the form of door to door minibus or taxi. There could be more or less of a demand for certain transport providers, or an impact on school settings, where there may not be control over the number of vehicles arriving on their site. The impact on transport in Darlington at certain times could be affected.	
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:		Continue to full EIA: Yes
Reason for Decision		Due to potential implications for families, parents/carers of children and young people with SEND.	
Signed (Assistant Director)		Tony Murphy, Head of Education and Inclusion	
Date		26 March 2018	



Equality Impact Assessment Record Form

This form is to be used for recording the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of Council activities. It should be used in conjunction with the guidance on carrying out EIA in **Annex 2** of the Equality Scheme. The activities that may be subject to EIA are set out in the guidance.

EIA is particularly important in supporting the Council to make fair decisions. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Using this form will help Council officers to carry out EIA in an effective and transparent way and provide decision-makers with full information on the potential impact of their decisions. EIAs are public documents, accompany reports going to Councillors for decisions and are published with committee papers on our website and are available in hard copy at the relevant meeting.

Title of activity:	SEND Transport Assistance Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND)
Name of Directorate and Service Area:	Children and Adults Services
Lead Officer and contact details	Eleanor Marshall, 01325 406134
Assistant Director accountable for this EIA	Tony Murphy – Head of Education and Inclusion
Who else will be involved in carrying out the EIA:	Natasha Telfer, Policy Development Manager (Advice and Guidance) Education Project Board – Head of Education and Inclusion, Finance Manager, Head of SEND, Admissions and Transport Manager, Principal Solicitor, Assistant Director – Performance and Commissioning

When did the EIA process start?	March 2018	
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Section 2 – The Activity and Supporting Information

<p>Details of the activity (describe briefly - including the main purpose and aims) (e.g. are you starting a new service, changing how you do something, stopping doing something?)</p> <p>This EIA is about the changes proposed to introduce a Transport Assistance Policy for Children and Young People with SEND. Under the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006, local authorities have a duty to provide assistance with travel to and from qualifying schools/college for children aged 5-16 in certain circumstances. A duty arises if transport is referred to on a child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). In the circumstances for children/young people with an EHCP transport assistance is currently allocated at the point a pupil becomes in receipt of an EHCP.</p> <p>Currently, any child attending a specialist provision, including specialist provision in mainstream (such as a resource base), receives travel assistance. The mode of travel assistance is commonly in the form of door to door minibus or taxi. Once transport is allocated it usually remains in place until the end of the young person's schooling.</p> <p>The current Home to School Transport Policy does not adequately address the needs of pupils with SEND as it does not support pupils to develop independent travel skills. Children and young people who have the potential to travel independently are not given the opportunity to do so. This approach does not support young people in preparing for an independent adulthood. It also does not take account of potential for changing needs. A reliance on transport provision has meant transport spend has exceeded the planned budget.</p> <p>It is proposed therefore to implement a new policy to address these significant issues through introduction of an annual application and review process, options for families to receive a personal travel assistance budget or cash allowance, and offer of independent travel training. The policy will also set out in what circumstances the Council will not provide travel assistance.</p> <p>If decisions to pursue the proposals are made, this may impact on some families of, and children and young people with SEND. Following an annual review, children and young people who are currently transported by vehicles may be offered alternative support, such as travel training, following an assessment of their current needs.</p>
<p>Why is this being proposed? What are the aims? What does the Council hope to achieve by it? (e.g. to save money, meet increased demand, do things more efficiently)</p> <p>The proposed changes are due to a significantly growing overspend within the Council's Home to School Transport Budget and the current model is not sustainable going forward. The Local Authority intends to still provide support to those who need it the most, however, with increased choice for parents and carers as part of the revised policy.</p> <p>The aim of the Transport Assistance Policy is to support all children and young people with SEND to lead lives which are as independent as possible. It will help to ensure travel assistance can continue to be provided to all eligible children and young people in line with increasing demand.</p>

What will change? What will be different for service users/ customers and/ or staff?

The table illustrates the rise in the number of pupils with SEND transported to specialist settings over the last three school years.

Placement	17/18	16/17	15/16
	No. of Pupils	No. of Pupils	No. of Pupils
Beaumont Hill Academy	177	161	153
Primary SEN	21	18	15
Secondary SEN	23	15	13
Out of Borough SEN	39	23	19
Further Education	38	21	60
Marchbank	21		19

Implementing a new SEND Transport Assistance policy will offer wider options for children and young people with SEND and parents/carers in getting to and from the most suitable provision, including independent travel.

It is possible that some children/young people/families will not be offered the same transport, however these decisions would only be made in consultation with parents/carers and through a formal annual review process. Options that may be offered where travel assistance is agreed include:

- a. Reimbursement of agreed public transport costs, (where concessional fares or free transport appropriate for the age and disability of the young person is not available)
- b. Supported travel training and use of public transport
- c. Payment of a personal budget at the Council's standard rates for parents to transport their children to the special school
- d. Travel assistance via the Council's contracted transport providers with or without a passenger assistant. This may be on a shared basis and from a designated collection point which may or may not be the home address.

Any impact arising from changes to their current travel arrangements will be mitigated by achieving better outcomes for the individual through personalised service e.g.independent travel training and/or the potential introduction following consultation of a personal travel allowance option which will provide more flexibility for families to make arrangements which suit their needs.

Independent travel training however could cause some concern for children and young people with SEND as a prospect of change or any incidents during a journey could cause anxiety or distress, and through the consultation some respondents cited safeguarding issues as a key line of enquiry.

What data, research and other evidence or information is available which is relevant to the EIA?

DfE statutory guidance, 'Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2014)

National policy initiatives have supported the introduction of independent travel training, for example the DfE's Travel Training Good Practice Guide sets out benefits.

Association of Children's Services survey

Engagement and consultation (What engagement and consultation has been done regarding the proposal and what are the results? What consultation will be needed and how will it be done?)

Formal consultation on the SEND Transport Assistance Policy commenced on 17 October 2018 and concluded on 28 November 2018. The consultation methods included a dedicated website page, which contained all the consultation documentation, on line survey's and public meetings were held. Consultation responses were also welcomed in writing to the Education team. Specific meetings were also held with schools, social care and health leads.

Additional public events were organised in response to requests by parents and carers. All parents and carers of children and young people with EHCPs were individually contacted to let them know about the consultation.

The Local Authority recognised that the consultation on three key policy areas was significant however all these policies (see separate EIA for SEND Strategy and Funding), are inter-related and therefore the consultations were split into two key themes – SEND Strategy and Funding and SEND Transport Assistance Policy. Public meetings included either both of these key themes areas and each theme on its own, which were shorter meetings. Meetings were held at different times to give the widest possible choice for the public. Current transport operators and providers were invited to any public meeting and received links to survey's and opportunity to complete hard copy surveys.

The outcome for responses to the online and hard copy survey for the SEND Transport Assistance Policy are below:

Question:	Total agreed	Neither agree nor disagree	Total disagree
To what extent do you agree that there should be an annual review of transport arrangements?	48.28%	13.79%	44.73%
To what extent would you agree to a personal travel assistance budget?	27.58%	13.79%	58.62%
Should the placement not be the nearest appropriate, to what extent do you agree that transport should not be provided?	28.57%	7.14%	64.29%
To what extent would you agree to independent travel training?	53.57%	10.71%	35.71%

What impact will this activity have on the Council's budget? (e.g. cost neutral, increased costs or reduced costs? If so, by how much? Explain briefly why this is the case)

The activity would look to make savings as the cost of providing transport to specialist settings has increased. Other LAs that have introduced similar schemes have reported savings of between 12% and 16%. If a similar reduction resulted, this would lead to a saving of £189K.

Section 3: Assessment

How will the activity affect people with protected characteristics?	No Impact	Positive impact	Negative impact	Why will it have this effect? (refer to evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information, etc)
Age		Yes	Yes	<p>Overall on an individual basis, children and young people with SEND, no matter what their age, should positively benefit as, for example, long term needs would be identified at an earlier stage by the implementation of an annual review.</p> <p>However, there is still a potential for negative impact in the short term on children and young people and their parents/carers who have been used to the traditional transport services, as change may be seen as challenging. However, it is anticipated that the benefits afforded by greater choice will mitigate the impact on a longer-term basis. No changes will be made without consultation with families, parents/carers and children and young people through a formal process.</p> <p>The LA are aware that there are children in mainstream schools who attend 'resource bases' that do not have EHCPs. These children could be negatively impacted, as only children/young people with EHCPs would be eligible for transport assistance under the new policy. Transition arrangements will be put in place for any pupils currently receiving transport support in these circumstances.</p> <p>When children and young people across all age groups were consulted some children said they still wanted to be transported by</p>

				<p>Taxi however some children wanted to socialise with friends and did not want to have to be collected. Some young people expressed their aspirations for the future and wanted more choice in their travel to support them prepare for adulthood. However, there were no specific concerns raised by children/young people which were representative of particular age groups through the consultation.</p>
<p>Disability (Mobility Impairment, Visual impairment, Hearing impairment, Learning Disability, Mental Health, Long Term Limiting Illness, Multiple Impairments, Other – Specify)</p>		Yes	Yes	<p>The proposals aim to positively impact children and young people with disabilities and their families by ensuring that pupils with disabilities are attending a school most appropriate to their individual needs, and therefore implementation of the policy should have a positive impact on children with SEND.</p> <p>Implementation of this policy may not mean any change to transport assistance for many families as current arrangements may be appropriate. For these families the only change will therefore be that they will have an annual review of their needs which will be designed to be as easy and stress-free as possible.</p> <p>Where current arrangements are not deemed appropriate and require a change due to changes in need, families, children and young people will be offered appropriate options where these are available and in consultation with parents through the annual review process. In addition, elements such as personal budget and travel training will not be mandatory.</p> <p>A 'potential' negative impact has been noted as there is a chance that the new policy may mean that on an individual basis, some children and families will no longer be entitled to the same level of support with regards to transport as they would continue to be under the current system. It is not possible at this stage to estimate how many children/families with SEND the new policy may identify as being no longer entitled to the same level of support, however where children with SEND are identified as still in need of this support, this will continue to be provided.</p> <p>Some young people and children who are currently transported to their education provision may no longer receive this level of</p>

				<p>support following an assessment of their needs.</p> <p>As part of the consultation there were some concerns raised about the proposed new Transport Assistance Policy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concern that an annual review would cut transport unnecessarily <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ if the annual review were to find that a child is still in need of transport then this will continue to be provided. • concern that a personal budget would place an unnecessary burden on families; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ personal budgets will not be mandatory – parents will only be awarded a personal budget if they agree to one • Concern that parental choice would be removed over placements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ parental choice is a legal right and placements will always be based upon the needs of the child/young person. • Some parents felt cautious about independent travel training for very vulnerable children/young people and therefore the safeguarding implications of this <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Through the annual review it will be identified if a child/young person would benefit from independent travel training, this will not be limited to the child/young person's age, SEN, distance or route. A comprehensive training consultation involving parents/carers, school/college and the child/young person will determine this. Training will be tailored and relevant to build confidence and independence skills. As with all the proposals this will be reviewed annually. • Some respondents felt the current system works and were sceptical that
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				<p>the reason for the changes are purely financially driven.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ there is a budget overspend and savings may be made through the implementation of the policy, however, the proposals improve the current system by giving more options to families and supporting children and young people to prepare for adulthood.
Sex (Gender)	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon Sex (Gender) as a protected characteristic group with regard to this proposed activity
Race	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon Race as a protected characteristic group with regard to this proposed activity.
Gender Reassignment	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon Gender Reassignment as a protected characteristic group with regard to this proposed activity.
Sexual Orientation	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon Sexual Orientation as a protected characteristic group with regard to this proposed activity.
Religion or belief	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon Religion or belief as a protected characteristic group with regard to this proposed activity.
Pregnancy or maternity	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon Pregnancy or maternity as a protected characteristic group with regard to this proposed activity.
Marriage or civil partnership	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon Marriage or Civil partnership as a protected characteristic group with regard to this proposed activity.
How will the activity affect people who:	No impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Why will it have this effect? (Refer to evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information, etc)
Live in a rural location?	yes			In the consultation it was highlighted that some placements are not accessible by direct transport routes and a 'home to school' model is more appropriate. This may also occur in a rural location. It is not proposed to enforce a particular transport method rather

				all methods will be discussed at an annual review.
Are carers?	yes			Concern was expressed over potential additional administrative burdens, which may have an impact on balancing of working and caring responsibilities however all options will be explored on an individual basis, and changes to any particular part of the Policy are not mandatory.
Are on a low income?			Yes	<p>If a parent/carer on a low income does decline the offer of a placement that is the nearest most suitable placement for their child, under these proposals transport would need to be provided by the parent/carer. This may have a financial or other impact, particularly if they are on a low income. It may also prohibit them from choosing to send their child to a placement outside of the borough which, otherwise, they would have preferred.</p> <p>It is unlikely that a parent/carer would be able to negotiate the economies of scale that the LA does for certain transport providers.</p>

Section 4: Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative Impacts – will the activity affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics? (e.g. older women or young gay men – state what you think the effect might be and why, providing evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information, etc)

Are there any other activities of which you are aware which might also impact on the same protected characteristics?

The nature of new proposals means it is exclusive to children and young people with SEND and therefore people affected will, by definition, have a combination of these Protected Characteristics. There has also been a consultation on a new SEND Strategy, top up funding and development of new SEND provision which aim to:

- Implement a new SEND Strategy – 6 key objectives
- Implement changes to SEND top up funding
- Expressions of interest for use of SEND capital funding in order to develop new provision for pupils with a primary need of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD).

These consultations also may impact on the same Protected Characteristics.

SEND Transport Assistance will be offered to any child or young person with SEND that is eligible regardless of a combination of protected characteristics. Any individual child or young person’s needs will be considered carefully as to the best application of the policy.

Section 5: Analysis

a) How will the activity help to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

This was a strong concern raised in the public consultations. Any reports of a child or young person subject to discrimination, harassment or victimisation will be dealt with in the appropriate way eg through school procedures or travel company procedures. Implementation of the SEND Transport Assistance Policy will require extensive community engagement as through the consultation it has been raised that there could be an element of harassment/victimisation of vulnerable children or young people who travel independently. Any child or young person with SEND considered as being suitable for independent travel training this factor will be considered prior to and whilst developing a programme for their needs.

b) How will the activity help to advance equality of opportunity?

The implementation of the transport assistance policy will support children and young people to become more socially mobile, independent and be prepared for the transition to adulthood.

c) How will the activity help to foster good relations?

Through an annual review process, this will ensure having open, honest discussions to review a child/young person's needs. This will support good relations with parents/carers and allow them to have their voice heard.

During the engagement/ consultation process were there any suggestions on how to avoid, minimise or mitigate any negative impacts? If so, please give details.

Many consultation responses outlined personal circumstances and outlined how the introduction of a new policy would have potential negative impacts. These are summarised above. During the consultation, particularly the public events, debates on some of these areas took place and observations made on process details. As a result of the discussions, many of the attendees felt less anxious. There may be anxieties in the short term about the new policy, but the implementation of the policy should have positive benefits long term.

Section 6 - Sign-off when assessment is completed

Officer Completing the Form:		
Signed	Name:	Eleanor Marshall
	Date:	11.12.18
	Job Title:	School Forum Monitoring and Support Officer
Assistant Director:		
Signed	Name:	Tony Murphy – Head of Education and Inclusion
	Date:	22.02.19
	Service:	Children and Adults Services

Section 7 – Reporting of Findings and Recommendations to Decision Makers

<p>Next Steps to address the anticipated impact (Select one of the following options and explain why this has been chosen – remember we have a duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can access services and work for us)</p>
<p>Negative impact identified – recommend continuing with the activity</p> <p>Children and young people with SEND, their parents/carers/families may be negatively impacted due to a potential to change in their current home to transport arrangements. However, any adverse impact should be lessened through managed transition as part of a consultation annual review process that would identify clearly the child/young person’s needs. Assessments will be carried out consistently according to the Policy and all needs will be identified and addressed.</p> <p>It is recognised that this may cause anxiety for parents/carers and children and young people however ensuring a thorough management process the Local Authority intends to reduce these anxieties through a clear communication strategy that sets out clear paths to implementation.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor the impact these changes may have on children and young people and their families in accessing their education provision.</p>
<p>Explanation of why the option above has been chosen (Including any advice given by legal services)</p>
<p>The proposals are recommended because they provide clarity for families on their entitlement to travel assistance. They reflect that as children and young people develop, their needs may change and travel assistance arrangements need to accommodate this. By widening the offer to families with SEND to include travel training and access to personal budgets the proposals support children and young people with SEND as they prepare for adulthood. Any potential negative impacts will be mitigated through a management process that will ensure full consultation with families on an individual basis.</p>
<p>If the activity is to be implemented how will you find out how it is affecting people once it is in place? (How will you monitor and review the changes?)</p>

Independent Travel Training has been in place from Autumn 2018 and an evaluation of the impact of this will take place by end Summer Term, which will inform future implementation.

The annual review process for Transport Assistance will review the impact and success / failure of any changes to an individual child or young person's Transport arrangements. The policy will be reviewed by the Education Senior Management team at the end of one full year of implementation.

Section 8 – Action Plan and Performance Management

List any actions you need to take which have been identified in this EIA, including post implementation reviews to find out how the outcomes have been achieved in practice and what impacts there have actually been on people with protected characteristics

What is the negative impact?	Actions required to reduce/eliminate the negative impact (if applicable)	Who will lead on action	Target completion date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of transport concern that an annual review would cut transport unnecessarily • concern that a personal budget would place an unnecessary burden on families; • Concern that parental choice would be removed over placements • Some parents felt cautious about independent travel training for very vulnerable children/young people and therefore the safeguarding implications. 	<p>Through a combination of all or one of the below:</p> <p>Review of the initial implementation of Independent Travel Training</p> <p>Review of the Transport Assistance Policy</p> <p>The Annual Review process will consider all individual needs. It will not be mandatory for parents/carers to accept any changes to transport where a child is still eligible.</p> <p>Parental choice is a legal right and placements will always be based upon the needs of the child/young person.</p>	<p>Transport Manager</p> <p>Transport Manager</p> <p>Transport Manager</p>	<p>August 2019</p> <p>August 2020</p> <p>Ongoing to each individual Child and Young person's annual review.</p>

Performance Management

Date of the next review of the EIA	September 2020
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How often will the EIA action plan be reviewed?	Annually
Who will carry out this review?	Head of Education and Inclusion

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SEND Consultation Findings Report – SEND Travel Assistance Policy

December 2018

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to feed back the key findings of this consultation to the SEND Consultation project board, Head of Education and Inclusion and Education Senior Management Team and to inform the Head of Education and Inclusion's paper to Cabinet on 5th March 2019.

Transport Assistance Policy

- This was the largest group of respondents (48.28%) who expressed a view supported introduction of a annual review whilst 37.93% did not support this proposal. The majority of respondents (58.62%) indicated they would not wish to take up the opportunity of a personal budget.
- The majority of respondents did not agree with the proposal to transport would not be provided if the local authority if the parental preference was not the nearest appropriate placement
- There was a clear differentiation between comments made in the surveys and the conclusions made by attendees at the events.
- There was overwhelming feedback that the current system works and in some cases the introduction of a new policy was seen as a cost cutting exercise.
- There has been little support for the recommendation to introduce a travel assistance budget however from young people there is support as they see this as a benefit towards making their life more independent.
- The annual review of transport is perceived as being of great anxiety in that transport may be removed, however, the principle when explained was accepted.

Main Report - Introduction

1. Proposed Approach

Approval to consult on the proposal to introduce a new SEND Travel Assistance Policy with key stakeholders, partners and children, young people and their families was granted by the Darlington Borough Council Cabinet on 9th October 2018. The consultation ran from 17th October 2018 to 28th November 2018.

2. Consulting on the Proposed Approach

The public consultation questions focused on the introduction of a new SEND Travel Assistance Policy and the introduction of:

- An annual review of transport arrangements
- An introduction and offer of personal travel assistance budgets/cash allowance
- An offer of independent travel training

The Policy also outlined where transport would not be provided and asked for comments on the eligibility proposals.

3. Methodology

The general public and interested parties were invited to participate in the consultation. To reach as many people as possible, a range of consultation methods were available. The consultation documents including the survey can be found at **Annex A**.

3.1 Consultation Documents

There was a series of public consultations through both events and a survey which was available on line www.darlington.gov.uk/SEND. The survey was also available in hard copy at all events.

The SEND Travel Assistance Policy was provided alongside the presentation on the proposed SEND Travel Assistance Policy which outlined the reasons for the proposed change, benefits and strengths of the proposals, and questions for consultation.

3.2 Stakeholder Consultation Events

There was a whole variety of professional fora pre-consultation to brief colleagues and stakeholders on the consultation including the Parent Carer Forum, and Darlington Association on Disability (DAD).

During consultation we were able to inform stakeholders of the consultation themes at meetings that had already been organised by the Local Authority (LA) and stakeholders, for example, events for parents and carers, hosted by the Parent Carer Forum; the SEND Steering group; School Forum; SENCo network training; Primary Schools Forum; 11-19 Forum (secondary schools and post 16 providers); Joint meetings with health and other partner meetings.

A list of who we consulted with and in what way can be seen in Section 5.

3.3 Publicity

In order to reach as many people as possible, the consultation was advertised through the following channels.

We directly emailed all parents/carers of children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and emailed key stakeholders in addition to early years providers, schools, colleges and health and social care professionals. This included members of Darlington's Children Young People Plan steering group, SEND Steering Group, and Healthy Lifestyle steering group.

All stakeholders were encouraged to respond in ways appropriate, including writing formal responses to a dedicated email address.

A poster was circulated within key locations in Darlington town centre including the Library, One Stop Shop and sent to other locations attended by the public eg children centres, Head of Steam etc. The LA Communications team organised social media and press releases, such as through Darlington and Stockton Times as well as regular reminders on the DBC website. The Local Offer pages were updated to include information to post readers to the SEND consultation page.

All DBC staff were alerted through publicity on "The Bulletin" and posters.

Consultation with Children and Young People was organised through the LA participation officers and this included representatives from 'Voices'; 'Next Steps'; 'Young Leaders'; Primary and Secondary school Councils. 50 Children and Young People attended these meetings.

The Parent Carer Forum, the Children and Young People Scrutiny and SENDIASS Officer were all instrumental in sharing the information with their forums/contacts.

School Governors were all alerted to the consultation along with other education professionals such as resource base heads of teams, outreach service heads and SENCOs.

Requests via social care team leaders were made to share wider and support when engagement with parents and young people.

Health professionals eg service leads (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Audiology, Ophthalmology; etc) were contacted directly, as well as Clinical Commissioning Group and the North of England commissioning support unit.

3.4 Quantitative Data

As well as the respondents who completed survey online all hard copy/paper versions of the questionnaires completed by individuals were entered into the survey results.

It was evident of the answers directly entered by respondents on the online survey that the majority of responses were individual responses. The hard copy/paper versions of the survey were mostly on behalf of organisations.

The data was extracted onto an excel spreadsheet and the closed questions were analysed to establish what proportion of respondents agreed or disagreed. Group public data and feedback was not entered onto the on line surveys, but was recorded separately, and the

number of participants at public events was recorded in accordance with attendance lists and headcounts as not all participants recorded attendance due to personal choice.

3.5 Qualitative Data

For the feedback, the survey open questions with qualitative responses were analysed manually to establish particular themes and enable key findings to emerge. Feedback from group meetings was noted long-hand, typed up and analysed for key themes. These key themes were separate to the survey responses. Due to the nature of the format for events and discussions raised, not all the questions were necessarily covered but these have been added to the appropriate part of the Key Findings section 4.

In addition to the 29 respondents to the survey, 99 overall took part in public meetings which presented the opportunity to ask questions and express views and there were 11 written responses (please see section 5).

4. Key Findings

The Key Findings from the consultation was presented as a table of quantitative data about the closed questions from the survey, and then key themes from both the qualitative feedback from the open survey questions and events, about why respondents agreed or disagreed and any particular impact raised has been noted.

4.1 SEND Travel Assistance Policy

This survey asked nine questions in relation to implementation of a SEND Travel Assistance Policy. In all areas of this part of the consultation a theme was in relation to the administration of the policy recommendations and the need for the LA to consider capacity required and to think the process through.

Questions 24-28 asked about the respondent, these are summarised in **Annex B**. Of the 29 respondents through the survey 27 identified the capacity in which they were responding to the survey:

A parent / carer	55.56%	15
A young person	0.00%	0
An educational professional	37.04%	10
A health professional	0.00%	0
A social care professional	0.00%	0
A governor	0.00%	0
A charity	0.00%	0
A voluntary organisation	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	7.41%	2
	Answered	27
	Skipped	2

The comments of children and young people on their experiences are also sighted in this section.

Question 1 and 2 – To what extent do you agree that there should be an annual review of transport arrangements?

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	20.69%	6	Total agree	48.28%
Agree	27.59%	8		
Neither agree nor disagree	13.79%	4	Neither agree nor disagree	13.79%
Disagree	6.90%	2		
Strongly disagree	31.03%	9	Total disagree	37.93%
Answered		29		
Skipped		0		

There was some support for an annual review but the majority did not agree.

- Many commented that CYP with more complex needs may not change much within this timescale and that this should be noted in application of the policy.
- There was concern that an annual review would increase levels of stress to families and young people, if each year support would be removed.
- Comments made were in support of the principle of an annual review particularly in respect to preparation for adulthood as this would enable us to identify long term needs at an earlier stage.
- The timing of the transport annual review should take place at the EHC Plan review however concern was expressed that the LA should prioritise at key transition points and ensure SEND officers are in attendance.

“as long as the annual review is not used to cut transport costs and is used to make sure transport is thoughtfully worked out to suit the needs of the children and their families”

Questions 3 and 4 – to what extent would you agree to a personal travel assistance budget?

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	10.34%	3	Total agree	27.58%
Agree	17.24%	5	Neither agree nor disagree	13.79%
Neither agree nor disagree	13.79%	4	Total disagree	58.62%
Disagree	20.69%	6		
Strongly disagree	37.93%	11		
	Answered	29		
	Skipped	0		

There was strong disagreement which was evidenced through the survey and at meetings for this proposal:

- In the survey there was overwhelming disagreement with this proposal some highlighting safeguarding risks in handing over responsibility of vulnerable young people to travel companies.
- On discussion at meetings there was some acceptance from families particularly for older more mobile children/young people this may work
- In reviewing children and young people's comments, there are some examples cited where a personal assistance budget may work in terms of access to employment/leisure activities

“if transport is no longer co-ordinated and there is a free for all we would be very worried about the impact on the safety of site users as inevitably it would increase the numbers of vehicles coming on site – has there been any assessment of impact of this?”

“it may also be challenging for some families to cope with such a system from a financial management and administrative perspective”

“this is a short sighted proposal”

“it would be spent on other things and the child would be left unable to get to school”

Questions 5 and 6 – should the placement not be the nearest appropriate, to what extent do you agree that transport should not be provided?

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	21.43%	6	Total agree	28.57%
Agree	7.14%	2	Neither agree nor disagree	7.14%
Neither agree nor disagree	7.14%	2		
Disagree	17.86%	5	Total disagree	64.29%
Strongly disagree	46.43%	13		
Answered		28		
Skipped		1		

There was strong disagreement for this proposal through the survey. The key messages included:

this would take away parental choice.

- On discussion at meetings there was acceptance from families that in an ideal world, all families would want their child to be educated closer to home but because of the lack of choice families do not want this to be restricted and feel it would be unfair to pay, as many cannot pay and the repercussions' could be wide reaching eg social mobility.
- At meetings members of the public identified the need to ensure link to the Strategy.

“there is a risk that the policy will result in high numbers of appeals and cost incurred offset value for money”

Questions 7 and 8 – to what extent would you agree to independent travel training?

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	35.71%	10	Total agree	53.57%
Agree	17.86%	5		
Neither agree nor disagree			Neither agree nor disagree	10.71%
	10.71%	3		
Disagree	7.14%	2	Total disagree	35.71%
Strongly disagree	28.57%	8		
Answered		28		
Skipped		1		

The proposal was relatively balanced for and against.

- In the survey's respondents felt that this element of the policy would expose vulnerable CYP to unacceptable behaviour and some raised safeguarding considerations.
- There was consistent concern regarding capacity of the transport infrastructure in Darlington to cope alongside safety and safeguarding.
- Some felt this would be acceptable for Year 11's if they could cope.
- There was some agreement that as a concept this would prepare children for adulthood where it was appropriate. Travel training should be extended to the school workforce.

"in respect to our child, this would be of not benefit however where the individual is able and could benefit from this it is a good idea"

"independent travel might not be realistic for all children and there are some concerns that this ultimately shifts responsibility for travel safety of vulnerable young people to travel companies"

"there are benefits to having travel trainers"

Voice of the Children and Young People

- 6 pupils who represented a School Council were all happy with the mode of transport to get to school (including taxi, and school bus) but not happy with the time it takes due to distances and pick up. Due to this they have little opportunity to take part in activities after school, make and sustain friendships. One secondary school age pupil said it was easy to be picked up from home to as the placement for this pupil was out of borough.
- 7 young people aged 17 to 25 expressed their issues with a shared mini-bus, they preferred the choice of a taxi rather than the arranged transport. The issues included the co-ordination and communication around transport between DBC, Darlington College, the Family and young person these relate to timetabling which can prevent them from doing after College 'on site' activities which they would like to do. They feel this restricts them from socialising due to transport arrangements and sometimes it has been known that the buses leave without them. *"They do not wait very long for people just in case they have just been held up"*. They felt that walking would be OK to school and/or College but that their parents would not be happy is it may be too far

and that they would not know the way however the young people felt comfortable to do this.

- Pupils at a special school expressed concern about behaviour on their bus, but despite this they were happy with the current way of getting to school.
- Some would like to bike to school but they have been given no option but the school bus, they would like to explore other options and they are very happy to go on their own. Some feel that they cannot walk or go on a bike because of the distance and lack of placements closer to home.
- Some CYP were making plans for independent travel and also stated that DAD does provide travel training.
- Many like the idea of getting a bus pass and using public transport if they had independence training.
- Due to transport restrictions there are very few after school clubs in specialist settings which restricts socialising with peers.
- Some children who are travelling from other boroughs are taxied into school, they are happy with the arrangement but not the time it takes due to distance and due to dropping off/picking up other children. Due to the distance that they travelled they could not take part in after school activities and had few local friends.

5. Consultees

Summary

Responses from the 11 consultees (as presented below) are presented in **Annex C** of this document.

Response Type	Numbers
Total survey responses (including hard copy survey's received)	29
Public Events (including open health, social care and school meetings) number of attendees	99
Children and Young People Events – number of attendees	50
Total number of detailed written responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers of Deaf and Visually Impaired, Darlington Low Incidence Needs Service - National Deaf Children Society - Federation of Mowden Schools - Traveller Education and Attainment Service, Darlington - Parent/Carer - The Federation of Darlington Nursery Schools - Darlington CYP Scrutiny Committee - Carmel Education Trust - Darlington Association on Disability - Parent Carer Forum 	11

Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation theme	Consultation type	Date	Numbers
SEND Strategy and Funding	Public event	Monday 5 November	8
SEND Travel Assistance Policy	Public event	Monday 5 November	11
SEND Strategy and Funding	Public event	Monday 5 November	6
SEND Strategy and Funding	Public event	Tuesday 6 November	6
SEND Travel Assistance Policy	Public event	Tuesday 6 November	2
All consultations	Open Health meeting	Wednesday 14 November	2
All consultations	Open Social Care meeting	Wednesday 14 November	10
All consultations	Public event	Tuesday 20 November	5
SEND Strategy and Funding	Public event	Wednesday 21 November	16
SEND Travel Assistance Policy	Public event	Wednesday 21 November	5
All consultations	Open Schools meeting	Thursday 22 November	28

Children and Young People Consultation

Consultation Theme	Consultation details	Date	Numbers
All consultations	<p>Voices C:TheBox A social group for young people aged between 15 and 25 who are on the Asperger's & Autistic spectrum</p>	Thursday 15 November	3 CYP
All consultations	<p>Next Steps Darlington College A group of 16 plus young people who attend Darlington college to social and learn life skill all of whom are on the ASD spectrum</p>	Thurs 15 November	3 CYP
All consultations	<p>Darlington Association on Disability provide a number of young people focused groups.</p> <p>Young Leaders is a group for young people with disabilities aged between 14 and 25.</p> <p>M.F.I (Mentoring For Independence) works with older young people and aims to improve independence.</p> <p>DASH Play Scheme offers 3 playgroups for children aged 3 to 15.</p>	<p>Wednesday 7 November</p> <p>Thursday 15 November</p> <p>Wednesday 31 October & Thursday 1 November</p>	<p>7 CYP</p> <p>14 CYP</p> <p>12 CYP</p>
All consultations	<p>Primary School Council March Bank School Meeting with the school council and talking to children aged between 5 and 11</p>	Wednesday 7 November	6 CYP
All consultations	<p>Primary & Secondary School Council Beaumont Hill Academy A specialist provider for children aged 2 -19 with special educational needs. Meeting with both the primary and secondary aged School Council</p>	Wednesday 14 November	5 CY P



**DARLINGTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

SEND Travel Assistance Policy

Introduction

- Darlington Borough Council recognises the pressures faced by parents of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and undertakes to provide statutory transport services in accordance with the Department of Education Guidance on Home to School Travel and Transport.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>
- Consultation on Darlington Borough Council's SEND Travel Assistance Policy (covered within the Darlington Borough Council Schools Transport policy <https://www.darlington.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-years/school-transport/>) aims to clarify eligibility; when and how transport may be provided and what further options can be made available for parents to access.



Transport Statistics

Darlington Borough Council currently transports children and young people with SEND to:

- 38 educational establishments across the North East.

Currently we transport the following children and young people:

- Page 91
- 91 in primary settings
 - 153 in secondary settings
 - 44 in Further Education settings
 - 16 within 19+ continuing education



Vision

- Darlington Borough Council is committed to ensuring that every child and young person can fulfil their potential and is supported in doing so.
- The aim of the Travel Assistance Policy is to support all children with SEND to lead lives which are as independent as possible.

Where possible children and young people will be supported in achieving greater independence through the development of independent travel skills.



Five Key Proposals

The five key proposals for the consultation are:

1. The introduction of a specific travel assistance policy to support children and young people with SEND.
2. To introduce an annual review of travel assistance to take account of the personal development of a child and young person with SEND and to identify opportunities to promote independence.
3. To offer a cash allowance or direct payment in the form of a personal assistance budget to allow greater flexibility for families to make their own arrangements.
4. Travel assistance will be offered for the nearest suitable placement which meets a child or young person's needs.
5. To offer independent travel training to give children and young people the confidence and skills to attend their educational provision.



Challenges/Opportunities

Darlington Borough Council recognises the challenges that parents/carers face in meeting the conflicting demands on their time. We seek views on the varied travel opportunities that can be offered and which are aimed at meeting the individual needs of their child/young person.

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We are committed to working closely with children and young people, parents, carers, educational establishments and transport providers. This is to ensure that we are best considering the strengths and abilities and needs of children and young people so that they are provided with appropriate and proportionate assistance.



How can I give my views?

- All comments and views expressed today will be noted.
- We have provided hard copies of the electronic survey which you can complete today or return in the pre-paid envelope.
- We also have a survey on our website:

www.Darlington.gov.uk/SEND

Thank you for attending today.



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Introduction

The aim of the SEND Travel Assistance Policy is to support all children and young people with SEND to lead lives which are as independent as possible. Where appropriate, children and young people will be supported to achieve greater independence through the development of independent travel skills and the use of public transport. Darlington Borough Council will work closely with parents/carers, children, young people and schools/colleges to ensure that all play a supportive role in making this happen.

Children and young people with SEND who are eligible for assistance with their travel arrangements currently have transport by taxi or bus. We are looking at alternative ways that children and young people can be supported to attend their education establishments, and we are consulting you on the various ways that we can do this.



Annual review

To introduce an annual review of travel assistance to take account of the personal development of a child and young person with SEND and to identify opportunities to promote independence.

* 1. To what extent do you agree that there should be an annual review of transport arrangements?

Strongly agree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

2. If you have any comments about the proposal for an annual review please do so here.



Personal assistance budget

We are proposing to offer a cash allowance or direct payment in the form of a personal assistance budget to allow greater flexibility for families to make their own arrangements.

* 3. To what extent would you agree to a personal travel assistance budget?

Strongly agree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

4. If you have any comments about the proposal of a personal assistance budget please do so here.



Suitable placement

Travel assistance will be offered for the nearest suitable placement which meets a child or young person's needs.

* 5. Should the placement not be the nearest appropriate, to what extent do you agree that transport should not be provided?

Strongly agree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

6. If you have any comments about the proposal to offer assistance for the nearest suitable placement please do so here.



Independent travel training

To offer independent travel training to give children and young people the confidence and skills to attend their educational provision.

* 7. To what extent would you agree to independent travel training?

- Strongly agree Disagree
- Agree Strongly disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree

8. If you have any comments about the proposal for independent travel training please do so here.



Comment, feedback or suggestions

9. If you have any other comments, suggestions or feedback on out proposals please do so here.



Your interest

* 10. In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

- A parent / carer
- A young person
- An educational professional
- A health professional
- Other (please specify)
- A social care professional
- A governor
- A charity
- A voluntary organisation



About you - Sex

11. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say



About you - Age

12. What age were you on your last birthday?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Under 18 years | <input type="radio"/> 45 - 59 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 18 - 24 years | <input type="radio"/> 60 - 75 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 25 - 34 years | <input type="radio"/> Over 75 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 35 - 44 years | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |

About you - Ethnicity

13. What ethnic group do you belong to?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British | <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British - Bangladeshi |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Irish | <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British - Chinese |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller | <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British - Other |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Other | <input type="radio"/> Black / Black British - African |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black Caribbean | <input type="radio"/> Black / Black British - Caribbean |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black African | <input type="radio"/> Black / Black British - Other |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Asian | <input type="radio"/> Arab |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - Other | <input type="radio"/> Other |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British - Indian | <input type="radio"/> Not sure / don't know |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British - Pakistani | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |



About you - Disability

14. Do you consider yourself to have a disability

- Yes
- No
- Not sure / don't know
- Prefer not to say

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Annex B Respondents Analysis – SEND Transport Assistance Policy

Q10. In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

Answer Choices	Responses	
A parent / carer	55.56%	15
A young person	0.00%	0
An educational professional	37.04%	10
A health professional	0.00%	0
A social care professional	0.00%	0
A governor	0.00%	0
A charity	0.00%	0
A voluntary organisation	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	7.41%	2
	Answered	27
	Skipped	2

Q11. What is your sex?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	14.81%	4
Female	62.96%	17
Other	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	22.22%	6
	Answered	27
	Skipped	2

Q12. What age were you on your last birthday?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Under 18 years	0.00%	0
18 - 24 years	0.00%	0
25 - 34 years	3.70%	1
35 - 44 years	29.63%	8
45 - 59 years	37.04%	10
60 - 75 years	0.00%	0
Over 75 years	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	29.63%	8
	Answered	27
	Skipped	2

Q13. What ethnic group do you belong to?

Answer Choices	Responses	
White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	70.37%	19
White - Irish	0.00%	0
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.00%	0
White - Other	0.00%	0

Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black Caribbean	0.00%	0
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black African	0.00%	0
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Asian	0.00%	0
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - Other	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Indian	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Pakistani	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Chinese	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Other	0.00%	0
Black / Black British - African	0.00%	0
Black / Black British - Caribbean	0.00%	0
Black / Black British - Other	0.00%	0
Arab	0.00%	0
Other	0.00%	0
Not sure / don't know	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	29.63%	8
	Answered	27
	Skipped	2

Q14. Do you consider yourself to have a disability

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	3.70%	1
No	66.67%	18
Not sure / don't know	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	29.63%	8
	Answered	27
	Skipped	2

RESPONSE 1

I have read the draft SEND strategy with interest and in principle agree with its content. In fact I think that we would all agree that improving the quality of life and reducing inequality is important to us all.

Building strong communities, growing the economy and spending every pound wisely is essential and I was pleased to hear all the references to early intervention. As an educator and professional who has worked within Darlington during the last 15 years I have seen many changes some for the better however over the last two years the funding issues have transformed schools and reduced resources to a bare minimum. Social deprivation has increased and whether as a result of this or not SEND needs have increased at such a rate that it is hard to manage and support demand as effectively as we would like to.

Early years provision and support has seen cut upon cut and I was therefore pleased to read that early intervention and support is key and then confused to read that the strategy suggests the best place for an early years hub is in a primary school? Surely the early years begins long before the child enters a primary school? In fact by the time the child enters full time education health visitors and the early years inclusion team have withdrawn their services?

We work with some of the most vulnerable families and children and it takes time for them to build trusting relationships with adults. Staff work hard in both settings to provide early intervention and support to parents who are often unaware of their child's needs and difficulties or not ready to acknowledge them. It can take time to build the necessary trust for parents to acknowledge the differences and accept support or involvement from outside professionals and the 1:4 ratios in 2 year old provision can mask all sorts of difficulties. Therefore it is important to us to invest time and effort into establishing strong relationships with our families. This begins with home visits and discussions with health visitors. Daily contact and incidental conversations with parents at drop off and pick up time provide us with the opportunity to provide that nurturing support and we invest a lot of time in working with the family to ensure that their child achieves the best outcomes possible and to ensure that the most appropriate support is in place.

Excellent links with health professionals such as health visitors mean that often before the child enters school we can ensure that the appropriate discussions with the family have taken place and the appropriate support arranged. We have also worked hard to establish effective multi-agency links working in particular with the early years inclusion team who's support for children ceases when they enter full time education.

Many of our parents have not had good experiences of the education and welfare systems and are reluctant to engage however we provide support groups for parents as well as delivering sessions designed to improve their confidence in working with their children and we can do so often without the parent even realising this and attendance at these groups is increasing. We could offer so much more with the appropriate mechanisms in place.

We currently have around X children identified on the SEND register. These are children with significant needs some of whom already have EHCPs and the others with one plans in place. In order to support these children we have well trained/skilled staff who can provide the support required. With limited funding streams available to us it is challenging managing this level of need. One Plans are costly, time consuming and cumbersome and don't always achieve the outcomes they are put in place to achieve. Often advice from professionals is to wait and see how children cope once they enter mainstream which means that children do not receive the timely support they need.

If the early years teams were placed within our settings I think it would improve the support we could provide and encourage parents to accept intervention at an earlier stage. Many of our parents are not keen to consent to additional involvement at the earliest stage because they feel either threatened or suspicious and I think having the teams working within settings would allay these fears. If we want to ensure that the 'views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their parents/carers are at the centre of decision making and that they are given the right support and information in a timely manner' then this would be the best place to begin.

We have the space in settings to offer 'systematic, proactive and appropriate early identification, early help and provision' and are keen to support and develop partnerships within other schools and with other child care services. Transition has to be a key part of this and it is not just transition for children that is required. I am concerned that whilst all the supports to the family may be in place whilst they are in nursery with our open door policy often these supports disappear as the child enters full time education and it is at this point that I believe parents suddenly feel almost destitute and the good work that has begun with the family starts to crumble. We know that mental health is a serious issue and with some of the most neediest and vulnerable families passing through our doors having mental health professionals working within the nurseries would be another way of trying to support families more effectively.

It is important to utilise the SEND capital grant and other grants effectively in line with the SEND strategy key principles. With funding our settings could be developed to offer a specialist outreach provision or a resource base. We have facilities already in place but would require some funding to update the provision. We could potentially offer up to X full time places and then could also offer X short term places whereby other settings could buy into the service for a period of time if the child is requiring assessment or access to therapeutic services. This is an area ripe for further development and we could work closely with the early help team and early years inclusion team to develop this. It would improve transparency about the range of services and support available which is a key requirement from parents and would enable us to commission the right services to meet the needs of our children and families. If we want to improve communication and interaction then the earlier this begins the better and better partnership working at an earlier age should help to reduce the level of SEND needs/EHCP when children enter school.

If therefore you are committed to 'early identification of need, ensuring the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support; to build capacity in mainstream settings to reduce reliance on specialist and out of authority placements; to ensure that children and young people are educated in their local community; increase achievement and improve outcomes; focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication; achieving best value;' then I can see no better place to start than with nursery.

I believe that this is indeed an exciting time of opportunity and it is important that we get the support and provision right. I think meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families through co-ordinated services has to be the focus if we want a more effective and efficient service. I will be happy to discuss this further.

RESPONSE 2

It's difficult to argue with any of the objectives in the SEND Strategy. They all seem relevant and useful but I have some points/suggestions.

It's very wordy, which it has to be, but on first impressions there's a sense that perhaps one can't see the woods for the trees.

- The preamble is such that the objectives don't start until section 11, page 22. Who's going to read that far? Shouldn't the objectives be headline makers?

- Partly linked to the previous point, where is the 'in your face' prioritisation? i.e. the 5 (for example) key things upon which this plan succeeds or fails. Again, the objectives seem fine, and written by people who know the picture better than me, but they start to look a bit sameish visually.

- Finance is a very big driver for this strategy, but the strategy that could make the biggest difference to the finances - out of borough placements - is barely mentioned. Objective 2 does have reduced costs of such placements as an outcome, but there are no associated objectives that seem to fulfil this. The strategies listed in section 2 feel a bit jargonised and generic. How about a task/finish group identifying specific local premises etc? I feel that the work has to be this direct and specific, alongside the listed mainstream provision objectives, for us to actually crack this difficult issue.

RESPONSE 3

- 1. Committed to the right support at the right time in the right place. Want to identify needs at 'a very early stage' so that the right support can be identified. Will ensure they have as many opportunities as EVERY C/YP to achieve, make really good progress and enjoy a fulfilling life.**

We believe that by and large we do well in this area identifying needs as early as possible via proactive transition work with our feeder schools, historically well supported in this by the LA. Unfortunately, all too often in secondary, we can be thwarted in our efforts to identify needs 'at a very early stage,' due to a few primary feeder schools appearing, at least, to be less proactive in identifying and addressing needs themselves. 'They'll sort that out in secondary school,' is a phrase that is often heard in meetings with parents of pupils new to the school

We suspect that this is largely a financially driven issue, as identification of need involves the cost of an Ed Psych assessment, plus whatever interventions are then recommended. There is also the colossal cost in resource terms of committing time to a full EHC Plan application. We note considerable inconsistency across our feeder primary schools in the numbers or levels of need being identified prior to KS2-3 transition. Perhaps this is a genuine reflection of need, linked in part at least to socio-economic deprivation levels. We are not sure if this is the whole story and wonder if more could perhaps be done via the LA to provide the training and motivation to identify early.

We fully appreciate that needs can emerge at a later stage, too. SEMH sometimes emerge as a looked after pupil hits puberty, for example, or a student who has done well to manage their dyslexic tendencies throughout KS1-4 suddenly finds that the wheels come off their coping strategies when faced with the much greater literacy levels demanded of GCEs and access arrangements are urgently required to provide the level playing field to which they are entitled and to reduce anxiety. As a Trust we are fairly self-sufficient in this regard, due to staff having attended CPT3A training.

Paperwork to support transition is noted to be inconsistent. We wonder if perhaps GDPR legislation may have had an impact here, leading to a significant minority of schools to

perhaps sit on records and paperwork, rather than risk sharing anything inappropriately or in an incorrect manner and risking serious consequences. This may be an area where all of our schools could benefit from clear information-sharing advice from the LA. The lack of the former LA spreadsheet on the Common Transfer File means that no information on the needs of pupils at SEN Support now reaches secondary providers from the LA. This can put the secondary SENCo into the unenviable position of having to either make an intelligent guess in some areas, or to personally visit all feeder primary schools. In our case, that can be up to 29 schools. Hardly practicable. LA support in this would be especially useful to support early identification.

2. Need good quality support in their mainstream and local settings so they can achieve their academic potential and maintain their self-esteem and confidence.

It is our secondary SENCo's experience that whilst in-school support is generally quite strong, some forms of support, when required in particularly complex or unusual cases, or to help meet the needs of particular vulnerable groups, is thin on the ground. For example,

- there is no EAL support, since Traveller Education was cut back
- the Social Communication Outreach Service would appear to be overstretched and it is our secondary SENCo's experience that feedback is difficult to obtain
- it would appear that it is difficult to obtain additional guidance or alternative provision for complex aspects of SEMH support without costs attached.
- there are no SALTS or SEMH provision for the secondary sector, other than Rise Carr, as provision is all being aimed at primary phase, other than in the area of autistic spectrum disorders
- these primary and secondary academies share the frustration of the great difficulty that exists in successfully proving that more funding is required via an EHC Plan in order to effectively support a pupil who has significant levels of need to achieve their academic potential and maintain fragile self-esteem in the process. This difficulty is exacerbated when internal policy is also obliged to keep a very tight grip on purse strings regarding the availability of TA support, when striving to demonstrate efficient use of public funds. The combination of factors here make life very challenging for SENCos who must field concerns and probing questions from anxious parents.

3. Should be educated in their local community, supporting independent living etc

We are aware that expensive, out of County placement for learners who have EHC Plans is an issue that ultimately affects all of us. Here we wonder if the LA is receiving an accurate overview. This point has been mooted because difficulties are currently being experienced with inter-authority co-operation and communication in this area. Our SENCOs really struggle to find the time needed to study the complex resource acquisition systems of several different LAs, where children have arrived from out of area. Anything that is very time consuming for a SENCo is by its very nature already proving very expensive as a process for a school. The principle that children with SEND should be educated in their local community, supporting independent living, is a given. We are all signed up to this, as a happy journey towards an independent life is rarely won by moving away from one's friends and community for significant parts of the week throughout one's developing years. However, to prevent the need for these expensive and exclusive seeming arrangements being ultimately relied upon to solve problems at crisis level, we are in need of considerable investment in local alternative provision within the authority.

4. Improve KS4 progress by ensuring that ‘right support’ is identified, the teaching they receive is meeting their needs and that this is kept regularly under review.

Unfortunately the new exams quite simply do not meet the needs of learners with significant levels of Cognition and Learning difficulty, some kinds of disability or significant physical/medical vulnerabilities that affect cognition and/or emotional well-being. This list is not exhaustive. Stronger guidance and training or signposting from the LA linked to alternative qualifications would be valuable in this area.

5. Importance of communication with one another. Ensure we work closely with parents / carers, C/YP and education settings in all that we do. Important to co-produce documents, policies and ways of working together.

Co-production is an area of relative strength for us in both settings represented here. The publication of the Ranges are a good example of this. Internally, Learner Profiles pull together all agencies working closely with the family and are structured to ensure that the child and family’s voice is heard and actively shared and responded to within actions emanating from the plans. Our SENCos’ meetings with families and staff or TAFs (and internal meetings of SENCos) are generally well managed and well run. Documentation on the running of child-centred meetings has left an indelible impression on the systems that operate around child and family in our academies here in post COP NE England. Person-centred review templates shared in anticipation of the first publication of the new COP in 2014 were particularly valuable in developing these strong systems, that have now become a routine part at the heart of all we do. Families are fully included most, if not all of the time and we believe that the LA has strong systems in place to lead and support with this.

Where we feel disappointed is with regards to the equitable sharing with other partners who work with children to support identified needs in a range of areas. It has been the experience and observation of our secondary SENCo that social care are quick to let schools know if something they require in order to meet their own statutory processes around a child has not been made promptly available. Unfortunately their own availability is often an issue when it comes to working as we would wish, with their regular and predictable attendance at child centred meetings. We would also welcome LA support in helping our social care colleagues develop awareness of what is realistically within the provision reach of SENCos.

6. Wise use of monies. Staff, building, resources. Effectiveness ensured.

There are currently not the resources out there to consistently and effectively meet needs early. We can identify needs with considerable areas, especially given the high quality partnership working brokered with external agencies such as EPs, SALTs and OT services etc. However, if there are scant easily accessible, in-area affordable resources to effectively be able to address and support these needs going forward, how helpful has the identification of need process really been? Has it perhaps risked merely serving to increase frustration?

What is working well, less well and what simply needs tweaking

1. We appreciate the clarity within the new Ranges and the consultation process led by Anne Astbury, which showed a genuine level of consultation during the training days allocated.

Tweaking –

We believe that greater familiarity with the new Ranges will assist greatly in tweaking this area for the better across the LA.

To this aim, MAT SENCo will be recommending to all our SENCos at our imminent MAT SENCo Meeting (being held 4 Dec 18) that we allocate time to this process at our first meeting of 2019. The meeting could be structured in a way that enables us to support one another to become a little more familiar with the language and levels within the ranges by playing to our separate strengths. We could allocate some time for close study within the meeting, followed by discussion in small groups, using memorable examples as referents to bring the documentation to life, via shared, anonymised case studies.

We could gradually assign a level from the Ranges to the carefully chosen examples of one of each form of primary need from the 4 outlined in the COP 2015, following some healthy debate, referring to our shared view of the descriptors projected on a large screen. This is likely to be useful to our colleagues from a neighbouring LA, who have to use similar documentation in their own identification of levels of need in order to assign appropriate levels of provision.

2. We greatly appreciate the chance to come together as a group of SENCos, both within our own Trust and within our respective LAs.

These meetings go a long way towards reducing the sense of isolation that SENCos can experience, almost always being the only one within their setting, so having no on-site colleagues in the way experienced by Key Stage colleagues in primary settings or by departmental, SEN or pastoral team colleagues in secondary.

Colleagues greatly appreciate and make very good use of the wider experience of both LA SEND teams and Case Workers allocated to schools. They are excellent opportunities for us to be brought up to speed with the latest initiatives in the field from DfE and as always, we all greatly appreciate the opportunity to network. This opportunity can be particularly helpful when feeder primary schools and secondary colleagues are able to have a little informal time together between agenda items, supporting transition issues and building important inter-school relationships that benefit our pupils, amongst many other things.

It is also incredibly useful and motivating to learn about the excellent practice going on in other schools within the local area. Even where a presentation may be about what is happening in a different phase perhaps outside of one's own direct personal experience, (eg exciting developments in SEND provision within Early Years settings) there is almost always something useful to take away from the examples shared.

Being able to secure prompt advice and support from a shared MAT Learning Support Officer / MAT SENCo is valued by our SENCos, particularly when new to post or to the academy. The same applies to the ability to seek specific advice and guidance from the LA's SEND Advisor, who is also a sound and much appreciated source of support, when required, by our MAT SENCo.

Tweaking –

Greater advance notice of meeting dates would be extremely helpful, given the difficulties involved in securing cover to allow time out of school.

We intend addressing this as a MAT at our next meeting, with several new colleagues on board for the first time. MAT SENCo is changing her part-time working days in the new term in order to be always available for the LA's CPD meetings.

More information at the start of each academic year about best times and methods of contacting our allocated LA case workers would be really helpful. This is because it would

lead to swifter responses to queries or concerns, making us all more effective in our identification and provision of support, also and importantly helping to reduce anxiety in the children and families we support.

RESPONSE 4

Objective 1: Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support.

Newborn hearing screening is in place and there is 52 weeks/year access to ToD for newly diagnosed children. There is a clear referral pathway and all protocols are adhered to. Children are monitored using the Deaf Early Monitoring Protocol. Pre-school Deaf children get a high level of early intervention from LINS staff, working on receptive and expressive language, visual and auditory memory and listening & attention. We work closely with family to help them to understand and meet the needs of their deaf child.

Currently we have no preschool children with access to a radio aid at home although research highlights the benefits of early radio aid use.

http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/external_research/index.html#contentblock2

Darlington no longer commissions the School Hearing Screening programme for children in YR. This means that children with a progressive or acquired hearing loss will risk being undiagnosed for many years as the only route to diagnosis is through parent accessing a referral via GP.

Objective 2: Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings to reduce reliance on specialist out of authority placements 0-25

Most Darlington hearing impaired children attend local schools. There are currently X Darlington hearing impaired pupils who go out of authority to Sunnyside Academy, Kings Academy and Northern Counties. We understand that currently Kings Academy do not employ a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf in their resourced provision. LINS Team have no involvement in the education of these children.

NATSIP (National Sensory Impairment Partnership) guidelines are used to allocate the level of support given to hearing impaired children.

There is no resource base for deaf children in Darlington.

Objective 3: Ensuring that CYP with SEND are educated in their own local community and have an effective preparation for adulthood, including access to appropriate work, training and leisure opportunities.

Children are not on our caseload after Y11 (6th form in Carmel, and age 18/19 at Beaumont Hill) We do initial transition support with QE and Darlington College but there is no regular support from our team for hearing impaired pupils in these settings. More needs to be in place to support children through transition to adulthood and to educate hearing impaired pupils about making and attending appointments, accessing hearing aid repair, assistive technology and reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

There are no Deaf Youth clubs or facilities for Deaf young people to mix and socialise with hearing impaired peers. These facilities exist in Middlesbrough <http://cdyp.co.uk/> The National Deaf Children's Society are developing **Deaf- friendly Standards** which clubs can use to offer Deaf children equal access to their activities.

http://www.ndcs.org.uk/me2/are_you_an_organisation/support_for_me2_clubs/deaffriendly.html

Objective 4: Increasing achievement and improving all outcomes for CYP with SEND.

It is important to recognise that a mild or moderate hearing loss has a significant impact on learning and achieving. Incidental language learning is reduced so children need repetition and reinforcement of vocabulary and concepts. The gap with peers often widens from Y1 onwards. It is hard to measure our value added as we identify and address gaps in language as and when they arise – we address social and emotional needs by delivering the NDCS Healthy Minds programme as well as supporting academic development.

<https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=2ahUKEwidli8hPXeAhVmMewKHTWMAx4QFjABegQICBAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndcs.org.uk%2Fdocument.rm%3Fid%3D10331&usq=AOvVaw1I2y4vbSgzyevV7VoEVssq>

We are finding that a small number of the hearing impaired children have additional learning needs for example dyslexia.

Children with MSI (Multiple Sensory Impairment) need to have their needs identified and met by professionals with the appropriate qualifications and expertise.

Objective 5: Collaboration, co-production and communication

We have links with Social Care and Health and we are building collaborative practice with Beaumont Hill. We attend EHCP annual review meetings and this gives us an opportunity to meet parents. We attend CHSWIG meetings.

Objective 6: Achieving best value for money from all our services – human, physical and financial resources with clear agreed commissioning intentions

The pathway for funding radio aids for early years is not clear as radio aids are currently partly funded by individual schools and settings through the Specialist Equipment Policy. The NDCS has produced research which demonstrates the benefits to language development from use of a radio aid in the home.

<http://www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=10331>

RESPONSE 5

In response to the Darlington Send Consultation members of Darlington Parent Carer Forum members attended many of the consultations days and discussed the consultation with our members via our closed Facebook group, direct messages, emails and at forum meetings.

Though we at Darlington Parent Carer Forum note we do not represent all parents of children with SEND in Darlington in this response we have taken into account the views of those who have contacted us in order to form a collective response to this consultation and there is a few points we feel we need to raise.

We feel that consulting on the send strategy at the same time as the high needs funding review and a travel policy was too much and that it didn't allow for parents to make an informed and educated response to each individual consultation.

We believe that starting the consultation a week before half term was unwise and we feel that the letters written to families of those who would be impacted should have gone out before the consultation started and not after as this didn't allow for some parents to have appropriate time to plan and respond.

We also feel that for parents to be able to make an informed and educated response to the consultations particularly around the proposed funding model more information should have been available on what the current model looks like to be able to make said informed response, for instance many parents we spoke to didn't realise that the proposed funding model replaced the current one, the consultation questions did not make that clear.

Though we accept changes need to be made to the current system we would suggest that it needs to be done in a way which is both transparent and legally sound.

In response to the send strategy we feel that is an aspirational document and clearly based on the send code of practice. We would welcome an overarching SEND policy and would hope that it will be used in practice. Though we must note that one of the key objectives is coproduction and it is disappointing that the strategy itself was not coproduced.

The questions in the survey were found to be leading in some instances for example the ranges and attaching funding as mentioned above. Nobody would disagree with attaching a new funding model if they didn't realise it was replacing a pre existing one and we have also had a lot of feedback from concerned parents about the out of area provision questions. We feel as a collective that asking if you believe all children should have access to education in their own local area is only relevant if we had the provision to provide it which we currently do not and that isn't made clear.

Darlington Parent Carer Forum have been involved on some work regarding the graduated response but feel we must make clear that whilst we would support the ranges as a guidance document , anything above and beyond that we do not.

For example if the local authority are saying to have an EHCP assessment a school "might" try is fine to say a school "must" we believe to be unlawful with this in mind we are concerned as to how attaching the funding model to the ranges will work particularly as there was no clear information provided on the difference in the funding model or the impact it would have upon children both with EHCPs and at SEN support, so we feel we currently do not have enough information to make a formal response to the strategy and attached consultations overall.

RESPONSE 6

I am the parent of X.

The delivery within the SEND strategy supports and encourages mainstream educational settings and I would agree with this. This however comes with a caveat of having appropriate resources and support in place to facilitate children reaching their utmost potential (and beyond).

Supported by X teacher the school have undertaken the challenge wholeheartedly and we work and support each other, cognisant of how to unite different skill sets going forward. The input by X working with X has been without doubt pivotal in her success and development thus far. I cannot stress this enough. X is visited twice a week by X. X could have an even greater positive impact if capacity to visit more was accommodated. I would urge that consideration for exploring this be given.

I would hope that the LA have an unswerving thirst to provide the provision and support (and this includes funding) to ensure X (and others) can succeed in mainstream education.

Consideration also to be given to support and continue to provide specialist work for children like X. Obtaining such support in Darlington was met with frustrating delay and a feeling of avoidance by the LA to commit to this undertaking.

To summarise , your vision and key principles are an encouraging read and I look forward to seeing how this strategy is put into practice.

RESPONSE 7

We are writing this letter regarding the current Consultation on the Draft Strategy for Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) 2019 - 2022 The Best Start In Life

DAD agrees in principle with six key objectives set out in the Draft Strategy and supports the key messages that children and young people with Special Educational Needs and / or Disability should receive high quality educational support and the right time, in the most appropriate provision and at the earliest opportunity, identified through high quality assessment and early identification of need.

DAD strongly feel an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is required which crucially identifies who is impacted ie children, young people and parents, what their involvement was to identify the impact and includes clear details of what mitigations will be put in place for those affected by changes in policy and practices.

I am sure you are well aware the duty to have due regard to the needs of disabled people is a duty on all members and officers of all public bodies. If asked to demonstrate how the duty was met when making a decision it must be revealed by means of an EIA.

Information coming from an EIA should be used in the making of the decisions and whether any potential positive or negative impacts were identified including any potential mitigation. Consideration should also be given to the impact on education providers as they adjust budgets to reflect changes in practice.

The results of this consultation alone will not be sufficient for members to fulfil their duty under the Equality Act.

We would ask that a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment be sent to DAD Chief Executive, Lauren Robinson.

The SEND Ranges may provide a useful mechanism to support the identification of need and the development of supporting provision map, however, we have concerns regarding the linking of funding to the ranges, particularly for children and young people who would be identified as being in range 3.

It is within this range particularly, that in some schools, they may be fully using the notional budget to support children and young people, evidenced through a costed provision map, but may still not be able to meet the needs of the pupil, increasing the attainment gap at a point where they may not be eligible for Education Health and Care Plan.

It is not clear from the supporting documents and the consultation what the impact of the proposed funding model will be, although DAD is supportive of the principle that funding should 'follow the child'. The supporting documentation states that the previous and proposed model can not be compared 'like to like' and does not indicate if the proposed model represent and increase or decrease in funding available per pupil.

We ask for further transparency and consultation in this area so that respondents are able to make more informed decisions and comments.

DAD supports the principles of inclusion and inclusive education with children and young people attending local schools within their community and local area but acknowledge that currently this is not possible and that specialist provisions, including alternative education establishments and out of area placements are essential to meet the needs of children and young people in Darlington.

We request that any review of specialist settings (Resource Bases and schools/colleges/work placement and employment) and support services is completed with full consultation and again believe that a full Equality Impact Assessment should be undertaken and request that a copy of the Assessment be sent to DAD's Chief Executive.

Yours sincerely
Darlington Association on Disability

RESPONSE 8

Objective 1: Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support.

Pupils reach the services at different ages although some have diagnoses some time before they are referred. Some health professionals refer if they feel there is a need for support in school rather than referring at diagnosis. Children should be assessed by a qualified teacher of vision impaired (QTVI) and a habilitation specialist upon diagnosis and given a plan as they will need support as early as possible.

Children and young people may attend a range of different eye clinics at the RVI, Newcastle, Sunderland Eye Hospital and Darlington Memorial Hospital. How is it decided where pupils attend Eye Clinics? It is clear some are placed where there are specific areas of expertise but this is not always the case. We have good communication with some of the clinics and we working to ensure we have this will all.

Objective 2: Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings to reduce reliance on specialist out of authority placements 0-25.

Parents are keen for their children to be educated in the local authority. In the near future there will be a need for production of tactile resources e.g. braille and tactile diagrams. For this to happen there needs to be equipment e.g. a braille embosser, braille transcription software, graphics software, swell fuser in the local authority.

Equally important to having the equipment is having staff who have the knowledge and expertise to use it. A pupil who is completely using tactile means to access should have full time support from a TA in class who has knowledge of braille and 0.5 member of staff who can produce braille resources. Staff can be trained to do this. It is essential a mainstream school has support from a QTVI who can share their specialist knowledge and help support staff understand how to meet an educationally blind child's needs. Due to the time constraints of Qualified Teacher of Vision Impairment (QTVI) it would be necessary to adopt an approach where a school TA supporting the pupil in class consolidates braille teaching provided by the QTVI. We have a good example of this working at two settings.

Due to the ages of pupils that are in different stages of their education it would not be possible to have all the pupils in one school. It could be possible to have one person to produce braille resources and tactile diagrams for the authority, but schools would have to be organised and distribution of the resources arranged. A neighbouring local authority has had a sudden increase in pupils accessing braille within mainstream schools. Funding from the higher needs funding block is used to buy the needed equipment. The sensory service provide training to the school in how to use the equipment and the school are responsible for producing all the resources in braille as well as tactile diagrams. A QTVI visits at least twice a week to carry out specialist teaching in braille and tactile skills which are followed up by school staff. The service also have specialist support staff who also carry out visits to support. Training on how to ensure curriculum access to teaching staff is delivered. This model could be used in Darlington.

Koenig and Holdbrook explain the achievement of pupils with vision impairment depends on their being able to understand what it is being taught and having access to appropriate teaching and learning materials (Koenig and Holbrook 2003). It is the role of QTVI to ensure staff understand each pupils optimal learning needs. Barriers can be overcome through adaptation to the environment, media, teaching style and use of equipment (NBCS). There are very few barriers to learning which are impossible to overcome (Webster and Roe 1997).

Objective 3: Ensuring that CYP with SEND are educated in their own local community and have an effective preparation for adulthood, including access to appropriate work, training and leisure opportunities.

To be prepared for adulthood, it is essential pupils have access to an additional curriculum where needed to learn specific skills to overcome barriers linked to their vision impairment. The additional curriculum comprises of the following areas :- orientation and mobility, daily living skills, independent living skills, listening skills, tactile skills involving the learning of braille, use of specialist equipment and development of social skills. Children and young people with vision impairment need direct teaching to learn skills which sighted pupils could learn incidentally. It is essential to be clear how and when this will be provided. Due to the low incidence of blind pupils in Darlington until recently there has not been a need for this provision.

In the past, there were a greater number of staff at Vane House who were qualified and could provide support to children and young people. Vane House has equipment such as a talking microwave, talking scales which could be very useful. Adults are given support with cooking skills, but it is not clear if this available for children. Young people need mobility training not just on routes in school, to and from school but also for independent travel using different means of transport through a habilitation specialist to gain all the skills necessary. It is clear there needs to be a cohesive plan between education and social care with a clear plan of skills which will be taught and when this will happen. In order for pupils to be independent they need specialist support.

Objective 4: Increasing achievement and improving all outcomes for CYP with SEND.

Vision impairment is a low incidence need. Data from the World Health Organisation and World Population Bureau stated in 2014 it affected 3.9% of the population. Many teachers will have little experience or understanding of working with pupils with vision impairment (RNIB). Therefore it is vital teachers have support from a QTVI to ensure they understand the needs of a pupil who has a vision impairment. Wester and Roe explain that good educational outcomes are possible for pupils with vision impairment. Webster and Roe show how barriers or restrictions to learning and development occur because of restrictive learning environments, inadequate and inappropriate interventions rather than vision impairment per se (Wester and Roe 1998).

To ensure increasing achievement, it is essential to continue to monitor children and young people with mild / fluctuating vision impairment to ensure they can access learning and achieve. It is vital pupils in special school continue to be given the support needed according to the NatSIP criteria whether it is monitoring or specific teaching on tactile skills which can be reinforced by staff. It is also imperative to continue to ensure pupils are given specialist support to understand their visual impairment and articulate their needs and to ensure pupils who are tactile users are given the right amount of support in class as well as having staff allocated time to prepare resources so all lessons are accessible.

Objective 5: Collaboration, co-production and communication

I have carried out some collaborative work with to carry out an event with the RNIB for parents and pupils on using iPads. It would be good to carry out more events in collaboration.

It would be beneficial to have a clear understanding of what support children and young people with vision impairment can receive e.g. in terms of daily living skills and mobility. It would be beneficial to clarify what areas of the additional curriculum are covered by education and those that can be supported by social care. It is clear there is limited capacity compared to the past when there were three members of staff and now only one.

I have worked with a habilitation specialist which has been essential to meet the children and young people's habilitation needs. It is crucial habilitation support in Darlington continues. Currently Social Care do not have a qualified habilitation specialist. It would be ideal if the person carrying out habilitation for social care working with children was the same as the person carrying out habilitation support in education. This has been arranged in one case but it would be much better if this was standard procedure. In other LA's one habilitation

specialist carries out all the mobility work whether at home or school. In other authorities habilitation specialists visit educationally blind pupils weekly and provide daily living skills as well as mobility work.

In terms of links with Health services the Vision Impairment Service don't have a group comparative to that of the Hearing Impaired team as they meet once a term with Children Hearing Services Working Interest Group CHSWG (It comprises ENT, Audiology, Education, Social Services and nursing).

It would be beneficial to have similar meetings and collaboration with all the clinics children and young people attend e.g. the RVI, Newcastle, Sunderland Eye Hospital and Darlington Memorial Hospital.

RESPONSE 9

It is outlined that children with SEND will aim high and achieve their full potential and that they are well prepared for adulthood.

My concern is that there is a very large Gypsy Roma Traveller Community which is well established in Darlington. According to recent research they are still the lowest performing ethnic group, with the poorest outcomes in the UK.

Although the Gypsy Roma Traveller community does not feature in the SEND strategy as they are not all SEND they are a distinct group in our borough who do have 'additional needs' and are a vulnerable group. These needs are distinctive as a result of many factors including low literacy skills of parents, cultural expectations and mobile/transient life styles and interrupted education. My concern is that although they have additional needs, they do not fit neatly into the Pupil Premium or the SEND category and therefore do not come with any additional funding.

As a service we want the very best for all Gypsy Roma Travellers CYP in Darlington. We continue to strive to support this community and have developed successful relationships with this traditionally hard to reach group. We have found that educational provision in Darlington Primary schools for Gypsy Roma Travellers is successful at reaching the needs of these children. However, the overall picture for GRT children accessing and continuing at our Darlington Secondary Schools is poor. Very few children transfer into Secondary school and of those that do only a handful of these reaches Key Stage 4. As a result of this a significant number of GRT children are on the Elective Home Education register. This then allows them to be a potential safe guarding issue with few opportunities and a lack of awareness of how to access employment, training and education. Once again we want to ensure that all Darlington children and young people can aim high and achieve their full potential and are well prepared for adulthood. This as you can see mirrors the aims for the Draft SEND strategy.

I feel that more provision needs to be made for the Gypsy Roma Traveller CYP here in Darlington so that they have equal access and equal choices and chances in life. There is scope to improve access to education and early identification of SEND in the Gypsy Roma Traveller community and there is a need to improve the educational experience of Gypsy Roma Traveller CYP in Secondary schools.

With no mention of Gypsy Roma Traveller CYP in the Draft strategy are we really striving to meet the needs of all CYP with additional and distinctive needs in Darlington?

RESPONDENT 10

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
10 DECEMBER 2018**

**SEND STRATEGY AND FUNDING/TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY CONSULTATION
REVIEW GROUP**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To present the outcome and findings of the Review Group established by this Scrutiny Committee to examine the proposals and submit comment on the consultation process.

Summary

2. Members will recall that, at a meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 29 October 2018 Members received a report outlining plans to consult on a strategic plan for delivering better outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and proposed amendments to the application of the High Needs Block in relation to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
3. Members also received a report on plans to consult on the introduction of a SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Travel Assistance Policy.
4. The Review Group has met on 26 November and their findings are outlined in the report.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Members of this Scrutiny Committee approve the recommendations to be forwarded as the formal response of this Scrutiny Committee on the consultation process.

**Councillor Chris Taylor
Chair of the Review Group**

Background Papers

Special Educational Needs Strategy and Funding Report and Special Educational Needs Home to School Transport to Scrutiny on 29 October 2018

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no specific implications for Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	Increased engagement for children and families in the receiving of timely services.
Carbon Impact	There is no carbon impact in relation to this report.
Diversity	There are no specific diversity issues in this report.

Wards Affected	There are no specific Wards which are affected by this report.
Groups Affected	Children and families in Darlington.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report has no impact on the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This report does not constitute a Key Decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not considered an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	To enable children with the best start in life.
Efficiency	The outcome of this report does not impact on the Council efficiency agenda.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

Information

6. A number of Members of this Scrutiny Committee attended the various public consultation events that had been organised by this authority between 5 and 21 November 2018 to consult on the SEND Strategy and Funding and the SEND Travel Assistance Policy.
7. Members met on 26 October 2018 to discuss the feedback received at the various consultation events attended and to propose a Scrutiny response to the proposals in the strategy.

SEND Strategy and Funding

8. With regard to the SEND Strategy and Funding the feedback from those parents that attended the consultation events was in general supportive of the principle of the money following the child or young person.
9. There were some concerns around transition between phases; the current lack of specialist provision in Darlington; the poor communication between home and school especially in secondary education; and the out of area placements which was above average in Darlington.
10. Parents also expressed their desire to have more information on their own child's funding and felt that there could be improved liaison between the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and schools and the overall sharing of information between professionals could be improved.

SEND Travel Assistance Policy

11. The main feedback received regarding this Policy was around ensuring that each case is examined to prevent hardship and encourage better utilisation of local facilities.

Conclusion

12. From our discussions on the feedback from the various consultation events we concluded that in general there is support for the proposals in the SEND Strategy and Funding from parents and Members, however we felt that there were some improvements that could be made to services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and disabilities. .
13. One of our main concerns was the lack of local resource bases and Members agreed that now was a good time to review the outside provision as the last commissioning was in 2010.

14. Members also agreed that the appointment of a key person for accountability and communication between parents and schools was key to the success of the proposed strategy.

Recommendations

15. It is recommended that:

- (a) There is adequate monitoring of the funding allocated, especially within the Academies.
- (b) Consideration be given to the appointment of a Parental Liaison Officer.
- (c) That more Resource Bases are commissioned in Darlington mainstream provision.
- (d) The need for a Portage Service in Darlington be re-examined.
- (e) The working arrangements with the health organisations and CAMHS be improved.

RESPONDENT 11

A response by the National Deaf Children's Society

November 2018



1. About us

- 1.1. The National Deaf Children's Society is the leading national charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people. We represent the interests and campaign for the rights of all deaf children and young people from birth until they reach independence.
- 1.2. There are over 50,000 deaf children in the UK and three more are born every day. We support deaf children and their families, and work with decision-makers and professionals to overcome the barriers that hold deaf children back.
- 1.3. There are at least 90 deaf children living in Darlington.
- 1.4. By deaf, we mean anyone with a permanent or temporary hearing loss. This could be a mild, moderate, severe or profound hearing loss. The term deaf does not presuppose the use of any one communication method and could refer to children who communicate orally or through sign language. We also include children who have a hearing loss in one ear.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation on Darlington Borough Council's strategic plan for education of children and young people with SEND from 2019 to 2022.
- 2.2. We focus our submission on the six key objectives from the draft strategy and how the proposed changes may impact on the support that deaf children receive.
- 2.3. We also make a number of suggestions and recommendations, with the aim of ensuring that deaf children and their families remain at the heart of any changes and continue to have access to high quality specialist education support.

3 Our feedback in relation to the proposals

3.1 Early identification of need

3.1.1 Early intervention

Early intervention is key to good outcomes for deaf children. The development of language and the ability to communicate lies at the heart of a child's development. Deafness and often society's lack of understanding of the needs of deaf children and young people can present a barrier to their social and emotional development, preventing them from achieving their full potential.

It is important to understand that in addition to supporting the curriculum and providing access for school aged children, Teachers of the Deaf co-ordinate and deliver specialist support for children and their families in the home from diagnosis onwards which more often than not is within the first few weeks of birth. This peripatetic Teacher of the Deaf role is particularly important in the context of the implementation of universal Newborn Hearing Screening.

Teachers of the Deaf are critical in raising parents' aspirations of their deaf child at the earliest possible stage. They also ensure that parents provide access to early language and communication, whatever mode that may be. Early intervention and support of this kind maximises the possibility of children being successfully included in mainstream schools if this is the parental choice.

This work should be monitored at local authority level, through the Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG), at individual services level and at a strategic level.

3.1.2 Social and emotional wellbeing of deaf children

We would like Darlington Borough Council to take the opportunity to review the provision of the social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs of deaf children through these proposals, given that SEMH is high on the agenda. Across the country, we are aware that the social and emotional needs of deaf children are rarely understood and provision of

effective support is often not forthcoming. This is particularly noted where there is a lack of expertise on deafness across Early Help right through to Children with Disabilities and safeguarding services.

The concerns around joint working with social care, assessments, support and the need for deaf children to have a positive self-identity of their deafness, have been evidenced in the mapping and pathways work that we have been undertaking across all disciplines/agencies that work with deaf children in County Durham and Darlington.

However, more recently and very positively, Darlington local authority has been fully involved in the North East regional education and social care multi-sensory impairment (MSI) group, who are working together and with Directors of Children's Services to develop a regional 'approach' to the assessment and provision of services for this very low incidence group of children.

Darlington Council itself has recently bought in the services of a qualified assessor to undertake a Section 7 assessment in collaboration with social care for a child. This child's profound and multiple learning difficulty (PMLD) initially appears to have masked the formal identification of the child's hearing and visual impairments. The outcomes of this assessment and the strategies put in place for this child are now improving his overall wellbeing and educational outcomes. This is an example of good practice in Darlington which we are highlighting at a regional level but we would like to move this to a regional model, sharing resources and good practice.

3.1.3 Communication options

We are aware that parents and their deaf children do not currently have access to a full range of communication options on a consistent basis. For instance, we are aware that there is a total communication approach with children, and taster sessions in British Sign Language (BSL) for parents. However, BSL and other communication choices e.g. Cued Speech, are not routinely available either for deaf children to learn and use in their local school, or for parents to learn to enable them to communicate effectively with their child.

We believe that parents should have access to a full range of different options and then be in a position to be able to choose whichever suits their child best and in whatever setting they prefer. We would welcome this being reviewed.

3.1.4 Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)

ALDs refer to various types of amplification equipment designed to improve the communication of individuals with hearing impairment to enhance the accessibility to speech when individuals are in poor listening environments. These include radio aids but also devices that use newer technology.

We are aware that radio aids are currently provided through a specialist equipment policy whereby schools pay towards radio aids. This can cause problems with schools when they may not wish to pay or they deem the radio aid to belong to the school rather than following the child to their next setting.

We would recommend a review of this system and consideration of a loan system to schools with Teachers of the Deaf being the key contact and provider of these ALDs. This would enable their knowledge and expertise to be used to ensure that deaf children access an optimum learning environment in school. It is unclear currently who has responsibility for fitting and maintenance of the radio aid during its lifetime.

In addition, we recently commissioned research¹ on the provision of radio aids in the early years, particularly in the home which highlights the positive outcomes for children when radio aids are provided. Consideration needs to be given to how deaf children in Darlington could access a radio aid at a very young age e.g. 18 months - two years old. We are aware from the research that everyday situations present a risk to learning spoken language and that using a radio aid can reduce this risk and maximise potential benefits for the child and their family by:

¹ http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/external_research/index.html#contentblock2

- Improving hearing for speech in difficult listening conditions.
- Increasing the amount parents talk and interact with their child.
- Having a positive impact on the family's well-being.

We are also aware that Darlington Council is consulting on its spending of the Special Provision Capital Fund and so we would ask for consideration on the provision of radio aids for children in the early years so that language and communication can be enriched in the home, prior to the child attending any educational or childcare setting. The Capital Fund is not ring-fenced and the Department for Education has not ruled out that it could be used in this way.

3.2 Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings

3.2.1 Teachers of the Deaf

We know that all children learn through hearing and seeing. Not being able to hear fully what a teacher is saying presents a complex learning challenge to both the child and teacher. So mainstream teachers will need much more support in areas such as effective use of technologies, effective ways of communication, improving listening conditions, the assessment of need and progress, and specialist teaching and learning strategies that work well for deaf children.

Unlike higher incidence needs (e.g. autism), pupils with sensory impairments are not spread so evenly across schools. Therefore, mainstream teachers are unlikely to have the experience, knowledge and skills to support deaf children to access the curriculum. For this reason, deaf pupils, their teachers and other education staff will depend on support from specialist Teachers of the Deaf to help deaf children progress in their education.

This support is particularly critical in the early years, when a child is developing language. Failure to support a deaf child at this time will result in higher support costs in schools as the child gets older.

It is also important to note that deaf children who have a unilateral, mild or moderate loss still need the specialist support of a Teacher of the Deaf, working closely with mainstream settings. Research commissioned by the National Deaf Children's Society² on mild and moderate hearing loss highlighted that:

- Children and young people with mild/moderate hearing losses in school have to use greater levels of effort than generally realised.
- Mild/moderate hearing loss frequently has a social and emotional impact on the child or young person.

We do not disagree however, with building capacity within mainstream schools through training that Teachers of the Deaf can provide to mainstream staff and we would encourage this. This may be around deaf awareness, supporting technology, developing skills of Teaching Assistants. We would encourage Darlington Council to embed this training as part of the overall workforce development for all professionals.

3.3. Ensuring that children and young people are educated in their local community and have an effective preparation for adulthood

3.3.1 Importance of a centrally managed service

Sensory loss is a low incidence need, meaning that it requires a different response to provision of services. Because both hearing and visual impairments are very complex disabilities, it is vital that the service is flexible if all deaf children in Darlington are to achieve excellent outcomes and this can only be achieved through keeping the service centralised. In addition, it is easier for deaf children to be managed centrally in order to maintain a consistency in the level of provision.

However, Darlington is a small authority and for low incidence groups of children such as deaf children, there may not always be the staff specialties to support deaf children in their locality, for example, educational audiologists, support for children with additional needs, working with babies, and specialist speech and language therapists.

² http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/external_research/index.html#contentblock4

In addition, it is difficult for one or two peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf based and working in a locality to develop sufficient knowledge to provide effective support for deaf children across all age ranges and all education key stages.

In response to this, we are aware of the Tees joint arrangement which supports all deaf children from across the four Tees authorities under the management of Middlesbrough Council. This gives not only a greater mass of deaf children but a higher and more specialised team of Teachers of the Deaf and other staff, to support those children. As Darlington is 'attached' to this area via for example, the Tees Valley Commissioning Group and the Tees Valley devolved council, this gives Darlington the opportunity to consider the potential for collaboration and/or a formal partnership with the Tees joint arrangement.

The SEND Code of Practice Section 3.68 advocates for this type of arrangement for low incidence needs and is indeed the reason why the MSI regional arrangement is being considered. This section highlights greater choice, access to a wider range of services and educational settings and could also represent greater value for money.

A wider partnership would not detract from deaf children being educated in their local community, in fact it could enhance that as it would be easier to move staff from locality to locality to reflect the changing pattern of need. It is also easier to ensure cover is provided for absences. In addition to this the specialist equipment necessary to monitor the development of communication, speech and language could also be enhanced through 'bulk buying'. A centrally held stock is cost effective, up to date and available to all staff.

There is also a growing change in the population of deaf children, many have more complex additional needs and many children are arriving in the country with no English or British Sign Language. These children need Teachers of Deaf with additional specialisms to support them. A sub-regional arrangement may enable this support to be delivered more effectively.

While we advocate that a central local authority arrangement should be in place, we do accept that good outcomes for deaf children may not be achieved purely through one service. Leaving the service centralised would not stop those partnerships from developing through for example the proposed Early Years Hubs.

Currently the sensory support service is devolved to a school but it does not have the appropriate management and leadership of someone with the mandatory qualification in either deafness or visual impairment. It is vital that this is put in place as soon as possible.

3.3.2 Preparation for adulthood

We are aware of the increased requirement for the low incidence team to work with post 16 deaf young people and that smooth transition is key to further improving outcomes for deaf young people. Research undertaken by Manchester University³ on behalf of the National Deaf Children's Society highlighted that:

- While Further Education (FE) is the most common destination for deaf young people leaving school, there is evidence that it does not serve many of them well.
- Decisions were being made for and with deaf young people to go to FE without a detailed consideration of what kind of FE environment might best suit them.
- In some cases local authorities were steering young people and their parents to the least expensive and most local provision without due consideration to whether it is the most suitable or effective for the individual deaf young person.
- Many deaf young people were not accessing enough information or offered enough experiences to gain the understanding they need to make knowledgeable choices about what they want to do in FE and afterwards.
- Currently there is no national process for tracking deaf young people's progress through FE, and therefore identifying what works best in which circumstances. Opportunities for effective intervention to improve outcomes are therefore lost.

³ http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/external_research/#contentblock5

It is therefore vital that Darlington Council understands the issues for deaf young people and recognises the specialist tailored careers advice that they need, as well as the full range of options for furthering their education/training at age 16. In addition to the research, a survey conducted by the National Deaf Children's Society in 2016 revealed that many Teachers of the Deaf felt they lacked the knowledge and confidence in strategies for supporting deaf young people who have not achieved good grades in English and/or Maths by the age of 16.

The Darlington SEND strategy highlights the need for equality of access and consistency and continuum of provision for post 16 as well as strengthening young people's preparation for adulthood from an earlier age. We are concerned that Teachers of the Deaf will be expected to support more deaf young people, with no additional funding or staff allocated in order to do this.

It is also not clear whether the Teachers of the Deaf currently supporting both early years and school age deaf children have the necessary expertise to work across a whole range of offers for post 16 deaf young people. For instance, will there be enough specialism and someone who is experienced in supporting deaf young people to support their move into apprenticeships and work placements, if they do not chose the FE route? It will therefore be crucial to consider how the specialist teacher's work overlaps with the colleges, apprenticeships and supported internships, and how that might work.

The National Deaf Children's Society has a range of resources to support deaf children moving into adulthood. These can be found [here](#) for parents and [here](#) for professionals. We are continuing to develop this area of our work and we would be keen to work with you on this.

3.4 Increasing achievement and improving all outcomes for children and young people with SEND

3.4.1 Mainstream settings

We believe that staff are the most valuable resource that any service can have. Teachers of the Deaf provide consistent, direct and long term support to deaf children and young people in mainstream schools in addition to building school capability and capacity. They are able to

monitor the quality of curriculum delivery and provide practical advice to mainstream teachers to make teaching and learning accessible at the level of classroom strategy.

Due to the low incidence nature of deafness in terms of numbers, even small fluctuations in the numbers of deaf children and young people can have a significant impact on caseload.

As previously highlighted, unlike higher incidence of needs, pupils with sensory impairment are not spread so evenly across schools. Therefore, mainstream teachers are unlikely to have the experience, knowledge and skills to support deaf children to access the curriculum. For this reason, deaf pupils, their teachers and other education staff will depend on support from specialist Teachers of the Deaf to help deaf children progress in their education. Failure to support a deaf child at this time will result in higher support costs in schools as the child gets older.

3.4.2 Special schools

We are aware that there is a high incidence of additional complex needs amongst deaf children and therefore there is believed to be a high prevalence of hearing loss in children attending special schools for disabled children.

Research has shown that the hearing needs of deaf children can be overshadowed by other difficulties to the detriment of their progress. Research undertaken by Manchester University on behalf of the National Deaf Children's Society on Service Delivery to Deaf Children with Complex Disabilities⁴ particularly highlighted issues in relation to deafness.

These issues related to problems and delays in assessing hearing problems, complexity of needs masking concerns regarding hearing status, access to Teachers of the Deaf, and lack of deaf awareness. What parents cited as being helpful was the flexibility of roles and individuals with for example, Teachers of the Deaf taking responsibility for their child's language development.

⁴ http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/external_research/#contentblock10

A key recommendation from this research is that all children who are deaf, whether or not they have additional complex needs, should have access to a qualified Teacher of the Deaf that is appropriate to their level of deafness and not determined by any other needs they may have, or by the educational establishment they attend. In one case in the research undertaken, a parent reported that once their child was identified as having learning disabilities he had automatically lost access to a Teacher of the Deaf and yet parents were clear that “deafness had a ‘multiplier’ effect, and that their children should have a right to regular access to a qualified Teacher of the Deaf”.

Staff within the school would need to be able to monitor hearing aids and make decisions about which children are eligible for radio aids/sound field systems as well as ordering and looking after the equipment, carrying out functional listening assessments etc., if local specialist services were not involved. This is a specialist service and one that Teachers of the Deaf are specifically trained in.

3.4.3 Resource provisions

We are aware that as a geographically small local authority in England, it becomes difficult to support those even smaller groups of deaf children who need more intensive support than the peripatetic service can provide, as well as a deaf peer group when children are communicating through BSL for example.

We do understand that placing resource provisions within the borough, as other inner city or larger local authority areas are able to do, would be very difficult in terms of numbers. Nevertheless, while we are aware that Darlington Council currently places deaf children at the resource provisions in Middlesbrough on an ad-hoc basis, it may be beneficial to seek a more formal partnership with the Tees joint arrangement to ensure that this is another option for parents to make an informed choice about the education of their deaf child.

We believe that the Darlington Teachers of the Deaf should be fully involved, not only in the decision making to send deaf children to Middlesbrough provisions but also in the ongoing support via annual reviews as they are the professionals with the expertise.

We would also expect your Local Offer to have information about other local authority resource provisions for deaf children where that authority borders Darlington.

Finally, it is important that data is collected across all areas of SEND and is fed into the JSNA as well as this strategy. The strategy currently fails to do this in terms of low incidence. We are aware that deaf children are failing to achieve good GCSEs compared to their hearing peers and fits with other areas of SEND in Darlington.

In 2017⁵:

- The average attainment 8 score for deaf children is 37.4. This means their average score per subject is 3.7 which, under the old grading, would be a grade D. This compares to the average attainment 8 score for children with no identified SEN which was 49.5 or, per subject, 5. Under the old grading, this would be a grade C.
- The progress 8 score for deaf children is -0.12 compared to children with no identified SEND which was 0.07
- In the North East the attainment 8 score was 37.4 and the progress 8 score was -0.19

This means that on average, deaf children underachieve by over a whole grade per subject compared to children with no identified SEND. This gap has widened since 2016.

3.5 Focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication

We are aware that deaf children and their parents are often seen as a 'hard group' to engage with. Nevertheless, the local authority must find ways to not only engage parents and deaf children in those conversations but to meaningfully involve them in co-production of

⁵ <http://www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=11186>

services. This is a legal requirement under the Children and Families Act 2014. We would be able to support this with our resources and best practice.

3.6 Achieving best value

3.6.1 Overall funding for low incidence needs

As previously highlighted, the formula for calculating school budgets does not evenly reflect the distribution of low incidence needs pupils and so mainstream teachers are likely to require much higher (and hence more expensive) levels of support than for other types of higher incidence SEND.

This is therefore a very good rationale for the specialist sensory support team to provide the specialist input for deaf children in mainstream schools as a centrally funded team, working across all areas and all schools in Darlington. The Department for Education's decision that low incidence specialist education services should be funded through the High Needs Block shows that this is also their expectation.

As previously highlighted, it may be even more cost efficient to join the service with the Tees area.

We would be opposed to any reduction in the budget for the sensory support service. This position is in light of the levels of support required for this low incidence group of children, and also the current underachievement and gap in attainment. For further information on funding for specialist services for deaf children we would direct you to our resource 'Specialist Education Support Advice for Commissioners'⁶.

3.6.2 Banding

While the need to budget for a level of funding for different types and levels of SEND is necessary, we recommend that the bandings that have been published should be more flexible and truly respond to need.

⁶ <http://www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=1218>

Therefore it might be advisable to allocate 'between' for example £3,001 and £6,500 for Band 4b, rather than what appears to jump from £3,000 to £6,500 with nothing in between. There is also a risk with bandings of a perverse incentive for schools for example to determine a child as being 5a for example rather than 4b as that attracts more funding.

However, we do agree that changing to banding from a delegated Element 3 level is crucial to ensure that you are responding to individual need.

We have looked at the SEND Ranges documentation and recommend that at range 5a and 6a for sensory, there should be mention of consideration of a resource provision.

3.6.3 Top up funding

The Government has made it clear that local authorities have the option to provide top up funding without the need for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). We would like Darlington Council to explore this option. There may be deaf children who for a very small amount of top up funding, could see significant improvements in their outcomes. This may mean there wouldn't be the need to apply and go through the process of an EHCP.

There would need to be clear criteria with an effective system in place so that a child is not inappropriately left without an EHCP where it is needed.

3.6.4 Robust and local governance, accountability, decision making and support

Effective leadership is crucial to the quality of service provision and good multi-agency working. It will therefore be important via the Local Offer to be absolutely clear about roles e.g. where referrals are received, how assessments and allocation of children will happen and who will carry that out.

In addition, it has to be recognised that:

- a) Many of the changes introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014 rely on support from a Teacher of the Deaf to ensure effective implementation. For example, accompanying regulations state that advice from a Teacher of the Deaf must be sought in any EHC needs assessment. Teachers of the Deaf also provide specialist advice on assessments and teaching strategies to ensure effective implementation of the 'assess, plan, do, review' cycle. In addition, Ofsted found in a study of best practice⁷ that when deaf children progressed well, it was because services were underpinned by a good understanding of the need for specialist services for deaf children and a strong commitment to maintain them.
- b) All of this is compounded by the diversity of need within low incidence. For example use of different technologies (hearing aids, cochlear implants, bone anchored hearing aids), communication preferences (oral/signing/total communication), additional needs and having English as an additional language.
- c) The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to keep provision for children and young people with SEND under review. However, your strategy contains no information on low incidence needs and instead concentrates mainly on ASD, MLD, SEMH and SLCN. While it highlights current data and recent trends, it does not consider likely changes in the future for all SEND children and young people.

4. Recommendations

Darlington Borough Council should:

- 4.1** Continue to provide the specialist education Sensory Support service as a centrally led and managed service.
- 4.2** Protect the funding of the Sensory Support Service. This should be provided via a planned budget which supports identified key trends and patterns across the borough together with the necessary and appropriate specialist staff and technology.

⁷ http://www.ndcs.org.uk/search_clicks.rm?id=7269&destinationtype=2&instanceid=641346

- 4.3** Ensure that the staff in the Sensory Support Team are led and managed by a specialist Teacher of the Deaf or Teacher of the Visually Impaired
- 4.4** Provide the statutory support of Teachers of the Deaf into special schools to support those deaf children with additional needs.
- 4.5** Consider a review of ALDs, provision of radio aids to schools and their management
- 4.6** Consider the use of radio aids for deaf children in their early years in to the home.
- 4.7** Consider the funding radio aids via the Special Provision Capital Fund
- 4.8** Review the skills and capacity of the Sensory Support Team in order to ensure that they can appropriately and effectively prepare deaf children for adulthood
- 4.9** Consider the current social care pathway for deaf children and how this can be improved to support effective early intervention.
- 4.10** Ensure that any proposed changes will lead to improved outcomes for deaf children as required by the SEND Code of Practice (Paragraph 4.19).
- 4.11** Consider how you will discharge your duties under sections 22, 23 and 24 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which makes your local authority responsible for all children with SEND. Specifically related to these sections we would ask:
 - a) How will you support health services to deliver on their duty to report to the local authority those children who have, or probably have an SEN or Disability
 - b) How will the local authority monitor the progress of deaf children in mainstream, resource provisions, special schools and out of borough placements?
 - c) What will the local authority do if it is clear that a deaf child is not making expected progress?
 - d) How will the local authority advocate for children who are not making good progress and challenge schools where support is not being provided appropriately and at the right level?

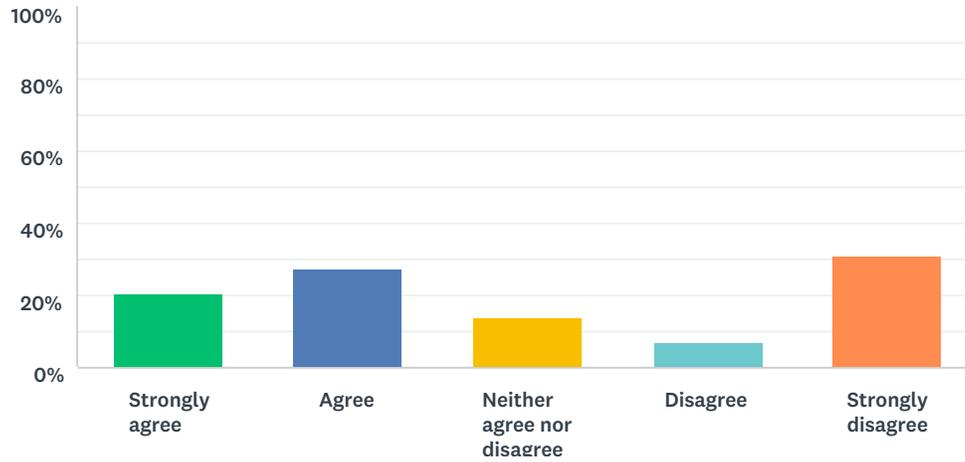
Darlington Borough Council must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice legislative framework and guidance which relates to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, and its associated regulations, when making any changes to provision. This includes co-producing services with parents and deaf children to ensure that they meet the needs of all children with SEND. This is something that Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission are now looking closely at with their inspections of local area SEND provision.

5. For further information please contact:

Alison Lawson, Regional Director for North East, Yorkshire and the Humber
Alison.Lawson@ndcs.org.uk
Telephone: 0191 5225406
Mobile: 07792 661704

Q1 To what extent do you agree that there should be an annual review of transport arrangements?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	20.69%	6
Agree	27.59%	8
Neither agree nor disagree	13.79%	4
Disagree	6.90%	2
Strongly disagree	31.03%	9
TOTAL		29

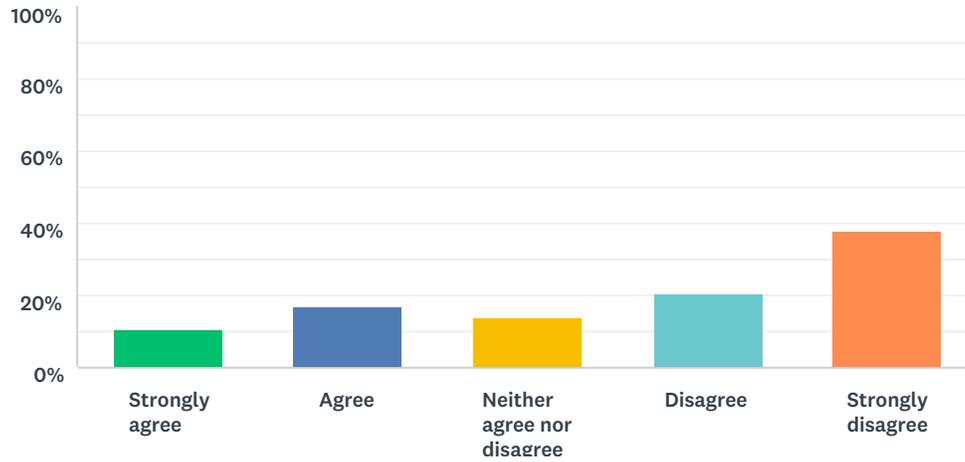
Q2 If you have any comments about the proposal for an annual review please do so here.

Answered: 11 Skipped: 18

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Would this form part of the annual ENCP review? If so, and the review were attended by DBC officer, it may be worthwhile, although we would question whether an annual review of travel assistance is relevant in all cases. Otherwise, we would be concerned about creating yet another administrative burden on educators.	12/5/2018 5:39 PM
2	It is likely this will introduce levels of stress to families, if each year support could be removed. This should be considered further in terms of the approach of how the annual review will be undertaken,	11/28/2018 11:36 PM
3	not frequent enough, children with complex needs can change and therefore it needs to be reviewed as and when required	11/28/2018 8:09 PM
4	Annual monitoring makes sense as some people's travel needs may change, increase or decrease	11/26/2018 6:49 PM
5	Just another admin burden for parents. There isn't enough staff to do the job now, it takes weeks and we never find out until half way through the summer holidays.	11/13/2018 7:29 AM
6	This will just be yet another meeting that us parent will have to prepare for and take what little annual leave we have left after looking after the kids during the summer holidays (as there is no affordable childcare for disabled children). The indication that we could lose the service if we are unable to attend is REALLY unfair. What if we or the child is ill or needs to be at a medical appointment. There should at least be another chance given or a warning system rather than losing a vital service for missing one appointment. If the Tories were doing this then Labour would be jumping up and down, this is a Labour council and I voted Labour in a marginal seat. If this goes through you have lost my vote!!!!	11/6/2018 1:32 PM
7	Why is it needed? Things don't change much in a year	11/6/2018 10:25 AM
8	My daughter is autistic and has severe learning difficulties so will never be able to live independently. She is non-verbal and therefore could never use public transport independently. So why is there a need for an annual review? It just adds another layer of administration when administering my daughter's affairs is already approaching a full-time task. There is also no indication that the council has considered or will provide sufficient staff levels to ensure that annual reviews can be completed for all current users. What if (due to council delays) the reviews haven't been completed in time for a new academic year? Will the transport be ended? Has the council considered that this could result in a significant peak in applications/reviews (presumably during the summer months when many council staff members will be on annual leave). The council should commit within the policy that if there is a delay in processing the application/review then the services will not be withdrawn during this time. Quite frankly the lack of any detail around the administration of the annual review is disgraceful, you are asking us to comment on something we know nothing about! An alternative approach would be to have options for the next review which the council administrator could select from (e.g. 12 months, 2 or 3 years and 5 years). This would allow the council to still ensure that the needs of the individual are met but reduce the burden on both the Council and the parents by ensuring that a review is only required where there is likely to be a change in circumstances within the given timeframe.	11/6/2018 9:58 AM
9	As long as the Annual Review is not used to cut transport costs, and is used to make sure transport is thoughtfully worked out to suit the needs of the children and their families.	10/23/2018 7:13 PM
10	Atypically the needs of a child with special needs who requires support does not change significantly enough within a twelve-month time period to warrant the annual review. This would also have a time cost in reviewing each case.	10/22/2018 6:46 PM
11	Parents like myself need the transport to get my children to school. I don't drive and as no one to ask.	10/18/2018 4:06 PM

Q3 To what extent would you agree to a personal travel assistance budget?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	10.34%	3
Agree	17.24%	5
Neither agree nor disagree	13.79%	4
Disagree	20.69%	6
Strongly disagree	37.93%	11
TOTAL		29

Q4 If you have any comments about the proposal of a personal assistance budget please do so here.

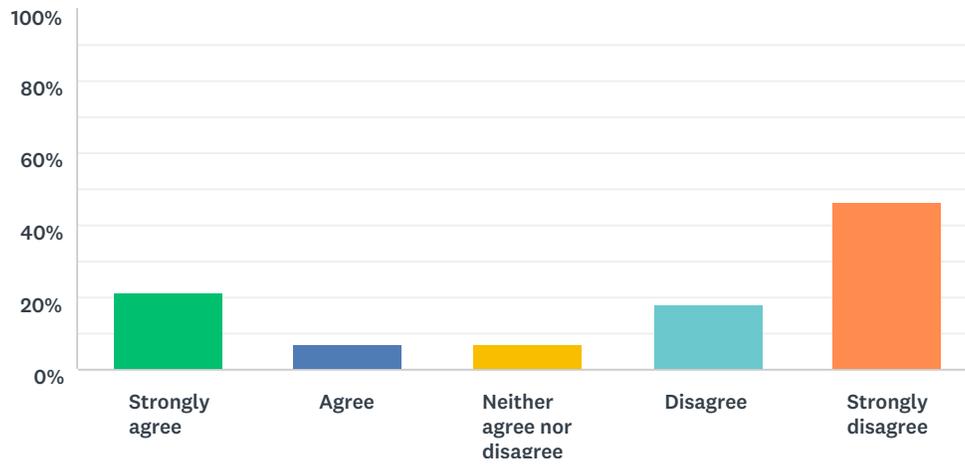
Answered: 13 Skipped: 16

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Would depend what impact this would have on benefits already being received	12/5/2018 5:42 PM
2	The current system works effectively so why change? There is a risk that this might be difficult to manage for vulnerable adults and families and could result in a lack of provision if not budgeted effectively. Seems to add an unnecessary level of complication for families. Is there the infrastructure in place to support this policy locally? There are safeguarding risks in handing over responsibility and should the safeguarding of our vulnerable young people be put in the hand of local travel companies - this is not their job. Serious concerns as also our children who currently use transport provision need continuity and trained/skilled staff who support them when travelling.	11/28/2018 11:44 PM
3	difficult to find employment which will only result in minimum hours to take to/from school. Also if they are poorly no backup plan where if a school bus/transport they will get to school	11/28/2018 8:11 PM
4	It would get spent on other things and the child would be left unable to get to school.	11/13/2018 6:17 PM
5	Stop pushing all the admin burden onto parents. First the personal care budgets and now this. There's also no detail, how can we support something if we don't know the detail. Will it be £1 each way or £10 each way. The amount being offered makes a massive difference!!! Also there is nowhere near enough taxis to accommodate this, also not having multiple children on the bus means more cars on the road.	11/13/2018 7:32 AM
6	The council is able to achieve economies of scale (e.g. by agreeing a contract with the provider at much more favourable terms than the individual parent would be able to) therefore why make the parents do all the work when there is a viable solution already in place. The parents are the ones that do the vast majority of the caring, let's not put anymore onto them else there is a risk it would be the straw that broke the camels back. How many additional kids put into care would it take for any cost savings this plan would achieve? If kids miss school or are consistently late due to the lack of suitable or available transport how much more will it cost schools/the council to try and enforce the unenforceable? This is a short sighted policy that does not consider the impact on families that are working hard to balance their jobs and caring responsibilities. At some point something has to give!	11/6/2018 1:38 PM
7	Why alter something that works? To save money I bet!	11/6/2018 10:26 AM
8	How do you know that families want to make their own arrangements? Have you asked them? There is no question on this here? So where have you got the indication that this is something that families want? There is no indication of how much money will be available so how can I support something that I know nothing about (and which could actually cause me financial hardship if the actual cost of transport is higher than the amount offered in a personal travel budget). Once again (in the same way as it has for the personal assistant budgets) the council is wanting to push the administrative/additional costs onto parents. Has the Council undertaken any research to establish if there is sufficient capacity in the private vehicle hire services in the town to accommodate the potential increased demand this will cause? Are there enough taxis with wheel chair access to accommodate the need? This is a short sighted proposal, the main purpose of this is to save the Council money not to improve the service offered. Why not be upfront about it? Be honest with the service users and actually ask for their thoughts on how the current service could be delivered more effectively. Some of us have experience in these areas and may be able/willing to assist the Council if we were only asked. Instead you put leading questions in the survey and little/no actual detail/figures/costs/analysis into the consultation document. Has the Council considered what the impact will be on attendance rates (e.g. late arrivals due to private hire firms being unable to accommodate increased demands in peak times) and the congestion within the town (due to several vehicles now taking children to schools who were previously all taken in one bus)? This is possibly one of the poorest consultation documents I have ever read with little to no detail included on what the actual impact will be on parents, pupils, schools or even the Council.	11/6/2018 10:19 AM
9	My child would be better off using the current system of using a taxi. His school is on the other of town to us and four buses a day would be too much.	10/29/2018 8:36 PM

10	I would need more information on the choices families would have to agree or disagree	10/25/2018 6:40 PM
11	Surely, to assist all families involved, it will be counter-productive to give separate allowances, and will cost more in the final process?	10/23/2018 7:14 PM
12	This is a blanket approach which does not look at the individual requirements of the young person in respect of their needs. It is significantly more expensive if the child requires an assistant and vehicle with a ramp than a standard taxi.	10/22/2018 6:48 PM
13	Why can't it stay the way it is. The transport works and if there was a shortfall I couldn't afford it.	10/18/2018 4:07 PM

Q5 Should the placement not be the nearest appropriate, to what extent do you agree that transport should not be provided?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	21.43%	6
Agree	7.14%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	7.14%	2
Disagree	17.86%	5
Strongly disagree	46.43%	13
TOTAL		28

Q6 If you have any comments about the proposal to offer assistance for the nearest suitable placement please do so here.

Answered: 15 Skipped: 14

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Would need to be clear on definition of nearest appropriate	12/5/2018 5:43 PM
2	CYPN should be placed in the most appropriate setting to meet their needs, not on the basis of financial expediency	12/5/2018 5:39 PM
3	There needs to be a condition attached, and some flexibility to assess each case on individual merit if there is collective agreement that the nearest placement is appropriate but there are other placements that would better meet the child's needs. There is a risk that the policy will result in high numbers of appeals and cost incurred offset VFM.	11/28/2018 11:49 PM
4	I am aware of incidents already where DBC were determined to keep a child within Darlington and the parent took it to a Tribe Union, who agreed with parent that their child's needs were better met outside of area, Therefore I believe that the suitable placement offer will be more based on keeping spending to a minimum rather than what is best for the individual	11/28/2018 8:16 PM
5	If children's needs to be placed somewhere suitable for their needs, corners can't be cut by taking a 'make do' attitude	11/26/2018 6:54 PM
6	It is not the child or family's fault that suitable provision is not within travelling distance.	11/13/2018 6:18 PM
7	That's not fair on the kids already given an out of town placement, so when they are next up for their annual review they could have their transport withdrawn. Leaving the parents to either pay for it themselves or have to seek alternative placement which would be really unsettling for the child.	11/13/2018 7:36 AM
8	Wouldn't impact me directly but the impact of moving the most vulnerable children from a setting in which they are settled should be considered. Are there even enough spare places available in the town if all current placements were to be ended? The impact of bringing these children back into a Darlington school also needs to be considered. The proposal as it stands provides no details at all on this area, timeframes for implementation nor the impact it could have on the children and the schools they go back to	11/6/2018 1:44 PM
9	It's not fair on the kid, it's not the kid's fault the council is skint	11/6/2018 10:26 AM
10	What if the child is already at a particular provision and you then decide that it's not the nearest suitable placement? Presumably at the next annual review you would withdraw transport. That quite frankly would be a scandal and result in significant negative publicity for the Council. The lack of clarification on this is disgraceful and underhand, if this is going to be the impact then the council should have made this clear to all parents that this could affect so that they could participate in the consultation and at least have their voice heard. Instead the council has buried this in the detail of the document, presumably in the hope that it will be missed by the majority and that this policy can be passed/implemented before anyone realises the impact it will have on the most vulnerable families. If this results in children with the most significant need no longer being able to attend their current setting where would they go? Has the council considered the impact on places within the town and if there is spare capacity within these settings to accommodate children if they could no longer attend their out of town placement?	11/6/2018 10:19 AM
11	All children must be kept safe	10/29/2018 8:36 PM
12	The initial statement is fine. If a placement is offered that is deemed appropriate but is declined by parents/carers then travel assistance should be declined	10/25/2018 6:50 PM
13	We know where the nearest suitable placement is at the moment, unless there are plans to change this? Given the distances the children have to travel to get to a 'central' placement, as at present, then the best assistance is to get them to school safely.	10/23/2018 7:18 PM
14	Not providing transport for any child categorised as SEND is fundamentally wrong and does not consider the child or the family circumstances. How are families with several children supposed to deal with the conflicting requirements of sending children to different schools?	10/22/2018 6:51 PM

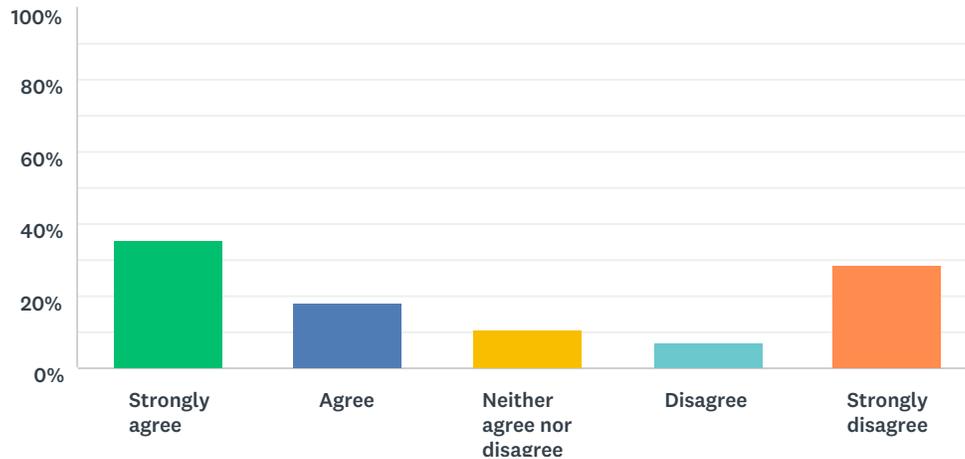
15

if my children didn't have transport they wouldn't be able to go.

10/18/2018 4:09 PM

Q7 To what extent would you agree to independent travel training?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	35.71% 10
Agree	17.86% 5
Neither agree nor disagree	10.71% 3
Disagree	7.14% 2
Strongly disagree	28.57% 8
TOTAL	28

Q8 If you have any comments about the proposal for independent travel training please do so here.

Answered: 17 Skipped: 12

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Independent Travel training would need to be very individualised and be in place for as long as was required	12/5/2018 5:44 PM
2	Who would provide the training where, when, how? How would it be funded?	12/5/2018 5:39 PM
3	Independent travel might not be realistic for all children and there are concerns that this ultimately shifts responsibility for travel safety of vulnerable young people to travel companies. However there are definitely benefits in having dedicated trainers and that they should also work with local businesses to increase community awareness of issues and support they might be able to provide themselves.	11/28/2018 11:52 PM
4	this would be a massive task, as often our children are vulnerable, yes in an ideal world that is our goal but I would need a lengthy intervention to ensure that this was not compromising my child's safety and not just about saving money	11/28/2018 8:18 PM
5	where appropriate	11/28/2018 12:41 PM
6	There is no guarantee that travel training would provide the child with road or traffic sense	11/26/2018 6:55 PM
7	What a joke, they would be targeted by other children on the bus. I think this is a really unsafe idea unless school is going to stagger their opening times? Has the safeguarding implications of this suggestion been considered?	11/13/2018 7:37 AM
8	What a waste of time. How can you train these kids to use a bus when some of them are in wheel chairs, can't communicate or are exceptionally vulnerable? For me this has significant safeguarding implications that need to be considered. Also there simply isn't capacity in the public transport links in Darlington to accommodate more pupils, the public buses that service my school are full to the brim every day. To add into that the children who currently use the local authority ran bus service for SEND pupils would be a disaster waiting to happen. The SEND pupils would be picked on as they are different to the other children and therefore would be an easy target. No amount of training can prepare a vulnerable child for that.	11/6/2018 1:50 PM
9	Making provision for when things go wrong, especially regarding personal safety	11/6/2018 11:15 AM
10	What a load of cr@p! You can train a child not to be disabled or be different from the other kids on the bus? They would get bullied!	11/6/2018 10:27 AM
11	This is likely to be a waste of money, if the training is given is it then automatically assumed that they will be able to use public transport to attend? Who would make that judgement? How can we be expected to assess if training will be effective when there is no indication as to the nature/length of the training. Will it be an hours desk based training (in which case it will not be representative of the real world) or will it be provided over a number of weeks during the peak usage hours so that it provide the children with a real world experience and therefore allowing an informed decision on their ability to use public transport to be made. Also there is no indication if the training would be compulsory or the consequences if the training is not taken up. For example my daughter would not be able to cope using public transport, the sensory overload would result in her having a melt-down and becoming aggressive to the other users of the service. I know this but to someone administrating the training they wouldn't know anything about her so it should be the parent's decision if the training is suitable to their child and there should be no negative consequences if the training is not taken up.	11/6/2018 10:20 AM
12	There needs to be a "safety net" built in such as an interim review after perhaps 6 weeks to confirm that the student is able to access the public travel system.	11/5/2018 9:23 AM
13	This would be acceptable for year 11 if they can cope.	10/29/2018 8:37 PM
14	I feel that not offering independent travel training to some of our most vulnerable students, especially during transition time is a concern and a gap in the services that you offer	10/25/2018 6:54 PM

15	But not to the detriment of getting the children to school and home again in a safe and timely way.	10/23/2018 7:19 PM
16	In respect of our child this would be of no benefit,however where the individual is able and could benefit from this it is a good idea.	10/22/2018 6:53 PM
17	both of my children are unable to do independent travelling	10/18/2018 4:10 PM

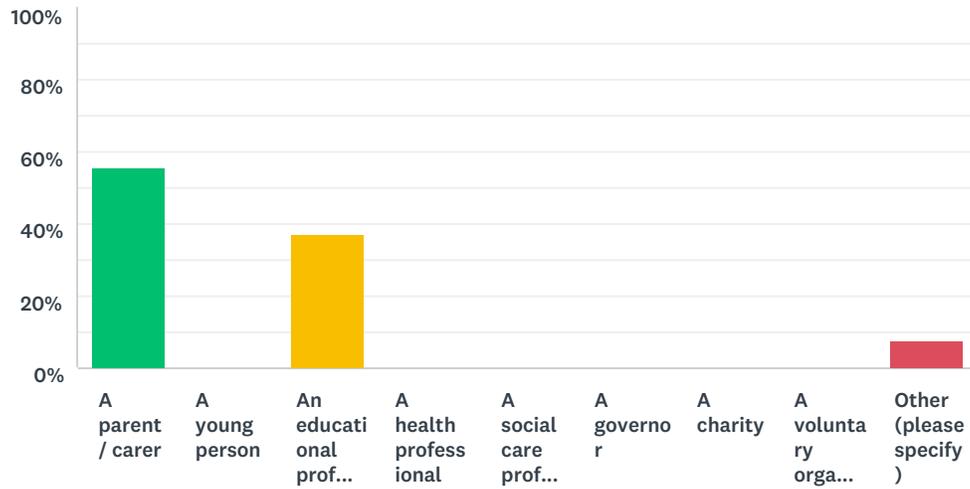
Q9 If you have any other comments, suggestions or feedback on our proposals please do so here.

Answered: 10 Skipped: 19

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The most urgent priority to address overspend in respect of SEND transport is to create additional, high-quality local provision.	12/5/2018 5:39 PM
2	The current home to school travel system works well and the travel assistant become a part of young peoples lives. It should not be underestimated the potential impact on social mobility and family income if this provision is taken away or changed. This is likely to result in significant loss of earnings to families and wider consequences of this.	11/28/2018 11:57 PM
3	The times of the consultation events have meant that I wasn't able to attend. Did anyone think what parents would be doing between 4-5pm on a school night (l.e picking their kids up from the drop off point) or on a staff training day at BHA. Did you want anyone to turn up?	11/13/2018 7:40 AM
4	This is a cost saving measure pure and simple. Stop trying to target those who are in the greatest need but least able to defend themselves.	11/6/2018 1:50 PM
5	You you be ashamed trying to take what little the poor kids have. At least let them get to school without the threat of being picked on or hurt.	11/6/2018 10:29 AM
6	Why does the consultation document not mention the finances of this at all? Yet the papers presented to the council members highlight that the main reason for this change in policy is to save money. It is outrageous that the council is yet again looking to save money by reducing the services it offers to its most vulnerable members of society. What you are proposing will limit the ability of children with significant learning and physical disabilities to attend school. That may not be the intention but that will be the outcome. If the Council decides to go ahead with this plan then it should be required to undertake an impact assessment on attendance to establish if the implementation of the plan has had a negative impact. The amounts you are looking to save are negligible but the impact on peoples lives will be immense. Please, from the bottom of my heart, reconsider it!	11/6/2018 10:20 AM
7	I would like to see included exceptional circumstances arrangements for children of nursery age - this is such a critical learning phase that exclusion from this policy may exclude a few children from accessing the high quality provision they need.	11/5/2018 9:24 AM
8	Great care needs to be taken not to disadvantage our children with cost cutting exercises.	10/23/2018 7:20 PM
9	To fully understand the requirements of the individuals and family who utilise these services it would be wise to ensure the families all receive these questionnaires in the post. We were only made aware of this through a family members involvement with local politics.	10/22/2018 6:56 PM
10	I hope my children wouldn't be effect as its very important to get my children to school. The way the travel is at the moment. Works for both children.	10/18/2018 4:11 PM

Q10 In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 2

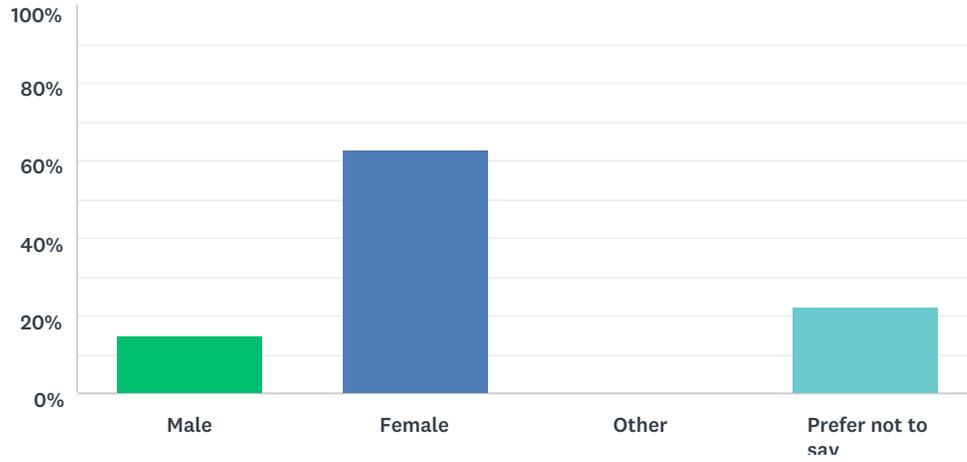


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A parent / carer	55.56%	15
A young person	0.00%	0
An educational professional	37.04%	10
A health professional	0.00%	0
A social care professional	0.00%	0
A governor	0.00%	0
A charity	0.00%	0
A voluntary organisation	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	7.41%	2
TOTAL		27

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Parent, Education Professional and governor	11/28/2018 8:18 PM
2	A grandparent	10/23/2018 7:21 PM

Q11 What is your sex?

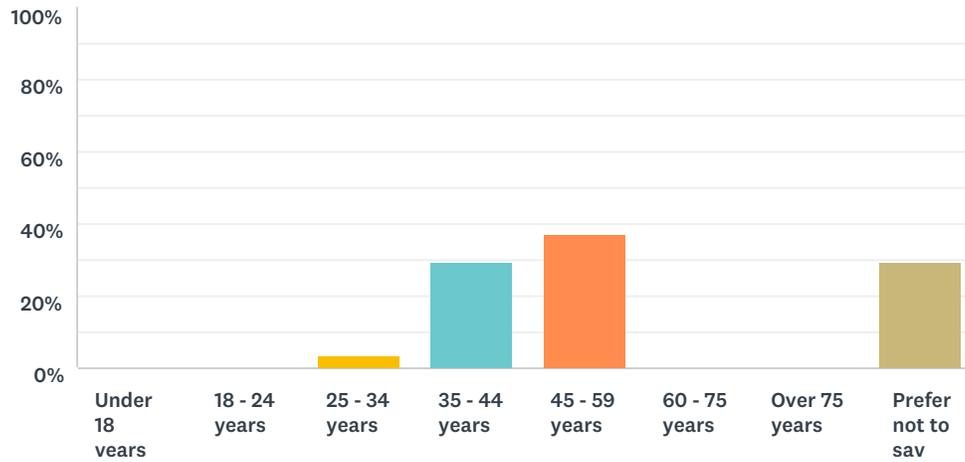
Answered: 27 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	14.81%	4
Female	62.96%	17
Other	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	22.22%	6
TOTAL		27

Q12 What age were you on your last birthday?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18 years	0.00%	0
18 - 24 years	0.00%	0
25 - 34 years	3.70%	1
35 - 44 years	29.63%	8
45 - 59 years	37.04%	10
60 - 75 years	0.00%	0
Over 75 years	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	29.63%	8
TOTAL		27

Q13 What ethnic group do you belong to?

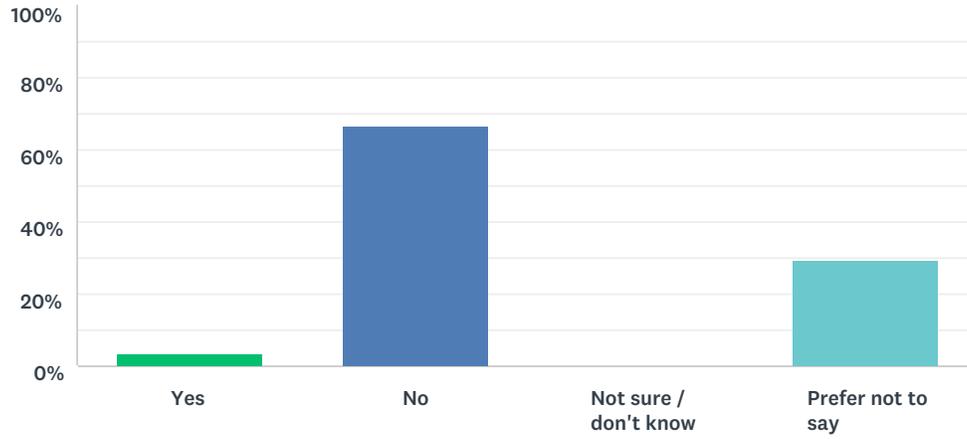
Answered: 27 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	70.37%	19
White - Irish	0.00%	0
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.00%	0
White - Other	0.00%	0
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black Caribbean	0.00%	0
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black African	0.00%	0
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Asian	0.00%	0
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - Other	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Indian	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Pakistani	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Chinese	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Other	0.00%	0
Black / Black British - African	0.00%	0
Black / Black British - Caribbean	0.00%	0
Black / Black British - Other	0.00%	0
Arab	0.00%	0
Other	0.00%	0
Not sure / don't know	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	29.63%	8
TOTAL		27

Q14 Do you consider yourself to have a disability

Answered: 27 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	3.70%	1
No	66.67%	18
Not sure / don't know	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	29.63%	8
TOTAL		27

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CABINET
5 March 2019

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS STRATEGY AND FUNDING

Responsible Cabinet Member
Councillor Cyndi Hughes,
Children and Young People Portfolio

Responsible Director
Suzanne Joyner, Director of Children and Adults Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report advises Cabinet of the outcomes of the recent public consultation. Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the updated Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) strategy (2019-2022) (**Appendix 1**) which summarises the strategic plan for delivering better outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs. Cabinet is also asked to consider and approve changes to the funding model for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Summary

2. This report provides a summary of feedback received during the consultation process for the proposed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy (2019-2022). The consultation took place in October 2018 and comments were invited to a draft SEND strategy and submitted via online survey or via consultation events.
3. During the public consultation there was a positive response to the strategic objectives outlined in the draft SEND strategy with the majority of respondents supporting the identified key aims.
4. The report outlines proposed changes to the funding arrangements for SEND which aim to ensure a transparent, clear and fair allocation of funding, following a needs led "money following the child" approach and address budgetary pressures. During the consultation the majority of respondents supported the introduction of a new funding approach. Concerns were raised about the level of funding attributed to individual need and proposals have been amended to address these concerns.
5. During the consultation, concerns were raised about the impact of new funding arrangements on families and schools. The move to a money follows the child

model may have a negative impact on individual school budgets and therefore transition funding arrangements have been put in place to mitigate against the impact of these changes. Furthermore, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure the assessed needs identified in a young person's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are met regardless to any changes in funding arrangements and therefore the proposed new funding model ensures that all children with SEND will receive sufficient funding to meet their needs and that schools will be accountable for evidencing that all their pupils with SEND are receiving adequate support.

6. The report details commissioning intentions to extend local SEND provision so that more Darlington children with SEND can be educated locally. The majority of respondents to the consultation supported the commissioning intentions to work with education partners to provide more local places for pupils with a primary need of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD).
7. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and this is included in **Appendix 5**. Members are asked to read the Equalities Impact Assessment in full before making a decision. The Equalities Impact Assessment identifies both positive and negative impacts that will follow from the introduction of the SEND strategy and revised funding model.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that Cabinet:-
 - (a) Consider the feedback from of the public consultation
 - (b) Read and note the Equalities Impact Assessment that has been undertaken
 - (c) Approve the adoption of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy (2019-2022).
 - (d) Approve the implementation of the revised funding model for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Reasons

9. The recommendations are supported for the following reasons:
 - (a) To drive the work of the SEND partnership in Darlington through to 2022 to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.
 - (b) To address pressures on the high needs funding block budget.
 - (c) To ensure that school funding for children with SEND is aligned to children and their needs, and that schools are held accountable for ensuring that children's needs are effectively met.

**Suzanne Joyner,
Director of Children and Adults Services**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Tony Murphy: Extension 5637

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	The SEND Strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability in the borough.
Carbon Impact	There are no issues which this report needs to address.
Diversity	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken. This identifies both positive and negative impacts from the changes proposed, but with appropriate support being available for children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability in the borough.
Wards Affected	Children and young people with SEND may live in any ward.
Groups Affected	Children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The report contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy Priority 'the best start in life'.
Efficiency	There are no direct efficiencies to the Council from the information contained within this report.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The SEND Strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability in the borough, some of which could be Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

The SEND Strategy

10. Darlington's Special Educational Needs Strategy 2017-2020 was approved by Cabinet on 5 December 2017. This updated version builds on progress to date, identifying what has been achieved and our priorities for action up to 2022.
11. The vision for the strategy is that it promotes inclusion, maximizes young people's opportunities to be independent and enables young people with special educational needs and disabilities to be recognised as fully integrated citizens with the ability to contribute to their local community.
12. The document has been designed as a joint local area strategy in collaboration with health services in the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the North of England Commissioning Support (NECS), and education providers through the Primary Heads Forum and the 11-19 Partnership.
13. The strategy has been written to respond to the key priorities set out in the SEND code of practice, and highlights local strategic aims associated with each priority area for implementation. These are set out below:
 - (a) **Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support**
Early identification and intervention is essential to prevent underachievement and improve outcomes and improve children's life chances.
 - (b) **Building capacity in mainstream settings to enable children and young people to be educated in appropriate settings locally**
Children and young people with SEND need to have good quality support in their mainstream and local settings so that they can achieve their academic potential and maintain their self-esteem and confidence.
 - (c) **Ensuring that children and young people are educated in their local community and have an effective preparation for adulthood and access to work and leisure opportunities**
Being educated in their local area enables pupils with SEND greater independence and a sense of contributing and belonging to their local community. Children and young people with SEND tell us that they want to make friends locally and access local facilities with their families.
 - (d) **Increasing achievement and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND**
Address the underperformance in educational achievement across the Key Stages but particularly at Key Stage 4 through targeted interventions, appropriate curriculum, high quality training and effective quality assurance, monitoring and moderation.
 - (e) **Focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication**
Ensuring that all policies and practices are co-produced with all

stakeholders and with the active involvement of parent/carers and children and young people.

(f) **Achieving 'Best Value' (human, physical and financial resources) from all our services**

Effective, efficient and co-ordinated services that meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families. With increasing demand we must ensure that the right resources are going to the right children in the right place.

14. The SEND Strategy sets out our vision in Darlington for a well-planned continuum of provision from birth to age 25 that meets the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families, and that we expect every early years setting, post 16 provider, mainstream school and academy to have the capacity and confidence to deliver effective provision.
15. The strategy aims to identify children with SEND at the earliest possible opportunity and provide them with the support they need to make good educational progress and achieve good outcomes so that they and their families feel well supported. It recognises the importance of providing good training for all staff, whichever setting they are working in, using the best expertise and knowledge, sharing best practice and by promoting a model of collaborative working and shared responsibility.
16. The strategy aims to ensure education, care and health services are delivered in an integrated way so that the experience of families accessing services is positive and children and young people's learning and development, safety, well-being and health outcomes are well promoted alongside their educational progress and achievement.

SEND in Darlington

17. The most recent published national data (from January 2017, published in SEN in England in July 2018) shows that 3.3% of Darlington pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This is slightly higher than the North East average of 3% and above the England average of 2.8%.
18. The published data shows the profile of primary need in Darlington is different to that seen nationally. A higher proportion of school age children have social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) identified as their primary need than nationally, 19.9% in Darlington compared to 15.7% across England and 16% across the North East) (**Appendix 2 Figures 1 and 2**).
19. The contrast is particularly different for pupils with SEMH placed in specialist provision, with 28.8% of Darlington pupils with SEMH as a primary need placed in a special school compared to 13% across England, making Darlington the 4th highest.
20. The data indicates that there is a high number of pupils identified with SEMH as a primary need and that a high ratio of those pupils are being educated in

special schools. However this may not be the best way to achieve good outcomes for those children. **(Appendix 2 Figure 3).**

21. Darlington has seen a significant rise in the total number of EHCPs in the last 3 years **(Appendix 2 Figure 4)**. The number of plans has risen from 385 in January 2013 to 683 in January 2018. This equates to a rise of 77% throughout this period.
22. The increasing levels of EHCPs are more significant since the profile of placements for pupils is skewed towards independent specialist provision. In England 41.9% pupils with EHCPs are placed in mainstream schools compared with 30.6% in Darlington, evidencing that a smaller proportion of young people are educated in mainstream schools **(Appendix 2 Figure 5)**. Darlington also places a higher proportion of young people with EHCPs in Independent Special Schools (5.1% compared to 2.3% across the North East and 3.7% across England).
23. This trend is more pronounced in relation to EHCPs issued in 2017. Darlington placed 9.8% of new EHCPs in Independent Special Schools in 2017 compared to 2.7% across the North East and 2.9% in England **(Appendix 2 Figure 6)**. In 2017 Darlington had the 5th highest proportion of new EHCPs placed in Independent Special Schools in England.

Developing Local Provision

24. The SEND strategy identifies the key priority of providing high quality local provision. One of the key drivers for the placement of pupils in high cost out of borough independent placements is the lack of suitable local specialist provision.
25. The strategy identifies key areas of consideration of commissioning local provision to meet need and manage demand.

Type of Need	Phase	Delivery
Pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH)	Primary	Resource base in a primary school setting
Pupils with Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH)	Secondary	Resource base in a secondary setting or alternative provision
Cognition and Learning - MLD	Secondary	Resource base in a secondary setting

Public Consultation

26. Following approval from Cabinet on 9th October 2018, a public consultation was undertaken between 17th October 2018 and 28th November 2018. The general public and key stakeholders were invited to participate in the consultation. A series of public consultation events were held at which the draft strategy was presented which outlined the key challenges and opportunities identified and questions for consultation. Surveys and key

documents were also available online. Full details of the consultation outcome are detailed in **Appendix 3**.

27. Consultation with Children and Young People was organised and included representatives from “Voices”, “Next Steps”, “Young Leaders” and school councils. School councils at Marchbank Special School and Beaumont Hill Academy were involved in the consultation.
28. Health professionals e.g. service leads (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Audiology, Ophthalmology; etc.) were contacted directly as well as the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the North of England commission support unit.
29. A summary of the responders is outlined in the table below:

Table 1: Summary of responders to SEND public consultation

Response Type	Numbers
Total survey responses (including hard copy survey's received)	108
Public Events (including open health, social care and school meetings) number of attendees	99
Children and Young People Events – number of attendees	50
Total number of detailed written responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers of Deaf and Visually Impaired, Darlington Low Incidence Needs Service - National Deaf Children Society - Federation of Mowden Schools - Traveller Education and Attainment Service, Darlington - Parent/Carer - The Federation of Darlington Nursery Schools - Darlington CYP Scrutiny Committee - Carmel Education Trust - Darlington Association on Disability - Parent Carer Forum 	11

30. The SEND strategy survey was built around the 6 draft key objectives. The table below outlines the responses received through the formal surveys. There was strong public support for the strategic objectives outlined in the strategy.

Table 2: Summary of responses to strategy objectives

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft strategy objective of:	Total agreed	Neither agree nor disagree	Total disagree
Early identification of need ensuring that the right children	92.41%	5.06%	2.53%

and young people are in the right placement with the right support			
Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings to reduce reliance on specialist out of area placements 0-25	80.00%	4.29%	15.71%
Ensuring that children and young people with SEND are educated in their local community and have effective preparation for adulthood and access to work and leisure opportunities	82.36%	5.88%	11.76%
Increasing achievement and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND	90.77%	3.08%	6.16%
Focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication	92.31%	1.54%	6.16%
Achieving Best Value (human, physical and financial resources) from all our services	87.30%	6.35%	6.34%

Re-shaping of the High Needs Block

31. In order to ensure pupils with SEND in Darlington fulfil their potential, the funding system that supports them needs to be transparent and targeted to meet a child's individual needs.
32. Under the current school funding framework, the Government allocates amounts to each local authority through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), based on four blocks.
- (a) Schools Block
 - (b) High Needs Block
 - (c) Early Years Block
 - (d) Central Schools Block

The allocations for the blocks in 2018/19 are:

Block	Allocation £'000's
Schools	65,102
High Needs	12,253
Early Years	6,827
Central Schools	1,454
Total	85,636

Figures updated July 2018, pre recoupment

33. The High Needs Block caters for pupils with special educational need and disabilities (SEND). It funds Darlington special schools, SEN resource bases in mainstream schools, pupil referral unit (PRU) and the provision of education to

those pupils with complex or severe needs requiring support in a non-maintained or independent special school (NMI). It provides additional funding to primary and secondary schools for pupils with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs), and also funds specialist support services (e.g. physical and sensory support, speech and language therapies).

34. The high needs funding system supports provision for pupils and students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from their early years to 25. The Children and Families Act 2014 extends local authorities' statutory duties relating to SEND across the 0 to 25 age range.

Darlington 17/18 Funding Model

35. The system for funding high needs provision in Darlington up to the end of the 17/18 academic year was both complex and unclear. There was a lack of transparency for schools and parents about how the funding system worked and the funding schools received was not allocated to an individual pupil's needs.
36. Guidance from the Education, Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) states that schools and academies should have sufficient funding in their delegated budget to enable them to support pupils' SEND where required, up to a mandatory cost threshold of £6,000 per pupil (Element 1 & 2 below).
37. Only when this threshold is crossed, can a school apply to the local authority for high needs top up funding from the DSG (Element 3 below). This national policy change was introduced in 2014.
38. There are 3 ways schools are funded nationally to support pupils with SEND:

Element 1	This is the core budget and it is used to provide education and support for all pupils in the school, including those with SEND. Nationally this is set at around £4,000
Element 2	The notional SEND budget. Schools have a duty to identify, assess and make special provision for all children with special education needs and disabilities. Schools are expected to contribute £6000 to support a pupil with high needs
Element 3	"Top up" funding for a pupil with complex or exceptional needs is allocated to the school after a statutory assessment has been carried out and the pupil has been given an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

39. Nationally, most LAs have applied a "top up" level of funding to the notional £6,000 on an individual pupil basis since 2014. This funding is awarded per individual child and the amount depends on the pupil's level of assessed need. An EHC plan describes a pupil's needs, agreed outcomes and required provision and the top-up funding is directly linked to these. Nationally, most LAs

operate a universal high needs banding system which is used to allocate the appropriate level of funding for each pupil.

40. Darlington’s funding model did not follow this approach. Rather than applying a “top up” to the notional £6,000 funding, a combination of a delegated lump sum and “top up” model was in place. Primary schools received a lump sum payment which replaces top up funding between £6,000 and £13,500 with additional “top up” funding applied. Secondary schools received a fully delegated lump sum model with no “top up” payments.

Darlington Funding Model		
Element 1	Core budget	
Element 2	The notional SEND budget.	
Element 3	Primary	Secondary
	Mixture of “top up” funding linked to pupil and delegated lump sum payment to school	Delegated lump sum payment to school. Funding does not follow individual pupil

41. The funding scheme did not apply a “money follows the child” model, resulting in a wide variance between the funding a school received and the number of pupils at the school with an EHCP.
42. It is important that the funding system is transparent, and is as fair and equitable as possible. The demand for High Needs top up funding must be more financially predictable and more closely linked to the needs of individual pupils.
43. School Forum has agreed to implement a fully “money follows the child” model with effect from the 2018/19 school year. However, there remains a need to revise the existing funding model to clarify resources available to schools and deliver an equitable and transparent allocation. It is proposed to move to a system introducing more specific top up funding arrangements, graduated to support the most profound level of individual need.

A new funding model

44. The following proposals are designed to create a clearer, simpler high needs funding model that is more easily understood by parents, carers and professionals across the system. They are designed to simplify the current banding system and to deliver the necessary savings to the system to address the increasing demand.
45. It is proposed to introduce a SEND ranges model based on national best practice in determining the needs of pupils with SEND. They are based on the four areas of the SEND Code of Practice (2014) and on the “golden thread” of the graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review that underpins SEND best practice.
46. This approach to assessing pupil needs will determine the “top up” funding that will be allocated to ensure that individual pupil needs are met in the most

effective and efficient way. It is a “needs led approach” rather than purely allocating provision.

47. There will be greater emphasis on accountability and targeting of notional SEN funding and additional “top up” funding to meet needs. Allocations of “top up” funding in addition to the notional £6,000 per pupil SEN budget will require an evidence base of the assessment of need, the range of interventions in place and the impact and outcome. Schools will be required to demonstrate how they are spending the notional £6,000 SEN budget before further “top up” allocation will be considered.
48. The SEND ranges model, which schools, health professionals and parent/carers have contributed to, will provide a clear framework as to the level of SEN provision which can reasonably be provided from within the resources available to mainstream schools. The application of the ranges will reduce the risk of inappropriate pupil placement in high cost specialist provision.
49. It is proposed to move to a single “universal” banding system for all mainstream schools in Darlington in line with the principle outlined in the SEND code of practice of “money follows the child.” The transition to a new funding model may have an impact on individual school budgets. This will be a significant shift for schools in the current system, and so the changes will be applied through a transition period in the 18/19 and 19/20 academic years to mitigate any negative impact.
50. The LA has a statutory duty to meet the assessed needs contained within an Education, Health and Care Plan regardless of any changes to the funding system. Children and young people will continue to have their assessed needs met under the revised funding model. There is a statutory process of annual reviews to ensure needs are reviewed annually and the required provision to meet needs is maintained.
51. The consultation sought views on a revised funding model to provide funding to schools that is directly related to the assessed needs of the child or young person. This funding would be used for the provision of resources for that individual and would be a needs-based approach of money following the child/young person. Darlington’s previous funding model was a combination of a delegated lump sum payment to schools and top up to the notional funding.
52. There was strong support that a new funding model would provide a consistent, simpler system. There was less consensus around the proposed funding levels attached to the range of need.

Table 3: Summary of responses to funding model

Question:	Total agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Total disagree
To what extent do you agree with the proposals to move from the current system, which is varied across the Borough, to a consistent and applied	88.71%	6.45%	4.84%

approach for all primary and secondary educational settings?			
Darlington Borough Council has put in place the SEND ranges which cover the four areas of the Code of Practice. There are ranges of need between 1 and 7. To what extent do you agree with these bandings?	32.76%	29.31%	37.93%
The funding proposals are designed to create a clearer and simpler model that is more easily understood by parents, carers, young people (where appropriate) and professionals. To what extent do you agree that the proposals will create a clearer and simpler system?	68.96%	18.97%	12.07%

53. In response to the consultation, changes have been made to the banding proposals to reflect respondents' views that the gaps between banding rates could impact on outcomes. A higher rate has been added to the banding rates to reflect the need of pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) in specialist settings. The revised funding proposals are detailed in **Appendix 4**.

54. Darlington Parent Carer Forum and Darlington Association on Disability submitted written responses to the consultation. The Parent Carer Forum raised the need to provide more detail in particular to the top up funding model in order for an informed response to be made. This was addressed and a briefing was provided and made available on the website and at public meetings. Additional public events were organised in response to requests by parents and carers. All parents and carers of children and young people with EHCPs were individually contacted to let them know about the consultation.

Developing Local Provision

55. The SEND strategy identifies the key priority of providing high quality local provision. One of the key drivers for the placement of pupils in high cost out of borough independent placements is the lack of suitable local specialist provision.

56. The strategy identifies key areas of consideration of commissioning local provision to meet need and manage demand.

Type of Need	Phase	Delivery
Pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH)	Primary	Resource base in a primary schools setting
Pupils with Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH)	Secondary	Resource base in a secondary setting or alternative provision
Pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)	Secondary	Resource base in a secondary setting

57. £800,000 of special educational needs and disability (SEND) provision capital funding (SEND Capital) is available to the Council from Department for Education (DfE) to:

- (a) Improve the quality of provision for children and young people with EHCPs 0-25;
- (b) Create new (additional places) at good or outstanding settings;
- (c) Improve facilities or develop new facilities - which can be expanded, reconfigured, re-purposed, and can include capital installations such as hoists.

58. There was strong support shown in the public consultation for the proposed usage of the Capital grant.

Table 4: Summary of responses to commissioning intentions

Question:	Total agreed	Neither agree nor disagree	Total disagree
Do you agree that we need to develop provision in these areas of need?	88.71%	6.45%	4.84%
Do you agree this is appropriate use of the money?	75.81%	16.12%	8.06%

59. To receive this funding, the Council is required to publish on the Local Offer by the end of March 2019, a short plan identifying the numbers, type and location of the proposed new places.

60. Following the result of the public consultation the following two stage project selection process has been designed and agreed with the Council's Legal and Procurement.

Table 5: Commissioning of provision

LOT	Provision	No of Places	Broad Area of Need and Primary Need
1	Primary School	Up to 16	Social Emotional Mental Health – (SEMH)
2	Secondary School/ KS3 provision	Up to 16	Social Emotional Mental Health – (SEMH)
3	Secondary School	Up to 16	Cognition and Learning - MLD

Expressions of Interest

61. Expressions of interest in providing the new places were invited from all mainstream, specialist and independent KS1-KS4 provision in the Darlington area. Detailed guidance on the scoring criteria (Table 6) was provided to schools and a commissioning event was held. It was expected that some schools could deliver new places without the need for additional accommodation or significant capital works.

62. The Department for Education expects new places to be created in Ofsted good or outstanding schools. However, settings that are not good or outstanding but wish to express interest in delivery of SEND places could do so through this process and Ofsted grading was not part of the overall stage 1 score. The LA can attribute funding to settings that are not “Good” or “Outstanding”, upon consultation with the Regional Schools Commissioner, as long as all other options have been explored.

End Stage 1: Project Shortlist

63. The expressions of interest were scored by a panel of LA officers and the recommended short list of projects agreed by the Director of Children and Adults Services. The shortlisted projects have been identified at Rise Carr College and Red Hall Primary School. Both of these provisions are graded “Good” by Ofsted.

64. Both proposals are from maintained settings. When considering any reorganisation of provision that the LA recognises as reserved for pupils with special educational needs, including that which might lead to children being displaced, proposers will need to demonstrate how the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for those children. Therefore the LA will run a statutory process for Rise Carr College and Red Hall Primary School as creation of SEND specific places is a prescribed alteration.

Table 6: Shortlisted proposals for new provision

LOT 1	Primary School Provision	Places (Up to 16)	Social Emotional Mental Health – SEMH
Proposal 1.1	Red Hall Primary School	16	<p>Brief Project Summary:</p> <p>Development of a Resource Base¹.</p> <p>SEND capital funding (subject to feasibility and options analysis) to support the development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 classroom areas • 2 smaller spaces – for sensory provision and break out space for therapeutic work. • Toilet facilities, small kitchen and staff office

¹ DFE guidance: provision reserved for pupils with SEN includes both "resourced provision" (where pupils spend more than half of their time in mainstream classes with support) and "designated SEN units" (where pupils spend more than half of their time in special classes).

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A secure outdoor space
LOT 2	Secondary School/ KS3 provision	Places (Up to 16)	Social Emotional Mental Health - SEMH
Proposal 2.1	Rise Carr College	16	<p>Brief Project Summary:</p> <p>Development of a designated SEN Unit which will operate predominantly for KS3 though a small allocation of places will be given over to KS4 dependent on need. KS3 will operate through a child centred approach. KS4 places will principally be developed around pathways for progression post-16, access to high quality work experience placements where appropriate and extended transition periods into the destination provision whilst building resilience and community networks to support through the next stages of education. Each child will follow a programme appropriate to both their educational and therapeutic needs.</p> <p>SEND capital funding (subject to feasibility and options analysis) to support the development of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 teaching spaces • 3 therapeutic/meeting spaces • 1 larger multi-use space • Toilet facilities, small kitchen and staff office • A secure outdoor space
LOT 3	Secondary School	Places (Up to 16)	Cognition and Learning - MLD
	No responses		

65. The proposals on the shortlist will go forward to stage 2. Due to the challenging DfE timescales, it is necessary to publish the shortlist of projects by the end of March before Stage 2/feasibility has been completed. However, officers are confident that we have sufficient information to secure the capital funding and that the list of projects can be updated in the future. Settings are aware that to

meet the DfE deadline, the shortlist will be made public before the completion of feasibility stage first in this report, and upon publication on the Local Offer website, and that this is not a guarantee that their project will be invested in. Officers will continue to explore options for new provision for pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties.

Stage 2: Feasibility

66. Feasibility studies will be carried out by the Council on the proposed projects and they will then be scored on appropriateness, timescales and deliverability.

Financial Implications

Current Budget Position

67. Darlington's High Needs Block (HNB) allocation for 2019/20 was £12.25M. An overspend of £1.40m is projected for this year based on the current profile of high needs expenditure. In addition to this, £1.6m of overspend has been carried forward from 2017/18, therefore a combined overspend of over £3m is expected to be carried forward into the 2019/20 financial year. This level of expenditure against the HNB is financially unsustainable and we need to develop a more affordable system of funding high needs, in line with the level of funding Darlington receives from the government.
68. The combination of the three key demands increasing rates of ECHPs, the high level of mainstream top up payments and the types of placements for young people with EHCPs is placing considerable pressure on the HNB.
69. From 2015/16 to 2017/18 spend on mainstream "top up" payments increased from £1,342,661 to £1,670,248. Spend on independent special school placements rose from £1,271,069 in 15/16 to £2,392,507 in 17/18.

Dedicated Schools Grant

70. The Department for Education (DfE) are intending to introduce revised national funding arrangements for all school funding blocks. The DfE's intention is for schools' budgets to be set on the basis of a single, national formula (a 'hard' formula) from 2021/2022. To ensure some transitional stability, local authorities can continue to set a local formula for schools in both 2019/20 and 2020/21.
71. The vast majority (99.5%) of the schools block is ring-fenced and must be distributed through a formula directly to schools. In consultation with their Schools Forum, local authorities can move 0.5% of funding into the High Needs Block. Local Authorities can make a request to the Secretary of State to move more than 0.5% of the school block to support the High Needs Block.
72. In 2018/19 in agreement with Schools Forum, Darlington moved 0.5% (£325,000) of the schools block into the high needs block to reduce high needs pressures. School Forum has agreed to transfer 0.6% of the school block to support the High Needs Block in 2019/20.

Projected Savings

73. The chart below illustrates the projected savings to the mainstream top up spend by implementing the new funding model in comparison to the historic Darlington model (as outlined in paragraphs 24 to 29). (Note the figures are based on pupil characteristics during 2017/18 and are illustrative as the actual spend will be based on the actual pupils in school in each year).

	<u>18/19</u>	<u>19/20</u>	<u>20/21</u>
Historic Expenditure	1,733,394	1,733,394	1,733,394
Historic Funding Model	577,798	0	0
Transitional Funding Model	1,166,848	545,148	0
New Funding Model	0	828,861	1,243,291
Total	1,744,646	1,374,009	1,243,291
Savings	(11,252)	359,385	490,103

The savings are shown in financial years, system changes are introduced in academic years

74. The changes to the mainstream top up system are projected to save in the region of £490,000 once fully implemented, therefore a further £1.5m of savings will be required in the HNB in order to balance the budget in future years. Further changes to the delivery of high needs are currently being investigated to deliver the savings required to balance the budget in year and recover previous years overspends. A plan of high needs delivery changes proposals will be formulated during the current academic year to address this overspend.
75. With effect from 2019/20 the DfE intends to tighten the rules governing deficits in local authorities' overall DSG accounts, under which LAs have to explain to the DfE their plans for bringing DSG accounts back into balance.
76. Following the conclusion of a national consultation exercise, it is expected that in May 2019 the DfE will require a report from any LA that has a DSG deficit of more than 1% as of 31st March 2019. The report will need to have been discussed by our local Schools Forum. The report will outline the Local Authorities' plans to address the overspend over future years.

Legal Implications

77. Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and assess the special educational needs of children and young people for whom they are responsible. Once a local authority becomes aware that the child/young person in their area has or may have special educational needs, the local authority must ensure that those children/young people receive support to help them in "achieving the best possible educational and other outcomes".

Equalities Impact Assessment

78. The Local Authority also has an Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 and an obligation to make reasonable adjustments for disabled persons when exercising its functions. Consideration has been given to understand the potential impact of proposals and the appropriate steps have been taken to

mitigate against any identified negative impacts where relevant. Members are asked to read the Equality Impact Assessment at **Appendix 5** in full before making a decision.

79. The Equalities Impact Assessment has identified some potential negative impacts that may result from the introduction of these proposals.
80. The consultation raised concerns regarding the potential effect on changes to funding for individual children or young people with SEND. Where children and young people have SEND then they will continue to be eligible for funding in accordance with their level of need. There are likely to be some children and young people who, as a result of the changed funding model, have a reduced level of funding applied to their education provider for their support. Their education provider will still receive sufficient funding to meet the needs identified in a child or young person's Education, Health and Care Plan. There will be some education providers who will receive increased funding through a "money follows the child" model as this will more accurately reflect the number of pupils with SEND on their roll.
81. The change to the top up funding model may result in reductions in allocations to schools and settings through the funding allocation model. This may mean that education settings who are currently receiving higher funding allocations for pupils may, in the future model, receive less funding. If prior, to the changes, the funding was used by the school generally, rather than specifically for SEND, then there may be negative impacts from the reallocation of this funding to SEND. This will impact all children and young people, not only those with SEND – as a result of a reduction in overall resources. However, the new funding model will ensure that SEND funding is targeted rather than allocated to education provision as a whole and that all children with Education, Health and Care Plans are allocated sufficient funding to meet their needs. In addition, some schools and establishments may benefit from an increase in their funding allocation as a result of the new model which means their pupils will be positively impacted by the proposals.
82. Transitional funding arrangements will be in place to mitigate and manage the changes that are being introduced to the funding model to enable schools to adjust and plan.
83. The consultation raised concerns regarding the potential effect on changes to funding for individual children or young people with SEND. Some parents and carers had some anxiety about what the proposed changes would mean for them and their children. The embedding of the SEND ranges and associated processes in order to evaluate support that would be expected to be in place will ensure that children and young people's needs must be proven to be met with any funding allocated and settings to be held accountable for meeting children and young people's needs. Any negative impacts will be limited due to the LA's statutory duty to meet assessed needs through the EHCP, which will ensure that all children with identified SEND are allocated sufficient funding to meet their needs. Furthermore, requests for assessment will be accompanied by clear evidence of need, e.g. through use of the SEND ranges and costed provision maps this will ensure that the LA can monitor and challenge to ensure that CYP receives the provision and support that they require.

84. We will continuously monitor the impact of the changes on individual children and young people and on school budgets. This will include reporting via the School Forum.
85. The implementation plan has a communication strategy which should help in ensuring that children and young people, parents and carers and schools have a clear understanding of the changes and way that they will be affected. It is hoped this will contribute to reducing any anxiety that may be caused by the changes.

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Darlington Council Strategy for Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) 2019 - 2022



**“THE BEST START IN
LIFE”**

**OUR STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 0-25 WITH SEND**

**“Keeping Children and Young People at the centre of all we do, by providing
services built around the child, their family and the community”**

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1. Executive Summary

The purpose of Darlington's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2019-2022 for improving outcomes for Children and Young People with SEND 0-25 giving them the 'best start in life' is to outline our shared vision, aims and key priorities for supporting Darlington's Children and Young People with SEND and their families.

Our aim for all Children and Young People with SEND is that they have the right support and opportunities at the right time so that they become resilient, happy and successful adults. We will develop our strategic approach to preparation for adulthood in the key outcome areas of:

- Independence
- Friends, relationships and community participation
- Health and wellbeing
- Education, employment and moving on

This is set within the national context and our statutory requirement to meet the needs of Children and Young People under the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014 and our local context with the rising numbers of children who have a range of complex needs and the

need to provide high quality, ambitious and responsive services within financial constraints.

Darlington Local Authority and the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are fully committed to Children and Young People with SEND and their families and strive to ensure that they receive the highest quality provision, at the point that it is required, wherever possible. We have analysed our gaps in provision, used a range of data across services and settings and improved partnership working with a wide range of stakeholders. We endeavour to work closely with the Parent/Carer forum in all that we do.

Elected Members, leaders and managers from education, health and social care services are driving our ambition through the Darlington SEND Steering Group, the Children and Young Peoples Joint Commissioning Operational Group, the Health and Wellbeing Board as well as through CCG and Local Authority Governance mechanisms including CCG Executives and Cabinet.

We recognise the wide range of services that play a part in delivering our ambition and that working in a collaborative and multi-agency way is crucial to our success.

One of our key strategic objectives is effective collaboration, co-production and communication. We must always listen, communicate effectively and develop our current and future services together and in partnership – it is only then that we can truly develop the provision for which our Children and Young People with SEND richly deserve. The local area SEND Partnership Improvement Plan is key to ensuring we take a multi-agency approach to SEND.

We have used the available information and feedback through consultation processes and ongoing engagement with partners to identify our key objectives, priority actions, opportunities and challenges in meeting the growing needs and numbers of Children and Young People who have SEND. The consultation feedback indicated that whilst parents welcomed the new SEND Strategy, the local area still has quite some distance to travel in order to ensure that young people and their families have confidence in the robustness of the proposals to implement and embed positive change.

Ensuring good outcomes for Children and Young People with SEND should be a priority for all agencies and when the Local

Area can respond as a system to get things right for these learners, the SEND Strategy will benefit children with additional needs by embedding and promoting a fully inclusive and fully person centred approach amongst professionals and peers, which will lead to a greater understanding of our local population.

It will be important that we have high quality specialist staff with the right skills, knowledge and experience in our settings who will be supported by a comprehensive workforce reform strategy across all services. We will need to support the coherence between all services to respond to newly developed SEND Ranges and to support schools, services and settings to effectively implement high quality interventions.

We will strive to ensure that there is equality of access to our services and that we have consistency and a continuum of high quality provision 0-25. Our Children and Young People with SEND and their families are pivotal to the success of this strategy. One of our key strategic objectives is effective collaboration, co-production and communication. We must always listen, communicate effectively and develop our current and future services in partnership with all stakeholders – it is only then that we

can truly develop the provision for which our Children and Young People with SEND richly deserve. The local area SEND partnership improvement plan is key to ensuring we take a multi-agency approach to SEND

2. Introduction and Vision



Darlington's Children and Young People with SEND will aim high and achieve their full potential, grow up to be as independent as possible and become active citizens within their community.

These are the key values that underpin this vision:

- Focus on the child's real experience
- Being proactive early
- Investing in local solutions
- Being aspirational on holistic outcomes
- Value Families
- Investment in systems and services that we know work

This SEND strategy 'The Best Start in Life', aims to meet the requirements of the Children and Families Act in a way that is ambitious, inclusive, realistic and person centred within a challenging financial context. It was developed with stakeholders responsible for implementing changes and with parents, carers and young people at the core. It is our shared vision across Education, Health and Care in partnership and co-production with our families and young people. It sets out our next steps for improving outcomes and opportunities for

every Darlington child and young person with SEND.

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced the biggest changes to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in a generation; a new statutory duty on the Local Authority (LA) and other statutory bodies including the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to ensure that the views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their parents/carers are at the centre of decision making and that they are given the right support and information in a timely manner to ensure they are able to participate in decisions which help them to achieve good outcomes.

Achieving inclusive education would mean that Children and Young People with SEND are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of school life alongside their peers. This Strategy recognises that all partners have a role in supporting this goal. A whole system approach to working is crucial, ensuring that there is a joined-up approach to make a positive difference to the lives of our Children and Young People in Darlington –

this approach is set out in Darlington's Children and Young People's Plan.

Children with SEND in Darlington are prioritized at a strategic level. We know this because we have:

- Strong leadership and governance of the SEND Reforms overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- The SEND Steering Group has representation from all key agencies and includes a strong voice from the Darlington Parent Carer Forum.
- Clear strategic oversight from the Director of Children's and Adult Services and Lead Member for Children and Young people.
- Oversight of SEND developments from the CCG Executive Board.
- Cabinet oversight and full public consultation on the updated SEND strategy.

Over the past year we have started to review all our provision for SEND to ensure that it is 'fit for purpose' and meeting the growing and complex needs of our young people. We have worked closely with schools, settings and services to engage all stakeholders and to start planning collectively and effectively together. We

are using our analysis of our SEND data and will be seeking the views of our parents, carers and young people to 'future proof' our services and to recognise where our gaps are and to find solutions to our challenges.

Darlington Borough Council have successfully developed and implemented [SEND Ranges](#) across schools and services so that we can more accurately assess need and to ensure that there is a 'graduated response' to meeting those needs. Strategic partners and stakeholders have been engaged in the discussions around funding and the changes that need to be made to ensure that the system can get 'best value' from all of our resources for example through the SEND Joint Commissioning work and priorities as outlined in the Joint Commissioning Statement of Intent, and in our developing SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy.

We have good links across our multi-disciplinary services and recognise that we need to work more consistently. We are above the national average in our completion of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) within the 20-week deadline but we need to improve our quality of plans,

systems and processes and the involvement of parents and carers in the process. All statements of special education need were successfully converted to Education, Health and Care Plans by the statutory March 2018 deadline.

Going forward we recognise that there is much to do to keep pace with demand, to improve the quality of provision further and to ensure that more Children and Young People can have the specialist support they need in local schools, post 16 providers, work placements and early years settings.

Our challenges for this strategy include:

- We have a higher than average number of Children and Young People with EHCPs when compared with both regional and national averages and our growth in the number of plans over the past 4 years has been high.
- Children and Young People with SEND are achieving well in the Early Years and in Key Stage 2 with children with an EHCP and

SEN Support making better progress than the EHC plan cohort nationally. Progress at key Stage 5 is good. However, the performance at Key Stage 4 is a concern.

- Ensure that we can improve support for children with Autism (ASD), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMH).
- Reduce the number of children with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) in our special schools.
- Increase our capacity in mainstream schools and in particular in our secondary schools to meet the needs of Children and Young People with SEND and to reduce our dependence on out of authority placements.
- Our evaluations of services and liaison with various stakeholders including education settings, has highlighted an emerging need around ensuring that children are arriving at school ready to learn and with the necessary foundations upon which to build skills and abilities.

Partner agencies must work collaboratively and supportively to deliver this strategy in a way that is affordable and provides best value for money, whilst recognising the unprecedented increase in the number of Children and Young People supported by high needs funding and the corresponding increase in pressure on broader health and care services for those aged 0-25 years and beyond.

This Strategy is for all Children and Young People with SEND and their families, it is also for other stakeholders and organisations who work together to secure high quality provision that is efficient, sustainable and effective.

3. The Policy Context

National Context

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a set of significant reforms across all education, health and care services. The overall purpose of the reforms is to bring about better outcomes for Children and Young People from birth to 25 by:

- Implementing a new approach to joining up support across education health and care from birth to 25
- Ensuring help is offered at the earliest possible point
- Ensuring children and young people, parents and carers are fully involved in determining their own aspirations and participate in the decisions about the type of support they need to achieve these
- Establishing coherent and efficient ways of working.

There are specific requirements and obligations that are placed on Local Authorities and other statutory agencies that are set out within the Act itself and also implementation guidance is contained within the SEND Code of Practice 2014. The relationships developed between local authorities and CCGs are therefore vital in establishing effective joint commissioning

arrangements for SEND, something which both organisations are under a duty to deliver.

Our priorities for Children with SEND are shaped by the Children's and Families Act 2014 and within that the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years. The Act sets out the responsibility to improve services, life chances and choices for vulnerable children and to support families. It underpins wider reforms to ensure that all Children and Young People can succeed, no matter what their background. The Act extends the SEND system from birth to 25, giving children, young people and their parents/carers greater control and choice in decisions and ensuring that their needs are properly met.

The new approach to special educational needs and disability makes provision for:

- Children and Young People and their families to be at the heart of the system
- close co-operation between all the services that support children and their families through joint assessment, planning and commissioning of services
- early identification of Children and Young People with SEN and/or disabilities (SEND)

- a clear and easy to understand local offer
- support provided in mainstream settings where possible for children with more complex needs
- a co-ordinated assessment of needs and a new 0-25 Education, Health and Care plan for the first time giving new rights and protection for the 16-25 year olds in further education and training comparable to those in school.
- a clear focus on outcomes and planning for a clear pathway through education into adulthood, including paid employment
- a focus on living independently and participating in their community
- increased choice and opportunity overall and families to be able to express a preference and the offer of a personal budget for those Children and Young People who have an EHC plan.

Local Context

Darlington's Children and Young People's Plan 2017-2022 – 'The Best Start in Life', covers all services for children, young people and their families. For young people leaving care, responsibility extends beyond the age of 20. For those with learning difficulties it extends to the age of 25 to

ensure the transition to adult services is properly planned and delivered. The principle of extending the provisions and age ranges within services is also reinforced within the national NHS planning guidance and the Ten-Year Plan and within the Darlington CCG Operational Plan.

Darlington's Children and Young People's Plan 2017-2022 sets out the following vision:

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

- children with the best start in life
- more business and more jobs
- a safe and caring community
- more people caring for our environment
- more people active and involved.
- Enough support for people when needed
- More people healthy and independent
- A place designed to thrive

To do this we will:

- Build strong communities
- Grow the economy
- Spend every pound wisely

We can only achieve our aspirations for the future if we recognise that Children and

Young People are our future. We need to ensure that Darlington is a place where:

- All Children and Young People are safe from harm
- All Children and Young People have the tools to do well at all levels of learning and have the relevant skills to be prepared for life
- All Children and Young People enjoy a healthy life
- All Children and Young People enjoy growing up
- All Children and Young People are listened to

The SEND Reforms are an important cornerstone for this work and ensures that the Children and Young People's plan is realised and embedded in all that we do.

This **SEND Strategy** aims to ensure that:

- we have a collective and shared vision and an agreed action plan across all services in partnership with families and their children.
- we have an effective needs analysis evidence base across education, health and care to help us plan and decide how best to use our resources

- we are constantly listening to the views, aspirations and ambitions of Children and Young People and their parents and carers. We aim to ensure co-production with parent/carers and young people when we develop and commission person centred services
- resources are used where we can measure best value and where they make the biggest difference
- pathways for Children and Young People and their families are clear, easy to understand and support effective planning in preparation for adulthood
- all our provision, settings and services are of high quality and are accessible across universal, targeted and specialist support
- we have speedy resolution of problems and disagreements.

4. Population - Some Key Facts



Darlington is a unitary authority and covers an area of approximately 200 square kilometres. Darlington's current population is 105,396, having risen by over 6% since 2001. Of this population, approximately 24% are Children and Young People (aged between 0-19) and 39% are of working age (16-64 years old). Within this working age population 79% are economically active (in work or unemployed), 58% of these people work in the Borough and 21% commute out of the Borough to work.

Darlington is in the top 30% most deprived local authorities in England. It is ranked as the 97th most deprived area out of 326 on the index of multiple Deprivation 2015. The level of child poverty is worse than the England average with over 1 in 5 children under 16 years living in poverty. The concentration of children living in low income families is disproportionately evident in certain wards in the Borough. There are health issues in the borough relating to alcohol, smoking and diet resulting in differing life expectancies between electoral wards.

Darlington is an aspiring town with big ambitions for all of its Children and Young People to have the best start in life (Children and Young People's Plan 2017-2022). This plan supports the vision of

creating the local sustainable community strategy 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed' through building strong communities, growing the economy and achieving best value from all its resources. (Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026 revised in 2014).

Darlington and the other four Tees Valley local authorities have collaborated to establish a Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA). The TVCA unites the five local authorities on key decisions that affect the Tees Valley, helping to strengthen the area and accelerate economic growth. In almost all indices, Darlington's economy has outperformed regional and national growth trends. Recent trends show an improving picture regarding the skills and productivity of Darlington residents with an increase in employment rate, average earnings, coupled with dramatic reductions in the claimant count and unemployment rate.

SEND facts and Figures – as of August 2018

- There are currently 731 active EHCPs for those SEND pupils who are the responsibility of Darlington Borough Council (as opposed to those EHCP pupils in Darlington Schools) these are broken down as follows – Pre-school

14, Primary 245, Secondary 266 and Post 16 206

- Over the last three years there has been a significant rise in assessments with currently 122 new requests to date this year as opposed to 161 for the whole year 2017 and 122 for 2016
- Darlington is above national and regional average for the numbers of EHCPs. The numbers have risen significantly since 2014 from 410 to 731
- The most prominent primary needs are Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and Autism (ASD) followed by Social Emotional and Mental health needs (SEMH) and then Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
- In the Early years the primary needs are mostly ASD and MLD in terms of those children with EHCPs. However, current caseloads for the Early Years' Service show there is a high proportion of young children coming presenting with communication and interaction as their broad area of need with the majority having a social communication need
- In the primary phase ASD and MLD are the highest areas of need followed by SLCN and SEMH. In the secondary phase the highest need is SEMH

particularly in Years 10 and 11 followed by MLD and ASD. However, in the Post 16 phase the number of SEMH pupils decline and ASD and MLD are again the highest need

- The 2018 SEN2 published data shows that 39.1% of Darlington EHCP pupils were in a special school. This is 4.3% above the national average. 27% of Darlington EHCP pupils were in mainstream provision (excluding resource bases) and this is well below the national average of 34%
- There is a high incidence of MLD secondary aged pupils in special school placements of which the moderation of plans against the LA SEND ranges indicate that many of these pupils could be catered for in mainstream provision
- There is a high incidence of SEMH secondary aged pupils in independent placements. Moderation of these pupils' EHCPs suggests a number of these pupils may only be in independent provision due to a lack of suitable local provision
- The numbers of EHCP pupils in independent provision is only 2% of the EHCP cohort but costs are

disproportionally high for this group. An increase in numbers is expected

- New assessment requests reflect the current primary need profile of ASD, MLD and SEMH however there has been a spike in SLCN requests and those are generally from Early Years
- There is one secondary Resource Base which supports Social and Communication Difficulties including ASD. There is a significant demand for SEMH and MLD specialist provision in the secondary phase
- For those Post 16 young people with EHCPs who are engaging in education, over 72% are learning in the college sector, 15% are in special school and just under 6% are in the independent sector
- Darlington has a higher than average persistent absence rate and this includes pupils on SEN support. 48% of the pupils with fixed term exclusions had SEN and the number of days lost because of fixed term exclusions was higher for children with SEN than those without. Half of the SEN students excluded had a primary need of SEMH.
- In line with national trends there has been a significant rise in the number of

- parents electing to educate their children at home.
- Children with Low Incidence needs in Darlington are supported by a dedicated service and specialist teachers. There has been an increase in children with profound hearing and vision loss.
- Additional information is available within the Darlington Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which can be found [here](#)
- In 2017 at the Early Years Foundation Stage none of the small number of pupils with a statement / EHCP achieved a good level of development (GLD) in Darlington. However, the SEN pupils with SEN support achieved better than the national measure at 34.3% (national 27%). Overall for SEN pupils, this equated to a higher percentage of pupils achieving a GLD than similar pupils nationally.
- In 2017, a higher proportion of SEN pupils in Darlington met the expected standard of phonic decoding when compared with the national average. The gap between Darlington and national results was particularly high for pupils with a statement / EHCP.
- When compared to the national average, SEN pupils in Darlington performed less favourably at Key Stage 1 in 2017. However, maths was stronger for pupils with a Statement or EHCP and reading was a particular strength in Darlington.
- In contrast to Key Stage 1, the achievement of SEN pupils at Key Stage 2 was stronger in Darlington for 2017 compared to the national average. This was the case in all subjects with the exception of writing for pupils with a statement / EHCP. The results for SEN Support pupils are higher than those in the North East and Statistical Neighbours with a national ranking of 25. However, pupils with a statement / EHCP are average for these geographical comparators.
- At Key Stage 4 pupils with SEN in Darlington performed less well than their national comparators in all measures. Nationally 26.9% of pupils achieved the expected Attainment 8 score compared with 24.6% in Darlington. Nationally pupils with SEND achieved an average progress 8 score of -0.59% in Darlington this was -1.08%.
- For post 16 learners performance at Level 2 for those with statements / EHCPs at 18.20%, is above that of statistical neighbours (12.33%) and the England average (15.30%). However, for those with SEN support needs, at 26.20%, it is well below statistical neighbours (36.64%) and the England average (37.00%).
- Darlington has a higher percentage of post 16 students with EHCPs in further education provision compared with the national average, although this may be due to the low number of school sixth form places in Darlington. There is a higher than average percentage of post 16 students with EHCPs in post 16 specialist institutions than the North East and national averages.
- Service Self Evaluation processes have enabled us to review performance and activities within therapeutic service settings. Although most of CCG commissioned therapeutic health provision operates within the commissioned 18 week wait, we are aware that often families feel they wait too long to access the services that they need. We are addressing this as a system, to ensure that notification and referral pathways are appropriate, and that Children and Young People can access the right therapeutic services at the right time when they need them.

5. Our Challenges and Opportunities

We continue to face a number of challenges, many of which reflect the national position:

- There are issues with agencies recommending that children are not 'ready for school' this has a greater impact on schools further down the line.
- Attainment and progress for Children and Young People with SEND requires improvement in Key Stage 4
- There are a rising number of students with SEMH identified as their primary need
- There are a significant number of children with ASD diagnosis which impacts on the ability of services and settings to respond effectively to the wide ranging and complex needs. Numbers of Children and Young People (with or without Autism diagnosis) who have communication and interaction needs are growing fast and our services are not in the right shape to respond
- Our Resource Bases require a new remit and focus alongside effective outreach support provision
- A lack of provision in the secondary phase for pupils with an identified need of SEMH and MLD

- The need for mental health support at universal and targeted level is evident
- Significant rise of the number of EHCPs
- Need to have an increase in employment opportunities and supported employment practice Post 16 and increase access to supported internships and apprenticeships
- Access to personal health budgets
- The increase in demand for specialist placements has meant there is significant pressure on High Needs Block funding
- A rise in the number of parents choosing to electively home educate their children

We can also take advantage of the following opportunities:

- Strong working partnerships across services and with schools and colleges and stakeholders
- Strong commitment to joint working and joint commissioning
- The creation of more local services and reduction in external placements would allow us over time to invest in more preventative and early intervention services for children with SEND

- The SEND Capital Grant presents the opportunity to increase capacity
- The SEND Ranges gives us a good start to hold settings to account and to ensure that the interventions are part of a graduated response with accountability
- A reshaped funding process for SEND in Darlington will give greater accountability for spend with improved consistency of funding across the Borough and savings on out of area placements.

6. Our Achievements So Far



We have made considerable progress on the implementation of the 2014 Reforms, as set out below but we have more to do to embed our approach.

Accountability

We have a shared culture of accountability through which stakeholders demonstrate robust performance management. We know this because we have:

- Completed a robust multi-agency self-assessment identifying progress in the implementation of the SEND reforms
- Developed a Partnership Improvement Plan which is monitored monthly by the SEND Steering Group with exception reporting against targets and actions
- Held multi-agency development sessions where health and education staff identify opportunities for joint working and develop a shared vision
- Regular, embedded Performance Clinics in place across LA Education Services which inform quarterly DCS Assurance clinics where service development, compliance and quality of LA SEND services are held to account
- A Local Authority Transformation Programme where High Needs strategic planning and system

management is monitored and challenged.

Joint working

- The SEND Steering Group has been established and takes a leadership, accountability and steering role and is the principle mechanism for bringing together our collective work.
- Improved and improving working relationships and engagement between the LA, CCG and schools/colleges and other Stakeholders
- Strong partnership working between Education, Health and Social Care with an increasingly effective sharing of information
- A strong partnership has been developed with Health colleagues and a strategy for mental health provision in schools has been developed
- We have agreed a joint commissioning approach, have an approved Joint Commissioning Statement of Intent and are in the process of formalising a strategy. We have started the process of considering joint commissioning in a specific area and have plans to expand this work.

- Designated Clinical Officer role developed and recruited to by the CCG since June 2018, working closely across the partnership to support services in the identification co-ordination of and strategic oversight of provision for Children and Young People with SEND and has a key in providing training across the system and promoting the SEND agenda
- Early years notification between health and SEN has been developed and is in the process of being embedded
- Strong and effective education and health-based arrangements in place to monitor arrangements for vulnerable children.

Data, Systems and Services Improvement

- A gap analysis with regards to our SEND data across Education, Health and Care
- Data systems and flow across education health and social care agencies is improving, which will enable identification of Children and Young People with SEN or an EHCP across the system.

- Work has been undertaken within North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust to develop the data recording systems to capture the achievement of personal outcomes according to the extent to which outcomes have been achieved (met, partially met, not met) and to enable further narrative to be collected where outcomes are not met. This is being piloted and evaluated within one service prior to expected roll out within the Trust and wider.
- A review of the panels and an establishment of a vulnerable pupil panel. Panels have clear criteria and remit for operation.
- A thorough review of the funding to schools and services which has been shared with schools and a plan/timeline in place for a revised funding formula to be in place from September 2019.
- Review of Resource Bases and outreach support services to ensure best value.

Education Health and Care Plan Progress

- There has been excellent progress on timeliness, both in the transfer of statements to EHC plans, and on the

proportion of EHC Plans issued in 20 weeks.

- The quality and consistency of EHCPs are improving however further work will be undertaken to assess, evaluate and improve the quality of the content within all plans and to ensure multi agency contribution
- All EHC Plans are reviewed annually. There is work required to improve this process to ensure all agencies can effectively contribute to the review process and that progress in outcomes can be captured.
- Moderation of all EHCPs in all settings against the SEND Ranges which demonstrates excellent practice and commitment, identified good practice is currently being operated.
- Personal Education Plans for children looked after are an area of strength.

Achievement

- Children on SEND support achieved higher than the national average in early years.
- Key Stage 2 progress is strong with pupils with an EHCP and SEN support making better progress than the EHCP cohort nationally.

- Progress and retention at Key Stage 5 is good with positive feedback from students and parents.

We have made significant progress towards improving outcomes for young people to stay in education, employment and training.

Working with Children, Young People, Parents and Carers

- Availability of information and advice for parents across services has been improved by the introduction of parent guides and a local guide to health services but to date parents/carers feedback surveys have not captured how useful these have been.
- Work is underway to ensure that Children and Young People with SEN or an EHCP are identified and flagged at the earliest point by the most appropriate professional.
- Previous Parent/Carer feedback shows that the majority of parents feel that their views were taken into account by Education, Health and Care when their child is identified with SEND.
- We have improved choice and control through a range of ways Children and

Young People are engaged in the process of assessment and planning resulting in more personalised Outcomes and plans to achieve those Outcomes.

Partnership Working

- We are working with the Council for Disabled Children to develop/delivering/facilitating some training for a multi-agency workforce (education, health and social care) to address the values and principles of aspirational outcomes and to develop local processes.
- Development work has been undertaken with NHS Foundation Trust Provider agencies to develop the infrastructure required to deliver Personal Health Budgets, this has included Service Development Improvement Plan (SDIP) negotiations around notional and indicative costing, to facilitate with resource allocation.
- Successful introduction of the SEND Ranges in schools and across settings and services supported by in depth high quality training and support from agencies as appropriate in response to identified and assessed needs

supported by in depth high quality training and support for the workforce including SENCOs, Governors and other stakeholders.

- Joint moderation has taken place between LA, Schools and Health of all EHCPs in settings against the SEND ranges is in place.

7. Our Strategic Priorities for SEND in Darlington

We believe that every Darlington child and young person should, where possible, be supported in the community where they live. We will achieve this through access to good quality local Early Years provision, schools, post 16 settings, work-based training providers and employers. We believe that Children and Young People should have the right to fulfilling lives and equality of access to learning and other opportunities as well as appropriate health and care support in response to their diagnosed needs whilst recognising and understanding the specific needs of the families.

Children Young People with SEND and their families have previously told us that they want:

- *To be listened to and have our views valued*
- *To have the needs of the whole family considered to help families have more choice and control to develop independence and resilience*
- *Competent and well-trained staff with a good understanding of SEND*
- *Professionals to work collaboratively so that there is one conversation to support the family preventing duplication and fragmentation*

- *Help to navigate the system*
- *For Children and Young People with SEND to have a mentor to discuss how, where and when support should be provided*
- *Transparency about the range of services and support available and how to access them*
- *Clarity about accountability and what we can expect services to deliver.*

We are committed to the following key priorities in order to deliver our vision:

- Early identification of need ensuring that the right Children and Young People are in the right placement with the right support
- Building capacity in mainstream settings and reduced reliance on specialist and out of authority placements 0-25
- Ensuring that Children and Young People are educated in their local community and have an effective preparation for adulthood and access to work and leisure opportunities
- Increasing achievement and improving outcomes for Children and Young People with SEND

- Focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication
- Achieving Best Value for money from all our services through the review and planning of services and development of mechanisms for effective commissioning including joint commissioning arrangements and decision making.

We are committed to safeguarding and protecting all Children and Young People with SEND. We want to provide a well-planned continuum of provision from birth to 25 and beyond. This means high quality and well-integrated services across education, health and social care which work closely with young people, their parents and carers and where individual needs are met without unnecessary bureaucracy or delay. We want the journey from childhood to adolescence and through to adulthood to be a good experience for all with young people taking informed risks, making choices, being challenged and challenging boundaries as part of their growing up journey.

In order to deliver our aims and key priorities we will;

- Ensure a person-centred approach to service delivery and that all our plans, services and policies are co-produced with families
- Have a local offer which helps children, young people and their families to plan and make choices about their support
- Ensure that SEND Ranges are fully embedded and utilised in all settings and continue to focus on a Quality First approach in our universal settings
- Provide systematic, proactive and appropriate early identification, early help and provision which will be available locally
- Ensure successful preparation for adulthood including supporting independence, independent living, training and employment.
- Support the aim through effective workforce reform and education, health and social care services that are based on high quality interventions
- Establish clear pathways and transition between and across services
- Have a strong commitment at all levels to ensure effective partnership working and co-production happens
- Active involvement of all partners in developing practice supporting each other to understand differing views, priorities, skills and talents
- Have effective joint commissioning strategies which will provide greater synergy across services and will ensure accountability at all levels
- Put in place funding and support that is allocated fairly and openly

SEND STRATEGY OBJECTIVE 1

Early identification of need ensuring that the right Children and Young People are in the right placement with the right support.

What success will look like?

- There are clear, effective processes to identify children's needs early and partners communicate and co-ordinate services well
- The percentage of children with SEND assessed in Early Years as achieving a Good Level of Development to increase year on year

- Children are better able to engage with the school's curriculum and more likely to reach their full potential at school
- Children and Young People with SEND achieve well at every stage of their learning
- There is effective transition from each setting and each key stage
- All agencies working together in partnership to ensure that early identification and assessments have clear synergy
- Clear, accessible and up to date information is available through effective Local Offer and informed staff.

Why is this important?

- Parents and carers have told us that it is their most important priority for their children to get the help and support they need at the earliest opportunity
- Early identification and intervention is essential to prevent underachievement and improve outcomes and improve children's life chances
- Delay in the above can give rise to further learning difficulties and subsequently to a loss of self-esteem, frustration in learning and possibly to behaviour/ emotional difficulties.

Key Priority Actions to achieve our objectives

1. Ensure support and intervention services are fully engaged in delivering the SEND agenda.
2. Consideration to be given to developing an Early Years Hub with specialist support to ensure that the LA identifies needs through a multi-disciplinary approach at the earliest stage.
3. All schools and settings to embed the SEND Ranges into practice and ensure that provision maps are detailed, costed and demonstrate the impact of interventions and pupil outcomes.
4. Ensure the process of identification and assessment of need is effective and statutorily compliant and that effective training is in place across all services.
5. Review panel structures to ensure that settings are held effectively to account.
6. That all outcomes in EHCPs and Annual Reviews are clear, measurable, achievable and in line with the SEND Ranges.
7. Review the designation of all specialist settings (Resource Bases and schools/colleges/work placement and employment) and support services to ensure that Children and Young People

access the right provision with the right support.

8. Further develop the positive work with parents, carers and families in ensuring that provision for the most vulnerable groups is of the highest quality.
9. Parents, carers, families to receive high quality advice and support from the SEND Information Advise Service.
10. Review the Local Offer to ensure that it is accessible, easy to manage and to navigate.
11. Develop more effective communication between Education, Health and Social Care services so that the right provision is commissioned and there is a joint approach to future planning.
12. Review the role, remit and function of 0-19 universal offer to ensure it is fit for purpose in meeting the needs of the whole local population – including Children and Young People with SEND.

SEND STRATEGY OBJECTIVE 2

Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings to support Children and Young People to be educated in their local community and to reduce reliance on out of area placements 0-25

What success will look like?

- Children with EHCPs attend and achieve in high quality local provision and are able to remain with their families in their local communities
- Inclusive education, welcoming Children and Young People into local mainstream settings
- Schools and education settings are appropriately equipped to identify and respond to the needs of the local populations
- Quality First teaching embedded consistently into core service delivery within education settings, ensuring the use of appropriate evidence-based interventions
- Education Health and Social Care Workforce will have the right skills to be able to respond to presenting needs
- Less reliance within the local area on statutory assessment of children and young people's Special Educational Needs and more on getting the right level of support in school when needed.
- Children remain in contact with local services, as a result of remaining within local provision and so have continuity of support.
- There is an enhanced range of local specialist provision and reduced

reliance on external specialist placements

- Reduced costs on out of area placements so that these monies can be more effectively utilised developing local high quality provision.

Why is this important?

- Previously children and their families have told us that they want high quality local services and choice
- Children and Young People with SEND need to have good quality support in their mainstream and local settings so that they can achieve their academic potential and maintain their self-esteem and confidence
- Children and Young People with SEND previously told us that they want to make friends locally and access local facilities with their families.

Key Priority Actions to achieve this objective

1. Build upon the successes of the newly developed SEND ranges and ranges guidance (September 2018) recognising the differences within the healthcare model of delivery – based

around presenting need, functional impact and episodes of care model

2. Ensure through joint commissioning intentions that Resource Bases and mainstream settings meet the growing complexity and increasing numbers of Children and Young People presenting with communication and interaction, social emotional and mental health, cognition and learning needs with a strong multi-disciplinary therapeutic input from Early Years through to Post 16/ Post 19.
3. Put in place an effective workforce reform strategy that will include training, mentoring, coaching and an action research programme highlighting the sharing of best practice.
4. Review, further develop and effectively co-ordinate outreach services from specialist and multi-disciplinary settings to support mainstream provision 0-25.
5. Continue to work alongside schools to build capacity and resilience and develop the quality and resourcefulness of the settings in respect of meeting presenting needs.
 - All settings have targets and expectations that effective inclusion and equality permeates throughout the organisation.

SEND STRATEGY OBJECTIVE 3

Ensuring that Children and Young People with SEND have an effective preparation for adulthood including access to appropriate work, training and leisure opportunities.

What success will look like?

- Children and Young People with SEND (and their families) will have high aspirations of life for themselves (or the people they care for)
- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) figures for pupils with SEND are at a minimum
- Parents report increasing confidence in the ability of mainstream schools/colleges/work based training providers to meet their child's needs
- Provision available to all young people with SEND aged 16-25 to access purposeful activities (including education, work experience, supported employment, supported internships, apprenticeships, training including voluntary and community projects)
- Children and Young People with SEND are fully supported, encouraged and enabled to take part fully in all aspects

of education, community, leisure and fun activities

- All young people with SEND have a clear destination pathway and that are able to make appropriate progress, whatever their starting point
- Transition Points throughout life course are planned, smooth and well managed for Young People and their families
- All young people have access to work related learning activities, as appropriate to their level of ability, to enable them to work towards paid employment wherever possible
- Through partnership working and joint commissioning arrangements for Post 16 SEND services are delivered in a co-ordinated and personalised way.

Why is this important?

- Improved sense of worth and value for each young person
- Gives a clear pathway of opportunities and choice
- Enables greater independence and sense of contributing to our local community.

Key Priority Actions to achieve this objective

1. Establish a clear pathway and effective transition arrangements 0-25 for all Children and Young People with SEND.
2. Develop a wide range of opportunities and choice focusing on work, suitable employment and leisure activities.
3. Ensure that Children and Young People with SEND have opportunities to engage in independent travel training and access support for independent living.
4. That schools and specialist settings have a curriculum that prepares young people for the world of work and making effective contributions to their community.

Develop close partnerships with work-based training providers and employers to support their capacity to utilise the skills of young people with SEND.

SEND STRATEGY OBJECTIVE 4

Increasing achievement and improving all outcomes for Children and Young People with SEND

What success will look like?

- Increase attainment and achievement across all Key Stages
- All Children and Young People with SEND make at least good progress relative to their starting points
- The overall gap between attainment of Children and Young People with SEND and all children to reduce
- The number of children with SEND being excluded from school to reduce
- Good attendance of Children and Young People with SEND
- Children and Young People with SEND to make clear, evidence-based progress against their EHC Plan outcomes, which will be holistic and focus on academic attainment as well as whole life outcomes
- EHCP and SEN Support plan review processes will be outcome focussed

The following outcomes that form the focus of this objective are written from the young person's perspective are:

- *I have information about my health provision clearly explained to me*
- *I am learning how to manage my own health and well being*
- *I feel I am involved in planning and decision making about my health*
- *I have effective support networks with friends and family and in my school/college*
- *My care is co-ordinated and connected so people understand my needs and jointly meet them so that I don't have to keep telling my story.*

Why is this important?

- All Children and Young People with SEND will be able to achieve their full potential

Key Priority Actions to achieve this objective

1. Address the underperformance in educational achievement across the Key Stages but particularly at Key Stage 4 through challenge to education providers, targeted interventions, appropriate curriculum, high quality training and effective quality assurance, monitoring and moderation

2. Implement and embed a quality assurance framework across the LA to ensure that all EHCPs are of high quality
3. Ensure that all settings have high quality first teaching
4. Embed the SEND Ranges to ensure that all settings have an effective graduated response
5. Encourage schools to share best practice.
6. Monitoring and review of processes to track personal and educational and strategic service level outcomes.

SEND STRATEGY OBJECTIVE 5

Collaboration, Co-Production and Communication

What success will look like?

- Transparency of all decision making
- Agreed common approaches
- A whole organisation/area approach where we all feel part of a team delivering the SEND Strategy – strong multi-disciplinary partnerships are in place and strengthening all the time

Children and Young People with SEND and their families are well informed and have good access to accurate and up to date

information about services and what is available and how it can be accessed.

Why is this important?

- We want everyone to have 'trust' in all that we do
- We want all, but particularly parents, carers and young people to have confidence and respect in our future going forward together.

Key Priority Actions to achieve this objective

1. Develop a communications policy in order to analyse and implement actions required to ensure that there is effective communication between all partners, parents, carers and young people.
2. Ensure that all partners are aware of best practice and supporting each other in understanding different views, priorities, skills and talents.
3. Ensuring that the pupil and young people's voice is heard at all levels.
4. Ensuring that all policies, practices are co-produced with all stakeholders and with the active involvement of the parent/carers forums and the children and young people.

5. Demonstrate commitment at all levels to collaboration in partnership with parents, carers and families.
6. Review the effectiveness and impact of the Local Offer and make change as appropriate.
7. Hold schools, services and settings to account when the pupil and parent voice is not evidenced in the assessment and review process and link this to the performance management framework.
8. Provide on-going training and support to schools and other stakeholders in promoting pupil and parent engagement.
9. Young leaders and Parent/Carer groups to collaborate to produce a charter on excellence in co-production.

SEND STRATEGY OBJECTIVE 6

Achieving Best Value for money from all our services through the review and planning of services and development of mechanisms for effective commissioning including joint commissioning arrangements and decision making.

What success will look like?

- Effective, efficient and co-ordinated services that meet the needs of Children and Young People with SEND and their families.
- Effective joint commissioning arrangements in place to ensure that services can respond seamlessly to the personalised needs of Children and Young People with SEND and their families
- Information about local needs will be able to tangibly influence service design
- Children and families will be clear on how and when and where to access services and services operate flexibly around the needs of Children and Young People with SEND and their families
- Panel processes are robust and fit for purpose
- Choice and control for families about how individual needs are met
- Children and families report responsive and high quality services and that their needs are met
- System-wide understanding of the services and performance and impact

Why is this important?

- Statutory Agencies have a statutory duty to communicate effectively across the system
- Statutory agencies are accountable for financial resource allocation and must demonstrate best value and appropriate oversight and scrutiny
- The High Needs Budget is finite
- We must ensure best value from the public purse
- With the increased numbers of Children and Young People coming through with significant needs we must ensure that the right resources are going to the right children in the right place.

Key Priority Actions to achieve this objective

1. Developing and establish meaningful data flow between systems and services.
2. Develop collective systemic understanding of the needs of this group of Children Young People and their families.
3. Joint Commissioning (including collaboratively planning, developing and implementing services) to provide increased targeted capacity for SEND

within the Borough under the agreed commissioning intentions.

4. Develop financial mechanisms and systems of accountability to enable effective Joint Commissioning, including opportunities to pool/align budgets, and to implement and further roll out personal health budgets.
5. Develop systems to record and monitor performance of commissioned services.
6. Implement a new funding arrangement for SEND support in schools.
7. Allocate the SEND Capital Grant in line with the SEND Strategy.
8. Embed the SEND Ranges to ensure funding allocation for individual pupils is needs led.

8. Taking the SEND Strategy Forward - Governance, Monitoring and Review



The delivery of our SEND Strategy is not the responsibility of a single agency or person. It is a partnership approach with collection accountability and collective responsibility owned by all stakeholders working with children, young people and their families. These include Health, Education, Social Care, work based training providers, employers, voluntary and community organisations and those responsible for the development of leisure and social activities.

Governance for the strategy will be provided by the Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board and the SEND Steering Group. The SEND Steering Group will provide the strategic drive, co-ordination and oversight by receiving regular performance and outcome indicator reports on progress against objectives.

The Health and Wellbeing Board will be responsible for ensuring that the SEND issues are embedded effectively throughout the relevant plans and in the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

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SEND data comparator graphs

Figure 1: Pupils in Primary School by primary type of need

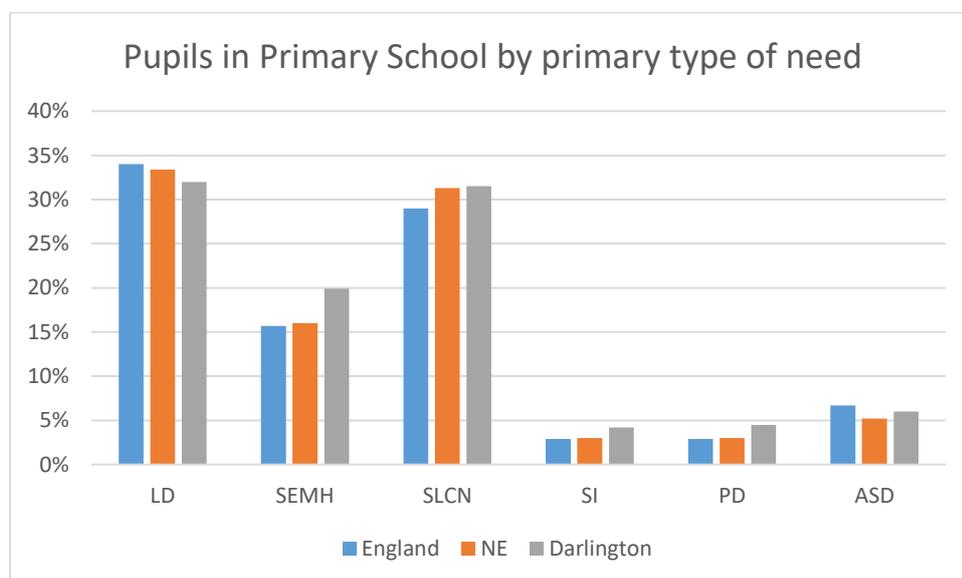


Figure 2: Pupils in Secondary School by primary type of need

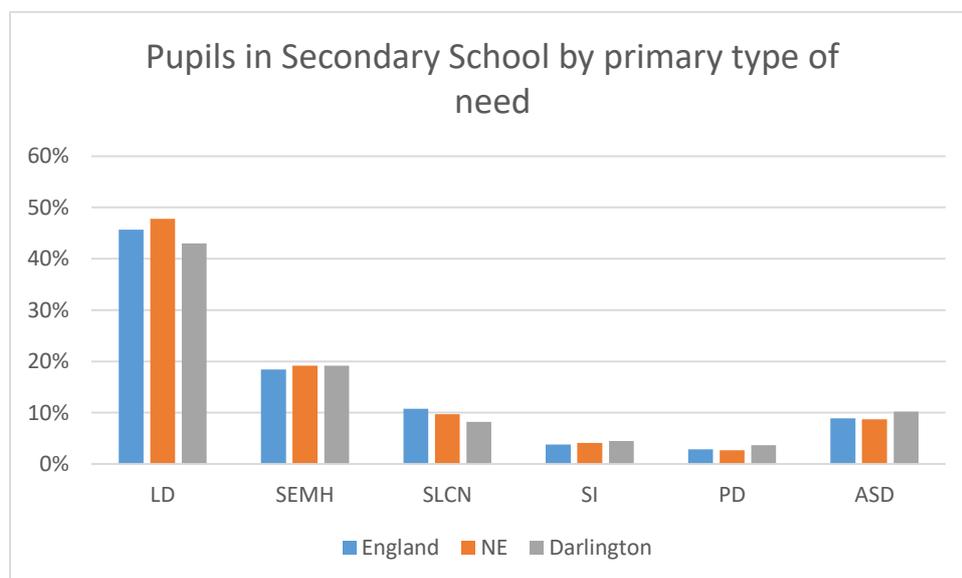


Figure 3: Pupils in Special School by primary type of need

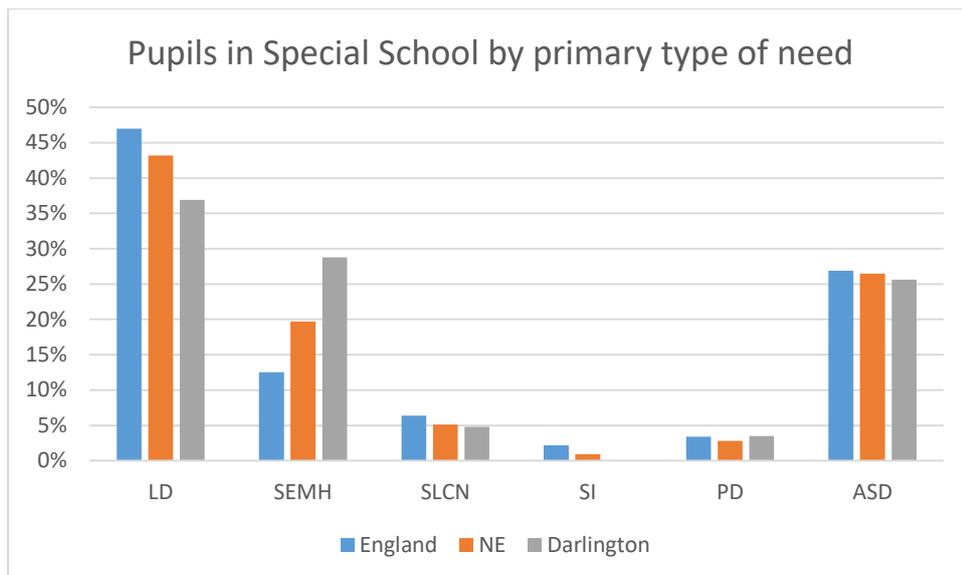


Figure 4: Number of statements or EHCPs in Darlington by year

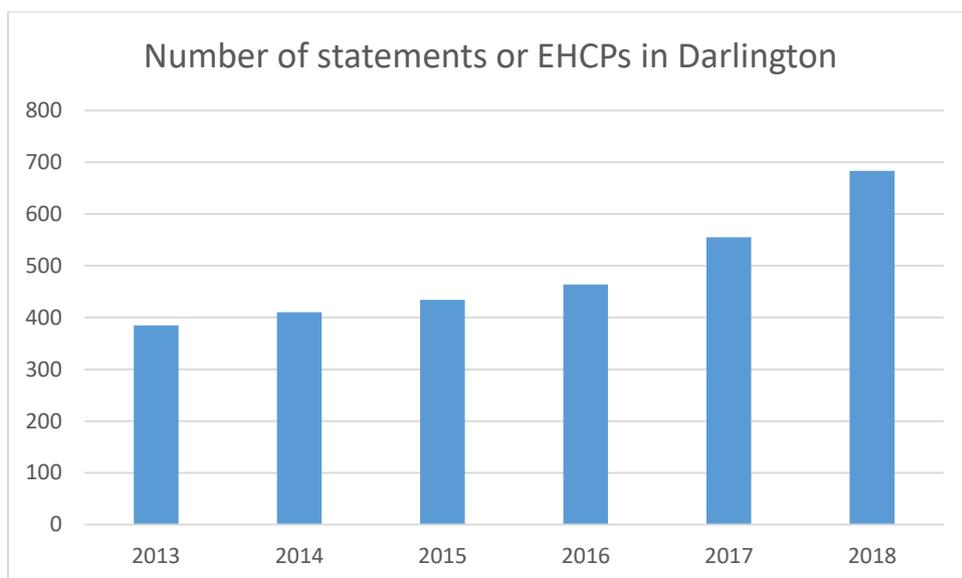


Figure 5: Placement of Pupils with ECHPs by type of provision

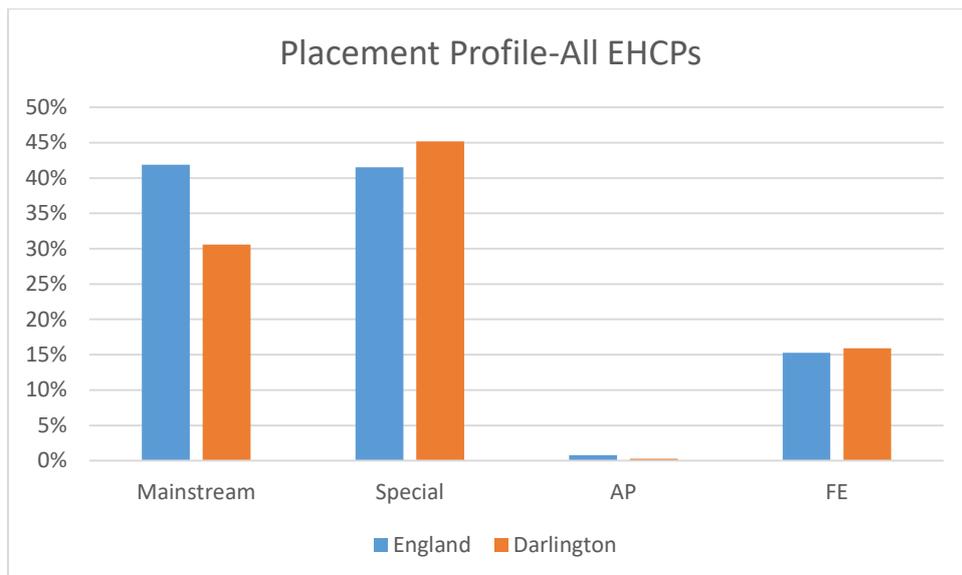
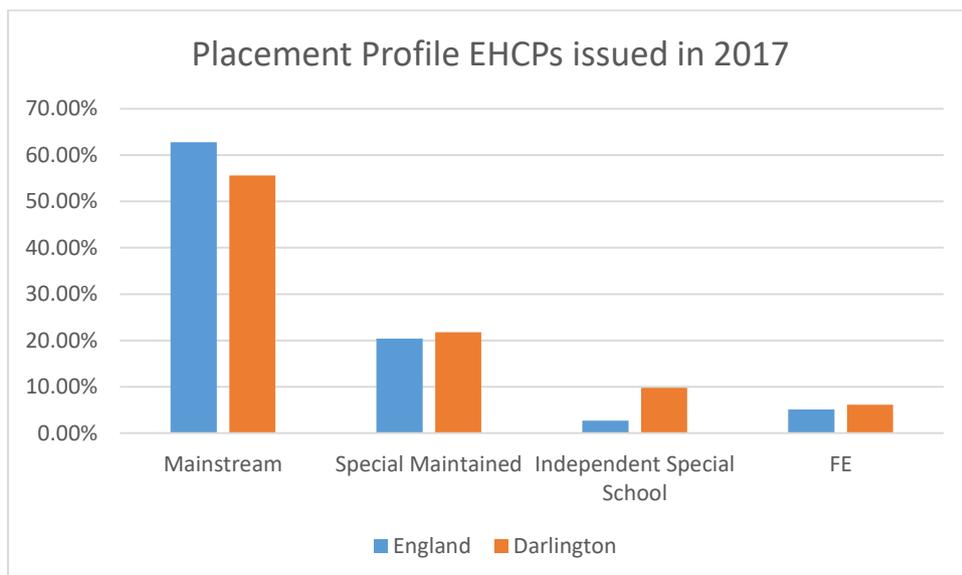


Figure 6: Placement of pupils with EHCPs by type of provision 2017



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SEND Consultation Findings Report – SEND Strategy and Funding (including SEND Provision and SEND Capital Funding) December 2018

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to feed back the key findings of this consultation to the SEND Consultation project board, Head of Education and Inclusion and Education Senior Management Team and to inform the Head of Education and Inclusion's paper to Cabinet on 5th March 2019.

SEND Strategy

There has been overwhelming support from the consultation on the six key themes of the Strategy.

“Your vision and key principles are an encouraging model and I look forward to seeing how this Strategy is put into practice” (parent of a child with SEND)

The key themes that are of concern to consultees are:

- Multi-disciplinary working needs to be seen on the ground, as well as within the Strategy as a key aim.
- Access to specialist support is needed at the earliest stage.
- Effective and proactive involvement of families and young people has to be in all decision making.
- Importance of the early years services and support in identification, assessment and provision.
- Ensuring there is more choice locally for specialist education provision.
- There must be clear communication at transition points from all involved in the Child/young person's life.
- Young people have a desire for independence and high aspirations, however their voice is not always heard. Young people with SEND do not have access to as many social opportunities as their peers and there have been closure of various groups to support them to do this.
- Our services must be developed collaboratively with parents.
- There is real concern over the current performance at KS4.
- Workforce development is key to making the Strategy work.
- More resources are required.
- The Local Offer website needs to be immediately improved.
- An urgent focus is required on preparation for adulthood.
- The need to act swiftly on the next steps.

Funding

- There has been overwhelming support from the consultation on the key principle of money following the child/young person.
- There has been support for the bandings, however there have been issues regarding whether the funding allocated is sufficient or correct.
- The funding methodology was seen as honest and transparent.
- Clarity on whether cost of specialist equipment for CYP who do not have an EHCP (eg CYP with hearing impairment/radio aids) could be covered under the bandings is sought.

Provision

- Most agreed with the expansion/review of resource bases, vocational support and early years hub and the need to expand specialist provision.
- Overall more detail was considered as important as to 'what does this mean' however this needs to be considered in the Strategy action plan.

Main Report - Introduction

1. Proposed Approach

Approval to consult on the Draft SEND Strategy (including use of SEND Capital for development of new SEND provision for Children and Young People with EHCPs); and Funding arrangements; with key stakeholders, partners and children, young people and their families was granted by the Darlington Borough Council Cabinet on 9th October 2018. The consultation ran from 17th October 2018 to 28th November 2018.

2. Consulting on the Proposed Approach

The public consultation questions focused on the six SEND Strategy Objectives, proposed changes to 'top up' funding model and bandings, and developing new SEND provision and use of the DfE SEND Special Provision Grant.

The consultation documents including the survey can be found at **Annex A**.

3. Methodology

The general public and interested parties were invited to participate in the consultation. To reach as many people as possible, a range of consultation methods were available.

3.1 Consultation Documents

There was a series of public consultations through both events and survey which was available on line www.darlington.gov.uk/SEND and the survey was available in hard copy at all events.

The draft strategy was provided alongside the presentation which outlined the key challenges/opportunities, and questions for consultation.

A funding summary document which supported the consultation was provided at an early stage during the consultation to support the completion of the on line survey. The document and survey can be found in Annex A.

3.2 Stakeholder Consultation Events

There was a whole variety of professional fora pre-consultation to brief colleagues and stakeholders on the consultation including the Parent Carer Forum, and Darlington Association on Disability (DAD).

During consultation we were able to inform stakeholders of the consultation themes at meetings that had already been organised by the Local Authority (LA) and stakeholders, for example, events for parents and carers, hosted by the Parent Carer Forum; the SEND Steering group; School Forum; SENCo network training; Primary Schools Forum; 11-19 Forum (secondary schools and post 16 providers); Joint meetings with health and other partner meetings.

A list of who we consulted with and in what way can be seen in Section 5.

3.3 Publicity

In order to reach as many people as possible, the consultation was advertised through the following channels.

We directly emailed all parents/carers of children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and emailed key stakeholders in addition to early years providers, schools, colleges and health and social care professionals. This included members of Darlington's Children Young People Plan steering group, SEND Steering Group, and Healthy Lifestyle steering group.

All stakeholders were encouraged to respond in ways appropriate, including writing formal responses to a dedicated email address.

A poster was circulated within key locations in Darlington town centre including the Library, One Stop Shop and sent to other locations attended by the public eg children centres, Head of Steam etc. The LA Communications team organised social media and press releases, such as through Darlington and Stockton Times as well as regular reminders on the DBC website. The Local Offer pages were updated to include information to post readers to the SEND consultation page.

All DBC staff were alerted through publicity on "The Bulletin" and posters.

Consultation with Children and Young People was organised through the LA participation officers and this included representatives from 'Voices'; 'Next Steps'; 'Young Leaders'; Primary and Secondary school Councils. 50 Children and Young people attended these various meetings.

The Parent Carer Forum, the Children and Young People Scrutiny and SENDIASS Officer were all instrumental in sharing the information with their forums/contacts.

School Governors were all alerted to the consultation along with other education professionals such as resource base heads of teams, outreach service heads and SENCOs.

Requests via social care team leaders were made to share wider and support when engagement with parents and young people.

Health professionals eg service leads (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Audiology, Ophthalmology; etc) were contacted directly, as well as Clinical Commissioning Group and the North of England commissioning support unit.

3.4 Quantitative Data

As well as the respondents who completed the online survey, all hard copy/paper versions of the questionnaires completed by individuals were entered into the survey results.

It was evident of the answers directly entered by respondents on the online survey that the majority of responses were individual responses. The hard copy/paper versions of the survey were mostly on behalf of organisations.

The data was extracted onto an excel spreadsheet and the closed questions were analysed to establish what proportion of respondents agreed or disagreed. Group public data and feedback was not entered onto the online survey, but was recorded separately, and the quantity of participants at public events was recorded in accordance with attendance lists and headcounts as not all participants recorded attendance due to personal choice.

3.5 Qualitative Data

For the feedback, the survey open questions with qualitative responses were analysed manually to establish particular themes and enable key findings to emerge. Feedback from group meetings was noted long-hand, typed up and analysed for key themes. These key themes were separate to the survey responses. Due to the nature of the format for events and discussions raised, not all the questions were necessarily covered but these have been added to the appropriate part of the Key Findings section 4.

In addition to the 79 respondents to the survey, overall 99 more took part in public meetings which presented the opportunity to ask questions and express views and there were 11 written responses (please see section 5).

Darlington Parent Carer Forum and Darlington Association on Disability submitted written responses to the consultation. The Parent Carer Forum raised the need to provide more detail in particular on the top up funding model in order for an informed response to be made. This was addressed and a briefing was provided and made available on the website and at public meetings. Additional public events were organised in response to requests by parents and carers. All parents and carers of children and young people with EHCPs were individually contacted to let them know about the consultation.

4. Key Findings

The Key Findings from the consultation are presented as a table of quantitative data about the closed questions from the survey, and then key themes from both the qualitative feedback from the open survey questions and events, about why respondents agreed or disagreed and any particular impact raised has been noted.

4.1 SEND Strategy and Funding

The SEND Strategy and Funding survey was built around the 6 draft key objectives (Questions 1-13), provision and use of SEND capital provision funding (questions 14 and 16), and the proposed SEND 'top up' funding model (questions 17-23). Questions 24-28 asked about the respondent, these are summarised in **Annex B**.

Under each draft key objective there were two questions posed; one to indicate the respondents agreement/disagreement; one 'open' question to provide any other information.

57 of the 79 respondents to the SEND Strategy and Funding survey identified the capacity in which they were responding:

A parent / carer	35.09%	20
A young person	0.00%	0
An education professional	45.61%	26
A health professional	1.75%	1
A social care professional	5.26%	3
A governor	7.02%	4
A charity	0.00%	0
A voluntary organisation	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	5.26%	3
	Answered	57

Skipped

22

Question 1 and 2 – SEND Strategy Objective 1**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy objective of****“Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support”.**

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	73.42%	58	Total agree	92.41%
Agree	18.99%	15	Neither agree nor disagree	5.06%
Neither agree nor disagree	5.06%	4	Total disagree	2.53%
Disagree	0.00%	0		
Strongly disagree	2.53%	2		
	Answered	79		
	Skipped	0		

Summary of Feedback

Overall strong agreement with this objective. Consistent messages included:

- Importance of early years provision in terms of identifying need before the children get to full time schooling.
- Importance of multi-disciplinary coordination in the early years particularly the need for therapeutic input at this stage.
- The whole process of early identification must be multi-disciplinary.
- There is an increasing awareness of the complexity of needs coming through particularly in the early years and we need to get the right expertise in to assess children and young people at earlier stages.
- We need to ensure that all our early years children have a high quality 2 year check by the health visitor, currently there is a feeling that we need a more robust system in place.
- Many expressed the need to have a portage service within and part of a multi-disciplinary hub.
- There was an acknowledgment that some young children are not ready for school and that some of those are being kept down a year thereby not being with their peers for the rest of their school experience.
- There are some examples of best practice in terms of early years specialist play groups run by social care, these only run once a week and parents would like to see these being developed further.
- We need to look at the thresholds of services, some services cannot be accessed by some needy children because the threshold is too high.

- Transition points expose a lot of vulnerability and some children's needs are not met at these times particularly at early years, primary to secondary and post 19.
- The role and function of resource bases is inconsistent.
- We need to use specialist support more effectively to target needs better.
- There is best practice in screening for early years for the Low Incidence Needs groups.
- There have been many comments that services need to be correctly funded.
- Early identification does not just mean early years it can take several years for it to be confirmed.
- Concern was expressed by some parents that the SEND ranges should not drive the Section F (placement section) of the EHC Plan.
- Some parents and professionals commented upon the need to differentiate the 'One Plan' from the EHC Plan.
- There needs to be a better early identification of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller children and young people who have SEND.
- There needs to be an opportunity to review the provision of the social, emotional and mental health needs of Deaf children.
- National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) would welcome a review of the communication options/support for children and young people who are deaf as well as the provision of Assistance Listening Devices (ALDs).
- Specialist staff at the earliest time should be involved with clear communication channels.
- There is some good work undertaken by Darlington between education and social care to develop a regional approach to the assessment and provision of funds for Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI) low incidence group of children. There has been a qualified assessor to undertake this work.
- There are a range of early screening/identification processes for children and young people with a hearing loss but this is not carried through in reception which means that children with progressive or acquired hearing loss will remain undetected. This is not commissioned by Darlington.
- The importance of multi disciplinary working with parents/nursery settings at the earliest stage – daily conversations, providing the opportunity to promote nurturing support to the family and thus provoking a positive experience of school as many of parents have not had a good experience of the education welfare systems.
- The importance of a specialist outreach service attached to the provision with therapeutic services *'blended into the offer'*.
- Services need to be co-ordinated and efficient.

"my son may not have been in mainstream education now if it was not for early educational intervention"

"early identification of need is essential but not just identification of primary need but also any secondary and/or tertiary needs, in addition that identification must be wholly accurate and must be completed by suitably trained and qualified professionals"

"too often identification is not early enough as services overwhelmed and so slow to respond"

"processes seem to delay support for as long as possible as there are so many hoops to jump through"

"all too often in the past diagnosis has not been wholly accurate and/or understanding of settings has been limited leading to placements breaking down"

“we need to ensure that staff are appropriately trained to both identify and deal with children with complex needs, we need to ensure that there is collaboration between settings across the authority to do this”

“our children in Darlington need a choice of placement not just the offer of the Education village”

“an early years hub sounds a great addition to the offer, it would be great to have parent sessions run from there”

Question 3 and 4 – SEND Strategy Objective 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy objective of

“Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings to reduce reliance on specialist out of area placements 0-25”.

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	58.57%	41	Total agree	80.00%
Agree	21.43%	15		
Neither agree nor disagree			Neither agree nor disagree	4.29%
	4.29%	3		
Disagree	10.00%	7	Total disagree	15.71%
Strongly disagree	5.71%	4		
	Answered	70		
	Skipped	9		

Summary of Feedback

Overall strong agreement with this objective. Consistent messages included:

- Very supportive of the SEND Ranges in terms of building up expertise, giving a framework for agencies and parents to work with but they need time to be embedded.
- There is a need for more therapeutic support wrapped around individual pupils' needs and to train staff within settings.
- We must reduce reliance on out of authority placements, we need to monitor the out of authority better, outcomes and cost.
- General agreement that we need to expand places for additional resource and placements in borough as there was acceptance of limited options and opportunities for choice in Darlington
- Off rolling pupils a particular concern in KS4.
- There was concern raised that some breakdown in school placements in primary as well as secondary settings.
- There is a need that the curriculum meets the needs particularly of children with SEND.
- There is recognition that some children with highly complex needs will need to be educated out of authority.
- A multi-disciplinary workforce reform strategy required, with consistent training to cover not only professionals, governors, but parents and young people themselves.
- We need to have outreach that encompasses the full range of pupils needs.

- There is concern that some mainstream schools are too large to meet the needs of children with SEND and that some may be ridiculed or bullied.
- In surveys and meetings concern was expressed that there is a need for a detailed Strategic action plan.
- The Low Incidence Needs (LINS) team to be involved in the decision making of all children and young people who are deaf and who go to out of authority schools.
- With more children and young people with complex needs coming through we need more specialist placements.
- Teachers will need more support in areas such as effective use of technologies, effective ways of communication, improving listening conditions, assessment of need and strategies that work well for deaf children and young people.
- Specialist support in the early years is essential for all children and young people with additional needs.
- Need to keep LINS under review as well as the other needs mentioned (SEMH, ASD, MLD).

“Darlington is in its current mess in respect of high needs funding precisely because of a lack of strategic leadership and foresight in this area dating back several years”

“It is imperative that additional local, publically owned provision is created as a matter of urgency to drive greater financial efficiencies and to better meet the needs of children and young people”

“schools need to understand that the life chances of those who have been off-rolled will be affected as many have significant needs”

“the mainstream setting I chose for my child through the EHC process is proving to be one of the best decisions I have made, being in our home area was important to us both”

“a mainstream approach does not suit all and I believe the focus should be on what is best for the child”

Question 5 and 6 – SEND Strategy Objective 3

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy objective of

“Ensuring that children and young people with SEND are educated in their local community and have effective preparation for adulthood and access to work and leisure opportunities”.

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	63.24%	43	Total agree	82.36%
Agree	19.12%	13		
Neither agree nor disagree			Neither agree nor disagree	5.88%
	5.88%	4		
Disagree	7.35%	5	Total disagree	11.76%
Strongly disagree	4.41%	3		
Answered		68		
Skipped		11		

Summary of Feedback

Overall strong agreement with this objective. The comments of young people on their experiences are also sighted in this section.

Consistent messages included:

- Preparation for adulthood (PFA) should start as early as possible.
- The EHC Plan outcomes need to respond to the PFA outcomes proactively.
- Harewood Hill Lodge is really helpful short break and day care provision.
- The DASH groups are very helpful in getting CYP together undertaking activities.
- Independence skills should be taught and developed from early years.
- Services for young people 19-25 seem only available for those with more complex needs, whilst many without these needs fall under the radar.
- We need to encourage advocacy for young people post 19.
- Parents have raised concerns about their children travelling on their own and have heightened anxiety with regard to this.
- There needs to be more effective coordination between children and adults services to develop true PFA.
- There is very clear support for development of local provision so that friendships and social opportunities are available as long as the placement is the right one.
- Clear plans between and across services going forward to support LINS.
- Young people with a hearing impairment post 16 are not on the case load of LINS. More needs to be in place for transition and Post 19 work with children and young people with Low Incidence Needs.
- There are no deaf youth clubs or facilities for deaf young people to mix and socialise with hearing impaired peers.
- NDCS are developing deaf-friendly standards which clubs can use to offer deaf children equal access to their activities.

*“DASH is a lifeline for the young person and parent, we need DASH all year”
“As the feedback is so positive we should look to making DASH activities a global offer”*

“The more we can support independence the better, travel training should be part of the right of passage”

“further investment is needed, particularly in leisure opportunities”

“Fully agree and we need the infrastructure and communication of events/activities so that families can access through a more accessible website for information and sharing activities through schools”

Responses to 2 and 3 were very similar and some responses to 3 could have been related to mainstream capacity.

The Voice of the Children and Young People

In the Children and young people interviews, the responses were very much focussed on this objective. The feedback from the interviews includes the following key themes:

Employment Aspirations - There is flexible and versatile provision at Darlington College but no real move into employment other than doing some voluntary work. Many students are involved with the pupil’s parliament and national projects but still do not have access into employment. Many have ideas about their future but state that there is very little careers advice. Many have aspirations but these do not lead into reality, *“I have a job but Im bored”*. They feel the courses they offered are limited and do not always match their aspirations.

CYP Voice - All feel safe and listened to, but some professionals *“speak to mum and dad, not me”*, they would like professionals to be involved with them. The young people feel they want to be involved far more in their own care plans and EHC Plans. One pupil who is in an out of authority school would like to be nearer friends and felt that his voice was not listened to when he had to move across two secondary schools.

Independence - The PIP tends to be managed by parents and the young people state that they’ve not got enough money to live on.

Social opportunities - Overall most like school and have varied interests and opportunities outside such as dance, church, DAD, young leaders, C:The Box, knitting club at the Pennyweight and cadets on Neasham Road, and other project work.

Provision - There is a general mixed view of the quality of support that they get but overall the children are mostly happy at school but it cannot be underestimated the importance of teachers as someone they go to for help. Young people are very supportive of the DAD play schemes which gives them good opportunities to socialise. The closure of the Gateway Club has affected many. Some talk about good quality support particularly from the occupational therapist and the equipment that they have plus the importance of the school counsellor. *“I’m happy I’ve found a school I like”*, however, they say there are few choices after and there is a lack of choice in Darlington and they have said they *‘loose friends’*. They have experienced difficult transitions, which makes them anxious about the future. One pupil mentioned that although the current placement was the right one, socially this pupil wanted to be at one of the ‘old’ schools, as this pupil would have liked to have stayed if the right support had been provided.

“At my last school I was very angry and would get annoyed at people. I don’t do that here, I just wished it was in my village so I could walk there.”

Question 7 and 8 – SEND Strategy Objective 4

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy objective of

“Increasing achievement and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND”.

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	66.15%	43	Total agree	90.77%
Agree	24.62%	16		
Neither agree nor disagree			Neither agree nor disagree	3.08%
	3.08%	2		
Disagree	1.54%	1	Total disagree	6.16%
Strongly disagree	4.62%	3		
Answered		65		

Skipped

14

Summary of Feedback

Overall strong agreement with this objective. Consistent messages included:

- Data is not the only measure of success but life skill outcomes are really important to consider.
- In terms of measuring outcomes a lot of the plans/targets lack clarity and need to be SMART'er.
- The quality of EHCPs need to be improved overall and some ECHP assessments take longer than they should.
- Transition is key there is a concern that information is not passed readily from setting to setting.
- The SEND Ranges are supported and should give in the long term a consistent approach.
- There are serious concerns about the curriculum framework particularly at KS4.
- There are fears from parents of some children with SEND as to what the future holds for their children in secondary in light of the current poor performance.
- Difficulty in accessing some services particularly CAMHS because of very high thresholds, there is a large 'gap' in service provision.
- There should be alternative options in the secondary curriculum.
- In surveys and at all events the importance of workforce reform was highlighted as critical to drive the objective forward.
- There is a large Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community in Darlington, they are still the lowest performing ethnic group nationally. These are a distinct group in the borough who do have additional needs.
- Very few GRT children transfer to secondary school and very few reach KS4. A significant number of GRT children are on the Home Education register and have few opportunities for GRT in accessing employment, training and education post 16.
- NDCS Healthy Minds programme is being developed to support social, emotional needs and academic development for hearing impaired children and young people.
- Nationally deaf children and young people on average under achieve by a whole grade per subject compared to children and young people with no identified SEND.

“Fully funded will be required to enable staff to meet the full and ever increasing range and complexity of need. The Local Authority has an important role in this regard.”

“Settings need to be better funded, estates and facilities must be fit for purpose and multi-agency support and engagement must be improved”

“I feel that secondary school especially for children with additional needs are not set up in the correct way This can cause a whole host of problems that were not an issue”

“Children with profound and complex needs and with lots of medical needs, need a safe place to go to be given fun learning experiences and not have the expectations that all other children have with regards to learning objectives”

“Schools are very result driven but for some children they will never achieve GCSE's there should be better provision available”

Question 9 and 10 – SEND Strategy Objective 5

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy objective of

“Focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication”.

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	72.31%	47	Total agree	92.31%
Agree	20.00%	13	Neither agree nor disagree	1.54%
Neither agree nor disagree				
	1.54%	1	Total disagree	6.16%
Disagree	1.54%	1		
Strongly disagree	4.62%	3		
	Answered	65		
	Skipped	14		

Summary of Feedback

Overall strong agreement with this objective. Consistent messages included:

- Services must work together, too many do individualised separate assessments.
- There is a challenge of getting all services to EHCP meetings and annual reviews.
- We need better home-school communication across all settings.
- There needs to be more reasonable adjustments/options available around hospital appointments.
- Different thresholds can be a barrier to multi-disciplinary working.
- There is a complexity of what trusts deliver and boundaries are a problem.
- The strategy needs to pull communication from all agencies together, with a greater knowledge of SEND.
- There is a real need for a multi-disciplinary workforce reform strategy.
- Some professional reports are difficult to understand and use complicated and complex language, reports need to be in laymans terms.
- Social care/education do not work together “on the ground”.
- The local offer is poor.
- It is perceived that criteria on how to access services is not clear and accessing CAMHS was mentioned regularly by many groups as being difficult.
- We must use the experience and expertise of parents more effectively.
- The parent carer dialogue with the LA is getting better.
- The EHC Plan assessment requires a report from the statutory NHS service, regardless of whether an independent specialist therapeutic service can provide that report as this service may be
- There have been strong comments from some parents about the lack of coproduction
- There were concerns regarding knowledge, and consistency of and changing of SEND case workers
- The importance of multi-disciplinary working with LINS.
- The local offer is poor in terms of highlighting assessments by whom and when.
- There should be a focus on multi-agency mentoring of all children and young people with SEND and challenging the data and provision if they are not making sufficient progress ie challenging schools.

- Need to ensure that parents with children and young people who have low incidence needs are engaged fully.
- There are some good links between the low incidence needs service, social care, health and Beaumont Hill.

“CAMHS assessment is a battle!”

“some services are a law unto themselves”

“sounds good, but from experience communication is not shared and often a parent has to repeat information”

“professionals want to do this but need time to make this meaningful and achievable”

“consultation and engagement must be genuine with stakeholders being listened to and their views acted upon”

“Collaboration is imperative. Equally important is that the schools who have proven their dedication to SEND, who have the skills, the local offer and the credibility in SEND have the opportunity to do more for the children of Darlington”.

Question 11 and 12 – SEND Strategy Objective 6

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy objective of

“Achieving Best Value (human, physical and financial resources) from all our services”.

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	63.49%	40	Total agree	87.30%
Agree	23.81%	15		
Neither agree nor disagree			Neither agree nor disagree	6.35%
	6.35%	4		
Disagree	3.17%	2	Total disagree	6.34%
Strongly disagree	3.17%	2		
Answered		63		
Skipped		16		

Summary of Feedback

Overall strong agreement with this objective. Consistent messages included:

- We need to try pooling more resources across agencies.
- We need to look at innovative ways of using resources.
- Agreement that services need to review to ensure that we have the right expertise.
- Networking and the SEND ranges can support providing the right expertise.
- Provision map should be used so that schools are held accountable.
- Need to review early years inclusion budget and the budget for low incidence needs and those children who have significant equipment needs for their disabilities.

- This objective needs to encompass a review of service and develop mechanisms for joint commissioning.
- There should be more reference to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as a local partner and to consider where the CCG priorities and strategic plans work alongside the Strategy.
- Need to make better use of council owned buildings for SEND provision.
- Ensure that we have accurate data on LINS so that we can future proof services.
- Consideration to a Tees joint arrangement for LINS to achieve specialist input for a small number of CYP.
- There is some concern over the funding of radio aids for early years.

“Is there a clear view of where the waste is in the system? Parents find it very frustrating to see how much equipment is laid around and not used or re-used effectively”

“economies of scale Seems the way to go ... we can do more for less by collaborating and sharing resources and training” (school)

“mainstream schools should be helped to become more inclusive eg publicising and sharing of good practice locally in Darlington and the North East to encourage schools to think if they can do it, we can too”

“if greater forward planning was in place to ensure appropriate and adequate provision is available this would save money in the long term”

“more investment is needed in existing local settings”

“commissioning needs to be SMARTer and make full use of local capacity for instance only about a quarter of available places at Marchbank Free School have been commissioned by DBC yet primary aged children with SEMH have been placed out of area”

Question 13

If you have any other comments, suggestions or feedback on our proposals on the six objectives, please tell us:

- Workforce should be a key objective – staff training is vital to the success.
- How effectively will the objectives be implemented?

“I think if this is done properly with consultation not just with the public with the staff already delivering services and their views on improvement are also taken into consideration then Darlington will become a great place for a child with SEN to live and grow and develop”

“I don’t think anybody can disagree with the 6 objectives, it is the cost that is the issue”

Questions 14-16 Provision and SEND Capital Funding

To help develop educational provision for children and young people with SEND Darlington Borough Council will receive funding from the Government each year, from 2019 to 2021. This funding has to be used to increase the number of places for children and young people with EHC Plans and improve facilities for children and young people with EHC Plans.

We have identified in our Strategy that provision may need to be commissioned to support children with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties, and Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), in the Primary phase for pupils with SEMH and in the secondary phase for pupils with SEMH and for those with MLD. We have also identified that we have gaps in our provision for those young people who find the demands of the curriculum difficult and for whom a more practical and vocational route is more appropriate.

Do you agree that we need to develop provision in these areas of need?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	88.71%	55
No	4.84%	3
Don't know	6.45%	4
Answered		62
Skipped		17

There was strong agreement however with the caveat that Darlington needs to ensure that other gaps that have been identified are not prejudiced. There have been specific comments regarding provision for ASD in respect to the role and function of the secondary resource base.

“some of the funding should be for this purpose but some of it should be used to ensure existing accommodation and facilities are wholly fit for purpose and sustainable in the long term particularly for our CYP with the most complex needs eg PMLD”

Darlington Association on Disabilities (DAD) consultation response especially noted that specialist provisions, including alternative education establishments and out of area placements are essential to meet the needs of children and young people in Darlington because there is a lack of high quality local provision.

“DAD supports the principles of inclusion and inclusive education with children and young people attending local schools within their community and local area but acknowledge that currently this is not possible and that specialist provisions, including alternative education establishments and out of area placements are essential to meet the needs of children and young people in Darlington.” (DAD)

Do you agree this is an appropriate use of the money?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	75.81%	47
No	8.06%	5
Don't know	8.06%	5
Other (please specify)	8.06%	5
Answered		62
Skipped		17

Summary of Feedback

There was strong agreement with the commissioning proposals. Consistent messages included:

- Surveys and meetings agreed on clarity and more use of resource bases.
- There was agreement that there is insufficient provision for children with SEMH and MLD.
- Agreement that more provision for children with ASD with nurture in secondary schools supported by multi agency working is required.
- Outreach behaviour support was mentioned as a gap.
- It was felt a larger EP service was required.
- There were both positive and negative comments made by parents following experience of access to resource bases.
- A strong feeling that some mainstream schools need to do more to support SEND and there needs to be more high quality workforce training.
- Early Years hub was seen to be a good idea.

“ensure that outreach services are accessible and appropriate”

“resource bases should not be the only areas of expertise and that outreach and expertise/training of mainstream is still a priority”

“they should not become an easy answer for schools who are failing to meet needs that they should be able to meet”

“the provision in Darlington for autism high achievers is poor”

“I think if schools offered better alternative qualifications and a curriculum”

Questions 17-23 Funding

Darlington Borough Council are proposing to provide funding to schools that is directly related to the assessed and identified needs of the child/young person. This funding is used for the provision of resources for that individual child (a needs based approach of money following the child/young person). This will allow for a clear, transparent and consistent approach by primary and secondary educational settings across the Borough. Darlington Borough Council’s funding model is currently a combination of a delegated lump sum payment and top up to the notional fund.

Questions 17 and 18 – system change

“To what extent do you agree with the proposals to move from the current system, which is varied across the Borough, to a consistent and applied approach for all primary and secondary educational settings?”

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	53.23%	33	Total agree	88.71%
Agree	35.48%	22		
Neither agree nor disagree			Neither agree nor disagree	6.45%
	6.45%	4		
Disagree	4.84%	3	Total disagree	4.84%
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0		
Answered		62		

Skipped 17

Overall there was strong agreement on the model to be linked to the SEND ranges and the principles to ensure funding ‘follows the child’ and is needs led. There was strong agreement with the proposals to move to a new system, because it is seen as positive in transparency and accountability, however some points were made about application in practice, for example

- If funding follows the child, this may be an issues for forward planning
- There was some concern that some children not on an EHC Plan do loose out because they do not have a formal recognition of an EHC Plan.
- General consensus that the model was fair and knowing the proposed bandings was a positive move forward.

“we need to be fair and transparent to ensure that the money does follow the child”

Both DAD and the Parent Carer Forum (PCF) highlighted their concerns as to how attaching the funding model to the ranges will work in practice. It was raised during the consultation that there was no information provided on the differences in the funding model or the impact it would have upon children both with EHCPs and at SEN support. In response to this, a funding briefing document was produced and made available on the consultation website, this issue has been addressed in the Equality Impact Assessment.

It is not clear from the supporting documents and the consultation what the impact of the proposed funding model will be, although DAD is supportive of the principle that funding should ‘follow the child’. The supporting documentation states that the previous and proposed model can not be compared ‘like to like’ and does not indicate if the proposed model represent and increase or decrease in funding available per pupil

We ask for further transparency and consultation in this area so that respondents are able to make more informed decisions and comments. (DAD)

Question 19 and 20 – ranges and bandings

“Darlington Borough Council has put in place the SEND ranges which cover the four areas of the Code of Practice. There are ranges of need between 1 and 7. To what extent do you agree with these bandings?”

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	3.45%	2	Total agree	32.76%
Agree	29.31%	17		
Neither agree nor disagree			Neither agree nor disagree	29.31%
	29.31%	17		
Disagree	29.31%	17	Total disagree	37.93%
Strongly disagree	8.62%	5		
	Answered	58		
	Skipped	21		

The majority either disagreed, or did not agree or disagree with the ranges and bandings.

The Parent Carer Forum raised during consultation that it was difficult to answer this question because the previous funding model was not available. These comments were also made on the survey monkey. This was addressed through the publication of an additional consultation paper.

When explained in the consultation meetings respondents indicated the new proposals were easier to understand than the previous model.

Darlington Association on Disability (DAD) also commented that the SEND Ranges may provide a useful mechanism to support the identification of need and the development of supporting provision map, however, had reservations about linking the funding to the SEND ranges.

As noted above and below there was a larger number of other responses that disagreed with linking the funding to ranges. The particular comment from DAD was: *“particularly for children and young people who would be identified as being in range 3. It is within this range particularly, that in some schools, they may be fully using the notional budget to support children and young people, evidenced through a costed provision map, but may still not be able to meet the needs of the pupil, increasing the attainment gap at a point where they may not be eligible for Education Health and Care Plan.”*

Comments were made on the bandings:

- There is a large jump between 4a and 4b which appears to be significant and could potentially skew funding.
- Bands 5a and 6a for sensory should mention consideration of a resource provision.
- Would like consideration for top up funding for Deaf children who do not have an EHC Plan.
- A query was raised whether the bandings allowed for discretion in allocation of actual amounts.
- Concerns was raised about the comparability between ‘old’ bandings and new ranges, would the funding give the right level of support.
- There was some concern about the application of the notional SEND budget as some comments were around the fact that schools rely too heavily on it for their general school budget.
- There was some concern that schools would inflate children’s needs in order to get funding.
- In both surveys and the meetings, there was a consistent concern about the impact of the new funding model i.e. will the money actually be sufficient.
- Some parents expressed concern and worry about any reduction of funding.
- Bandings need to be flexible to respond to individual needs
- The SEND ranges are helpful in education settings but the ranges do not reflect health care “episodes of care” and the impact of a condition on learning.

“academies will suffer in the main through job cuts is my fear immediately upon introduction of these relevant and needed changes”

“there are some big gaps between some of the bandings and I wonder if school will interpret the level with the amount of money in mind”

“as a parent with a disabled child I should not have the extra worry of funding for my child, my child's EHC Plan should be detailed enough to cover what my child needs to enrich his/her education and wellbeing”

“not able to determine appropriateness of levels, recognising that any health needs and interventions will be in addition to the monies/resources allocated in these blocks”

“the ranges will support to bring consistency across education settings and enable services to better evidence interventions”

“the number of bands are too few and the funding levels are too low to meet the needs of all learners”

Questions 21 and 22 – simpler model

“The funding proposals are designed to create a clearer and simpler model that is more easily understood by parents, carers, young people (where appropriate) and professionals. To what extent do you agree that the proposals will create a clearer and simpler system?”

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	34.48%	20	Total agree	68.96%
Agree	34.48%	20		
Neither agree nor disagree			Neither agree nor disagree	18.97%
	18.97%	11		
Disagree	8.62%	5	Total disagree	12.07%
Strongly disagree	3.45%	2		
Answered		58		
Skipped		21		

- The majority of respondents believed that this model is easier to understand and appropriate. The feedback was that the current model is not fit for purpose and the complicated application of top ups in Darlington is difficult to understand however, there was agreement that for the model to work the SEND ranges need to be consistently applied and workforce development was crucial to ensure this. The LA can then hold settings to account. Funding covers all schools, maintained and Academies.

However, various issues and other related concerns were raised:

“just because its easier to understand does not mean the right amount of support is being provided”

- There must be equitable funding, funding must not be a post code lottery
- There was a general concern that resources were scant anyway and funding is being reduced generally in schools
- There was concern that EHC Plans would rise if funding reduces.

- There was concern that the notional SEND formula does not meet the needs of children and young people.
- There was confusion and a lack of knowledge of personal budgets and direct payments.

“Help/support in managing systems to access support and equipment would be good”

“you are asking us to agree/support an unknown proposal”

“there has been a through consultation with stakeholders over the past few months”

“I am very anxious of my son’s future and it is good that you have been honest and highlighted all the areas of concern, however, there is a lot to implement and I hope you have the resource and funding to enable this to happen and in a short timeframe so we will see change in the near future”

“I am very worried that the banding changes are a smokescreen for DBCs past lack of accounting”

“any new funding model will only work if the assessment system including the award of EHC Plans is fit for purpose”

5. Consultees

Summary

Responses from the 11 consultees (as presented below) are presented in **Annex C** of this document.

Response Type	Numbers
Total survey responses (including hard copy survey's received)	79
Public Events (including open health, social care and school meetings) number of attendees	99
Children and Young People Events – number of attendees	50
Total number of detailed written responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers of Deaf and Visually Impaired, Darlington Low Incidence Needs Service - National Deaf Children Society - Federation of Mowden Schools - Traveller Education and Attainment Service, Darlington - Parent/Carer - The Federation of Darlington Nursery Schools - Darlington CYP Scrutiny Committee - Carmel Education Trust - Darlington Association on Disability - Parent Carer Forum 	11

Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation theme	Consultation type	Date	Numbers
SEND Strategy and Funding	Public event	Monday 5 November	8
SEND Travel Assistance Policy	Public event	Monday 5 November	11
SEND Strategy and Funding	Public event	Monday 5 November	6
SEND Strategy and Funding	Public event	Tuesday 6 November	6
SEND Travel Assistance Policy	Public event	Tuesday 6 November	2
All consultations	Open Health meeting	Wednesday 14 November	2
All consultations	Open Social Care meeting	Wednesday 14 November	10
All consultations	Public event	Tuesday 20 November	5
SEND Strategy and Funding	Public event	Wednesday 21 November	16
SEND Travel Assistance Policy	Public event	Wednesday 21 November	5
All consultations	Open Schools meeting	Thursday 22 November	28

Children and Young People Consultation

Consultation Theme	Consultation details	Date	Numbers
All consultations	<p>Voices C:TheBox A social group for young people aged between 15 and 25 who are on the Asperger's & Autistic spectrum</p>	Thursday 15 November	3 CYP
All consultations	<p>Next Steps Darlington College A group of 16 plus young people who attend Darlington college to social and learn life skill all of whom are on the ASD spectrum</p>	Thurs 15 November	3 CYP
All consultations	<p>Darlington Association on Disability provide a number of young people focused groups.</p> <p>Young Leaders is a group for young people with disabilities aged between 14 and 25.</p> <p>M.F.I (Mentoring For Independence) works with older young people and aims to improve independence.</p> <p>DASH Play Scheme offers 3 playgroups for children aged 3 to 15.</p>	<p>Wednesday 7 November</p> <p>Thursday 15 November</p> <p>Wednesday 31 October & Thursday 1 November</p>	<p>7 CYP</p> <p>14 CYP</p> <p>12 CYP</p>
All consultations	<p>Primary School Council March Bank School Meeting with the school council and talking to children aged between 5 and 11</p>	Wednesday 7 November	6 CYP
All consultations	<p>Primary & Secondary School Council Beaumont Hill Academy A specialist provider for children aged 2 -19 with special educational needs. Meeting with both the primary and secondary aged School Council</p>	Wednesday 14 November	5 CYP

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Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Consultation

Mainstream Schools Funding Guidance

Darlington Borough Council is committed to providing additional resources for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) to supplement schools' own resources (not instead of them).

This document has been produced following responses to the Consultation to date. It is aimed at identifying the differences between the current system and the proposed system which forms part of the consultation.

Current Funding Arrangements

Financial support for pupils with SEND is made up of three elements which should be used by settings to meet individual needs.

Element 1 - The Age Weighted Pupil Unit. Schools receive an allocation per child/young person, based upon actual numbers of children/young people in October each year which is reported by schools through a 'school census'.

Element 2 – Notional SEN budget. This is an identified amount of money within a school's overall budget that is to contribute to the special educational provision of children with SEN or disabilities of approximately £6000. This is not allocated on a named pupil basis but through a formula, based on factors in the school budget using data from the school census.

Element 3 – Top up funding. This represents the additional funding provided by the Local Authority to the school from 'high needs' funding where the cost of supporting a pupil's needs is deemed to exceed £6,000. The expectation is that a mainstream school must provide Element 1 and 2 before they can access this top up funding. There are currently bands for top up's applied and the Local Authority also delegated 'lump sum' funding to mainstream schools which was not linked to individual children and young people's needs under this element. This lump sum was worked out, not on the number of children and young people with SEND, but based upon a formula including factors such as deprivation. Therefore the 'Element 3' was not directly linked to the individual children and young people's needs. A complicated model existed in that Primary schools received a lump sum plus top up funding and secondary schools received a lump sum with no top up funding.

The SEND Ranges

The Local Authority have introduced the SEND ranges to ensure that there is a 'graduated response' to identifying and planning to meet each child and young person's individual needs. The ranges are based on national best practice on the four areas of the SEND Code of Practice (2014) and on the 'golden thread' of the graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review. The SEND ranges provide an evidence base of the assessment of need, the range of interventions that a school can put into place and the impact and outcomes expected.



Proposed Funding Arrangements

Elements 1, 2 and 3 will remain as previous. It is proposed however to link the SEND ranges to the Elements 1, 2 and 3 funding so that there is greater emphasis on accountability and targeting of the resources to meet each pupil's needs. This is what is commonly understood as 'money following the child' - a needs led approach.

The Local Authority are proposing a change to the way the 'Element 3' top up funding is applied so that the funding is **directly related to the assessed and identified needs of the child or young person according to the SEND ranges**. The lump sum will be phased out and the top up funding will be allocated according to the SEND ranges.

The proposed changes to the existing system are as follows:

Proposed Top up Bands

Bands 1-3 are needs that can be met in the mainstream school/setting, funded through Elements 1 and 2. Where the needs of children are more specialist, such as requiring enhanced mainstream support, Element 3 or 'top up funding' can be accessed and this relates to those bandings of 4a and above in the box below.

Bands 1-3	No top up
Band 4a	£3,000
Band 4b	£6,500
Band 5a	£8,500
Band 5b	£10,000
Band 6a	£12,500
Band 6b	£15,000

The previous bandings in mainstream primary settings for Element 3 or 'top up funding' were as follows:-

Banding 7 £2,251

Banding 8 £4,502

Banding 9 £6,753

Banding 10 £9,004

[Bandings 1 – 6 related to Elements 1 and 2 and therefore no top funding was applicable].

Please note that the previous model also included lump sum payments to schools. The two models cannot be compared like to like.



Introduction

Darlington's Draft SEND Strategy 2019-2022 for improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) giving them the 'best start in life' outlines the vision and the key objectives for supporting Darlington's children and young people with SEND and their families.

- 1. We are committed to giving all our children and young people with SEND the right support that they need at the right time and in the right place. We want to identify needs at a very early stage so that the right support can be identified. This will ensure that children and young people with SEND can have as many opportunities as every child and young person to achieve, make really good progress and to enjoy a fulfilling life.**
- 2. Children and young people with SEND need to have good quality support in their mainstream and local settings so that they can achieve their academic potential and maintain their self-esteem and confidence.**
- 3. We believe that children and young people should be educated in their local community. This will help children and young people to make local friends, socialise, go to local leisure activities and have opportunities to develop their independence. This will support young people to prepare for independent living and to go on to training and work and socialise locally.**
- 4. Not all our children and young people with SEND make the progress that they should particularly in Key Stage 4 (secondary age). It will be important that we improve this by ensuring that there is the right support identified, that the teaching they receive is meeting their needs and that this is kept regularly under review.**
- 5. In order for all this to happen successfully, we all must communicate and talk with each other. We need to ensure that we work closely together with parents/carers, children and young people and education settings in all that we do. It will be important for us to produce documents, policies and ways of working together. This is called co-production.**
- 6. It is important that any monies are used wisely. This means making the best use of staff, buildings and resources. We must ensure that with the increase in the numbers of children and young people with SEND, that all our resources are used effectively.**

These are our six key objectives and this survey asks you whether you agree with these and what other ideas you have. We also want to seek your views on what local specialist provision we need in Darlington and our proposals for funding system change.



Objective number 1

We are committed to giving all our children and young people with SEND the right support that they need at the right time and in the right place. We want to identify needs at a very early stage so that the right support can be identified. This will ensure that children and young people with SEND can have as many opportunities as every child and young person to achieve, make really good progress and to enjoy a fulfilling life.

* 1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy objective of 'Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support'.

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

2. If you have any comments about objective number 1 please do so here.



Objective number 2

Children and young people with SEND need to have good quality support in their mainstream and local settings so that they can achieve their academic potential and maintain their self-esteem and confidence.

* 3. To what extent do you agree or disagree do you agree with the SEND Draft Strategy Objective of "Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings to reduce reliance on specialist out of area placements 0-25".

- Strongly agree Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. If you have any comments about objective number 2 please do so here.



Objective number 3

We believe that children and young people should be educated in their local community. This will help children and young people to make local friends, socialise, go to local leisure activities and have opportunities to develop their independence. This will support young people to prepare for independent living and to go on to training and work and socialise locally.

* 5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND draft strategy objective of 'Ensuring that children and young people with SEND are educated in their local community and have effective preparation for adulthood and access to work and leisure opportunities'.

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

6. If you have any comments about objective number 3 please do so here.



Objective number 4

Not all our children and young people with SEND make the progress that they should particularly in Key Stage 4 (secondary age). It will be important that we improve this by ensuring that there is the right support identified, that the teaching they receive is meeting their needs and that this is kept regularly under review.

* 7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND draft strategy objective of 'Increasing achievement and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND'.

Strongly agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

8. If you have any comments about objective number 4 please do so here.



Objective number 5

In order for all this to happen successfully, we all must communicate and talk with each other. We need to ensure that we work closely together with parents/carers, children and young people and education settings in all that we do. It will be important for us to produce documents, policies and ways of working together. This is called co-production.

* 9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND draft strategy objective of 'Focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication'.

- Strongly agree Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree Disagree
- Strongly disagree

10. If you have any comments about objective number 5 please do so here.



Objective number 6

It is important that any monies are used wisely. This means making the best use of staff, buildings and resources. We must ensure that with the increase in the numbers of children and young people with SEND that all our resources are used effectively.

* 11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND draft strategy objective of 'Achieving Best Value' (human, physical and financial resources) from all our services'.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Strongly agree | <input type="radio"/> Neither agree nor disagree |
| <input type="radio"/> Agree | <input type="radio"/> Disagree |
| <input type="radio"/> Strongly disagree | |

12. If you have any comments about objective number 6 please do so here.



Objectives feedback

13. If you have any other comments, suggestions or feedback on our proposals on the six objectives please tell us below.



Local specialist provision

To help develop educational provision for children and young people with SEND, Darlington Borough Council will receive funding from the Government each year from 2019 to 2021. This funding has to be used to increase the number of places and improve facilities for children and young people who have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). We have to publish a plan for how we will use this funding by March 2019 and update and republish the plan each year. The information on this funding can be found on the website:

[Please click here to read guidance.](#) (this will open in a new tab)

We have identified in our Strategy that provision may be required to support children with Social Emotional and Mental Health difficulties and Moderate Learning Difficulties. In the Primary phase for pupils with Social Emotional and Mental Health difficulties and in the Secondary phase for pupils with Social Emotional and Mental Health difficulties and for those with Moderate Learning Difficulties.

We have also identified that we have gaps in our provision for those young people who find the demands of the curriculum difficult and for whom a more practical and vocational route is more appropriate.

* 14. Do you agree that we need to develop provision in these areas of need?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

* 15. Do you agree this is an appropriate use of the money?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Other (please specify)

16. If you have any comments about local specialist provision please do so here.



Funding - system change

Darlington Borough Council are proposing to provide funding to schools that is directly related to the assessed and identified needs of the child/young person. The funding is used for the provision of resources for that individual child [a needs based approach of money following the child/young person]. This will allow for a clear, transparent and consistent approach by primary and secondary educational settings across the Borough. Darlington Borough Council funding model is currently a combination of a delegated lump sum payment and top up to the notional fund.

* 17. To what extent do you agree with the proposals to move from the current system, which is varied across the Borough, to a consistent and applied approach for all primary and secondary educational settings?

- Strongly agree Disagree
- Agree Strongly disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree

18. If you have any comments about the system change please do so here.



Funding - ranges and bandings

Darlington Borough Council has put in place the SEND ranges which cover the four areas of the Code of Practice. There are ranges of need between 1 and 7. The funding bands for these ranges are:

Range	Band
1	Nil
2	Nil
3	Nil
4a	£3,000
4b	£6,500
5a	£8,500
5b	£10,000
6a	£12,500
6b	£15,000
7	Determined by need

19. To what extent do you agree with these bandings?

- Strongly agree Disagree
- Agree Strongly disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree

20. If you have any comments about the bandings please do so here.



Funding - simpler model

The funding proposals are designed to create a clearer and simpler model that is more easily understood by parents, carers, young people (where appropriate) and professionals.

21. To what extent do you agree that the proposals will create a clearer and simpler system?

- Strongly agree Disagree
- Agree Strongly disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree

22. If you have any comments about the simpler model please do so here.



23. If you have any other comments, suggestions or feedback on the funding please add them here.



Your interest

* 24. In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

- A parent / carer
- A young person
- A social care professional
- A governor
- Other (please specify)
- An education professional
- A health professional
- A charity
- A voluntary organisation



About you - Sex

25. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say



About you - Age

26. What age were you on your last birthday?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Under 18 years | <input type="radio"/> 45 - 59 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 18 - 24 years | <input type="radio"/> 60 - 75 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 25 - 34 years | <input type="radio"/> Over 75 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 35 - 44 years | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |



About you - Ethnicity

27. What ethnic group do you belong to?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British | <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black African |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Irish | <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Asian |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller | <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - Other |
| <input type="radio"/> White - Other | <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British - Indian |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black Caribbean | <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British - Pakistani |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British - Bangladeshi | <input type="radio"/> Black / Black British - Other |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British - Chinese | <input type="radio"/> Arab |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian / Asian British - Other | <input type="radio"/> Other |
| <input type="radio"/> Black / Black British - African | <input type="radio"/> Not sure / don't know |
| <input type="radio"/> Black / Black British - Caribbean | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |



About you - Disability

28. Do you consider yourself to have a disability

- Yes
- No
- Not sure / don't know
- Prefer not to say



Draft Strategy for Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) 2019-2022

“The Best Start In Life”



INTRODUCTION

Page 266

- Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice.
- Best Start in Life – Our Vision is that Children and Young People 0-25 with SEND aim high, achieve their full potential, grow up to be as independent as possible and become active citizens within their communities.
- Implications across all services and sectors – ambitious, inclusive, realistic and person centred within a challenging financial context.



INTRODUCTION (continued)

Page 267

- Multi-disciplinary with children, young people, families, parents and carers at the core.
- Co-production, communication and collaboration – avoid duplication, repetition and conflict.
- Significant rise in numbers and complexity of need. We therefore must future proof our services, to recognise where our gaps are and to find solutions to our challenges.



OUR VISION

Page 268

- Where possible we believe that every child and young person in Darlington should be supported in the community where they live. We will achieve this, where possible, through access to educational provision.
- Access to appropriate health and care support.
- Recognising and understanding the specific needs of the children and young people, families and carers.



POPULATION – Some Key Facts

Page 269

- Currently (August 2018) 731 active Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) – 14 in pre school, 245 in primary, 266 in secondary and 206 Post 16.
- Significant rise over past 4 years (over 70%) of EHCPs and a significant rise in new requests. Darlington is above the national and regional average for the numbers of EHCP's.
- Most prominent primary needs are Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) followed by Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)



POPULATION – Some Key Facts (continued)

Page 270

- Early Years – primary needs are mostly ASD/MLD/SLCN. New assessments show a ‘spike’ in SLCN requests.
- Primary – ASD and MLD are the highest needs followed by SLCN and SEMH.
- Secondary – the highest need is SEMH particularly in Years 10 and 11 followed by MLD and ASD.
- In Post 16 the numbers of young people with SEMH decline and ASD and MLD are again the highest need.



POPULATION –
Some Key Facts
(continued)

Page 271

- 39.1% of pupils are in a special school which is 4.3% above the national average. 27% of pupils with EHCPs are in mainstream schools which is well below the national average of 34%.
- There is a high incidence of secondary aged pupils with MLD as a primary need in special schools.



POPULATION – Some Key Facts (continued)

Page 272

- There is a high incidence of secondary aged pupils with SEMH as a primary need in independent placements. Moderation of these pupils' EHCPs suggests that these pupils are in independent placements as a result of a lack of suitable local provision.
- There is a higher than average persistent absence rate for pupils with EHCPs.
- 48% of pupils on Fixed Term Exclusion had SEN with half having a primary need of SEMH.



OUTCOMES

- Early Years – none of the pupils with an EHCP achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) however pupils at SEN Support achieved better than the national average.
- Primary – Key Stage assessments for KS1 and KS2. KS1 SEN pupils performed less favourably in 2017 than nationally, maths was stronger for those with an EHCP and reading was a particular strength. Attainment was stronger in Darlington for KS2 pupils with SEN than nationally. Those on SEN support being higher than those in the North East.
- Secondary – KS4
All SEN pupils performed less well than their national comparators in all measures.
- Post 16 – attainment improved for those with SEN support whilst there was a decline for those with a statement or EHCP.



CHALLENGES

- Attainment and progress for those with SEND requires improvement, particularly at Key Stage 4.
- There has been a rising number of pupils with SEMH identified as their primary need.
- A significant number of pupils have been diagnosed with ASD which is putting pressure on our services. The numbers of pupils with communication and interaction needs are growing fast and our services need to adapt to meet these needs.
- We need to review our Resource Bases and outreach support services to ensure that they meet needs.



CHALLENGES (continued)

Page 275

- There has been a significant rise in EHCP's.
- We need to ensure a consistent approach to the assessment and recording of EHCP's.
- There is a growing need for mental health support at universal and targeted levels.
- We need to increase employment opportunities and access to supported internships and apprenticeships for young people with SEND.
- There is an increase in demand for specialist placements which is putting a significant pressure on funding.



- There are strong working partnerships across services and with schools, colleges and stakeholders.
- Good relationship with the Parent/Carer Forum.
- The SEND Ranges (graduated response), will introduce best practice in determining the needs of children and young people.
- There is strong commitment to joint working and joint commissioning.
- The Special Provision Capital Grant presents the opportunity to increase capacity for Children and Young People with EHCPs.



OPPORTUNITIES (continued)

Page 277

- Educating more children and young people in Darlington would allow us over time to invest in more preventative and early intervention services for children with SEND.
- By educating children and young people in Darlington will enable them to participate and engage with their families and local community.
- A reshaped funding process for SEND in Darlington will give greater accountability for spend with improved consistency of funding across the Borough and savings on out of area placements.



WE WILL: Making It Happen

Page 278

- Ensure a person centred approach to service delivery and that, wherever possible all our plans, services and policies are co-produced with children and young people and their families.
- Have a Local Offer which helps children and young people and their families to plan and make choices about their support.
- Ensure that the SEND Ranges are fully embedded and utilised in all settings and continue to focus on a ‘Quality First’ approach.
- Provide systematic, proactive and appropriate early identification and provision which will be available locally.



WE WILL: Making It Happen (continued)

Page 279

- Ensure appropriate preparation for adulthood including supporting independence, independent living, training and employment.
- Support the vision through effective workforce reform and outreach support services that are based on high quality interventions.
- Establish clear pathways and effective transition between and across services.
- Have a strong commitment at all levels to ensure effective partnership working and co-production happens.



WE WILL: Making It Happen (continued)

Page 280

- Ensure active involvement of all partners in developing excellent practice supporting each other to understand differing views, priorities, skills and talents.
- Have effective Joint Commissioning Strategies which will provide greater synergy between and across services and will ensure accountability at all levels.
- Put in place funding and support that is allocated fairly and openly.



6 KEY OBJECTIVES

1. Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support.
2. Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings to enable children to be educated in appropriate settings locally.
3. Ensuring that children and young people are educated in their local community and have an effective preparation for adulthood with access to work, training and leisure opportunities.
4. Increasing achievement and improving all outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
5. Focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication.
6. Achieving Best Value (human, physical and financial resources) from all our services.



KEY QUESTIONS

- What is working well for you?
- What is working but needs ‘tweaking’?
- What is not working?

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- All comments and views expressed today will be noted.
 - We have provided hard copies of the electronic survey which you can complete today or return in the pre-paid envelope.
 - We also have a survey on our website:
www.Darlington.gov.uk/SEND
- Thank you for attending today.



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**DARLINGTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Special Educational Needs and Disability Consultation Funding Proposals

Background

- The SEND Code of Practice says that schools and other settings (early years/nurseries) should have a staged approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND. This means that there are steps that schools need to put in place how they identify SEND needs, the support that they give, what they need to put in place and how to measure the impact of all of this. The Code of Practice calls this a ‘graduated response’.



The SEND Ranges

- Darlington has put in place the ‘SEND Ranges’ which cover the 4 areas of the Code of Practice.
- Ranges 1-3 are needs that can be met in the mainstream school/setting
- Ranges 4-7 being those needs which require significant additional support and for many access to specialist support or placement in a Resource Base or a special, or independent setting.



What is the current system?

The system for funding 'high needs' provision, for example those children and young people with complex Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) needs up to the end of the 17/18 academic year was unclear and difficult to understand.

There was a lack of transparency for schools and parents about how the funding worked, who accessed it and the funding schools received was not allocated to an individual pupil's needs.

For example, Primary schools receiving a lump sum plus top up funding and secondary schools receiving a lump sum with no top up funding. This led to potential variations in the funding and money not following the child or young person.



What is the current system?

- For those children and young people who fall within Ranges 1-3 the school receives a notional SEN fund of up to £6,000. If the child or young person requires more support then they receive this from the ‘high needs’ block through ‘top up’ funding and/or specialist support as identified through the Education Health and Care plan (EHCP).



What is the proposed system?

- It is proposed to allocate funding alongside the SEND Ranges. This means that funding is directly related to the needs of the child/young person.

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Schools will be asked to demonstrate also how they are spending the notional £6,000 spend on those children and young people who are on Ranges 1-3 before they receive any additional financial support. This will lead to a greater level of accountability.



Research into Funding levels

- In order to determine an appropriate funding level for each band we looked at the banded funding levels across a number of local authorities.

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For mainstream top-ups above the £6,000 notional SEN limit we identified a wide range of maximums from £3,700 right up to £16,651 with an average maximum of £9,216.

- The exercise showed that the majority of the top funding levels were in inner London authorities.



Top up funding proposals

- We investigated a number of examples of funding models. We settled on a range model which details the expected interventions across seven levels of need.

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Ranges 1-3 are funded from the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) and the notional SEN (up to £6,000) budget that each school receives. Ranges 4 (EHCP) and above are funded through the High Needs block.



Top up funding proposals

- We recognised that three ranges (ie range 4-6) would be too crude when determining funding therefore it was decided that each of those three bands would be subdivided into two. We are therefore proposing seven ranges with ten funding bands.



Top up funding proposals

- It is proposed to use funding level for the bandings as follows:

Bands 1-3	No top-up
Band 4a	£3,000
Band 4b	£6,500
Band 5a	£8,500
Band 5b	£10,000
Band 6a	£12,500
Band 6b	£15,000



In Summary

- Darlington Borough Council are proposing to provide funding to schools that is directly related to the assessed and identified needs of the child/young person.
- The funding is used for the provision of resources for that individual child [a needs based approach of money following the child/young person].
- This will allow for a clear, transparent and consistent approach by primary and secondary educational settings across the Borough.



How can I give my views?

- All comments and views expressed today will be noted.
- We have provided hard copies of the electronic survey which you can complete today or return in the pre-paid envelope.
- We also have a survey on our website:
www.Darlington.gov.uk/SEND
- Thank you for attending today.



Annex B Respondents Analysis – SEND Strategy and Funding

Q24. In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

Answer Choices	Responses	
A parent / carer	35.09%	20
A young person	0.00%	0
An education professional	45.61%	26
A health professional	1.75%	1
A social care professional	5.26%	3
A governor	7.02%	4
A charity	0.00%	0
A voluntary organisation	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	5.26%	3
	Answered	57
	Skipped	22

Q25. What is your sex?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	14.29%	8
Female	76.79%	43
Other	1.79%	1
Prefer not to say	7.14%	4
	Answered	56
	Skipped	23

Q26. What age were you on your last birthday?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Under 18 years	0.00%	0
18 - 24 years	0.00%	0
25 - 34 years	10.71%	6
35 - 44 years	33.93%	19
45 - 59 years	42.86%	24
60 - 75 years	1.79%	1
Over 75 years	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	10.71%	6
	Answered	56
	Skipped	23

Q27. What ethnic group do you belong to?

Answer Choices	Responses	
White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	83.93%	47
White - Irish	0.00%	0
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.00%	0
White - Other	3.57%	2

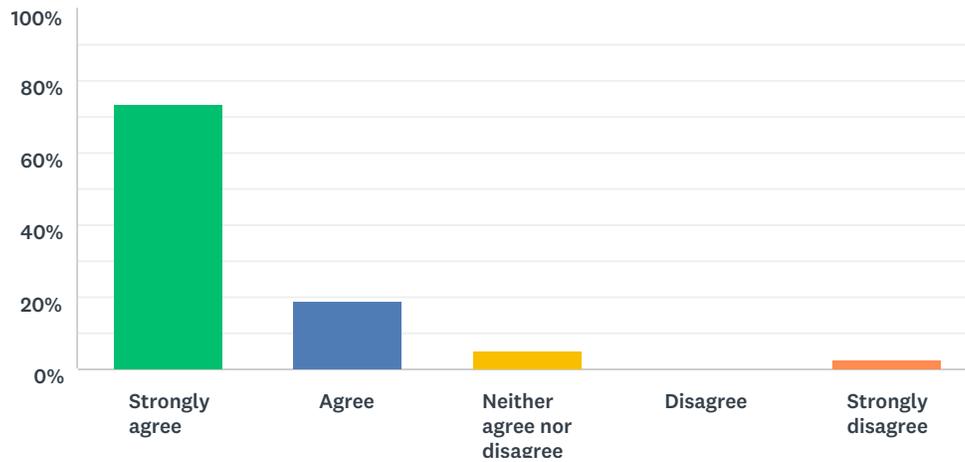
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black Caribbean	0.00%	0
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black African	0.00%	0
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Asian	0.00%	0
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - Other	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Indian	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Pakistani	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Chinese	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Other	1.79%	1
Black / Black British - African	0.00%	0
Black / Black British - Caribbean	0.00%	0
Black / Black British - Other	0.00%	0
Arab	0.00%	0
Other	0.00%	0
Not sure / don't know	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	10.71%	6
	Answered	56
	Skipped	23

Q28. Do you consider yourself to have a disability

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	5.36%	3
No	85.71%	48
Not sure / don't know	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	8.93%	5
	Answered	56
	Skipped	23

Q1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy objective of 'Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support'.

Answered: 79 Skipped: 0



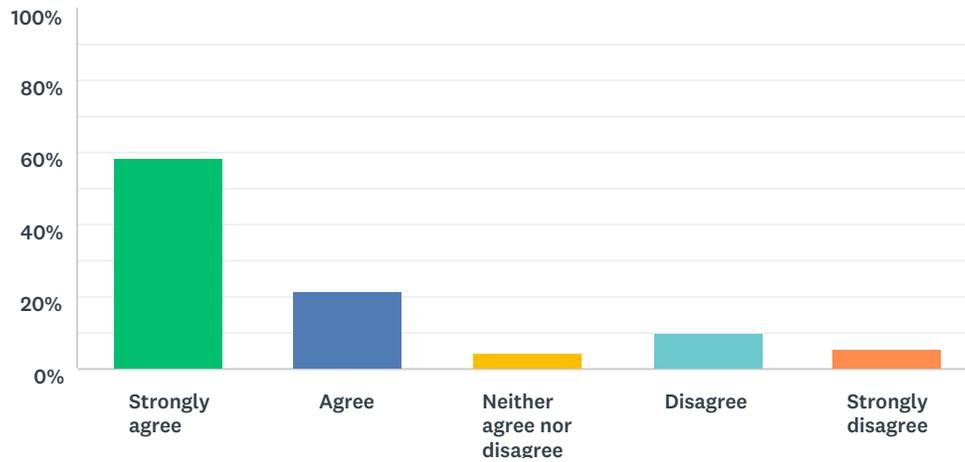
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	73.42%	58
Agree	18.99%	15
Neither agree nor disagree	5.06%	4
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	2.53%	2
TOTAL		79

**Q2 If you have any comments about objective number 1 please do so
here.**

Answered: 28 Skipped: 51

Q3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy Objective of "Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings to reduce reliance on specialist out of area placements 0-25".

Answered: 70 Skipped: 9



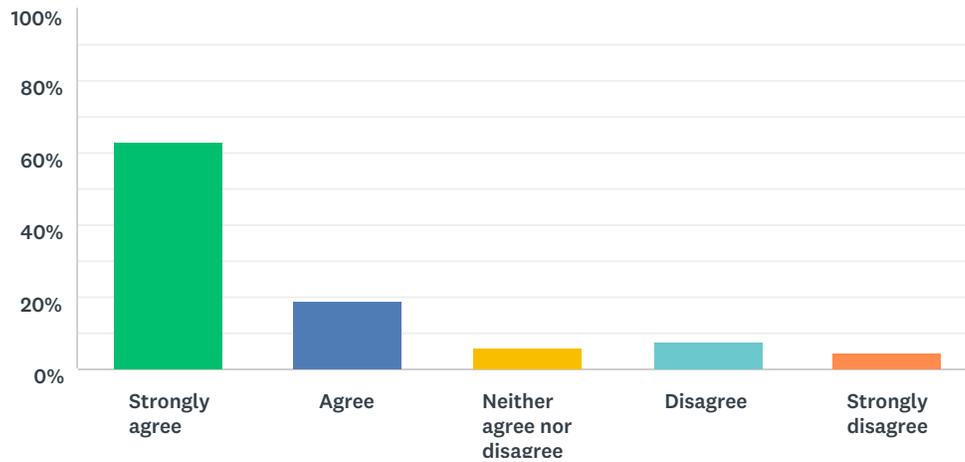
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	58.57%	41
Agree	21.43%	15
Neither agree nor disagree	4.29%	3
Disagree	10.00%	7
Strongly disagree	5.71%	4
TOTAL		70

**Q4 If you have any comments about objective number 2 please do so
here.**

Answered: 35 Skipped: 44

Q5 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND draft strategy objective of ‘Ensuring that children and young people with SEND are educated in their local community and have effective preparation for adulthood and access to work and leisure opportunities’.

Answered: 68 Skipped: 11



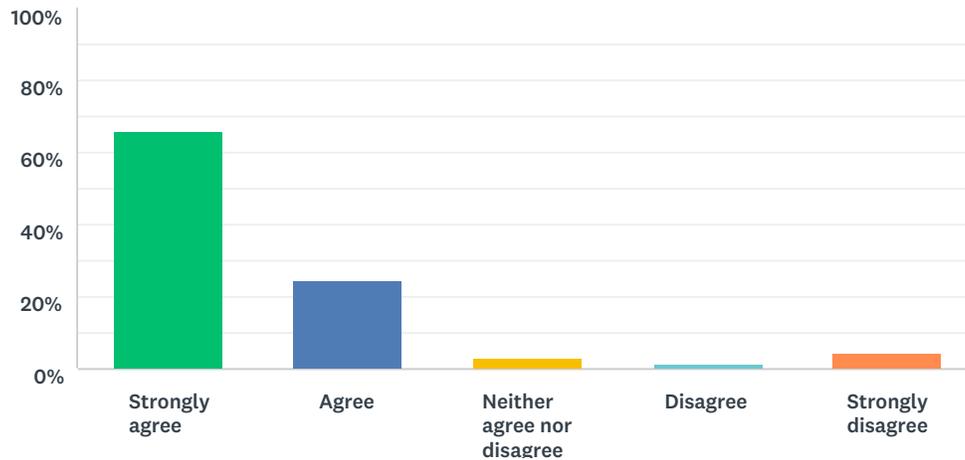
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	63.24%	43
Agree	19.12%	13
Neither agree nor disagree	5.88%	4
Disagree	7.35%	5
Strongly disagree	4.41%	3
TOTAL		68

**Q6 If you have any comments about objective number 3 please do so
here.**

Answered: 29 Skipped: 50

Q7 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND draft strategy objective of 'Increasing achievement and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND'.

Answered: 65 Skipped: 14



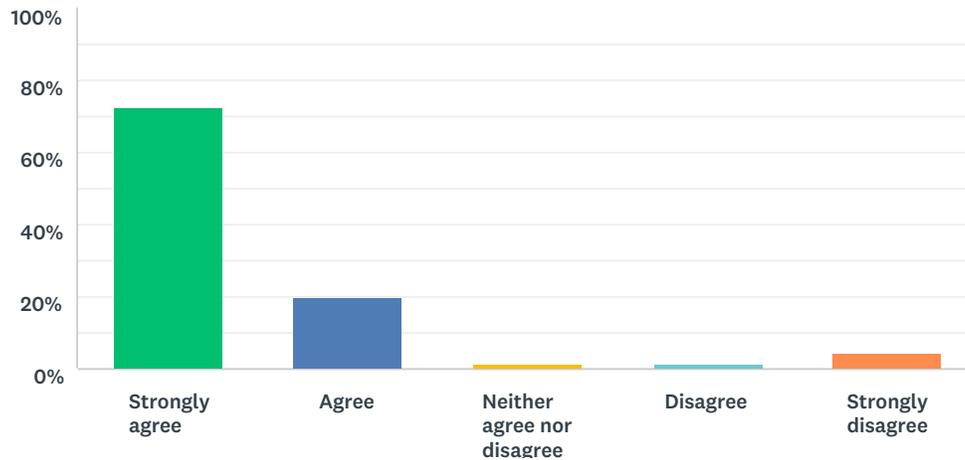
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	66.15%	43
Agree	24.62%	16
Neither agree nor disagree	3.08%	2
Disagree	1.54%	1
Strongly disagree	4.62%	3
TOTAL		65

**Q8 If you have any comments about objective number 4 please do so
here.**

Answered: 29 Skipped: 50

Q9 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND draft strategy objective of 'Focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication'.

Answered: 65 Skipped: 14



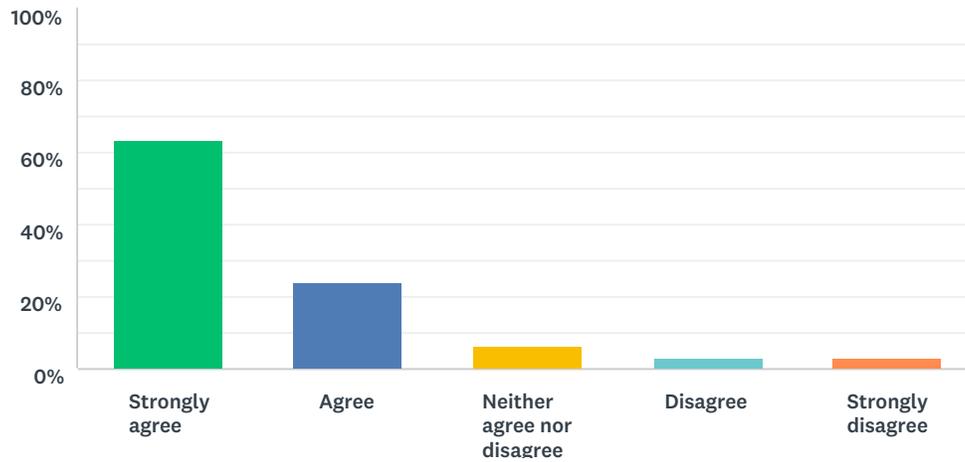
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	72.31%	47
Agree	20.00%	13
Neither agree nor disagree	1.54%	1
Disagree	1.54%	1
Strongly disagree	4.62%	3
TOTAL		65

**Q10 If you have any comments about objective number 5 please do so
here.**

Answered: 33 Skipped: 46

Q11 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND draft strategy objective of ‘ Achieving Best Value’ (human, physical and financial resources) from all our services’.

Answered: 63 Skipped: 16



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	63.49%	40
Agree	23.81%	15
Neither agree nor disagree	6.35%	4
Disagree	3.17%	2
Strongly disagree	3.17%	2
TOTAL		63

**Q12 If you have any comments about objective number 6 please do so
here.**

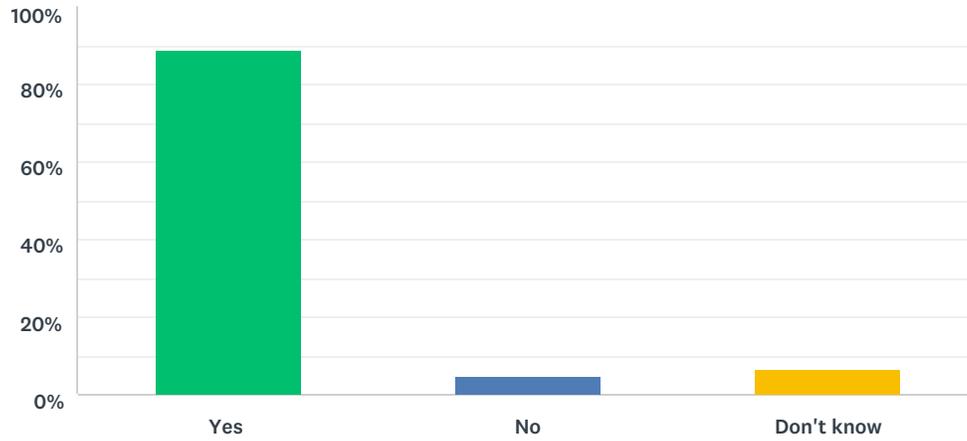
Answered: 30 Skipped: 49

Q13 If you have any other comments, suggestions or feedback on our proposals on the six objectives please tell us below.

Answered: 25 Skipped: 54

Q14 Do you agree that we need to develop provision in these areas of need?

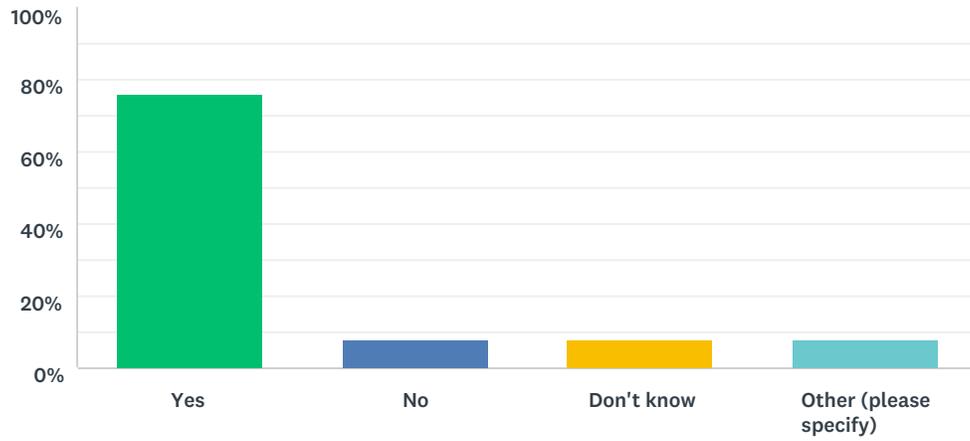
Answered: 62 Skipped: 17



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	88.71%	55
No	4.84%	3
Don't know	6.45%	4
TOTAL		62

Q15 Do you agree this is an appropriate use of the money?

Answered: 62 Skipped: 17



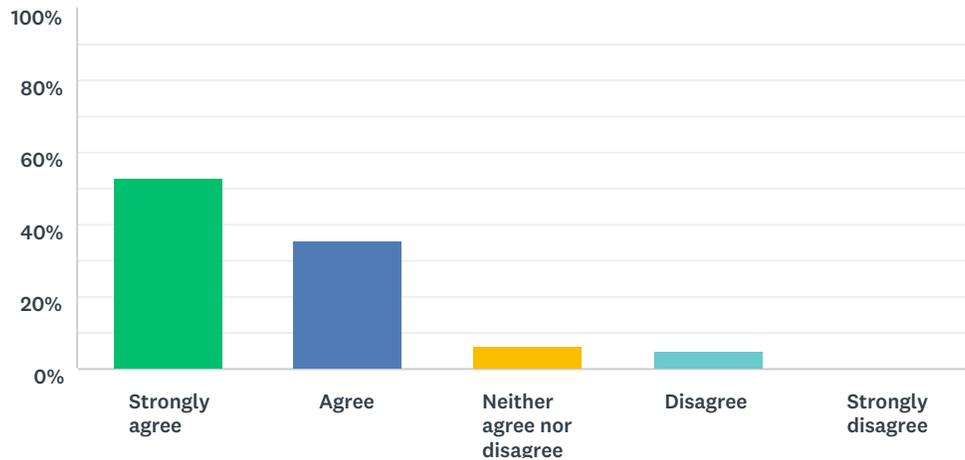
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	75.81%	47
No	8.06%	5
Don't know	8.06%	5
Other (please specify)	8.06%	5
TOTAL		62

**Q16 If you have any comments about local specialist provision please do
so here.**

Answered: 36 Skipped: 43

Q17 To what extent do you agree with the proposals to move from the current system, which is varied across the Borough, to a consistent and applied approach for all primary and secondary educational settings?

Answered: 62 Skipped: 17



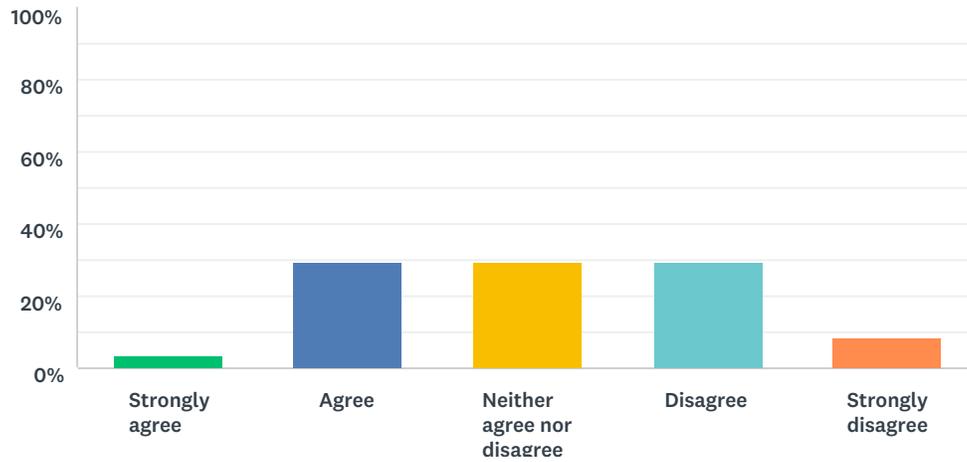
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	53.23%	33
Agree	35.48%	22
Neither agree nor disagree	6.45%	4
Disagree	4.84%	3
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
TOTAL		62

**Q18 If you have any comments about the system change please do so
here.**

Answered: 18 Skipped: 61

Q19 To what extent do you agree with these bandings?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 21



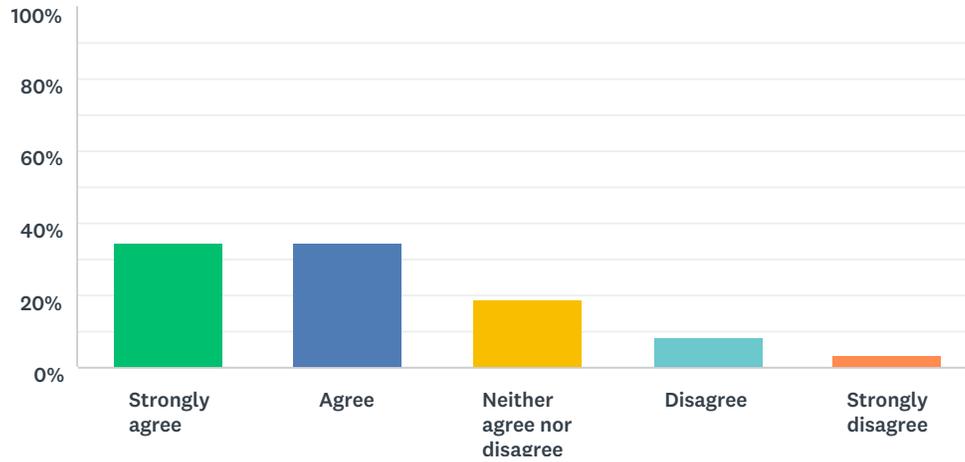
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	3.45%	2
Agree	29.31%	17
Neither agree nor disagree	29.31%	17
Disagree	29.31%	17
Strongly disagree	8.62%	5
TOTAL		58

Q20 If you have any comments about the bandings please do so here.

Answered: 42 Skipped: 37

Q21 To what extent do you agree that the proposals will create a clearer and simpler system?

Answered: 58 Skipped: 21



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	34.48%	20
Agree	34.48%	20
Neither agree nor disagree	18.97%	11
Disagree	8.62%	5
Strongly disagree	3.45%	2
TOTAL		58

**Q22 If you have any comments about the simpler model please do so
here.**

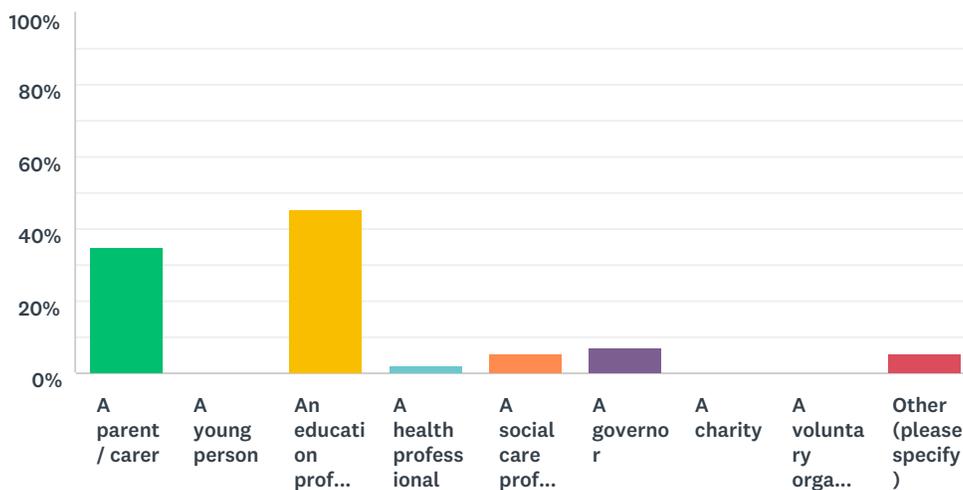
Answered: 17 Skipped: 62

**Q23 If you have any other comments, suggestions or feedback on the
funding please add them here.**

Answered: 10 Skipped: 69

Q24 In what capacity are you responding to this survey?

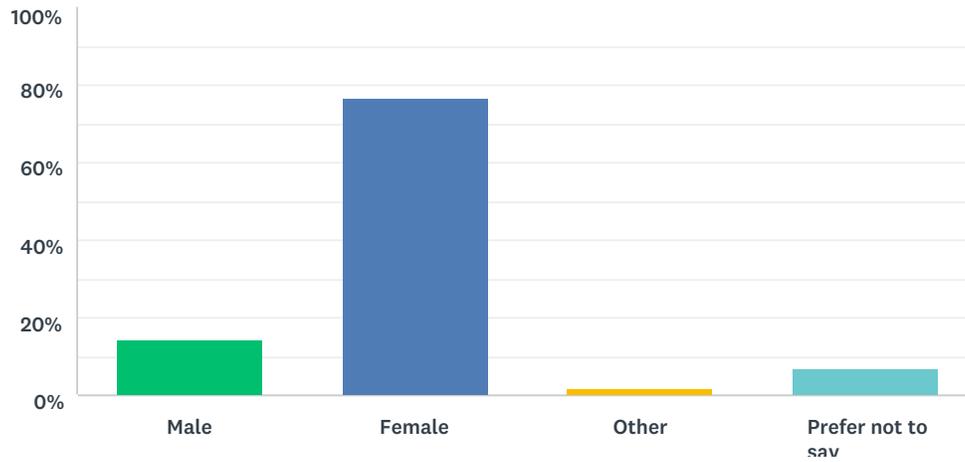
Answered: 57 Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A parent / carer	35.09%	20
A young person	0.00%	0
An education professional	45.61%	26
A health professional	1.75%	1
A social care professional	5.26%	3
A governor	7.02%	4
A charity	0.00%	0
A voluntary organisation	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	5.26%	3
TOTAL		57

Q25 What is your sex?

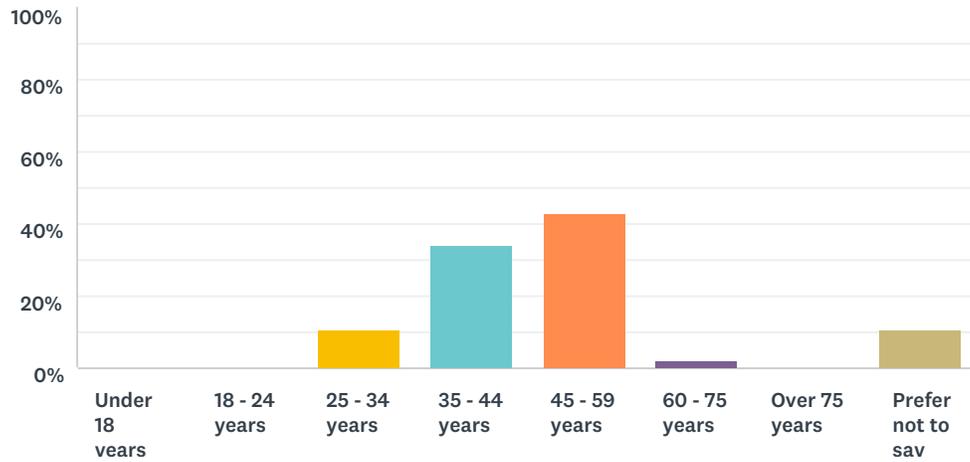
Answered: 56 Skipped: 23



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Male	14.29%	8
Female	76.79%	43
Other	1.79%	1
Prefer not to say	7.14%	4
TOTAL		56

Q26 What age were you on your last birthday?

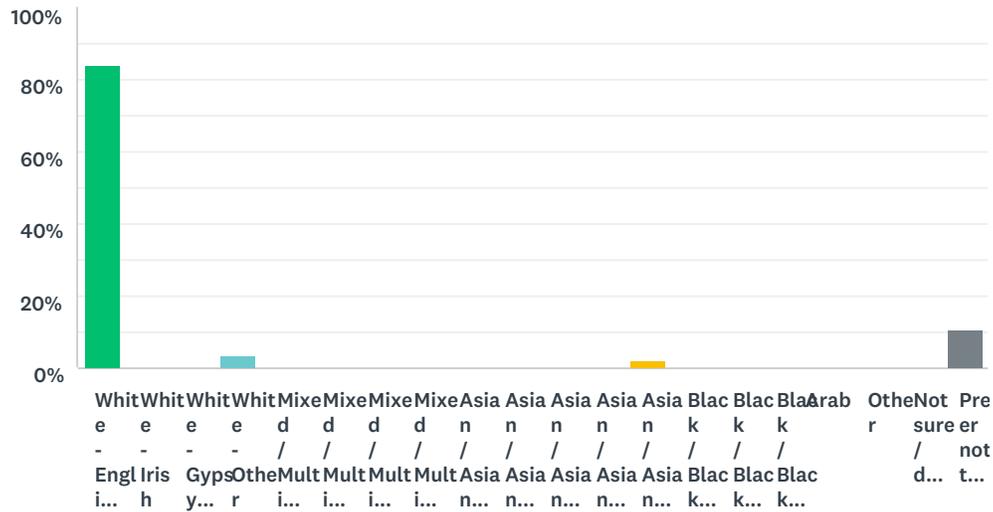
Answered: 56 Skipped: 23



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18 years	0.00%	0
18 - 24 years	0.00%	0
25 - 34 years	10.71%	6
35 - 44 years	33.93%	19
45 - 59 years	42.86%	24
60 - 75 years	1.79%	1
Over 75 years	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	10.71%	6
TOTAL		56

Q27 What ethnic group do you belong to?

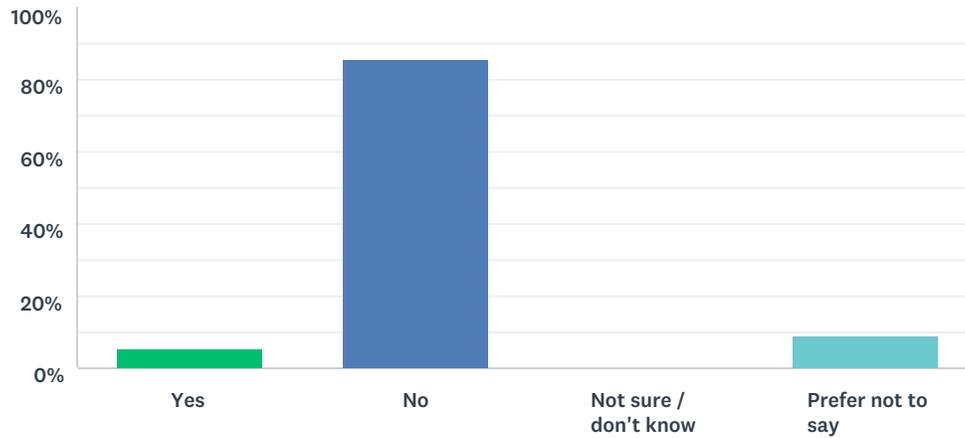
Answered: 56 Skipped: 23



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	83.93%	47
White - Irish	0.00%	0
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.00%	0
White - Other	3.57%	2
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black Caribbean	0.00%	0
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Black African	0.00%	0
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - White & Asian	0.00%	0
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups - Other	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Indian	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Pakistani	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Chinese	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British - Other	1.79%	1
Black / Black British - African	0.00%	0
Black / Black British - Caribbean	0.00%	0
Black / Black British - Other	0.00%	0
Arab	0.00%	0
Other	0.00%	0
Not sure / don't know	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	10.71%	6
TOTAL		56

Q28 Do you consider yourself to have a disability

Answered: 56 Skipped: 23



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	5.36%	3
No	85.71%	48
Not sure / don't know	0.00%	0
Prefer not to say	8.93%	5
TOTAL		56

RESPONSE 1

I have read the draft SEND strategy with interest and in principle agree with its content. In fact I think that we would all agree that improving the quality of life and reducing inequality is important to us all.

Building strong communities, growing the economy and spending every pound wisely is essential and I was pleased to hear all the references to early intervention. As an educator and professional who has worked within Darlington during the last 15 years I have seen many changes some for the better however over the last two years the funding issues have transformed schools and reduced resources to a bare minimum. Social deprivation has increased and whether as a result of this or not SEND needs have increased at such a rate that it is hard to manage and support demand as effectively as we would like to.

Early years provision and support has seen cut upon cut and I was therefore pleased to read that early intervention and support is key and then confused to read that the strategy suggests the best place for an early years hub is in a primary school? Surely the early years begins long before the child enters a primary school? In fact by the time the child enters full time education health visitors and the early years inclusion team have withdrawn their services?

We work with some of the most vulnerable families and children and it takes time for them to build trusting relationships with adults. Staff work hard in both settings to provide early intervention and support to parents who are often unaware of their child's needs and difficulties or not ready to acknowledge them. It can take time to build the necessary trust for parents to acknowledge the differences and accept support or involvement from outside professionals and the 1:4 ratios in 2 year old provision can mask all sorts of difficulties. Therefore it is important to us to invest time and effort into establishing strong relationships with our families. This begins with home visits and discussions with health visitors. Daily contact and incidental conversations with parents at drop off and pick up time provide us with the opportunity to provide that nurturing support and we invest a lot of time in working with the family to ensure that their child achieves the best outcomes possible and to ensure that the most appropriate support is in place.

Excellent links with health professionals such as health visitors mean that often before the child enters school we can ensure that the appropriate discussions with the family have taken place and the appropriate support arranged. We have also worked hard to establish effective multi-agency links working in particular with the early years inclusion team who's support for children ceases when they enter full time education.

Many of our parents have not had good experiences of the education and welfare systems and are reluctant to engage however we provide support groups for parents as well as delivering sessions designed to improve their confidence in working with their children and we can do so often without the parent even realising this and attendance at these groups is increasing. We could offer so much more with the appropriate mechanisms in place.

We currently have around X children identified on the SEND register. These are children with significant needs some of whom already have EHCPs and the others with one plans in place. In order to support these children we have well trained/skilled staff who can provide the support required. With limited funding streams available to us it is challenging managing this level of need. One Plans are costly, time consuming and cumbersome and don't always achieve the outcomes they are put in place to achieve. Often advice from professionals is to wait and see how children cope once they enter mainstream which means that children do not receive the timely support they need.

If the early years teams were placed within our settings I think it would improve the support we could provide and encourage parents to accept intervention at an earlier stage. Many of our parents are not keen to consent to additional involvement at the earliest stage because they feel either threatened or suspicious and I think having the teams working within settings would allay these fears. If we want to ensure that the 'views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their parents/carers are at the centre of decision making and that they are given the right support and information in a timely manner' then this would be the best place to begin.

We have the space in settings to offer 'systematic, proactive and appropriate early identification, early help and provision' and are keen to support and develop partnerships within other schools and with other child care services. Transition has to be a key part of this and it is not just transition for children that is required. I am concerned that whilst all the supports to the family may be in place whilst they are in nursery with our open door policy often these supports disappear as the child enters full time education and it is at this point that I believe parents suddenly feel almost destitute and the good work that has begun with the family starts to crumble. We know that mental health is a serious issue and with some of the most neediest and vulnerable families passing through our doors having mental health professionals working within the nurseries would be another way of trying to support families more effectively.

It is important to utilise the SEND capital grant and other grants effectively in line with the SEND strategy key principles. With funding our settings could be developed to offer a specialist outreach provision or a resource base. We have facilities already in place but would require some funding to update the provision. We could potentially offer up to X full time places and then could also offer X short term places whereby other settings could buy into the service for a period of time if the child is requiring assessment or access to therapeutic services. This is an area ripe for further development and we could work closely with the early help team and early years inclusion team to develop this. It would improve transparency about the range of services and support available which is a key requirement from parents and would enable us to commission the right services to meet the needs of our children and families. If we want to improve communication and interaction then the earlier this begins the better and better partnership working at an earlier age should help to reduce the level of SEND needs/EHCP when children enter school.

If therefore you are committed to 'early identification of need, ensuring the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support; to build capacity in mainstream settings to reduce reliance on specialist and out of authority placements; to ensure that children and young people are educated in their local community; increase achievement and improve outcomes; focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication; achieving best value;' then I can see no better place to start than with nursery.

I believe that this is indeed an exciting time of opportunity and it is important that we get the support and provision right. I think meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families through co-ordinated services has to be the focus if we want a more effective and efficient service. I will be happy to discuss this further.

RESPONSE 2

It's difficult to argue with any of the objectives in the SEND Strategy. They all seem relevant and useful but I have some points/suggestions.

It's very wordy, which it has to be, but on first impressions there's a sense that perhaps one can't see the woods for the trees.

- The preamble is such that the objectives don't start until section 11, page 22. Who's going to read that far? Shouldn't the objectives be headline makers?

- Partly linked to the previous point, where is the 'in your face' prioritisation? i.e. the 5 (for example) key things upon which this plan succeeds or fails. Again, the objectives seem fine, and written by people who know the picture better than me, but they start to look a bit sameish visually.

- Finance is a very big driver for this strategy, but the strategy that could make the biggest difference to the finances - out of borough placements - is barely mentioned. Objective 2 does have reduced costs of such placements as an outcome, but there are no associated objectives that seem to fulfil this. The strategies listed in section 2 feel a bit jargonised and generic. How about a task/finish group identifying specific local premises etc? I feel that the work has to be this direct and specific, alongside the listed mainstream provision objectives, for us to actually crack this difficult issue.

RESPONSE 3

- 1. Committed to the right support at the right time in the right place. Want to identify needs at 'a very early stage' so that the right support can be identified. Will ensure they have as many opportunities as EVERY C/YP to achieve, make really good progress and enjoy a fulfilling life.**

We believe that by and large we do well in this area identifying needs as early as possible via proactive transition work with our feeder schools, historically well supported in this by the LA. Unfortunately, all too often in secondary, we can be thwarted in our efforts to identify needs 'at a very early stage,' due to a few primary feeder schools appearing, at least, to be less proactive in identifying and addressing needs themselves. 'They'll sort that out in secondary school,' is a phrase that is often heard in meetings with parents of pupils new to the school

We suspect that this is largely a financially driven issue, as identification of need involves the cost of an Ed Psych assessment, plus whatever interventions are then recommended. There is also the colossal cost in resource terms of committing time to a full EHC Plan application. We note considerable inconsistency across our feeder primary schools in the numbers or levels of need being identified prior to KS2-3 transition. Perhaps this is a genuine reflection of need, linked in part at least to socio-economic deprivation levels. We are not sure if this is the whole story and wonder if more could perhaps be done via the LA to provide the training and motivation to identify early.

We fully appreciate that needs can emerge at a later stage, too. SEMH sometimes emerge as a looked after pupil hits puberty, for example, or a student who has done well to manage their dyslexic tendencies throughout KS1-4 suddenly finds that the wheels come off their coping strategies when faced with the much greater literacy levels demanded of GCEs and access arrangements are urgently required to provide the level playing field to which they are entitled and to reduce anxiety. As a Trust we are fairly self-sufficient in this regard, due to staff having attended CPT3A training.

Paperwork to support transition is noted to be inconsistent. We wonder if perhaps GDPR legislation may have had an impact here, leading to a significant minority of schools to

perhaps sit on records and paperwork, rather than risk sharing anything inappropriately or in an incorrect manner and risking serious consequences. This may be an area where all of our schools could benefit from clear information-sharing advice from the LA. The lack of the former LA spreadsheet on the Common Transfer File means that no information on the needs of pupils at SEN Support now reaches secondary providers from the LA. This can put the secondary SENCo into the unenviable position of having to either make an intelligent guess in some areas, or to personally visit all feeder primary schools. In our case, that can be up to 29 schools. Hardly practicable. LA support in this would be especially useful to support early identification.

2. Need good quality support in their mainstream and local settings so they can achieve their academic potential and maintain their self-esteem and confidence.

It is our secondary SENCo's experience that whilst in-school support is generally quite strong, some forms of support, when required in particularly complex or unusual cases, or to help meet the needs of particular vulnerable groups, is thin on the ground. For example,

- there is no EAL support, since Traveller Education was cut back
- the Social Communication Outreach Service would appear to be overstretched and it is our secondary SENCo's experience that feedback is difficult to obtain
- it would appear that it is difficult to obtain additional guidance or alternative provision for complex aspects of SEMH support without costs attached.
- there are no SALTS or SEMH provision for the secondary sector, other than Rise Carr, as provision is all being aimed at primary phase, other than in the area of autistic spectrum disorders
- these primary and secondary academies share the frustration of the great difficulty that exists in successfully proving that more funding is required via an EHC Plan in order to effectively support a pupil who has significant levels of need to achieve their academic potential and maintain fragile self-esteem in the process. This difficulty is exacerbated when internal policy is also obliged to keep a very tight grip on purse strings regarding the availability of TA support, when striving to demonstrate efficient use of public funds. The combination of factors here make life very challenging for SENCos who must field concerns and probing questions from anxious parents.

3. Should be educated in their local community, supporting independent living etc

We are aware that expensive, out of County placement for learners who have EHC Plans is an issue that ultimately affects all of us. Here we wonder if the LA is receiving an accurate overview. This point has been mooted because difficulties are currently being experienced with inter-authority co-operation and communication in this area. Our SENCOs really struggle to find the time needed to study the complex resource acquisition systems of several different LAs, where children have arrived from out of area. Anything that is very time consuming for a SENCo is by its very nature already proving very expensive as a process for a school. The principle that children with SEND should be educated in their local community, supporting independent living, is a given. We are all signed up to this, as a happy journey towards an independent life is rarely won by moving away from one's friends and community for significant parts of the week throughout one's developing years. However, to prevent the need for these expensive and exclusive seeming arrangements being ultimately relied upon to solve problems at crisis level, we are in need of considerable investment in local alternative provision within the authority.

4. Improve KS4 progress by ensuring that ‘right support’ is identified, the teaching they receive is meeting their needs and that this is kept regularly under review.

Unfortunately the new exams quite simply do not meet the needs of learners with significant levels of Cognition and Learning difficulty, some kinds of disability or significant physical/medical vulnerabilities that affect cognition and/or emotional well-being. This list is not exhaustive. Stronger guidance and training or signposting from the LA linked to alternative qualifications would be valuable in this area.

5. Importance of communication with one another. Ensure we work closely with parents / carers, C/YP and education settings in all that we do. Important to co-produce documents, policies and ways of working together.

Co-production is an area of relative strength for us in both settings represented here. The publication of the Ranges are a good example of this. Internally, Learner Profiles pull together all agencies working closely with the family and are structured to ensure that the child and family’s voice is heard and actively shared and responded to within actions emanating from the plans. Our SENCos’ meetings with families and staff or TAFs (and internal meetings of SENCos) are generally well managed and well run. Documentation on the running of child-centred meetings has left an indelible impression on the systems that operate around child and family in our academies here in post COP NE England. Person-centred review templates shared in anticipation of the first publication of the new COP in 2014 were particularly valuable in developing these strong systems, that have now become a routine part at the heart of all we do. Families are fully included most, if not all of the time and we believe that the LA has strong systems in place to lead and support with this.

Where we feel disappointed is with regards to the equitable sharing with other partners who work with children to support identified needs in a range of areas. It has been the experience and observation of our secondary SENCo that social care are quick to let schools know if something they require in order to meet their own statutory processes around a child has not been made promptly available. Unfortunately their own availability is often an issue when it comes to working as we would wish, with their regular and predictable attendance at child centred meetings. We would also welcome LA support in helping our social care colleagues develop awareness of what is realistically within the provision reach of SENCos.

6. Wise use of monies. Staff, building, resources. Effectiveness ensured.

There are currently not the resources out there to consistently and effectively meet needs early. We can identify needs with considerable areas, especially given the high quality partnership working brokered with external agencies such as EPs, SALTs and OT services etc. However, if there are scant easily accessible, in-area affordable resources to effectively be able to address and support these needs going forward, how helpful has the identification of need process really been? Has it perhaps risked merely serving to increase frustration?

What is working well, less well and what simply needs tweaking

1. We appreciate the clarity within the new Ranges and the consultation process led by Anne Astbury, which showed a genuine level of consultation during the training days allocated.

Tweaking –

We believe that greater familiarity with the new Ranges will assist greatly in tweaking this area for the better across the LA.

To this aim, MAT SENCo will be recommending to all our SENCos at our imminent MAT SENCo Meeting (being held 4 Dec 18) that we allocate time to this process at our first meeting of 2019. The meeting could be structured in a way that enables us to support one another to become a little more familiar with the language and levels within the ranges by playing to our separate strengths. We could allocate some time for close study within the meeting, followed by discussion in small groups, using memorable examples as referents to bring the documentation to life, via shared, anonymised case studies.

We could gradually assign a level from the Ranges to the carefully chosen examples of one of each form of primary need from the 4 outlined in the COP 2015, following some healthy debate, referring to our shared view of the descriptors projected on a large screen. This is likely to be useful to our colleagues from a neighbouring LA, who have to use similar documentation in their own identification of levels of need in order to assign appropriate levels of provision.

2. We greatly appreciate the chance to come together as a group of SENCos, both within our own Trust and within our respective LAs.

These meetings go a long way towards reducing the sense of isolation that SENCos can experience, almost always being the only one within their setting, so having no on-site colleagues in the way experienced by Key Stage colleagues in primary settings or by departmental, SEN or pastoral team colleagues in secondary.

Colleagues greatly appreciate and make very good use of the wider experience of both LA SEND teams and Case Workers allocated to schools. They are excellent opportunities for us to be brought up to speed with the latest initiatives in the field from DfE and as always, we all greatly appreciate the opportunity to network. This opportunity can be particularly helpful when feeder primary schools and secondary colleagues are able to have a little informal time together between agenda items, supporting transition issues and building important inter-school relationships that benefit our pupils, amongst many other things.

It is also incredibly useful and motivating to learn about the excellent practice going on in other schools within the local area. Even where a presentation may be about what is happening in a different phase perhaps outside of one's own direct personal experience, (eg exciting developments in SEND provision within Early Years settings) there is almost always something useful to take away from the examples shared.

Being able to secure prompt advice and support from a shared MAT Learning Support Officer / MAT SENCo is valued by our SENCos, particularly when new to post or to the academy. The same applies to the ability to seek specific advice and guidance from the LA's SEND Advisor, who is also a sound and much appreciated source of support, when required, by our MAT SENCo.

Tweaking –

Greater advance notice of meeting dates would be extremely helpful, given the difficulties involved in securing cover to allow time out of school.

We intend addressing this as a MAT at our next meeting, with several new colleagues on board for the first time. MAT SENCo is changing her part-time working days in the new term in order to be always available for the LA's CPD meetings.

More information at the start of each academic year about best times and methods of contacting our allocated LA case workers would be really helpful. This is because it would

lead to swifter responses to queries or concerns, making us all more effective in our identification and provision of support, also and importantly helping to reduce anxiety in the children and families we support.

RESPONSE 4

Objective 1: Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support.

Newborn hearing screening is in place and there is 52 weeks/year access to ToD for newly diagnosed children. There is a clear referral pathway and all protocols are adhered to. Children are monitored using the Deaf Early Monitoring Protocol. Pre-school Deaf children get a high level of early intervention from LINS staff, working on receptive and expressive language, visual and auditory memory and listening & attention. We work closely with family to help them to understand and meet the needs of their deaf child.

Currently we have no preschool children with access to a radio aid at home although research highlights the benefits of early radio aid use.

http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/external_research/index.html#contentblock2

Darlington no longer commissions the School Hearing Screening programme for children in YR. This means that children with a progressive or acquired hearing loss will risk being undiagnosed for many years as the only route to diagnosis is through parent accessing a referral via GP.

Objective 2: Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings to reduce reliance on specialist out of authority placements 0-25

Most Darlington hearing impaired children attend local schools. There are currently X Darlington hearing impaired pupils who go out of authority to Sunnyside Academy, Kings Academy and Northern Counties. We understand that currently Kings Academy do not employ a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf in their resourced provision. LINS Team have no involvement in the education of these children.

NATSIP (National Sensory Impairment Partnership) guidelines are used to allocate the level of support given to hearing impaired children.

There is no resource base for deaf children in Darlington.

Objective 3: Ensuring that CYP with SEND are educated in their own local community and have an effective preparation for adulthood, including access to appropriate work, training and leisure opportunities.

Children are not on our caseload after Y11 (6th form in Carmel, and age 18/19 at Beaumont Hill) We do initial transition support with QE and Darlington College but there is no regular support from our team for hearing impaired pupils in these settings. More needs to be in place to support children through transition to adulthood and to educate hearing impaired pupils about making and attending appointments, accessing hearing aid repair, assistive technology and reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

There are no Deaf Youth clubs or facilities for Deaf young people to mix and socialise with hearing impaired peers. These facilities exist in Middlesbrough <http://cdyp.co.uk/>

The National Deaf Children's Society are developing **Deaf- friendly Standards** which clubs can use to offer Deaf children equal access to their activities.

http://www.ndcs.org.uk/me2/are_you_an_organisation/support_for_me2_clubs/deaffriendly.html

Objective 4: Increasing achievement and improving all outcomes for CYP with SEND.

It is important to recognise that a mild or moderate hearing loss has a significant impact on learning and achieving. Incidental language learning is reduced so children need repetition and reinforcement of vocabulary and concepts. The gap with peers often widens from Y1 onwards. It is hard to measure our value added as we identify and address gaps in language as and when they arise – we address social and emotional needs by delivering the NDCS Healthy Minds programme as well as supporting academic development.

<https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=2ahUKEwidli8hPXeAhVmMewKHTWMAx4QFjABegQICBAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndcs.org.uk%2Fdocument.rm%3Fid%3D10331&usq=AOvVaw1I2y4vbSgzyevV7VoEVssq>

We are finding that a small number of the hearing impaired children have additional learning needs for example dyslexia.

Children with MSI (Multiple Sensory Impairment) need to have their needs identified and met by professionals with the appropriate qualifications and expertise.

Objective 5: Collaboration, co-production and communication

We have links with Social Care and Health and we are building collaborative practice with Beaumont Hill. We attend EHCP annual review meetings and this gives us an opportunity to meet parents. We attend CHSWG meetings.

Objective 6: Achieving best value for money from all our services – human, physical and financial resources with clear agreed commissioning intentions

The pathway for funding radio aids for early years is not clear as radio aids are currently partly funded by individual schools and settings through the Specialist Equipment Policy. The NDCS has produced research which demonstrates the benefits to language development from use of a radio aid in the home.

<http://www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=10331>

RESPONSE 5

In response to the Darlington Send Consultation members of Darlington Parent Carer Forum members attended many of the consultations days and discussed the consultation with our members via our closed Facebook group, direct messages, emails and at forum meetings.

Though we at Darlington Parent Carer Forum note we do not represent all parents of children with SEND in Darlington in this response we have taken into account the views of those who have contacted us in order to form a collective response to this consultation and there is a few points we feel we need to raise.

We feel that consulting on the send strategy at the same time as the high needs funding review and a travel policy was too much and that it didn't allow for parents to make an informed and educated response to each individual consultation.

We believe that starting the consultation a week before half term was unwise and we feel that the letters written to families of those who would be impacted should have gone out before the consultation started and not after as this didn't allow for some parents to have appropriate time to plan and respond.

We also feel that for parents to be able to make an informed and educated response to the consultations particularly around the proposed funding model more information should have been available on what the current model looks like to be able to make said informed response, for instance many parents we spoke to didn't realise that the proposed funding model replaced the current one, the consultation questions did not make that clear.

Though we accept changes need to be made to the current system we would suggest that it needs to be done in a way which is both transparent and legally sound.

In response to the send strategy we feel that is an aspirational document and clearly based on the send code of practice. We would welcome an overarching SEND policy and would hope that it will be used in practice. Though we must note that one of the key objectives is coproduction and it is disappointing that the strategy itself was not coproduced.

The questions in the survey were found to be leading in some instances for example the ranges and attaching funding as mentioned above. Nobody would disagree with attaching a new funding model if they didn't realise it was replacing a pre existing one and we have also had a lot of feedback from concerned parents about the out of area provision questions. We feel as a collective that asking if you believe all children should have access to education in their own local area is only relevant if we had the provision to provide it which we currently do not and that isn't made clear.

Darlington Parent Carer Forum have been involved on some work regarding the graduated response but feel we must make clear that whilst we would support the ranges as a guidance document , anything above and beyond that we do not.

For example if the local authority are saying to have an EHCP assessment a school "might" try is fine to say a school "must" we believe to be unlawful with this in mind we are concerned as to how attaching the funding model to the ranges will work particularly as there was no clear information provided on the difference in the funding model or the impact it would have upon children both with EHCPs and at SEN support, so we feel we currently do not have enough information to make a formal response to the strategy and attached consultations overall.

RESPONSE 6

I am the parent of X.

The delivery within the SEND strategy supports and encourages mainstream educational settings and I would agree with this. This however comes with a caveat of having appropriate resources and support in place to facilitate children reaching their utmost potential (and beyond).

Supported by X teacher the school have undertaken the challenge wholeheartedly and we work and support each other, cognisant of how to unite different skill sets going forward. The input by X working with X has been without doubt pivotal in her success and development thus far. I cannot stress this enough. X is visited twice a week by X. X could have an even greater positive impact if capacity to visit more was accommodated. I would urge that consideration for exploring this be given.

I would hope that the LA have an unswerving thirst to provide the provision and support (and this includes funding) to ensure X (and others) can succeed in mainstream education.

Consideration also to be given to support and continue to provide specialist work for children like X. Obtaining such support in Darlington was met with frustrating delay and a feeling of avoidance by the LA to commit to this undertaking.

To summarise , your vision and key principles are an encouraging read and I look forward to seeing how this strategy is put into practice.

RESPONSE 7

We are writing this letter regarding the current Consultation on the Draft Strategy for Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) 2019 - 2022 The Best Start In Life

DAD agrees in principle with six key objectives set out in the Draft Strategy and supports the key messages that children and young people with Special Educational Needs and / or Disability should receive high quality educational support and the right time, in the most appropriate provision and at the earliest opportunity, identified through high quality assessment and early identification of need.

DAD strongly feel an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is required which crucially identifies who is impacted ie children, young people and parents, what their involvement was to identify the impact and includes clear details of what mitigations will be put in place for those affected by changes in policy and practices.

I am sure you are well aware the duty to have due regard to the needs of disabled people is a duty on all members and officers of all public bodies. If asked to demonstrate how the duty was met when making a decision it must be revealed by means of an EIA.

Information coming from an EIA should be used in the making of the decisions and whether any potential positive or negative impacts were identified including any potential mitigation. Consideration should also be given to the impact on education providers as they adjust budgets to reflect changes in practice.

The results of this consultation alone will not be sufficient for members to fulfil their duty under the Equality Act.

We would ask that a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment be sent to DAD Chief Executive, Lauren Robinson.

The SEND Ranges may provide a useful mechanism to support the identification of need and the development of supporting provision map, however, we have concerns regarding the linking of funding to the ranges, particularly for children and young people who would be identified as being in range 3.

It is within this range particularly, that in some schools, they may be fully using the notional budget to support children and young people, evidenced through a costed provision map, but may still not be able to meet the needs of the pupil, increasing the attainment gap at a point where they may not be eligible for Education Health and Care Plan.

It is not clear from the supporting documents and the consultation what the impact of the proposed funding model will be, although DAD is supportive of the principle that funding should 'follow the child'. The supporting documentation states that the previous and proposed model can not be compared 'like to like' and does not indicate if the proposed model represent and increase or decrease in funding available per pupil.

We ask for further transparency and consultation in this area so that respondents are able to make more informed decisions and comments.

DAD supports the principles of inclusion and inclusive education with children and young people attending local schools within their community and local area but acknowledge that currently this is not possible and that specialist provisions, including alternative education establishments and out of area placements are essential to meet the needs of children and young people in Darlington.

We request that any review of specialist settings (Resource Bases and schools/colleges/work placement and employment) and support services is completed with full consultation and again believe that a full Equality Impact Assessment should be undertaken and request that a copy of the Assessment be sent to DAD's Chief Executive.

Yours sincerely
Darlington Association on Disability

RESPONSE 8

Objective 1: Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support.

Pupils reach the services at different ages although some have diagnoses some time before they are referred. Some health professionals refer if they feel there is a need for support in school rather than referring at diagnosis. Children should be assessed by a qualified teacher of vision impaired (QTVI) and a habilitation specialist upon diagnosis and given a plan as they will need support as early as possible.

Children and young people may attend a range of different eye clinics at the RVI, Newcastle, Sunderland Eye Hospital and Darlington Memorial Hospital. How is it decided where pupils attend Eye Clinics? It is clear some are placed where there are specific areas of expertise but this is not always the case. We have good communication with some of the clinics and we working to ensure we have this will all.

Objective 2: Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings to reduce reliance on specialist out of authority placements 0-25.

Parents are keen for their children to be educated in the local authority. In the near future there will be a need for production of tactile resources e.g. braille and tactile diagrams. For this to happen there needs to be equipment e.g. a braille embosser, braille transcription software, graphics software, swell fuser in the local authority.

Equally important to having the equipment is having staff who have the knowledge and expertise to use it. A pupil who is completely using tactile means to access should have full time support from a TA in class who has knowledge of braille and 0.5 member of staff who can produce braille resources. Staff can be trained to do this. It is essential a mainstream school has support from a QTVI who can share their specialist knowledge and help support staff understand how to meet an educationally blind child's needs. Due to the time constraints of Qualified Teacher of Vision Impairment (QTVI) it would be necessary to adopt an approach where a school TA supporting the pupil in class consolidates braille teaching provided by the QTVI. We have a good example of this working at two settings.

Due to the ages of pupils that are in different stages of their education it would not be possible to have all the pupils in one school. It could be possible to have one person to produce braille resources and tactile diagrams for the authority, but schools would have to be organised and distribution of the resources arranged. A neighbouring local authority has had a sudden increase in pupils accessing braille within mainstream schools. Funding from the higher needs funding block is used to buy the needed equipment. The sensory service provide training to the school in how to use the equipment and the school are responsible for producing all the resources in braille as well as tactile diagrams. A QTVI visits at least twice a week to carry out specialist teaching in braille and tactile skills which are followed up by school staff. The service also have specialist support staff who also carry out visits to support. Training on how to ensure curriculum access to teaching staff is delivered. This model could be used in Darlington.

Koenig and Holdbrook explain the achievement of pupils with vision impairment depends on their being able to understand what it is being taught and having access to appropriate teaching and learning materials (Koenig and Holbrook 2003). It is the role of QTVI to ensure staff understand each pupils optimal learning needs. Barriers can be overcome through adaptation to the environment, media, teaching style and use of equipment (NBCS). There are very few barriers to learning which are impossible to overcome (Webster and Roe 1997).

Objective 3: Ensuring that CYP with SEND are educated in their own local community and have an effective preparation for adulthood, including access to appropriate work, training and leisure opportunities.

To be prepared for adulthood, it is essential pupils have access to an additional curriculum where needed to learn specific skills to overcome barriers linked to their vision impairment. The additional curriculum comprises of the following areas :- orientation and mobility, daily living skills, independent living skills, listening skills, tactile skills involving the learning of braille, use of specialist equipment and development of social skills. Children and young people with vision impairment need direct teaching to learn skills which sighted pupils could learn incidentally. It is essential to be clear how and when this will be provided. Due to the low incidence of blind pupils in Darlington until recently there has not been a need for this provision.

In the past, there were a greater number of staff at Vane House who were qualified and could provide support to children and young people. Vane House has equipment such as a talking microwave, talking scales which could be very useful. Adults are given support with cooking skills, but it is not clear if this available for children. Young people need mobility training not just on routes in school, to and from school but also for independent travel using different means of transport through a habilitation specialist to gain all the skills necessary. It is clear there needs to be a cohesive plan between education and social care with a clear plan of skills which will be taught and when this will happen. In order for pupils to be independent they need specialist support.

Objective 4: Increasing achievement and improving all outcomes for CYP with SEND.

Vision impairment is a low incidence need. Data from the World Health Organisation and World Population Bureau stated in 2014 it affected 3.9% of the population. Many teachers will have little experience or understanding of working with pupils with vision impairment (RNIB). Therefore it is vital teachers have support from a QTVI to ensure they understand the needs of a pupil who has a vision impairment. Wester and Roe explain that good educational outcomes are possible for pupils with vision impairment. Webster and Roe show how barriers or restrictions to learning and development occur because of restrictive learning environments, inadequate and inappropriate interventions rather than vision impairment per se (Wester and Roe 1998).

To ensure increasing achievement, it is essential to continue to monitor children and young people with mild / fluctuating vision impairment to ensure they can access learning and achieve. It is vital pupils in special school continue to be given the support needed according to the NatSIP criteria whether it is monitoring or specific teaching on tactile skills which can be reinforced by staff. It is also imperative to continue to ensure pupils are given specialist support to understand their visual impairment and articulate their needs and to ensure pupils who are tactile users are given the right amount of support in class as well as having staff allocated time to prepare resources so all lessons are accessible.

Objective 5: Collaboration, co-production and communication

I have carried out some collaborative work with to carry out an event with the RNIB for parents and pupils on using iPads. It would be good to carry out more events in collaboration.

It would be beneficial to have a clear understanding of what support children and young people with vision impairment can receive e.g. in terms of daily living skills and mobility. It would be beneficial to clarify what areas of the additional curriculum are covered by education and those that can be supported by social care. It is clear there is limited capacity compared to the past when there were three members of staff and now only one.

I have worked with a habilitation specialist which has been essential to meet the children and young people's habilitation needs. It is crucial habilitation support in Darlington continues. Currently Social Care do not have a qualified habilitation specialist. It would be ideal if the person carrying out habilitation for social care working with children was the same as the person carrying out habilitation support in education. This has been arranged in one case but it would be much better if this was standard procedure. In other LA's one habilitation

specialist carries out all the mobility work whether at home or school. In other authorities habilitation specialists visit educationally blind pupils weekly and provide daily living skills as well as mobility work.

In terms of links with Health services the Vision Impairment Service don't have a group comparative to that of the Hearing Impaired team as they meet once a term with Children Hearing Services Working Interest Group CHSWG (It comprises ENT, Audiology, Education, Social Services and nursing).

It would be beneficial to have similar meetings and collaboration with all the clinics children and young people attend e.g. the RVI, Newcastle, Sunderland Eye Hospital and Darlington Memorial Hospital.

RESPONSE 9

It is outlined that children with SEND will aim high and achieve their full potential and that they are well prepared for adulthood.

My concern is that there is a very large Gypsy Roma Traveller Community which is well established in Darlington. According to recent research they are still the lowest performing ethnic group, with the poorest outcomes in the UK.

Although the Gypsy Roma Traveller community does not feature in the SEND strategy as they are not all SEND they are a distinct group in our borough who do have 'additional needs' and are a vulnerable group. These needs are distinctive as a result of many factors including low literacy skills of parents, cultural expectations and mobile/transient life styles and interrupted education. My concern is that although they have additional needs, they do not fit neatly into the Pupil Premium or the SEND category and therefore do not come with any additional funding.

As a service we want the very best for all Gypsy Roma Travellers CYP in Darlington. We continue to strive to support this community and have developed successful relationships with this traditionally hard to reach group. We have found that educational provision in Darlington Primary schools for Gypsy Roma Travellers is successful at reaching the needs of these children. However, the overall picture for GRT children accessing and continuing at our Darlington Secondary Schools is poor. Very few children transfer into Secondary school and of those that do only a handful of these reaches Key Stage 4. As a result of this a significant number of GRT children are on the Elective Home Education register. This then allows them to be a potential safe guarding issue with few opportunities and a lack of awareness of how to access employment, training and education. Once again we want to ensure that all Darlington children and young people can aim high and achieve their full potential and are well prepared for adulthood. This as you can see mirrors the aims for the Draft SEND strategy.

I feel that more provision needs to be made for the Gypsy Roma Traveller CYP here in Darlington so that they have equal access and equal choices and chances in life. There is scope to improve access to education and early identification of SEND in the Gypsy Roma Traveller community and there is a need to improve the educational experience of Gypsy Roma Traveller CYP in Secondary schools.

With no mention of Gypsy Roma Traveller CYP in the Draft strategy are we really striving to meet the needs of all CYP with additional and distinctive needs in Darlington?

RESPONDENT 10

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
10 DECEMBER 2018**

**SEND STRATEGY AND FUNDING/TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY CONSULTATION
REVIEW GROUP**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To present the outcome and findings of the Review Group established by this Scrutiny Committee to examine the proposals and submit comment on the consultation process.

Summary

2. Members will recall that, at a meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 29 October 2018 Members received a report outlining plans to consult on a strategic plan for delivering better outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and proposed amendments to the application of the High Needs Block in relation to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
3. Members also received a report on plans to consult on the introduction of a SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Travel Assistance Policy.
4. The Review Group has met on 26 November and their findings are outlined in the report.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Members of this Scrutiny Committee approve the recommendations to be forwarded as the formal response of this Scrutiny Committee on the consultation process.

**Councillor Chris Taylor
Chair of the Review Group**

Background Papers

Special Educational Needs Strategy and Funding Report and Special Educational Needs Home to School Transport to Scrutiny on 29 October 2018

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no specific implications for Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	Increased engagement for children and families in the receiving of timely services.
Carbon Impact	There is no carbon impact in relation to this report.
Diversity	There are no specific diversity issues in this report.

Wards Affected	There are no specific Wards which are affected by this report.
Groups Affected	Children and families in Darlington.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report has no impact on the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This report does not constitute a Key Decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not considered an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	To enable children with the best start in life.
Efficiency	The outcome of this report does not impact on the Council efficiency agenda.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

Information

6. A number of Members of this Scrutiny Committee attended the various public consultation events that had been organised by this authority between 5 and 21 November 2018 to consult on the SEND Strategy and Funding and the SEND Travel Assistance Policy.
7. Members met on 26 October 2018 to discuss the feedback received at the various consultation events attended and to propose a Scrutiny response to the proposals in the strategy.

SEND Strategy and Funding

8. With regard to the SEND Strategy and Funding the feedback from those parents that attended the consultation events was in general supportive of the principle of the money following the child or young person.
9. There were some concerns around transition between phases; the current lack of specialist provision in Darlington; the poor communication between home and school especially in secondary education; and the out of area placements which was above average in Darlington.
10. Parents also expressed their desire to have more information on their own child's funding and felt that there could be improved liaison between the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and schools and the overall sharing of information between professionals could be improved.

SEND Travel Assistance Policy

11. The main feedback received regarding this Policy was around ensuring that each case is examined to prevent hardship and encourage better utilisation of local facilities.

Conclusion

12. From our discussions on the feedback from the various consultation events we concluded that in general there is support for the proposals in the SEND Strategy and Funding from parents and Members, however we felt that there were some improvements that could be made to services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and disabilities. .
13. One of our main concerns was the lack of local resource bases and Members agreed that now was a good time to review the outside provision as the last commissioning was in 2010.

14. Members also agreed that the appointment of a key person for accountability and communication between parents and schools was key to the success of the proposed strategy.

Recommendations

15. It is recommended that:

- (a) There is adequate monitoring of the funding allocated, especially within the Academies.
- (b) Consideration be given to the appointment of a Parental Liaison Officer.
- (c) That more Resource Bases are commissioned in Darlington mainstream provision.
- (d) The need for a Portage Service in Darlington be re-examined.
- (e) The working arrangements with the health organisations and CAMHS be improved.

RESPONDENT 11

A response by the National Deaf Children's Society

November 2018



1. About us

- 1.1. The National Deaf Children's Society is the leading national charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people. We represent the interests and campaign for the rights of all deaf children and young people from birth until they reach independence.
- 1.2. There are over 50,000 deaf children in the UK and three more are born every day. We support deaf children and their families, and work with decision-makers and professionals to overcome the barriers that hold deaf children back.
- 1.3. There are at least 90 deaf children living in Darlington.
- 1.4. By deaf, we mean anyone with a permanent or temporary hearing loss. This could be a mild, moderate, severe or profound hearing loss. The term deaf does not presuppose the use of any one communication method and could refer to children who communicate orally or through sign language. We also include children who have a hearing loss in one ear.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation on Darlington Borough Council's strategic plan for education of children and young people with SEND from 2019 to 2022.
- 2.2. We focus our submission on the six key objectives from the draft strategy and how the proposed changes may impact on the support that deaf children receive.
- 2.3. We also make a number of suggestions and recommendations, with the aim of ensuring that deaf children and their families remain at the heart of any changes and continue to have access to high quality specialist education support.

3 Our feedback in relation to the proposals

3.1 Early identification of need

3.1.1 Early intervention

Early intervention is key to good outcomes for deaf children. The development of language and the ability to communicate lies at the heart of a child's development. Deafness and often society's lack of understanding of the needs of deaf children and young people can present a barrier to their social and emotional development, preventing them from achieving their full potential.

It is important to understand that in addition to supporting the curriculum and providing access for school aged children, Teachers of the Deaf co-ordinate and deliver specialist support for children and their families in the home from diagnosis onwards which more often than not is within the first few weeks of birth. This peripatetic Teacher of the Deaf role is particularly important in the context of the implementation of universal Newborn Hearing Screening.

Teachers of the Deaf are critical in raising parents' aspirations of their deaf child at the earliest possible stage. They also ensure that parents provide access to early language and communication, whatever mode that may be. Early intervention and support of this kind maximises the possibility of children being successfully included in mainstream schools if this is the parental choice.

This work should be monitored at local authority level, through the Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG), at individual services level and at a strategic level.

3.1.2 Social and emotional wellbeing of deaf children

We would like Darlington Borough Council to take the opportunity to review the provision of the social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs of deaf children through these proposals, given that SEMH is high on the agenda. Across the country, we are aware that the social and emotional needs of deaf children are rarely understood and provision of

effective support is often not forthcoming. This is particularly noted where there is a lack of expertise on deafness across Early Help right through to Children with Disabilities and safeguarding services.

The concerns around joint working with social care, assessments, support and the need for deaf children to have a positive self-identity of their deafness, have been evidenced in the mapping and pathways work that we have been undertaking across all disciplines/agencies that work with deaf children in County Durham and Darlington.

However, more recently and very positively, Darlington local authority has been fully involved in the North East regional education and social care multi-sensory impairment (MSI) group, who are working together and with Directors of Children's Services to develop a regional 'approach' to the assessment and provision of services for this very low incidence group of children.

Darlington Council itself has recently bought in the services of a qualified assessor to undertake a Section 7 assessment in collaboration with social care for a child. This child's profound and multiple learning difficulty (PMLD) initially appears to have masked the formal identification of the child's hearing and visual impairments. The outcomes of this assessment and the strategies put in place for this child are now improving his overall wellbeing and educational outcomes. This is an example of good practice in Darlington which we are highlighting at a regional level but we would like to move this to a regional model, sharing resources and good practice.

3.1.3 Communication options

We are aware that parents and their deaf children do not currently have access to a full range of communication options on a consistent basis. For instance, we are aware that there is a total communication approach with children, and taster sessions in British Sign Language (BSL) for parents. However, BSL and other communication choices e.g. Cued Speech, are not routinely available either for deaf children to learn and use in their local school, or for parents to learn to enable them to communicate effectively with their child.

We believe that parents should have access to a full range of different options and then be in a position to be able to choose whichever suits their child best and in whatever setting they prefer. We would welcome this being reviewed.

3.1.4 Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)

ALDs refer to various types of amplification equipment designed to improve the communication of individuals with hearing impairment to enhance the accessibility to speech when individuals are in poor listening environments. These include radio aids but also devices that use newer technology.

We are aware that radio aids are currently provided through a specialist equipment policy whereby schools pay towards radio aids. This can cause problems with schools when they may not wish to pay or they deem the radio aid to belong to the school rather than following the child to their next setting.

We would recommend a review of this system and consideration of a loan system to schools with Teachers of the Deaf being the key contact and provider of these ALDs. This would enable their knowledge and expertise to be used to ensure that deaf children access an optimum learning environment in school. It is unclear currently who has responsibility for fitting and maintenance of the radio aid during its lifetime.

In addition, we recently commissioned research¹ on the provision of radio aids in the early years, particularly in the home which highlights the positive outcomes for children when radio aids are provided. Consideration needs to be given to how deaf children in Darlington could access a radio aid at a very young age e.g. 18 months - two years old. We are aware from the research that everyday situations present a risk to learning spoken language and that using a radio aid can reduce this risk and maximise potential benefits for the child and their family by:

¹ http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/external_research/index.html#contentblock2

- Improving hearing for speech in difficult listening conditions.
- Increasing the amount parents talk and interact with their child.
- Having a positive impact on the family's well-being.

We are also aware that Darlington Council is consulting on its spending of the Special Provision Capital Fund and so we would ask for consideration on the provision of radio aids for children in the early years so that language and communication can be enriched in the home, prior to the child attending any educational or childcare setting. The Capital Fund is not ring-fenced and the Department for Education has not ruled out that it could be used in this way.

3.2 Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings

3.2.1 Teachers of the Deaf

We know that all children learn through hearing and seeing. Not being able to hear fully what a teacher is saying presents a complex learning challenge to both the child and teacher. So mainstream teachers will need much more support in areas such as effective use of technologies, effective ways of communication, improving listening conditions, the assessment of need and progress, and specialist teaching and learning strategies that work well for deaf children.

Unlike higher incidence needs (e.g. autism), pupils with sensory impairments are not spread so evenly across schools. Therefore, mainstream teachers are unlikely to have the experience, knowledge and skills to support deaf children to access the curriculum. For this reason, deaf pupils, their teachers and other education staff will depend on support from specialist Teachers of the Deaf to help deaf children progress in their education.

This support is particularly critical in the early years, when a child is developing language. Failure to support a deaf child at this time will result in higher support costs in schools as the child gets older.

It is also important to note that deaf children who have a unilateral, mild or moderate loss still need the specialist support of a Teacher of the Deaf, working closely with mainstream settings. Research commissioned by the National Deaf Children's Society² on mild and moderate hearing loss highlighted that:

- Children and young people with mild/moderate hearing losses in school have to use greater levels of effort than generally realised.
- Mild/moderate hearing loss frequently has a social and emotional impact on the child or young person.

We do not disagree however, with building capacity within mainstream schools through training that Teachers of the Deaf can provide to mainstream staff and we would encourage this. This may be around deaf awareness, supporting technology, developing skills of Teaching Assistants. We would encourage Darlington Council to embed this training as part of the overall workforce development for all professionals.

3.3. Ensuring that children and young people are educated in their local community and have an effective preparation for adulthood

3.3.1 Importance of a centrally managed service

Sensory loss is a low incidence need, meaning that it requires a different response to provision of services. Because both hearing and visual impairments are very complex disabilities, it is vital that the service is flexible if all deaf children in Darlington are to achieve excellent outcomes and this can only be achieved through keeping the service centralised. In addition, it is easier for deaf children to be managed centrally in order to maintain a consistency in the level of provision.

However, Darlington is a small authority and for low incidence groups of children such as deaf children, there may not always be the staff specialties to support deaf children in their locality, for example, educational audiologists, support for children with additional needs, working with babies, and specialist speech and language therapists.

² http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/external_research/index.html#contentblock4

In addition, it is difficult for one or two peripatetic Teachers of the Deaf based and working in a locality to develop sufficient knowledge to provide effective support for deaf children across all age ranges and all education key stages.

In response to this, we are aware of the Tees joint arrangement which supports all deaf children from across the four Tees authorities under the management of Middlesbrough Council. This gives not only a greater mass of deaf children but a higher and more specialised team of Teachers of the Deaf and other staff, to support those children. As Darlington is 'attached' to this area via for example, the Tees Valley Commissioning Group and the Tees Valley devolved council, this gives Darlington the opportunity to consider the potential for collaboration and/or a formal partnership with the Tees joint arrangement.

The SEND Code of Practice Section 3.68 advocates for this type of arrangement for low incidence needs and is indeed the reason why the MSI regional arrangement is being considered. This section highlights greater choice, access to a wider range of services and educational settings and could also represent greater value for money.

A wider partnership would not detract from deaf children being educated in their local community, in fact it could enhance that as it would be easier to move staff from locality to locality to reflect the changing pattern of need. It is also easier to ensure cover is provided for absences. In addition to this the specialist equipment necessary to monitor the development of communication, speech and language could also be enhanced through 'bulk buying'. A centrally held stock is cost effective, up to date and available to all staff.

There is also a growing change in the population of deaf children, many have more complex additional needs and many children are arriving in the country with no English or British Sign Language. These children need Teachers of Deaf with additional specialisms to support them. A sub-regional arrangement may enable this support to be delivered more effectively.

While we advocate that a central local authority arrangement should be in place, we do accept that good outcomes for deaf children may not be achieved purely through one service. Leaving the service centralised would not stop those partnerships from developing through for example the proposed Early Years Hubs.

Currently the sensory support service is devolved to a school but it does not have the appropriate management and leadership of someone with the mandatory qualification in either deafness or visual impairment. It is vital that this is put in place as soon as possible.

3.3.2 Preparation for adulthood

We are aware of the increased requirement for the low incidence team to work with post 16 deaf young people and that smooth transition is key to further improving outcomes for deaf young people. Research undertaken by Manchester University³ on behalf of the National Deaf Children's Society highlighted that:

- While Further Education (FE) is the most common destination for deaf young people leaving school, there is evidence that it does not serve many of them well.
- Decisions were being made for and with deaf young people to go to FE without a detailed consideration of what kind of FE environment might best suit them.
- In some cases local authorities were steering young people and their parents to the least expensive and most local provision without due consideration to whether it is the most suitable or effective for the individual deaf young person.
- Many deaf young people were not accessing enough information or offered enough experiences to gain the understanding they need to make knowledgeable choices about what they want to do in FE and afterwards.
- Currently there is no national process for tracking deaf young people's progress through FE, and therefore identifying what works best in which circumstances. Opportunities for effective intervention to improve outcomes are therefore lost.

³ http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/external_research/#contentblock5

It is therefore vital that Darlington Council understands the issues for deaf young people and recognises the specialist tailored careers advice that they need, as well as the full range of options for furthering their education/training at age 16. In addition to the research, a survey conducted by the National Deaf Children's Society in 2016 revealed that many Teachers of the Deaf felt they lacked the knowledge and confidence in strategies for supporting deaf young people who have not achieved good grades in English and/or Maths by the age of 16.

The Darlington SEND strategy highlights the need for equality of access and consistency and continuum of provision for post 16 as well as strengthening young people's preparation for adulthood from an earlier age. We are concerned that Teachers of the Deaf will be expected to support more deaf young people, with no additional funding or staff allocated in order to do this.

It is also not clear whether the Teachers of the Deaf currently supporting both early years and school age deaf children have the necessary expertise to work across a whole range of offers for post 16 deaf young people. For instance, will there be enough specialism and someone who is experienced in supporting deaf young people to support their move into apprenticeships and work placements, if they do not chose the FE route? It will therefore be crucial to consider how the specialist teacher's work overlaps with the colleges, apprenticeships and supported internships, and how that might work.

The National Deaf Children's Society has a range of resources to support deaf children moving into adulthood. These can be found [here](#) for parents and [here](#) for professionals. We are continuing to develop this area of our work and we would be keen to work with you on this.

3.4 Increasing achievement and improving all outcomes for children and young people with SEND

3.4.1 Mainstream settings

We believe that staff are the most valuable resource that any service can have. Teachers of the Deaf provide consistent, direct and long term support to deaf children and young people in mainstream schools in addition to building school capability and capacity. They are able to

monitor the quality of curriculum delivery and provide practical advice to mainstream teachers to make teaching and learning accessible at the level of classroom strategy.

Due to the low incidence nature of deafness in terms of numbers, even small fluctuations in the numbers of deaf children and young people can have a significant impact on caseload.

As previously highlighted, unlike higher incidence of needs, pupils with sensory impairment are not spread so evenly across schools. Therefore, mainstream teachers are unlikely to have the experience, knowledge and skills to support deaf children to access the curriculum. For this reason, deaf pupils, their teachers and other education staff will depend on support from specialist Teachers of the Deaf to help deaf children progress in their education. Failure to support a deaf child at this time will result in higher support costs in schools as the child gets older.

3.4.2 Special schools

We are aware that there is a high incidence of additional complex needs amongst deaf children and therefore there is believed to be a high prevalence of hearing loss in children attending special schools for disabled children.

Research has shown that the hearing needs of deaf children can be overshadowed by other difficulties to the detriment of their progress. Research undertaken by Manchester University on behalf of the National Deaf Children's Society on Service Delivery to Deaf Children with Complex Disabilities⁴ particularly highlighted issues in relation to deafness.

These issues related to problems and delays in assessing hearing problems, complexity of needs masking concerns regarding hearing status, access to Teachers of the Deaf, and lack of deaf awareness. What parents cited as being helpful was the flexibility of roles and individuals with for example, Teachers of the Deaf taking responsibility for their child's language development.

⁴ http://www.ndcs.org.uk/professional_support/external_research/#contentblock10

A key recommendation from this research is that all children who are deaf, whether or not they have additional complex needs, should have access to a qualified Teacher of the Deaf that is appropriate to their level of deafness and not determined by any other needs they may have, or by the educational establishment they attend. In one case in the research undertaken, a parent reported that once their child was identified as having learning disabilities he had automatically lost access to a Teacher of the Deaf and yet parents were clear that “deafness had a ‘multiplier’ effect, and that their children should have a right to regular access to a qualified Teacher of the Deaf”.

Staff within the school would need to be able to monitor hearing aids and make decisions about which children are eligible for radio aids/sound field systems as well as ordering and looking after the equipment, carrying out functional listening assessments etc., if local specialist services were not involved. This is a specialist service and one that Teachers of the Deaf are specifically trained in.

3.4.3 Resource provisions

We are aware that as a geographically small local authority in England, it becomes difficult to support those even smaller groups of deaf children who need more intensive support than the peripatetic service can provide, as well as a deaf peer group when children are communicating through BSL for example.

We do understand that placing resource provisions within the borough, as other inner city or larger local authority areas are able to do, would be very difficult in terms of numbers. Nevertheless, while we are aware that Darlington Council currently places deaf children at the resource provisions in Middlesbrough on an ad-hoc basis, it may be beneficial to seek a more formal partnership with the Tees joint arrangement to ensure that this is another option for parents to make an informed choice about the education of their deaf child.

We believe that the Darlington Teachers of the Deaf should be fully involved, not only in the decision making to send deaf children to Middlesbrough provisions but also in the ongoing support via annual reviews as they are the professionals with the expertise.

We would also expect your Local Offer to have information about other local authority resource provisions for deaf children where that authority borders Darlington.

Finally, it is important that data is collected across all areas of SEND and is fed into the JSNA as well as this strategy. The strategy currently fails to do this in terms of low incidence. We are aware that deaf children are failing to achieve good GCSEs compared to their hearing peers and fits with other areas of SEND in Darlington.

In 2017⁵:

- The average attainment 8 score for deaf children is 37.4. This means their average score per subject is 3.7 which, under the old grading, would be a grade D. This compares to the average attainment 8 score for children with no identified SEN which was 49.5 or, per subject, 5. Under the old grading, this would be a grade C.
- The progress 8 score for deaf children is -0.12 compared to children with no identified SEND which was 0.07
- In the North East the attainment 8 score was 37.4 and the progress 8 score was -0.19

This means that on average, deaf children underachieve by over a whole grade per subject compared to children with no identified SEND. This gap has widened since 2016.

3.5 Focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication

We are aware that deaf children and their parents are often seen as a 'hard group' to engage with. Nevertheless, the local authority must find ways to not only engage parents and deaf children in those conversations but to meaningfully involve them in co-production of

⁵ <http://www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=11186>

services. This is a legal requirement under the Children and Families Act 2014. We would be able to support this with our resources and best practice.

3.6 Achieving best value

3.6.1 Overall funding for low incidence needs

As previously highlighted, the formula for calculating school budgets does not evenly reflect the distribution of low incidence needs pupils and so mainstream teachers are likely to require much higher (and hence more expensive) levels of support than for other types of higher incidence SEND.

This is therefore a very good rationale for the specialist sensory support team to provide the specialist input for deaf children in mainstream schools as a centrally funded team, working across all areas and all schools in Darlington. The Department for Education's decision that low incidence specialist education services should be funded through the High Needs Block shows that this is also their expectation.

As previously highlighted, it may be even more cost efficient to join the service with the Tees area.

We would be opposed to any reduction in the budget for the sensory support service. This position is in light of the levels of support required for this low incidence group of children, and also the current underachievement and gap in attainment. For further information on funding for specialist services for deaf children we would direct you to our resource 'Specialist Education Support Advice for Commissioners'⁶.

3.6.2 Banding

While the need to budget for a level of funding for different types and levels of SEND is necessary, we recommend that the bandings that have been published should be more flexible and truly respond to need.

⁶ <http://www.ndcs.org.uk/document.rm?id=1218>

Therefore it might be advisable to allocate 'between' for example £3,001 and £6,500 for Band 4b, rather than what appears to jump from £3,000 to £6,500 with nothing in between. There is also a risk with bandings of a perverse incentive for schools for example to determine a child as being 5a for example rather than 4b as that attracts more funding.

However, we do agree that changing to banding from a delegated Element 3 level is crucial to ensure that you are responding to individual need.

We have looked at the SEND Ranges documentation and recommend that at range 5a and 6a for sensory, there should be mention of consideration of a resource provision.

3.6.3 Top up funding

The Government has made it clear that local authorities have the option to provide top up funding without the need for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). We would like Darlington Council to explore this option. There may be deaf children who for a very small amount of top up funding, could see significant improvements in their outcomes. This may mean there wouldn't be the need to apply and go through the process of an EHCP.

There would need to be clear criteria with an effective system in place so that a child is not inappropriately left without an EHCP where it is needed.

3.6.4 Robust and local governance, accountability, decision making and support

Effective leadership is crucial to the quality of service provision and good multi-agency working. It will therefore be important via the Local Offer to be absolutely clear about roles e.g. where referrals are received, how assessments and allocation of children will happen and who will carry that out.

In addition, it has to be recognised that:

- a) Many of the changes introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014 rely on support from a Teacher of the Deaf to ensure effective implementation. For example, accompanying regulations state that advice from a Teacher of the Deaf must be sought in any EHC needs assessment. Teachers of the Deaf also provide specialist advice on assessments and teaching strategies to ensure effective implementation of the 'assess, plan, do, review' cycle. In addition, Ofsted found in a study of best practice⁷ that when deaf children progressed well, it was because services were underpinned by a good understanding of the need for specialist services for deaf children and a strong commitment to maintain them.
- b) All of this is compounded by the diversity of need within low incidence. For example use of different technologies (hearing aids, cochlear implants, bone anchored hearing aids), communication preferences (oral/signing/total communication), additional needs and having English as an additional language.
- c) The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to keep provision for children and young people with SEND under review. However, your strategy contains no information on low incidence needs and instead concentrates mainly on ASD, MLD, SEMH and SLCN. While it highlights current data and recent trends, it does not consider likely changes in the future for all SEND children and young people.

4. Recommendations

Darlington Borough Council should:

- 4.1** Continue to provide the specialist education Sensory Support service as a centrally led and managed service.
- 4.2** Protect the funding of the Sensory Support Service. This should be provided via a planned budget which supports identified key trends and patterns across the borough together with the necessary and appropriate specialist staff and technology.

⁷ http://www.ndcs.org.uk/search_clicks.rm?id=7269&destinationtype=2&instanceid=641346

- 4.3** Ensure that the staff in the Sensory Support Team are led and managed by a specialist Teacher of the Deaf or Teacher of the Visually Impaired
- 4.4** Provide the statutory support of Teachers of the Deaf into special schools to support those deaf children with additional needs.
- 4.5** Consider a review of ALDs, provision of radio aids to schools and their management
- 4.6** Consider the use of radio aids for deaf children in their early years in to the home.
- 4.7** Consider the funding radio aids via the Special Provision Capital Fund
- 4.8** Review the skills and capacity of the Sensory Support Team in order to ensure that they can appropriately and effectively prepare deaf children for adulthood
- 4.9** Consider the current social care pathway for deaf children and how this can be improved to support effective early intervention.
- 4.10** Ensure that any proposed changes will lead to improved outcomes for deaf children as required by the SEND Code of Practice (Paragraph 4.19).
- 4.11** Consider how you will discharge your duties under sections 22, 23 and 24 of the Children and Families Act 2014, which makes your local authority responsible for all children with SEND. Specifically related to these sections we would ask:
 - a) How will you support health services to deliver on their duty to report to the local authority those children who have, or probably have an SEN or Disability
 - b) How will the local authority monitor the progress of deaf children in mainstream, resource provisions, special schools and out of borough placements?
 - c) What will the local authority do if it is clear that a deaf child is not making expected progress?
 - d) How will the local authority advocate for children who are not making good progress and challenge schools where support is not being provided appropriately and at the right level?

Darlington Borough Council must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice legislative framework and guidance which relates to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, and its associated regulations, when making any changes to provision. This includes co-producing services with parents and deaf children to ensure that they meet the needs of all children with SEND. This is something that Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission are now looking closely at with their inspections of local area SEND provision.

5. For further information please contact:

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Alison.Lawson@ndcs.org.uk
Telephone: 0191 5225406
Mobile: 07792 661704

Proposed Funding Model

2018/19 Transition Year 1

1. The current lump sums paid to schools will be phased out to adopt a wholly “money follows the child” model. It is acknowledged that the move to a new model in the 2018/19 academic year will have a significant effect on some schools, therefore in order to give schools more time to plan their budgets, there will be a transitional year starting from September 2018. Transitional protection arrangements will be put in place to ensure no school will lose more than 25% of the funding they would have received under the current system.
2. These proposals were presented to Schools Forum on 10th July 2018 and will be implemented from September 2018.

2019/20 Transition Year 2

3. The changes introduced in the 2018/19 will ensure that a universal banding model is in place in both primary and secondary phases. In order to achieve stability for the High Needs Block it is proposed that changes are made to the financial allocation to schools which is applied under the current banding model.
4. It is proposed to revise the level of top up applied and introduce a new banding linked to the new SEND ranges model which details the expected interventions across seven levels of need.

Range		Band	Additional “top up” Funding
1	Mainstream-AWPU	1	Nil
2	Mainstream-Notional SEN (£6,000)	2	Nil
3	Mainstream-Notional SEN (£6,000)	3	Nil
4	Mainstream/Resource Base	4a 4b	£3500 £6000
5	Resource Base/Specialist Placement	5a 5b	£8500 £10000
6	Specialist	6a 6b 6c	£12500 £15000 £20000
7	Independent Special Placement	7	Determined by need

5. Ranges 1 to 3 cover the support expected from the pupil funding and the notional SEN funding whilst Range 7 will only apply to independent specialist provision, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

6. It is unlikely pupils in mainstream school will be banded above Band 5a as the needs in ranges 1 to 5 have been identified as being reasonably supported at a mainstream provision. The majority of those with support needs above £6,000 notional SEN funding will sit in Band 4.

Initial equality impact assessment screening form

This form is an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to an activity, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.

Directorate:	Children and Adults Services
Service Area:	Education
Activity being screened:	<p>Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND Strategy • SEND Funding (Top up funding) • SEND Provision and SEND Capital Funding Assistance
Officer(s) carrying out the screening:	Eleanor Marshall School Forum Monitoring and Support Officer
What are you proposing to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a new SEND Strategy – 6 key objectives • Implement changes to SEND top up funding – implementation of a new banding model. • Develop new provision for pupils with a primary need of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD). Undertaking an Expressions of Interest for use of SEND capital funding in order to deliver this provision.
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	<p>The LA has a statutory responsibility under the Children and Families Act 2014 to keep its special educational needs provision under review, to ensure sufficiency in placements to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs, and/or disabilities (SEND) working with parents/carers, young people and providers.</p> <p>A review of Special Educational Needs commenced in late 2017 and identified the Special Educational Needs (SEN) of children and young people in Darlington are changing and increasing in different areas of need. Darlington also have a shortage of high quality provision places to meet the increasing need for SEN placements. The funding received by the LA to support most vulnerable pupils is insufficient to meet demand.</p> <p>An initial review into all of the mainstream and specialist provision in Darlington was undertaken in</p>

	<p>2017/18. The analysis of this review led to the development of a draft SEND Strategy in August 2018.</p> <p>These strands of activity became the focus of a public consultation in October-November 2018 in order to inform the SEND Strategy and funding arrangements for children and young people with EHCP's (top-up funding).</p> <p>An outcome of adopting a new SEND Strategy and a new top up funding model will be to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support • we build capacity in mainstream settings to reduce reliance on specialist and out of authority placements 0-25 • that children and young people are educated in their local community and have an effective preparation for adulthood and access to work and leisure opportunities • delivering a more sustainable funding model which addresses the current significant overspend on high needs funding <p>New provision funded by the SEND Capital Funding grant will ensure there is increased capacity to meet demand by planning for the growth.</p>
<p>Does the activity involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details</p>	<p>The changes in the mainstream top up system are projected to save in the region of £490,000 once fully implemented.</p> <p>A consideration is required to the reassignment / restructure of resources and potential reduction in resources for individual educational settings.</p> <p>A process to support settings to apply for SEND Capital Provision funding will support the LA's ability to deliver the objective of increasing the number of specialist provision places in Darlington.</p>

Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or any other socially excluded groups?

As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:

- **To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics?**
- **Does the activity relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important?**

- Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the activity relates to?

If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be a significant adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate.

Protected characteristic	Yes	No	Don't know/ Info not available
Age			X
Disability			X
Sex (gender)		X	
Race		X	
Sexual Orientation		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage or civil partnership		X	
Other			
Does the activity relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.		Yes – this activity relates to young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities and therefore will have potential impacts relating to Age and Disability	
Will the activity have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.		Possibly the application for SEND Capital Funding may require Academy schools to undertake a change to Academy status and submit a business plan for agreement to Department for Education. A change to the top up funding model may affect some education providers as they adjust budgets to reflect changes in practice.	
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	Continue to full EIA: Yes	
Reason for Decision		Due to impacts to any child or young person with SEND and impact on settings.	
Signed (Assistant Director)		Tony Murphy Head of Education and Inclusion	
Date		26.03.18	



Equality Impact Assessment Record Form

This form is to be used for recording the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of Council activities. It should be used in conjunction with the guidance on carrying out EIA in **Annex 2** of the Equality Scheme. The activities that may be subject to EIA are set out in the guidance.

EIA is particularly important in supporting the Council to make fair decisions. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Using this form will help Council officers to carry out EIA in an effective and transparent way and provide decision-makers with full information on the potential impact of their decisions. EIAs are public documents, accompany reports going to Councillors for decisions and are published with committee papers on our website and are available in hard copy at the relevant meeting.

Title of activity:	SEND Consultations – Strategy and Funding, including Provision
Name of Directorate and Service Area:	Children and Adults services
Lead Officer and contact details	Eleanor Marshall, 01325 406134
Assistant Director accountable for this EIA	Tony Murphy
Who else will be involved in carrying out the EIA:	Natasha Telfer, Policy Development Manager (Advice and Guidance) Education Project Board – Head of Education and Inclusion, Finance Manager, Head of SEND, Admissions and Transport Manager, Principal Solicitor, Assistant Director – Performance and Commissioning

When did the EIA process start?	March 2018	
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Section 2 – The Activity and Supporting Information

<p>Details of the activity (describe briefly - including the main purpose and aims) (e.g. are you starting a new service, changing how you do something, stopping doing something?)</p>
<p>The LA are proposing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of a SEND Strategy 2. Implementation of a new SEND top up funding model for children and young people with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) 3. Development of new provision for children and young people with EHCPs in mainstream primary and secondary schools, for children and young people with Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs and Moderate Learning Difficulties. <p>The reasons for these proposals are that there is currently a shortage of specialist high quality provision in the local area to meet the increasing need for placements for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND). In addition, the funding received by the local authority to support our most vulnerable children and young people with SEND is insufficient to meet demand. Therefore, the Council has undertaken an extensive review of SEND, and has worked with partners, to establish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what additional educational provision is required to meet the increasing needs of learners with complex SEND • what, if any, improvements or changes to current provision are required • how best to get value for money from the limited resources available and how to best use our resources (financial, human and physical) • how to best support changing needs for children and young people with SEND and prepare them for adulthood
<p>Why is this being proposed? What are the aims? What does the Council hope to achieve by it? (e.g. to save money, meet increased demand, do things more efficiently)</p>
<p>The aims of the SEND Strategy, top up funding changes and development of new provision, is to make sure there is a high quality offer to meet the needs of current and future children and young people with SEND, at a cost that is sustainable. The SEND Strategy, top up funding changes and the use of SEND Capital funding to support new provision development, has been subject to a public consultation.</p> <p>The purpose of Darlington's Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2019-2022 for improving outcomes for Children and Young People with SEND 0-25 is to outline our shared vision, aims and key priorities for supporting Darlington's Children and Young People with SEND and their families.</p> <p>Our aim for all Children and Young People with SEND is that they have the right support and opportunities at the right time so that they become resilient, happy and successful adults.</p> <p>The proposed new funding model for high needs top-up funding will aim to facilitate a more open and transparent process that is a consistently applied approach for all primary and secondary educational settings.</p>
<p>What will change? What will be different for service users/ customers and/ or staff?</p>

- The SEND Strategy will be adopted
- Create new specialist provision attached to mainstream schools (resourced provision) for children and young people with Social Emotional and Mental Health difficulties in primary and secondary mainstream settings; and children and young people with Moderate Learning Difficulties in secondary settings. This may include provision for children and young people who find the demands of the curriculum difficult and for whom a more practical and vocational route is more appropriate. Using the opportunity of the DfE SEND Capital Funding providers have been identified through an open expression of interest to all settings in Darlington.
- Implement a new funding top up model for primary and secondary aged pupils where 'money follows the child' linked to the Darlington SEND ranges of need. This will ensure that limited resources are allocated to an individual child or young person's needs rather than to the education provision as a whole.

What data, research and other evidence or information is available which is relevant to the EIA?

A full data analysis was undertaken on the most current school census data Spring 2018.

This is available in a strategic analysis which can be found here:

<https://livingwell.darlington.gov.uk/Documents/Download/137/SEN-Strategic-Analysis>

Other data considered includes case load data relating to SEND need assessments and identifying trends of need.

Engagement and consultation (What engagement and consultation has been done regarding the proposal and what are the results? What consultation will be needed and how will it be done?)

There has been on-going engagement with stakeholders on data and needs analysis. The review commenced in December 2017 and had a number of distinct phases. Throughout the first phase (Dec-March), meetings were held with our school partners, and other stakeholders were invited to a 'high needs conference' on 22nd February 2018. This included health, social care, parent/Carer Forum. Dialogue continued at relevant Forums and with individual schools / Academy Trusts that host the existing Special Education Needs provision throughout Spring/Summer 2018. The final phase has been the development of the draft SEND Strategy and top up funding model proposals, and the consultation on these key policy areas.

Formal consultation commenced on 17 October 2018 and concluded on 28 November 2018. The consultation methods included a dedicated website page, which contained all the consultation documentation, on line survey's and public meetings were arranged. Consultation responses were also welcomed in writing to the Education team. Specific meetings were also held with schools, social care and health leads.

During Consultation Darlington Parent Care forum raised the need to provide more detail in particular on the top up funding model in order for an informed response to be made. This was addressed and a briefing was provided and made available on the website and at all public meetings. Additional public events were organised in response to requests by parents and carers. All parents and carers of children and young people with EHCPs were individually contacted to let them know about the consultation.

The Local Authority recognised that the consultation on three key policy areas was significant however all these policies (see separate EIA for SEND Transport Assistance Policy), are inter-related and therefore the consultations were split into two key themes – SEND Strategy and Funding, and SEND Transport Assistance Policy. A variety of public meetings were held. Some focussed on one of the consultations and longer meetings were also held addressing both consultations. Meetings were held at different times to give the widest possible choice for the public.

What impact will this activity have on the Council's budget? (e.g. cost neutral, increased costs or reduced costs? If so, by how much? Explain briefly why this is the case)

SEND FUNDING

Darlington's allocation for high needs budget (HNB) in 2019/20 was £12.25M. An overspend of £1.40m is projected for this year based on the current profile of high needs expenditure. In addition to this, £1.6m of overspend has been carried forward from 2017/18, therefore a combined overspend of over £3m is expected to be carried forward into the 2019/20 financial year. This level of expenditure against the HNB is financially unsustainable, therefore a more affordable system of funding high needs, in line with the level of funding Darlington receives from Central Government is essential. The demand for High Needs top up funding must be more financially predictable and more closely linked to the needs of individual pupils.

The changes to the mainstream top up system are projected to save in the region of £490,000 once fully implemented, which will relieve some of the pressures on resources as a result of the continuing overspend in this area. A further £1.5m of savings will however still be required in the HNB in order to balance the budget in future years. Further changes to the delivery of high needs support are currently being investigated to deliver the savings required to balance the budget in year and recover previous years overspends.

SEND STRATEGY AND PROVISION

The development of new provision will be supported through the use of the DFE Special Provision Grant (capital funding).

Section 3: Assessment

How will the activity affect people with protected characteristics?	No Impact	Positive impact	Negative impact	Why will it have this effect? (refer to evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information, etc)
Age		yes	yes	<p>As the review aims to align provision to need and to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, with the aim that all children and young people with SEND, no matter what their age, will positively benefit..</p> <p>In particular, children and young people of primary and secondary ages with the specific SEND needs of Social Emotional and Mental Health and Moderate learning difficulties will positively benefit from the proposals as new provision will be developed which will increase their opportunities to be educated locally.</p> <p>The proposals for top up funding relate to Children and young people with SEND of primary and secondary ages. At least some schools and establishments will see a reduction in their funding allocation as a result of this proposal, which could negatively impact on attendees – both those with SEND and those without – as a result of a reduction in overall resources. However, the new funding model will ensure that SEND top up funding is targeted rather than allocated to education provision as a whole and that all children with SEND are allocated sufficient funding to meet their needs. In addition, some schools and establishments may benefit from an increase in their funding allocation as a result of the new model which means their pupils will be positively impacted by the proposals.</p>
Disability (Mobility Impairment, Visual		yes	yes	<p>The proposals aim to positively impact children and young people with disabilities and their families by ensuring that pupils with disabilities are attending a school most appropriate to their individual needs.</p>

<p>impairment, Hearing impairment, Learning Disability, Mental Health, Long Term Limiting Illness, Multiple Impairments, Other – Specify)</p>				<p>This would be done through proposals to update the role and function of the resource bases and to create new provision which is likely to provide more places in Borough which will enable pupils with disabilities to be educated locally who may otherwise be based in distant placements. The proposed SEND Strategy includes key objectives directly supporting the aim to provide suitable provision locally for children and young people with SEND to support the family and encourage the integration of young people in their community, as part of preparation and transition planning to adulthood.</p> <p>The Strategy also aims to address gaps in provision, for example, we do not currently have specialist provision in mainstream schools for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health difficulties, or moderate learning difficulties. There are proposals to introduce this provision and invest in school buildings to increase and improve provision for children and young people with SEND. This is to ensure sufficient and appropriate classrooms and spaces for children and young people with SEND and will therefore positively impact on children with SEND who are as a result able to attend this increased provision.</p> <p>This positive impact was confirmed consultation with children and young people where a number of respondents reported that there would be positives for them in attending their local mainstream schools including integrating, socialising, making/being friends and being part of their local community.</p> <p>The consultation raised concerns regarding the potential effect on changes to funding for individual children or young people with SEND. The embedding of the SEND ranges and associated processes in order to evaluate support that would be expected to be in place will ensure that children and young people's needs must be proven to be met with any funding allocated and settings to</p>
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				<p>be held accountable for meeting children and young people's needs.</p> <p>However the change to the top up funding model will result in reductions in allocations to at least some schools and settings through the proposed new funding allocation model.</p> <p>However the level of any negative impacts will be limited due to the LA's statutory duty to meet assessed needs through the EHCP, which will ensure that all children with identified SEND are allocated sufficient funding to meet their needs. Furthermore, requests for assessment will be accompanied by clear evidence of need, e.g. through use of the SEND ranges and costed provision maps this will ensure that the LA can monitor and challenge to ensure that CYP receives the provision and support that they require.</p>
Sex (Gender)	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon Sex (Gender) as a protected characteristic group with regard to this proposed activity
Race	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon Race as a protected characteristic group with regard to this proposed activity.
Gender Reassignment	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon Gender Reassignment as a protected characteristic group with regard to this proposed activity.
Sexual Orientation	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon Sexual Orientation as a protected characteristic group with regard to this proposed activity.
Religion or belief	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon Religion or belief as a protected characteristic group with regard to this proposed activity.
Pregnancy or maternity	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon Pregnancy or maternity as a protected characteristic group with regard to this proposed activity.
Marriage or civil partnership	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon Marriage or Civil partnership as a protected characteristic group with regard to this proposed activity.

How will the activity affect people who:	No impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Why will it have this effect? (Refer to evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information, etc)
Live in a rural location?	yes			There is no anticipated impact upon people living in a rural location with regard to this proposed activity
Are carers?	yes			<p>The parent / carer of any child or young person with SEND should positively benefit from their child receiving the right support, in the right place at the right time particularly if as a result of the change in funding models their child's school or establishment receives an increase in high needs funding to support them.</p> <p>There is also, however, a potential for carers to be negatively impacted if the new funding model were to mean their child's school received less high needs funding per SEND pupil in future, although sufficient funding to meet the needs of pupils with an EHCP will be ensured in line with our statutory duty. Furthermore during the consultation feedback was received from some parents that the proposed changes would cause them anxiety and therefore negatively impact them.</p>
Are on a low income?	yes			All children and young people with SEND, regardless of the family income will positively benefit as the review aims to align provision to need and to improve outcomes for children and young people in existing provision.

Section 4: Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative Impacts – will the activity affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics? (e.g. older women or young gay men – state what you think the effect might be and why, providing evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information, etc)

Are there any other activities of which you are aware which might also impact on the same protected characteristics?

The nature of new proposals means it is exclusive to Children and young people with SEND and therefore people affected will, by definition, have a combination of these Protected Characteristics. A consultation on a

new SEND Travel Assistance Policy has taken place which also may impact on the same Protected Characteristics.

SEND STRATEGY - Children and young people with Complex Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (CLDD) have conditions that co-exist. These conditions overlap and interlock creating a complex profile. The Strategy aims to support any child or young person with SEND, whether they have complex needs or not.

SEND PROVISION - SEND provision will be developed for children and young people with different needs (i.e. disability) at the relevant educational phases (i.e. age), however, the activity will not affect them adversely. Provision will be developed to meet the appropriate needs despite a combination of protected characteristics.

SEND FUNDING - All mainstream schools receive notional SEND funding allocated as part of delegated budgets. All mainstream school governing bodies are asked to ensure that SEND notional funding is carefully prioritised for pupils with SEND. This funding could be used in relation to resources and support for individual pupils as well as wider staff training and professional development to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. Through provision maps, settings will be required to evidence how this funding is spent in line with the SEND graduated response, and guidance as set out in the SEND ranges. Transition funding has been allocated in the current academic year to support schools that are financially impacted by the move to a money follows the child model.

Section 5: Analysis

a) How will the activity help to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

SEND FUNDING - The purpose of the new funding model is to ensure that children and young people with SEND have the right support for their needs. This will provide a clear and transparent method to ensure children and young people with SEND are treated fairly. There were previously different funding models for primary and secondary settings. The proposal is to bring together all the funding under one model. This would result in a fair, transparent and consistent funding route.

SEND STRATEGY AND PROVISION - The draft SEND Strategy promotes a clear and strong vision to ensure all children and young people with SEND in Darlington have the Best Start in Life. The objectives support strong multi agency working and co-operation to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

b) How will the activity help to advance equality of opportunity?

The development of new provision will support mainstream inclusion, it will open up more options for pupils to be taught in mainstream schools. By increasing mainstream inclusion and local school SEND places it is likely to reduce travel time for more pupils.

The provision of more placements in Darlington will enable children and young people with SEND to make friends and socialise in their community.

c) How will the activity help to foster good relations?

The development of a joint local area draft SEND Strategy will enforce the local area partnerships. The Strategy will help all schools to prepare more, meet the needs of individual children and young people and support schools to ensure teachers are appropriately trained through the implementation of the SEND ranges.

During the engagement/ consultation process were there any suggestions on how to avoid, minimise or mitigate any negative impacts? If so, please give details.

As part of the consultation responses it was highlighted that consideration should also be given to the impact on education providers as they adjust budgets to reflect changes in practice. A series of information sessions were held for head teachers throughout 2018 to consider financial models and to obtain feedback from schools which informed the final banding proposals. Transition funding arrangements have been put in place for the current academic year to support schools impacted by a move to a money follows the child model.

The consultation raised the need to review the level of bandings, particularly at the lower banding levels, to ensure that there was not a wide gap between lower to moderate needs and higher needs. In response to the consultation response changes have been made to the banding proposals to reflect respondents' views that the gaps between banding rates could impact on outcomes. A higher rate has been added to the banding rates to reflect the need of pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) in specialist settings

Section 6 - Sign-off when assessment is completed

Officer Completing the Form:		
Signed	Name:	Eleanor Marshall
	Date:	11.12.18
	Job Title:	School Forum Monitoring and Support Officer
Assistant Director:		
Signed	Name:	Tony Murphy Head of Education and Inclusion
	Date:	22.02.18
	Service:	Childrens and Adults Services

Section 7 – Reporting of Findings and Recommendations to Decision Makers

Next Steps to address the anticipated impact (Select one of the following options and explain why this has been chosen – remember we have a duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can access services and work for us)
Negative impact identified – recommend continuing with the activity
Explanation of why the option above has been chosen (Including any advice given by legal services)
<p>Children and young people with SEND may be negatively impacted due to potential changes in the level of top up funding allocated to them however we are confident that any negative impacts can be successfully managed/mitigated. A robust implementation plan will be implemented including transitional funding and we will ensure that each CYP's needs are met and suitable provision identified through the statutory EHCP process. In recognition that changes may cause anxiety for a thorough management process will be utilised including a clear communication strategy that sets out clear paths to implementation, which should help to reduce anxieties for parents/carers and children and young people.</p> <p>We will also continue to monitor the impact these changes may have on children and young people and their families in accessing their education provision.</p> <p>Overall these proposals seek to positively benefit children with SEND and their families. The Local Area SEND strategy provides a clear framework for all partners to drive improvement for children and young people with SEND and the recommended funding proposals will provide a clear, transparent and accountable system for families and education settings. Moreover, the current level of overspend of high needs funding is not sustainable and therefore retaining the current funding model is not viable.</p>
If the activity is to be implemented how will you find out how it is affecting people once it is in place? (How will you monitor and review the changes?)

The SEND Strategy will be governed through the SEND multi-agency Steering Group. The next steps is to develop an implementation plan which will be supported by these Governance arrangements.

The school(s) affected will work with the LA to ensure placements are appropriate, that the right child is in the right place with the right support. The LA will be undertaking a quality assurance review of its placement and monitoring frameworks and this will review on a regular basis the effects of the changes to children and young people with SEND.

The impact on any funding changes will be reviewed with settings on an ongoing basis.

Section 8 – Action Plan and Performance Management

List any actions you need to take which have been identified in this EIA, including post implementation reviews to find out how the outcomes have been achieved in practice and what impacts there have actually been on people with protected characteristics

What is the negative impact?	Actions required to reduce/eliminate the negative impact (if applicable)	Who will lead on action	Target completion date
Top up funding, potential impact on schools budgets	Mapping of impact that the new funding model will have on a school basis.	Brett Nielsen	Complete
Continued review with settings	Reports through School Forum		Ongoing – March; May; October 2019 2020 dates to be set
Impact of changes to top up funding on individual children and young people	Individual needs will continue to be met through the statutory EHCP process		

Performance Management	
Date of the next review of the EIA	September 2020
How often will the EIA action plan be reviewed?	Every 6 months until full implementation of new provision.
Who will carry out this review?	Head of Education and Inclusion

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**CABINET
5 MARCH 2019**

CHILDREN SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME

**Responsible Cabinet Member
Councillor Cyndi Hughes, Children and Young People Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
Suzanne Joyner, Director of Children and Adults Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Members' agreement to:-
 - (a) the proposed Education and Inclusion Service Capital Investment Programme for 2019/20; and
 - (b) releasing the capital funds in relation to this programme.

Summary

2. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the release of School Condition grant funding of £141,894 for the 2019/20 financial year to support a range of projects and initiatives across maintained Darlington Schools. Additionally, an under spend of £97,000 from the 2018/19 capital programme is available to support this year's projects. All funding has been allocated in line with rigorous assessment processes that support Asset Management priorities.
3. The Council has been allocated Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) of £50,367 for the 2019/20 financial year. This funding is a formula-based grant provided to all maintained schools to help support the capital needs for their building. Additionally, in the Budget 2018 the Government allocated all schools a top-up to their 2018/19 DFC allocations. The total top-up for Darlington maintained schools is £84,171.
4. The Healthy Pupils Capital Fund is a one-off grant generated by the Government's 'sugar tax' on the soft drinks industry. The report seeks release of the awarded funding to support a project at Borough Road Nursery to improve independence and promote self-care and hygiene.
5. **Appendix A** provides a full breakdown of all funding streams which are available and details of each of the projects identified as a priority for the allocation of capital funding.
6. All projects will be managed in line with the Corporate Capital Process procedures.

Recommendation

7. It is recommended that Members:
- (a) agree to formally release the total School Condition Allocation of £141,894 and agree the proposed prioritised capital investment programme for maintained schools, with delegated authority to the Director of Children and Adult Services to manage the authorisation of this funding.
 - (b) agree to formally release £13,581 of Healthy Pupil Capital Fund grant to support a suitability project at Borough Road Nursery.

Reasons

8. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
- (a) Release of the funds will enable capital investment to be undertaken in the areas identified with the greatest need, in terms of asset management priorities; and
 - (b) Detailed planning to identify priorities have been undertaken which ensures effective use of all investment.

Suzanne Joyner
Director of Children and Adults Services

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Julia McCabe: Extension 5903

S17 Crime and Disorder	Capital investment to improve facilities and provide better building maintenance will contribute to the reduction of crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	The capital strategy outlined in this report will continue the Council's drive to provide buildings that enhance children's life chances and opportunities to thrive. The project at Borough Road will increased independence with toileting which is critical to children understanding how to keep healthy by managing their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully
Carbon Impact	All work undertaken will be designed and constructed with sustainability in mind and aim to reduce the carbon footprint, and re-use energy and environmental resources.
Diversity	
Wards Affected	Schools located in: Park East, Pierremont, North Road, Red Hall and Lingfield, Eastbourne and Whinfield.

Groups Affected	Children and young people of school age (3-16) in Darlington.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision due to the amount of funding Members are requested to release.
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The Capital Programme is consistent with Aspiring Darlington: providing high quality facilities that support modern approaches to education in schools and for lifelong learning.
Efficiency	Defective materials and plant will be replaced with more efficient products e.g. increasing 'u' value on windows, insulation and modern highly efficiency boilers.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The proposed projects have no specific impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

9. The Authority funds the capital maintenance and improvement of maintained schools from a variety of sources including capital allocations received from the Department for Education (DfE) and bid based submissions for Central Government funding programmes (compiled and submitted by Officers or individual schools).
10. **Appendix A** provides a summary of the capital allocations available to support children's services capital programme and further details of the proposed works for each project.
11. Additional funding may be secured throughout the year and if this occurs reports will be brought to Cabinet to formally request the release of the additional funding.

Devolved Formula Capital

12. Schools received a top-up to their 2018/19 allocations (previously released) announced in the Budget 2018. As with their new 2019/20 allocations schools will be encouraged to manage spend in line with agreed Local Asset Management Plan priorities.

A Healthy Borough Road – Improving Independence in the Early Years

13. Borough Road Nursery have brought a suitability issue with their children's toilet arrangement to the attention of the LA. The children's toilets are located in a single location serving the entire nursery building. Due to staffing reductions over time, the arrangement is now having an impact on delivery in the 3 and 4 year old room as staff have to leave the room to accompany children to the toilets. A temporary solution of accessing a single toilet in an adjacent room reduces the time staff are out of the room, but the children must still be accompanied, as the layout does not afford passive observation.
14. It is important that the school has the necessary facilities to develop self-care skills particularly around toileting and general hygiene so that the children learn to operate independently within the environment. In addition, it is important that they have opportunities to develop sustained learning, which at this moment in time is interrupted by staff having to leave the 3 and 4 year old room to accompany children to the toilet.
15. The proposed project involves remodelling two small meeting rooms into an additional toilet area with hand wash and nappy change facility. Direct access for children and supervision by staff would be created by knocking a wide opening through from the 3 and 4 year old room. The area concerned was improved by Government grant funding in 2012 and in accordance with the funding terms the Secretary of State for Education must be consulted if making a change to the tangible asset. The Department for Education, on behalf of the Secretary of State, has confirmed that as the basic use of the asset remains unchanged and the freehold and control of the land remains in the ownership of the Council, there will be no consideration of recovery of value (clawback) of the original grant funding.

16. DBC Building Design Services have designed the proposal and provided a cost estimate of £39,000. Education capital grants have been identified to fully cover the estimated cost of the works. An underspend of £25,419 from the Funded Places for Two Year Olds programme completed in 2014 could be used and supplemented with Healthy Pupils Capital Fund (HPCF) grant of £13,581. HPCF is a one-off grant generated from the Government's Soft Drinks Industry Levy. £13,581 is the total grant award made to the LA.
17. The grant guidance requests that proposals fit wherever possible with local priorities and needs for pupil health and wellbeing. The proposal is supported by DBC Public Health.

School Condition Allocation 19/20 Programme of Works

18. The Local Authority has been allocated School Condition Allocation grant of £141,894 in 2019/20 to address capital maintenance needs across the borough's maintained schools. There is an underspend of £97,000 from last Summer's programme which will be rolled forward to provide an overall total of £238,894. The Education Services and Inclusion Service within Children and Adult Services is responsible for ensuring all funding is targeted to meet strategic priorities and the highest priority needs across maintained schools and nurseries.
19. Once a school has converted to an Academy it is no longer eligible to be considered for capital maintenance funding allocated to the LA but can apply direct to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for funding as required. No remaining maintained schools (for which the LA has building condition responsibility) are currently progressing to conversion.

Prioritisation Process

20. To guide local priorities for investment, officers work with Head Teachers of maintained schools within the Borough to develop a Local Asset Management Plan Agreement (LAMPA) for their school. These plans are agreed in partnership with each school and concentrate on ensuring that investment is targeted to the highest need. The schools maintained by the LA are: Harrowgate Hill Primary (PFI - no condition liability for LA) Red Hall Primary, Whinfield Primary, Rise Carr College, Borough Road Nursery and George Dent Nursery. St Teresa's is still maintained but is also voluntary aided and the LA does not have responsibility for the condition of the school building.
21. **Appendix A** provides information about each recommended project. In addition, the following section of the report provides some additional background information about key priorities.

Asset Management Costs

22. £25,500 to support central costs for undertaking annual surveys on school premises to support Asset Management Planning arrangements. In addition, a proportion of the personnel costs for the School Place Planning and Capital Assets Team are top sliced from the available funding to support co-ordination of asset management arrangements.

Urgent Works/Contingency

23. Each proposed project identified in **Appendix A** contains a 7.5% contingency within the estimated value of the works. A further £20,000 has been kept in reserve to cover any emergency works that may be required through the year. This will be monitored as the projects progress and, if possible, funding released for other schemes. Members are asked to delegate responsibility for approving the allocation of this funding to the Director of Children and Adult Services.

Appendix A

PROGRAMME OF WORKS 2019/20

Description	Additional Details	Funding Allocation	
Devolved Formula Capital (Schools) 2019/20			
Schools DFC 19/20	DFC is a formula based grant provided to all maintained schools to help support the capital needs for their building. It is initially allocated to the LA on a formulaic basis, the LA then allocates the funding directly to schools. As a rule this funding should be invested in the priorities identified through the LAMPA process.	50,367	Ring-fenced pass through
Schools DFC 18/19 Top-up	This funding announced in The Government's Budget 2018 is for schools to spend on capital projects to meet their own priorities. It is in addition to the devolved formula capital (DFC) already allocated to schools in 2018-19 and released by Cabinet in April 2018.	84,171	Ring-fenced pass through
A Healthy Borough Road - Improving Independence in the Early Years			
Healthy Pupils Capital Fund	HPCF is a one off grant generated from the Government's Soft Drinks Industry Levy. £13,581 is the total grant award made to the LA.	13,581	Request release by Cabinet
Funded Place for Two Year Olds	Underspend of £29k from the Funded Places for 2 Year Olds capital programme.	25,419	Already Released
Total		39,000	
School Condition Allocation 2019/20		141,894	Request release by Cabinet
Underspend School Condition Programme 2018/19		97,000	Already Released
Total funding available for Condition Improvement Programme 2019/20		238,894	
Programme Support Costs	Including: 1. Staffing costs proportionate to the time spent managing the school condition allocation and school estate responsibilities. 2. Annual allowances for for condition surveys and design fees (further detail at para 22 of main report). 3. Commissioning and coordination of display energy certificates.	-25,500	
Borough Road Nursery	High level plastering, roofing and repointing works to the building. Various works to the external timber ramp and flooring replacement in existing toilets. Replacement and insulation of pipework showing signs of corrosion in boiler house and plant room.	-19,850	
George Dent Nursery	Various external condition related items to the building and site. Replacement of both primary pumps and connecting pipework in the boiler house. Upgrade of the sub mains and the replacement of any old fuse boards	-30,000	
Rise Carr College	Various roofing works with associated high level plastering and redecorating works internally. Replacement of an external timber fence in poor condition. Small works to install some power outlets and replace damaged lights throughout the building.	-15,250	
Red Hall Primary School	Roofing and repointing works to areas identified on the survey. Works to both retaining walls along with the removal/replacement of all the external asbestos panels. Various works to lighting and fire escape signage around the building. CCTV upgrade and the installation of a new variable speed pump with in the boiler house.	-56,900	
Whinfield Primary School	Various works to the CCTV, fire and intruder alarm systems along with repair work to all internal, external and emergency lighting throughout the school. Roofing and retaining wall works highlighted in their condition survey.	-53,694	
Fees	10%	-17,700	
Urgent Works / Contingency	Not yet allocated	-20,000	
Total Programme 19/20 Condition Improvement Programme		-238,894	
Balance of Funds		0	

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**CABINET
5 MARCH 2019**

**HEIGHINGTON CONSERVATION AREA
CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND BOUNDARY REVIEW**

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy and Regeneration Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
Ian Williams, Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To report the outcome of the consultation process for Heighington Conservation Area Character Appraisal, including comments received on the proposed boundary changes.
2. To seek Members' approval to adopt the Heighington Conservation Area Character Appraisal as planning guidance and for the boundary to be extended.

Summary

3. Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 says that it is the duty of Local Planning Authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area that are Conservation Areas.
4. This can be achieved through Conservation Area Character Appraisals, Management Plans and detailed policy in the Local Plan.
5. The Environment Scrutiny Review Action Plan adopted by the Cabinet highlighted the need for Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans to be undertaken.
6. The emerging Local Plan includes a heritage policy- *Protecting, Enhancing and Promoting Darlington's Historic Environment* which sets out the Council's positive strategy for the historic environment. This includes the preparation and review of Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans for each conservation area, including any proposed new or extended areas, as the basis for determining proposals within or where it would affect the setting of conservation areas.
7. Character Appraisals provide sound evidence for decision making on planning applications received for development proposals within Conservation Areas.

8. Darlington Borough has 17 Conservation Areas. The earliest were designated in 1968 and the last in 2016. 12 of these Conservation Areas have the benefit of an adopted Character Appraisals.
9. Character Appraisals for Heighington Conservation Area and Hurworth Conservation Area have been prioritised due to increasing development pressure in and around these villages which, if not managed effectively through the planning process, could lead to impact on their special character and appearance. A draft Hurworth Conservation Area Character Appraisal will be subject to public consultation in summer 2019. The outcome of this will be reported to Cabinet later in the year.

Recommendation

10. It is recommended that Cabinet approves the attached Heighington Conservation Area Character Appraisal including the boundary changes proposed.

Reason

11. The recommendation is supported to provide a document adopted by the Council to assist in the preservation and enhancement of the Heighington Conservation Area and its setting.

Ian Williams
Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Rosalind Kain: Extension 6326

S17 Crime and Disorder	The Character Appraisal encourages a high standard of environmental quality, supporting public safety and security.
Health and Well Being	The Character Appraisal encourages a high standard of environmental quality, preserving and enhancing the existing area, supporting public health.
Carbon Impact	The Character Appraisal encourages a high quality, sustainable environment within the Conservation Area.
Diversity	No issues are raised.
Wards Affected	Heighington and Coniscliffe
Groups Affected	Residents, landowners, agencies and businesses within and immediately adjacent to Heighington Conservation Area.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The Character Appraisal contributes towards the corporate priorities of One Darlington Perfectly Placed, seeking to deliver aspects of Greener Darlington relating to Conservation.
Efficiency	The Character Appraisal should lead to savings in officer time and workload for the Local Planning Authority procedures including pre-application and planning application processes.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report proposes an extension to the Conservation Area to include a landscaped area adjacent to Heighington Primary School. This is not play space or sport provision. No impact.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

12. Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on Local Planning Authorities to designate as Conservation Areas any areas that from time to time they determine are "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance." Conservation Areas are places where buildings and the spaces around them interact to form distinctly recognisable areas of special quality and interest.
13. Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 emphasises that it is the duty of Local Planning Authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area that are Conservation Areas. This is best achieved through Conservation Area Character

Appraisals because they provide locally distinctive guidance about how best to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas.

14. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) references the need for Local Planning Authorities, when considering the designation of a Conservation Area, to ensure that it justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest; and to assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment. This can be achieved through a Character Appraisal. The NPPF also highlights the desire to assess the impact of planning proposals on Conservation Areas, as heritage assets, in order to make sound and well informed planning decisions, which Character Appraisals would help to identify. Character Appraisals would also help to inform applicants when preparing heritage statements required with planning applications that affect heritage assets.
15. Preparation and use of Conservation Area Character Appraisals is also recommended by Historic England, the government's advisory body on the historic environment. Historic England Advice Note 1 sets out ways to manage change in a way that conserves and enhances historic areas through conservation area designation, appraisal and management.
16. The Environment Scrutiny Review Action Plan (2010) adopted by Cabinet highlighted the need for Conservation Area Character Appraisals to be undertaken. A timetable to produce one Character Appraisal each year; and, once done, to review the Character Appraisals was agreed by Economy and Environment Scrutiny on 25 February 2010. This target has not been achieved due to resource pressure. Focus was shifted to the allocation of a new Conservation Area, including the production of a Character Appraisal, around Parkgate to complement the refurbishment and redevelopment of the listed Hippodrome Theatre, and highlight the special character of the Edwardian properties around it.
17. In 2017 two of the outstanding Conservation Area Character Appraisals, Heighington and Hurworth, were identified as gaps in the Local Plan evidence base and necessary to guide planning decisions.
18. Heighington Conservation Area was designated in February 1972 and extended in 1999. To date it has not have the benefit of a Character Appraisal.
19. Character Appraisals are a tool to assist in the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. They can help to understand what the special interest is in places, buildings and spaces that are worthy of preservation and enhancement. Features such as historic walls, stiles, open spaces, trees or historic surfaces can be highlighted as can features causing intrusion or damage.
20. The production of a Character Appraisal is a step in the process of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the designated area, providing a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future. Undertaking the preparation of such a document offers the opportunity to re-assess the designated area of Heighington and to evaluate and record its special interest. A Character Appraisal is not an end in itself. The process should lead to a better understanding of the character of the area and what makes it the place it is today; and so provide the basis for any particular policies or management proposals, for example introduction of an Article 4 Direction to remove Permitted Development Rights if this is considered appropriate. Character Appraisals are a material consideration in

planning decisions and so provide a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for Development Plan policies and Development Management decisions.

21. Defining the 'special interest' of an area is the main purpose of a Character Appraisal and is gained from the area's character and appearance; but other senses and experiences, local environmental conditions and historical associations can be drawn on. Historic street patterns (building plots, layouts and the relationship of buildings to open spaces), archaeology, buildings (listed and unlisted), spaces and townscape, materials, green spaces, uses and the built environment and landscape can all contribute towards the character of an area.
22. Commissioned by Darlington Council the Character Appraisal (**Appendix 1**) has been drafted by the North of England Civic Trust, a charitable body with expertise in heritage and its contribution to civic society in England. The document is an assessment of the area's special architectural and historic interest, based on careful analysis of the area as a result of time spent in the area, reference to published sources and analysis of the current planning context.
23. The boundary of the Conservation Area has been comprehensively reviewed and the following boundary changes recommended (**Appendix 2**):-
 - (a) Adding fields on the south side of Heighington, to the east side of Coatsay Moor Lane, to preserve the approach to the village and the views to the south across the landscape setting.
 - (b) Adding the verge, hedgerow and trees north of Millbank in the north-west corner of the area, to protect the amenity provided by the trees at this junction.
 - (c) Adding Nos.1-9 (odd) Snackgate Lane and green verges at the junction of Snackgate Lane, Millbank and Walworth Road, to include properties that contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.
 - (d) Removing the two late 20th century houses south of Page House, Darlington Road, to draw in the boundary of the Conservation Area excluding modern residential properties where it currently cuts across them.
24. Local Planning Authorities have the powers to introduce additional control over development in Conservation Areas through an Article 4 Direction. As part of this reassessment of the Conservation Area it is considered that such control would not be warranted at present. However, if the Conservation Area was to be designated as 'At Risk' by Historic England in their annual survey this may be revisited in the future.

Financial Implications

25. Improved efficiency in the Council's planning procedures, for example in providing pre-application advice and making well informed planning decisions at delegated and Committee level.

Legal Implications

26. If approved, the boundary changes would increase the area within the designated Conservation Area. This provides the Local Planning Authority with additional statutory powers affecting, for example, demolition of buildings, works to trees, and publicity procedures for planning applications and some restrictions on permitted development rights.

Equalities Implications

27. No equality implications are raised by the adoption of the Character Appraisal or the boundary extension. Best practice, as defined by Historic England Advice Note 1, in community and owner consultation, and in finalising and reviewing the boundary, has been followed.
28. If we were to consider an Article 4 Direction covering Heighington Conservation Area, to introduce additional planning controls, this would require further engagement and an additional Cabinet Report. It is at this point we would undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.

Consultation

29. Internally within the Council an electronic version of the draft Character Appraisal was made available to senior officers within Planning, Highways, Legal Services, Street Scene, Housing Services and Estates. Portfolio Holder Councillor McEwan and Ward Members Crudass and Lee were each sent a copy of the draft document by email.
30. Externally, local public participation and engagement is an integral part of the process to encourage valuable public understanding and ownership. Formal consultations with local and national heritage agencies was also carried-out. The consultation period ran from 1 May 2018 until 31 May 2018, during which time people were encouraged to comment on the draft Character Appraisal. An online system was added to the Council's website to facilitate this. Also a printed copy was deposited in the Town Hall reception for reference, with comments forms.
31. Residents, landowners and businesses within the Conservation Area were given a high priority, being likely to want more input than other people. Letters were sent to properties directly affected by the proposed changes. Also an informal drop-in event was held at Heighington Village Hall, between 3pm and 7pm on Friday 18 May 2018. At the staffed event there were displays boards, maps, copies of the draft document and comments forms. Attendees were encouraged to ask questions and make comments. The drop-in event held attracted about 25 people.
32. Eleven written responses were received from external consultees including eight letters and emails from members of the public. Of the residents six respondents were supportive of the proposed boundary changes and two objected.
33. Residents and external agencies who replied are generally supportive of Conservation Area changes; and of the Character Appraisal's purpose to better guide planning decisions in the area, with which some people in Heighington have been dissatisfied. Issues raised by respondents include protection of the character of the village, especially around the village greens and medieval core; and,

management of traffic and parking. Other comments identified historic connections with the Stockton and Darlington Railway; recent national recognition of the quality of the village; and the importance of land around the village fringe and managing development pressures. Objections raised include the belief that the extension would not add any benefit to the Conservation Area, does not significantly define the landscape or set a crisp boundary and a concern about additional bureaucracy; also that some of the land to be included is improved agricultural land.

34. Following consideration of the representations the proposed extensions to the south of Heighington village were reviewed. The land between Coatsay Moor Lane and Walworth Road, which was proposed for inclusion in the May 2018 consultation, was omitted from the proposed boundary due to the area being a man-made topography, formed by intensive farming processes, which have altered the pastoral historic landscape.
35. In light of this a second consultation exercise was carried out to give interested parties an opportunity to comment on the revised Appraisal and boundary. Letters were sent to all residents; and other interested parties informed by email. A copy was, again, deposited in the Town Hall reception; and facilities provided through the Council's website to read the document and submit comments online. The second consultation period ran from 7th – 25th January 2019.
36. Internally within the Council an electronic version of the draft Character Appraisal was circulated to senior officers within Planning, Highways, Legal Services, Street Scene, Housing Services and Estates and to Portfolio Holder Councillor McEwan and Ward Members Councillor Crudass and Councillor Lee.
37. In response to the letters sent to 260 properties and consultation of external agencies, four online comments forms were submitted through the webpage, three written response were received and four responses by email.
38. Responses from residents were generally supportive of the boundary extension. Although other properties were recommended for inclusion in the boundary. A full summary of respondents' comments and the Council's response to them is available at <https://www.darlington.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/conservation/character-appraisals/>.
39. Several responses from residents referred to two recent planning approvals for housing developments on the edge of Heighington and that the Council has failed in its planning duty by approving these housing development. Concerns were raised that any new housing development within the Conservation Area would have a detrimental effect on the village with Heighington fast losing its identity, and integrity as a village of historical significance. If future housing development were also to occur to the south and east of Coatsay Moor Lane, the old village would be completely encircled by new development and the integrity of the ancient village boundary would be lost. Other comments submitted request a restriction on further properties being built within existing boundaries of plots which would lead to loss of green space.
40. Nature conservation was raised as an additional reason to extend the boundary due to bat roosts and Great Crested Newts and Smooth Newts registered sites. It is out with the remit of a Conservation Area Character Appraisal to extend the

boundary on these grounds. Separate legislation protects these species. However, I note these comments and have raised them with the Council's Ecology Officer.

41. A detailed representation was received from Hedley Planning on behalf of the owner of Heighcroft House. In summary it sets out that the Character Appraisal falls short in providing an up-to-date description of the character of the Conservation Area, due to its lack of references to recent residential planning permissions, and its setting. In addition it does not distinguish between the quality of the Cumby buildings site and other land identified as open spaces in the degree to which they contribute to the Conservation Area.
42. All the points raised through the consultation exercises are noted. These responses and our actions are summarised on the conservation webpage.
43. Historic England welcome the report and recommend it is indicated how the recommendations will be taken forward, including details on timescales and monitoring. In addition, the Council may wish to consider how the advice could be disseminated to the local community most effectively, to help raise awareness of the Conservation Area, and assist with its management, including the maintenance of buildings and the design of any alterations.
44. Natural England had no comments, however, they stress this should not be interpreted as no impact on the natural environment. Other bodies and individuals may wish to make comments that might help the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to fully take account of any environmental risks and opportunities relating to this document. No comments were received from the Council's Ecology Officer.

Outcome of Consultation

45. A full summary of respondents' comments and our response to them, including whether the Character Appraisal has been altered as a result of comments, can be found in on the Conservation Area Character Appraisal webpage.
46. In conclusion there have been no objections that would be a reason not to adopt the Character Appraisal, or justification raised to change the boundary proposals further. The majority of response are supportive of the boundary extension. The points about inaccuracies have been checked and rectified where necessary.
47. If approved, we are required to advertise the boundary changes in the local press and in the London Gazette. All residents, landowners, agencies and businesses who are directly affected would receive a letter from the Council to inform them of the change and what that means for them, such as control over demolition of buildings and over works to trees for land and building included in the Conservation Area, or for those removed the removal of these controls.

Heighington

Conservation Area



Summary of special interest

- 1.1 Heighington Conservation Area takes in the old village, some later development, and parts of the village's open setting which contribute to significance. It is strongly influenced by its elevation, south-facing topography and underlying magnesian limestone geology.
- 1.2 Possibly with late Saxon origins, its early medieval layout is strongly evident today. It was an important local centre for centuries. 17th, 18th and 19th century renewal left the built legacy seen today, and the village became an extended but conserved dormitory village in the 20th century, dominated by single family dwellings and the communal village green.
- 1.3 Heighington is spatially significant. Its presence in the landscape is clear. Its crisp, organised, village green layout, ringed by linear plots, and with a largely unaltered set of routes, strongly describes its history. Open fields 'outside' the village contrast with the relative intensity of development 'inside' it. Open spaces including fields make a strong contribution. Views of, from and through the area are important.
- 1.4 The area's built character is significant including distinctive plot layout and low density. Modest architectural characteristics create remarkable unity and appealing informal harmony in strings of historic houses, despite some variety in detail. Historic outbuildings and boundary walls add crucial integrity to building groups.

Gardens and yards add intense, essential greenness as well as revealing history. Whilst mostly high quality, later backland development has little special interest.

- 1.5 Spaces including roads and front and rear gardens strongly contribute to significance. Simplicity and restraint in design, materials and detailing is key. Grass dominates the area adding well-established greenness, and many trees add grace, shape and maturity. Backland development and modernisation has stripped some spaces of rural village character.
- 1.6 The familiar rural village scene is rich, simple and charming, with history very evident in the clear rooftop and tree-filled horizon, backed by long green views. There is the strong sense of a historic, well-organised community settled quietly in the countryside for centuries, still partly encircled by open fields and thriving as a desirable, well-cared for place to live.

Location

- **Heighington is in the south-east of historic Co Durham, now in Darlington borough.**
- **It is strongly influenced by its elevation, south-facing topography over the north bank of Tees valley, and underlying magnesian limestone geology.**

- 1.7 Since 1974, Heighington has been in the north of Darlington borough but is traditionally in **south-east Co Durham**. It is 6 miles north-west

Fig 1: Heighington Tithe Commutation c.1838

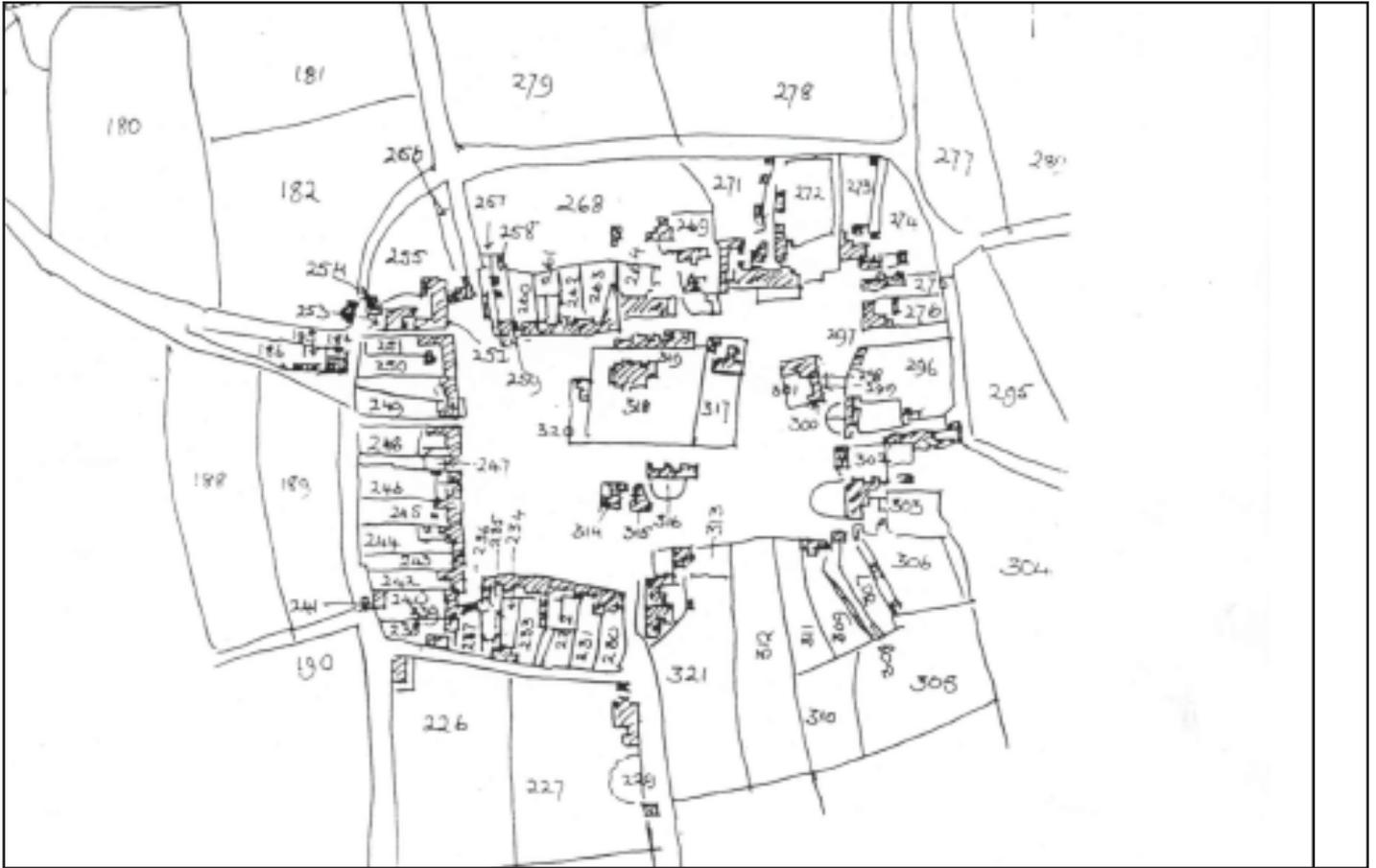


Fig 2: c.1923 3rd edition OS map of Heighington

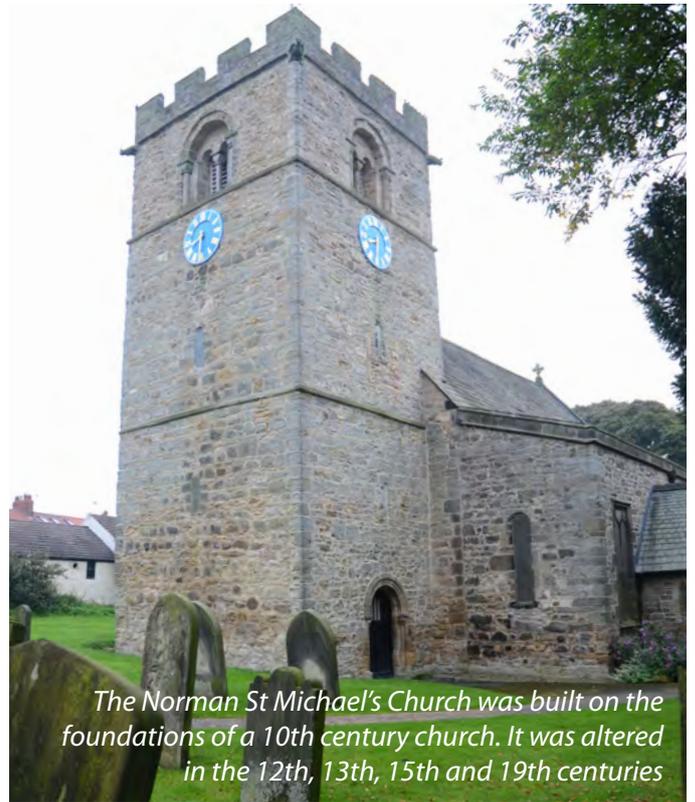


of Darlington and 6 miles south-east of Bishop Auckland, the two largest historic towns in this part of the traditional county. Newton Aycliffe new town is 2 miles to the east. The village is off the A6072, a modern south-east to north-west road parallel to the A68, one of the main historic roads from the North East to Edinburgh.

- 1.8 Darlington borough is on the north slope of the River Tees valley. Heighington is on higher land to the north of this. It is at the southern tip of the **Durham magnesian limestone plateau** (National Character Area 15) which runs diagonally through the county from the Tees lowlands up to Wearmouth. The village is laid out on a prominent natural feature, a **wide elevated watershed** between Red House Beck to the north and Halliwell and Dene Becks to the south, all flowing east to the River Skerne, a tributary of the Tees. This elevated ridge is most prominent in the south-east quadrant of the village where it appears as a high scarp accentuated by past quarrying. The ridge continues west as Highside Bank and south as Houghton Bank, where it carries the A68.
- 1.9 The area and its setting are strongly influenced by this **location, topography and geology**. The village is elevated and is a prominent feature in the landscape. It slopes noticeably to the south and east (the north-west corner is 150m above sea level, the south-east corner 125m), which creates long, wide, unimpeded views southwards, and corresponding views north towards the area. The scarp has influenced the area's layout and circulation. The limestone geology has influenced built character, like other Co Durham villages on the plateau (eg. Sedgfield); at Heighington there is also sandstone close by to the west.

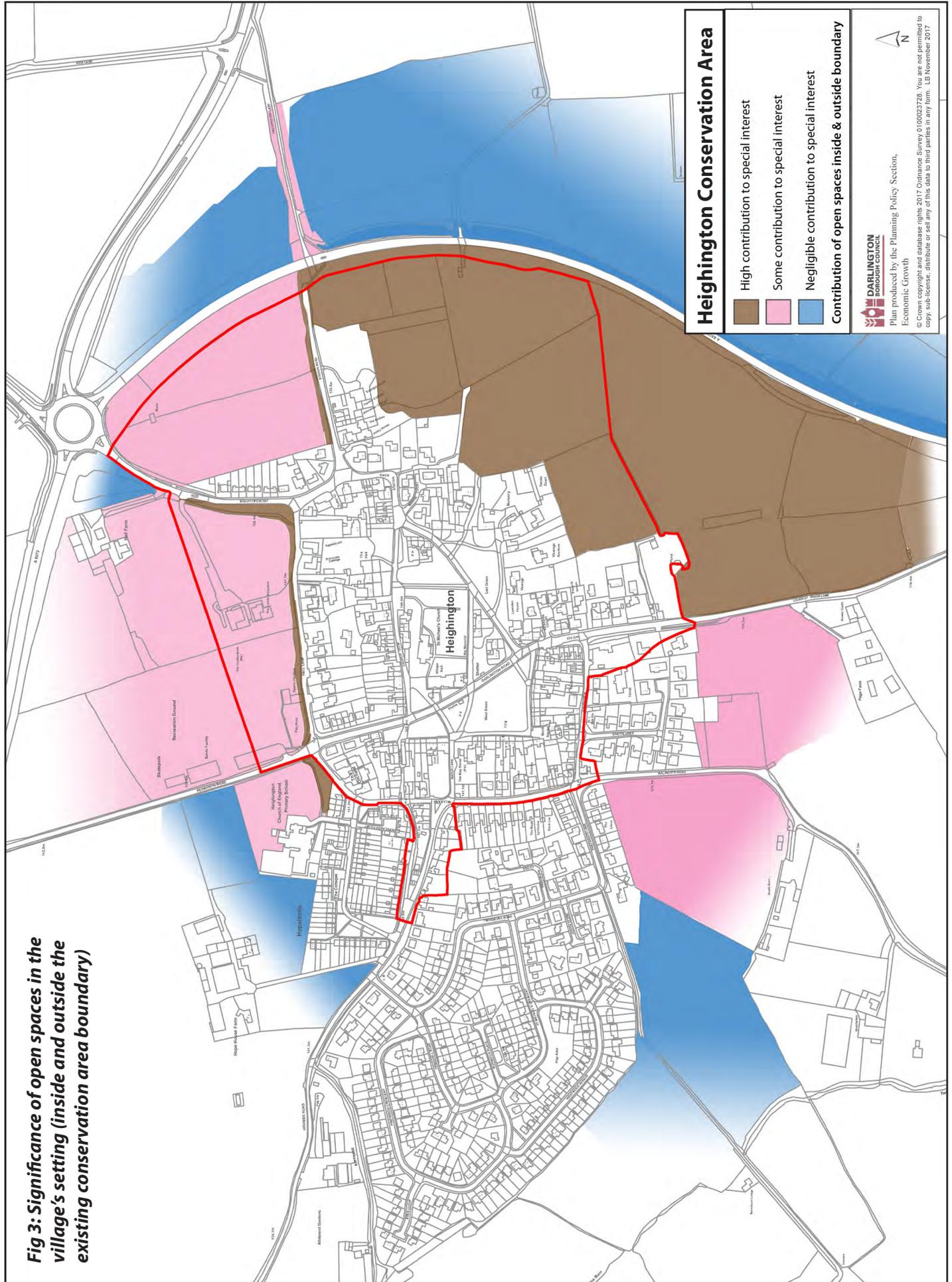
Historical development

- **Possibly with late Saxon origins, it was the early medieval period which set the development pattern still evident today.**
 - **The village was a significant administrative centre for many centuries.**
 - **17th, 18th and 19th century renewal created most of the buildings seen today.**
 - **The rural village was eclipsed by industrial centres nearby (eg. Darlington), but it still doubled in size in the late 20th century.**
- 1.10 There are **Iron Age** finds nearby, but the name Heighington is probably **Saxon**, meaning 'township of Hecca's people' or 'township on the high ground'. Although thought to be **early**



The Norman St Michael's Church was built on the foundations of a 10th century church. It was altered in the 12th, 13th, 15th and 19th centuries

- medieval** in origin, 1981 excavations suggest Heighington's Norman church was built on the foundations of a **10th century** church, suggesting late-Anglo Saxon origins. The village is first mentioned in the **1182 Boldon Buke** (a survey of Durham's parishes similar to the Domesday book) which, with other sources, indicates it had about 100 people living in small heather thatched cottages laid out around a green; the better houses were possibly cruck-framed. Planned villages were commonplace within the Palatinate of Durham, and survive best to the south of the county.
- 1.11 The c.1838 tithe plan (Fig 1) still largely reflects the **12th century** village layout. It shows the green and churchyard, with houses, farms and cottages facing inwards. Narrow strips of land and larger fields stretch back to an enclosing wall, which would have been gated to provide access to these plots. An encircling back lane surrounds the wall, and the narrow entrances to the village would also probably have been gated to ensure safe common enclosure for animals. The street name The Courtine – a French term for a curtain wall – is most likely a reference to these walls. The village's water source, a well, was to the west on Batt Lane.
- 1.12 The village was enlarged by the Hansard family of Walworth in the **12th century**. They also rebuilt St Michael's church (William Hansard was the first known rector), one of the few



substantial buildings in medieval Heighington. The south aisle was added in the **13th century**, and the tower raised in the **15th century**, with a parapet and gargoyles added at each corner.

- 1.13 A manor house, first mentioned in the **mid-14th century**, was at Middridge Grange, some 2 miles north of the village (where buildings of c.1600 survive). References in historical texts to the Bishop of Durham as lord of the manor being in frequent residence highlight the village's importance as a medieval settlement.
- 1.14 Whilst the village's layout is not likely to have changed much beyond the late medieval period, Heighington became more important with the addition of notable buildings from the early **17th century**. In **1601**, a grammar school was founded by Elizabeth Jenison next to the church. The Manor House (East Green) and the Bay Horse pub (West Green) also date from the **late 17th century**. Other village buildings may well also have building fabric from this period.
- 1.15 The **18th century** saw increased prosperity from better communication and agricultural improvement. This was reflected in the construction and reconstruction of more substantial houses; many of today's buildings dating from this period. The village's improved status was also reflected in a **1730** record citing Heighington as one of only six places in Co Durham where horses were raced.
- 1.16 Despite prosperity, the 1859 1st edition OS Map shows the village's historic plan form was little different by the mid-19th century. Heighington remained a self-sufficient community reliant on agriculture and linen weaving as a cottage industry. Some properties are said to have had rear weaving sheds; some rear cottages survive.
- 1.17 But there were notable **19th century** changes, evident by the 1923 3rd edition OS Map (Fig 2):
- The 17th century grammar school, which had been neglected, was rebuilt in **1812**. It was enlarged in **1831** as an elementary school, and today it houses the village hall.
 - Capt William Pryce Cumby, commander of the *Bellerophon* at the Battle of Trafalgar (1805), built grand Trafalgar House (later briefly re-named Heighington House) at the east entry to the village around **1815**, the year he was made Companion of the Order of the Bath. He was born in the village, as was his mother.
 - A stone pump head, or pant, was built on the green by Samuel Gamlen, vicar from **1815 to 1834**. Water no longer had to be carried from the Batt Lane well. The pant was the village's only public water supply until the 1930s.
- The Methodists built a chapel at Highside Road in **c.1815**, and later in **1872** a Wesleyan chapel at Church View, with its own house.
 - St Michael's church saw major restoration in **c.1870-1875**, adding the north aisle, south porch, and a new roof. In the late 19th century, the church tower and bells were renewed, and 3 new bells ('faith, hope and charity') added.
 - By the **late 1800s**, roadside development had begun to appear outside the village core.
- 1.18 The 19th century also saw great change nearby, with construction in 1825 of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR), 1.5 miles to the east. Heighington Station (named this after 1874), was built in 1826 as one of three railway taverns on the line. It was in essence one of the world's first prototype passenger railway stations. Here, Stephenson's *Locomotion* was first placed on the rails. The village did not expand east towards the station. The railway age saw the agricultural village eclipsed as industrial centres such as Darlington and Bishop Auckland overtook rural ones in status and growth.
- 1.19 The **20th century** saw the most rapid change, both within and beyond its historic core. Heighington was transformed from a self-contained rural community to a conserved dormitory village for nearby industrial growth.
- 1.20 In **1926**, the north entrance to the village, through the once-gated walls, was widened to take vehicles, involving demolition of historic buildings (including Brownless grocery shop and the post office). The south entrance was similarly widened. The old vicarage was demolished in **1929**, the site becoming further grave yard land, and the building materials reused in the present Vicarage (East Green).
- 1.21 Most significantly, new housing was added, a small amount **post-WWI** and much more from the **mid-C20**. The village was effectively doubled in size to the west. New housing was also built in former fields and orchards inside the village (eg. Vicarage Close), including infill and subdivision of historic plots (eg. Millbank).
- 1.22 The conservation area was designated in **February 1972** and enlarged in **March 1999**.
- 1.23 The village hall was extended in the late 20th century. Strong community pride is evident, eg. in the addition in **2000** of a decorative 'village cross' sign on the green. In **2006**, Heighington was featured as one of 12 'perfect villages' in a BBC TV programme of the same name.



View north along Coatsay Moor Lane showing clear open field setting to the village's buildings and tree cover, with the church as a landmark on the horizon



View south along Coatsay Moor Lane showing topography enclosure of the village's setting



Long, wide views south from the area include Darlington's spires and towers visible in the middle distance



The village registers in the landscape as a weight of established tree cover. Long views towards the Cleveland Hills and North York Moors in the distance

Boundary and setting

- **The boundary takes in the old village, small areas of later ribbon development, and some parts of the village's open setting.**
- **Many characteristics of the area's setting contribute to its heritage significance.**
- **The boundary should be extended to take in more of this historic open setting.**

- 1.24 The boundary takes in the old village, small areas of later ribbon development and some parts of the village's open setting to the north, east and south (delimited by the artificial arc of the Heighington bypass). The rationale for the boundary was given in two designation reports:
- When first designated in **1972**, the boundary focussed on the historic village plus open space to the north, because it formed *"an important approach to the village from the north-east, and protects the ridge line, and extends eastward to include Trafalgar House."*
 - The boundary was enlarged after **1999** to include Nos.2-6 Highside Road (to consolidate the spatial layout there), and a sizeable landscape belt to the east and south (largely defined by the then new bypass) based on *"the lower slopes of the hillside, which are important to the setting of the village and conservation area, particularly from the south."*

- 1.25 The conservation area's setting is very important to its heritage significance. See fig 3:
- As discussed above, **topography** is key, with the south and east-facing slopes and the scarp in the village influencing its position. The contrast between the elevated, tightly bound village and the open, sloping, undulating fields around it is a distinctive part of the village's spatial and landscape character. This is particularly obvious in the east and south where there is a robust **settlement edge**.
 - The general shape and arrangement of the village, and the layout of many buildings, has taken advantage of this long **south and east facing aspect**.
 - There are long, wide, uncluttered **views south** from the area into its landscape setting, over the valley of the Tees to the Cleveland Hills and North York Moors beyond. These are best from the high west side of the green and from the south edge of the settlement over the scarp. Darlington's spires and chimneys are clear in these views from some points, adding key context to the scene. Corresponding **views north** from south of Heighington are also significant. Shorter, busier views east

- include glimpses of Newton Aycliffe. Closer topography and established tree cover tends to dominate views to and from the west and north. Views of the village from the A68 in the south-west highlight its ridge-top position.
- The **church** is a particularly strong visual marker of the area in the wider landscape, and a symbolic beacon of the historic parish. It is particularly prominent in views north along Coatsay Moor Lane and also appears in approaching views on Redworth Lane and Beech Crescent and in glimpses further afield.
- In addition, the weight of **established tree cover** at the church garth and elsewhere adds greatly to the area's presence in its setting.
- As a large, historic rural village, the area has a key historical link to the **agricultural land use pattern** around it. The area is in the Central/South Durham Enclosure character zone of the Co Durham & Darlington Historic Landscape Characterisation, typified by a pattern of larger arable and smaller pasture enclosure fields with hedgerows. The pattern is smaller around the village than further away, illustrating the higher intensity of cultivation the village brought over time.
- The strong networks of **historic roads and paths** radiating out from the village illustrate its focal role in the local area. Routes shown on the earliest maps mostly survive despite later development and the bypass. **Walworth Road** for example is a largely untouched rural lane approaching the village from the south-west.
- The sense of established **privacy and intimacy** from boundary walls, trees and hedges is in contrast to the relative openness of the landscape, emphasising the intended contrast between the area and its setting.
- There is a general sense of **tranquillity** around the area. Apart from the village extension, setting is very sparsely settled, with only scattered farms, small villages and houses in parks (eg. Redworth Hall). The village is well screened by bunds and trees from the sights and noise of the bypass, and feels very remote from the A1, A68 and Newton Aycliffe.
- Despite no visual link, the relationship with the **S&DR** adds important historical context to the area's setting, notably through the nearest station taking its name. Control of land east of the village by Trafalgar House might be a reason for a lack of growth between the village and station over time.
- The greater **integrity** of landscape setting on

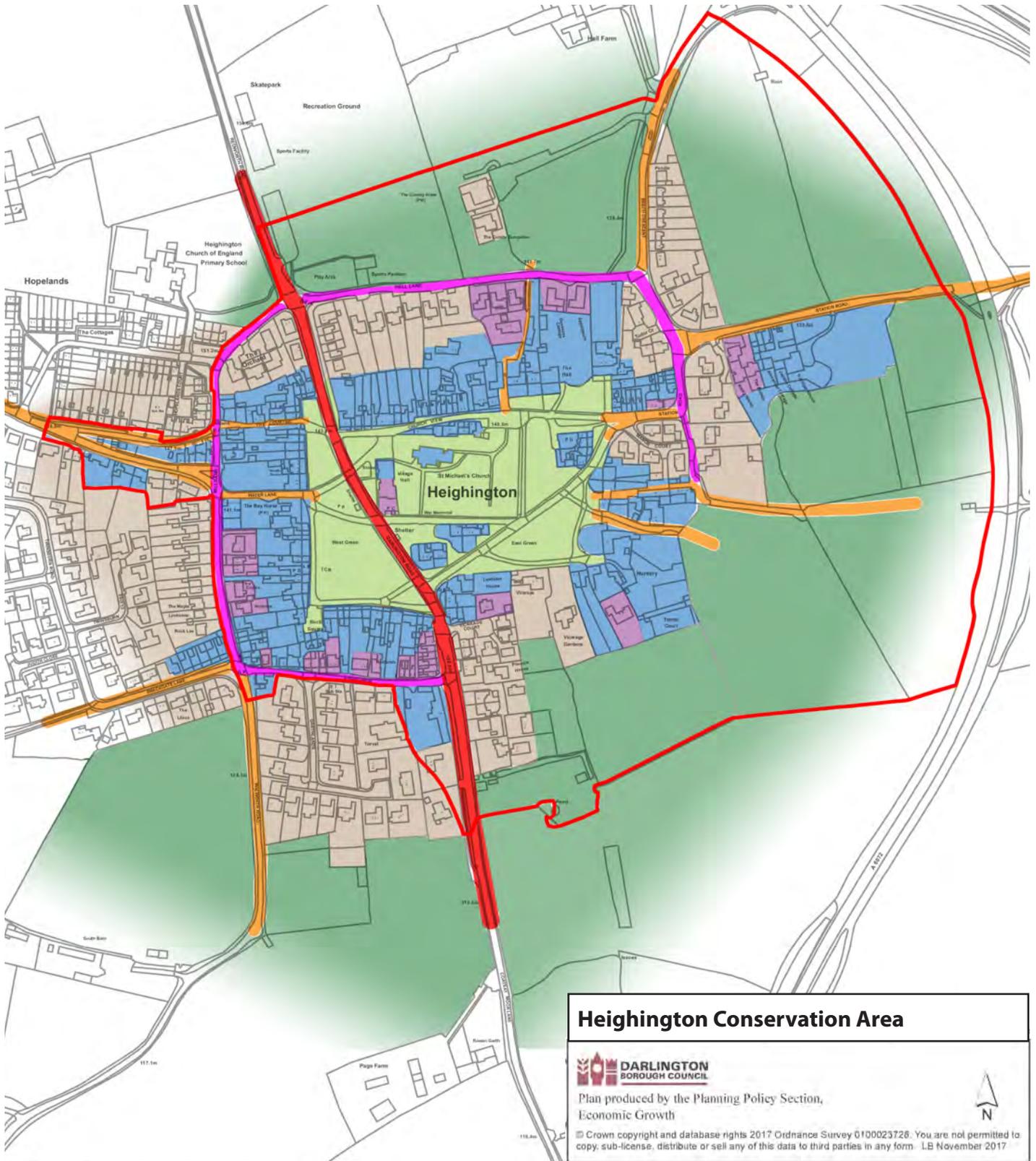


Fig 4: Spatial analysis (diagrammatic)

- Conservation area boundary
- Village green including church garth
- Routes:**
- Main road through village
- Back lane around village
- Secondary radiating route to village
- Historic village development plots:**
- Largely intact historic plots including gardens
- Post-WWI insertions into historic plots
- Fields and orchards:**
- Largely intact fields
- Post-WWI insertions into fields and orchards

Heighington Conservation Area

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Plan produced by the Planning Policy Section,
Economic Growth

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the south, east and north sides is important for its **relative rarity** compared to the west and south-west sides, where the area's setting is radically different due to the addition of the post-WWII village extension.

- It is significant that Heighington's spatial and landscape presence has been included in several planning and archaeological **studies** (eg. see Sharp, Shirley and Roberts on p25).

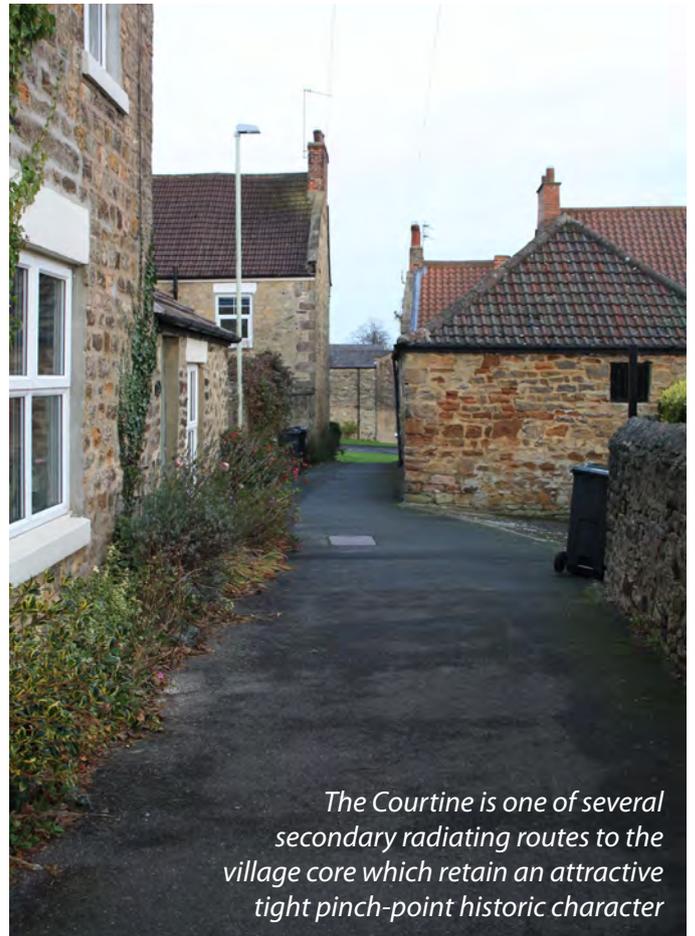
- 1.26 Some parts of the conservation area's setting are so significant that they should be included in an enlarged boundary; see *Management issues* and Fig 5, below.

Spatial characteristics

- **The old village's spatial presence in the landscape is still clear on the north, east and south sides, where it is still surrounded largely by open space. Post-WWII development to the west and south-west has harmed its spatial presence there.**
- **The crisp, organised, village green spatial pattern, ringed by linear plots, is a key characteristic that is strongly descriptive of its history. It was defensible, protected from the elements, and created communal green space for grazing and village life.**
- **The well-defined, largely unaltered set of routes shows essential historical movement to, around and inside the village.**

- 1.27 As a **traditional green village**, Heighington's spatial presence is large, influenced by its history and status as an important local centre. The village's footprint is the largest in Darlington and one of the largest in traditional Co Durham. It was identified in seminal 1972 research into the county's village plans as a 'multiple-row cluster', one of the larger and more complex village plan types in the county.

- 1.28 The old village's rectangular **spatial presence in the landscape** was clear and crisp on all sides until the mid-20th century. Other than the addition of Trafalgar House, the immediate setting outside the back lane was almost entirely open fields to traditional enclosure patterns. By the 1930s, a few houses appeared outside the back lane, but from the 1960s to the 1980s, Heighington's footprint more than doubled, with new estates and a school built in fields to the west and south-west. This harmed the village's traditional spatial footprint (even if the buildings are not generally visible from inside the village core). This makes the survival of its landscape spatial presence on the south,



The Courtine is one of several secondary radiating routes to the village core which retain an attractive tight pinch-point historic character

east and north sides more important.

- 1.29 The village's layout has been controlled over time through regulation rather than formally designed as a set piece. The basic canvas is a **rectangular green**. In the centre of this at the highest point is the large, focal, rectangular **church garth**. Around the edge of the green are rows of **linear plots** of varying widths, perpendicular to the green, plus a few larger fields and orchards. This original pattern is unmistakably pure in the west but more irregular in the east, where the scarp, several larger status plots, and historic encroachment onto the green have created a more varied layout. The village's general arrangement is strongly descriptive of its medieval origins and, although some plots are altered, the basic spatial pattern remains substantially intact.
- 1.30 The village's **routes** are well organised. The only route to directly enter and leave the village is the main **Darlington Road**. Its entry and exit points are offset and were once narrow pinch-points with a tighter built pattern, designed to improve security. Early 20th century demolition widened these points; the north-west entry was once laid out much like Buck Square (the small set-back area in the south-west corner of the



The village green is the anchor open space land use in the conservation area

village green). A **back lane** (Hall Lane, Millbank, South View and parts of Station Road) encircles most of the village, the scarp preventing it from joining up in the south-east quadrant. It still has a strong spatial presence. It acted as circulation around the village, and as a hub for several **secondary radiating routes** which met up with it without directly entering the village:

- Highside Road on the west side led to the village's early water source, a well at Batt Lane; constant daily use has left it wide and split in to two shallower gradients, presumably to ease transportation of water. It enters the village indirectly via Water Lane and The Courtine, both retaining tight pinch-points.
- Heighington Lane (later Station Road) was the main east road, now severed by the bypass. It enters the village indirectly at Church View.
- Walworth Road, Snackgate Lane and Beech Crescent meet the back lane at corners of the rectangle, but do not directly enter the village on those corners.
- As well as The Courtine, several other historic paths reach the village from surrounding fields to join the back lane, on all sides. For example, one enters the village core west of No.39 Church View. A wider route in to the village north of Eldon House may be a traditional cattle route between fields and the green (often called a cattle drift).

1.31 Inside the village, **the green is divided** by two main routes: the main diagonal north-south sweep of Darlington Road (which divides it notionally into **West Green** and **East Green**), and the diagonal east-west route above the top of the scarp. The latter became formalised as Station Road after the S&DR was built. In addition, the green is ringed by informal tracks

and paths serving the village's plots. The track along the top is formalised as Church View; the west side track lengthens into Buck Square at its south end; the track on the east side is less rectilinear. A minimal number of secondary tracks cross the green to link the various routes up. Routes over the green are more formal and engineered today than on the earliest maps.

1.32 This rich spatial pattern of routes illustrates Heighington's focal status in the locality. It provides insight into medieval village planning, highlighting the need to balance security inside the village with good communication to agricultural land outside it. The network of routes on the earliest maps is largely intact, if more formalised than it once was. See Fig 4.

Land uses

- **A clear split between built and open space uses, defined by the development pattern.**
- **Built uses are dominated by single family dwellings and traditional village uses.**
- **Open space uses comprise the village green, gardens, and agricultural land.**

1.33 Within the conservation area, there is a clear **split between built and open space uses**, the built uses being mainly inside the village's back lane. Only in the 20th century did a notable number of buildings begin to appear outside the back lane, some of which are now in the conservation area for their architectural interest and others only by default of the boundary's line. This split has been eroded in places, notably at Cumby buildings, Beech Crescent and Manor Court, where housing is outside the back lane. On the west side of the village, large areas of development outside the back lane are

excluded from the boundary. See fig 4.

- 1.34 A large part of the area's character comes from the range of large and small **single family dwellings** which dominate the village, including their domestic gardens, some of which are very large and include features such as historic outbuildings and modern tennis courts. A small number of buildings are now flats; this can harm character by increasing density, pressure for parking and subdivision of gardens, and reduce greenness over time.
- 1.35 The area still has a small but significant group of **traditional village uses** that contribute to its character. St Michael's Church and the village hall are at the heart of this. The doctor's surgery, the two pubs (Bay Horse pub, George & Dragon pub) and the grocery shop are also key. A fish and chip shop and a hair salon enhance character. Some buildings previously in similar uses are now housing, eg. the former Methodist chapel, No.36 West Green (once a shop), and No.27 Millbank (the former Red Lion pub).
- 1.36 The communal **village green**, including the **church garth**, is the anchor open space use for the area. It continues to provide a focal point for village life, for example being used for major annual Guy Fawkes Night bonfire events, a large Christmas tree, other festivals, and for the siting of local commemorative benches.
- 1.37 **Agricultural use of fields** inside the boundary significantly helps illustrate the village's rural past and landscape setting. Reducing agricultural use around the village would harm the evidence which can be used to illustrate its place in history and in the landscape. **Recreational use of fields** to the north provides a similar role.

Buildings and details

- **Distinctive historic plot layout and density survives greatly; backland development has altered this, making survivals rarer.**
 - **Modest architectural characteristics create remarkable unity and appealing informal harmony, despite some variety in detail.**
 - **Historic outbuildings and boundary walls add crucial integrity to building groups.**
 - **Gardens and yards add intense, essential greenness as well as revealing history.**
 - **Whilst mostly high quality, later backland development has little special interest.**
- 1.38 The historical basis for Heighington's buildings is essentially medieval in layout and largely

18th and 19th century in form and detail. There is a high concentration of significant historic buildings here, demonstrated by the number of listings: 42 at Grade II (including outbuildings and boundary walls as well as houses and other buildings), 1 at Grade II* (Heighington Hall) and 1 at Grade I (St Michael's Church). See Fig 6.

Layout, plots, density and backland development

- 1.39 **Around the green**, buildings are sited at the front of their plots leaving small gardens to the front and very long rear yards, originally for cultivation and cottage industry. This layout is very distinctive of the village's medieval origins, it reinforces the green as the hub of village life, and it created very low density with lots of yard and garden land. It is particularly pure around West Green with the west and south sides having some of the longest plots. On the north side, plots were slightly shorter (a field sat between the plots and Hall Lane), and had smaller or non-existent front gardens. Some parts were much tighter and denser, eg. at The Courtine and Buck Square, whilst plots directly north of the church have almost no land, opening straight on to the road and the churchyard. East Green is not as pure as West Green but it has much larger, lower density, higher status plots (eg. The Hall, The Old Hall, Eldon House) where principal houses are also sited to the front with sometimes extensive outbuildings to the rear. See fig 4.
- 1.40 This layout remains largely intact - see Fig 4. Yet the late 19th and especially the 20th centuries saw **backland development** in much of the area, altering layout and increasing density. To the south, cottages grew in the backs of housing plots facing South Lane and Darlington Road from the 1890s, expanding from the 1930s and still ongoing in the 1990s. Back yard additions on Millbank followed from the 1960s, the latest there in 2000. In the east of the area, small 19th century additions appeared in a few plots, and larger 20th century additions were added to some plots including The Hall's. In addition to back yard development, many of the large orchards and productive fields inside the village walls also took new development: between 1910 and the 1990s substantial new groups of housing were added to previously unbuilt fields and orchards on the north side (field numbers from the c.1838 tithe map shown in Fig 1: 225, 268, 271), the east side (296), and the south side (310, 311, 312, 321).



Continuous rows of modest houses, one up against the other, tumble down slopes or nestle in corners, each slightly but not greatly different from the next. A scene of remarkable coherence



Some grander houses have taller proportions



Heighington is full of the modest, familiar shapes of rural cottages and farmhouses



Massing is traditionally simple: flat fronts and backs with low single-storey offshots perpendicular to the house

- 1.41 Such backland development has altered the area's distinctive historic plot layout by establishing suburban detached cul-de-sac layouts, increasing density, removing yard and garden fabric, and introducing architecture alien to the village core. So, surviving historic plots without late 20th century backland additions make a very positive contribution to special historic interest. See fig 4.
- 1.42 Having a few **plots on the green itself** is not uncommon in medieval green villages. There are four clusters: two south of the church, the village hall group, and one to the east including a pub. Each group has carved out small yards and gardens that are surprisingly well-screened despite the 'island' nature of each cluster. Further encroachment on the green would cause harm to its communal value and the village's spatial pattern.

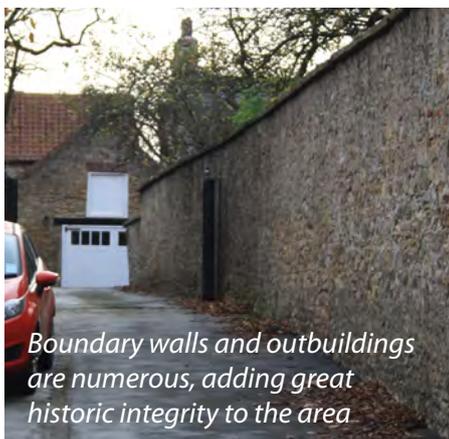
Form, height, scale and massing

- 1.43 Heighington's buildings have evolved over many centuries, plot by plot, but several shared characteristics have left remarkable unity. Most built fabric is 18th and 19th century; fabric from the 17th century and earlier also survives, giving great potential for standing archaeology.
- 1.44 Heighington is full of the modest, familiar shapes of rural cottages and farmhouses, plus the status of a few grander country mansions.
- **Form** is almost entirely rectangular, two storey, and with dual-pitch roofs studded with chimneys (some very large). Roof pitch varies; steeper pitches can suggest great age. Gables are common, hips are rare. Some offshots are mono-pitched. The Hall has a parapet roof.
 - Actual storey and ridge **heights** vary within a small tolerance, and are generally modest. The variety tells the story of incremental growth.
 - **Scale** is primarily cottage-like, squat and with low eaves directly above first floor windows.

The grander houses have taller proportions.

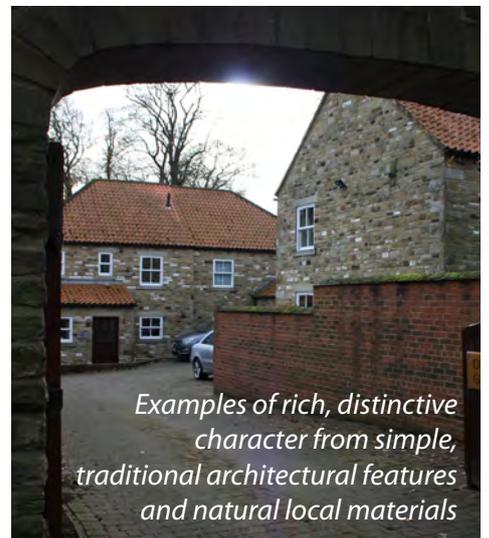
- **Massing** is traditionally simple: flat fronts, and backs with low (often single storey) multi-part offshots perpendicular to the house. The grander houses are the same (The Old Hall has an unusually shaped front elevation). Some former working building groups have more structured massing (eg. Page House, and the former farm behind No.5 East Green). Later bay windows add variety to some houses. Dormer windows and porches are not typical.

- 1.45 Coupled with sloping topography and strongly linear plot layouts, the scene around the green has a remarkable coherence and visual appeal. Continuous rows of modest houses, one up against the other, tumble down slopes or nestle in corners, each slightly but not greatly different from the next. Varied eaves and ridge heights combine to create appealing informal harmony.
- 1.46 **Outbuildings** such as dovecots, gazebos, carriage houses, stables, kennels, garages and other outhouses are a numerous and distinctive feature of the area, adding integrity to building groups, describing past domestic life and often illustrating a site's status. Vacant and decaying outbuildings (eg. the carriage house west of No.39 Church View shown below) are still part of the area's special interest and should be repaired and re-used. The best modern garages are in painted timber; the limestone garages on Highside Road are also positive features.
- 1.47 Post-WWII **backland development** erodes the area's built simplicity, introducing detached layouts, bungalow forms and elaborate massing typical of late 20th century suburbs (eg. Hall Lane, Manor Court, The Orchard). A small number of designs are high quality (eg. the Arts & Crafts vicarage) but, en masse, backland housing has gone against the area's prevailing historic architectural character. Little of it has special interest; some of the most intrusive is on



Boundary walls and outbuildings are numerous, adding great historic integrity to the area





Examples of rich, distinctive character from simple, traditional architectural features and natural local materials

Vicarage Court and South Lane. Beech Crescent's housing is equally indifferent to the core area with no special architectural interest.

1.48 Set apart, **Trafalgar House** is much like the earlier grand houses in the village but in its own grounds 'outside' the village. It is both notable and discreet. Extensive ornamental and cottage grounds still mark its presence on the south, east and north sides where it is thick with trees. Heavy boundary walls and imposing gateways define Station Road, and cobbled yards complete the intact scene. Although sub-divided and its former grounds to the west redeveloped, it remains a greatly intact anchor east of the village.

1.49 **St Michael's Church**, the **village hall** (former grammar school) and the **former Methodist chapel** confidently take on striking architecture suited to their institutional uses. As a group they lend great historic character expected of an important local village, especially the church which reveals its ancient fabric. The Methodist chapel is neatly converted to a new use, but the church and village hall continue to add thriving local life. The village hall's extension and WC block are modest and fitting. What appears to be a **former motor garage** on Darlington Road is a distinctive survival with its veranda design.

Architectural features and materials

1.50 Materials used are natural and local, and architectural features are simple and restrained. They add charm to the scene and help provide harmony with the rural countryside around it.

1.51 Three materials are used for **masonry**:

- **Magnesian limestone** is the most common, mostly rubble, sometimes coursed squared blocks. Its light, variegated yellow-grey tones flecked with white give a rich mottled appearance which is key to distinctive local character. The patina of age adds to its historic natural appearance. A recent trend to expose limestone masonry by removing render and re-pointing in lime, enhances buildings. Cement pointing is harmful to character and fabric. Local sandstone is also used in the village but is less common.
- **Lime render** over limestone is typical of the area, often painted a neutral, light or earthy tone. More obvious colours can make a building stand out, harming a building group. Lime render allows stone to breathe and leaves the natural unevenness of rubble



Above: magnesian limestone neatly re-pointed in lime
Below: smeared and strap pointing in cement is harmful



visible beneath. Cement render and pebble-dash can harm older buildings. Their hard-looking finish is unsuited to this rural village.

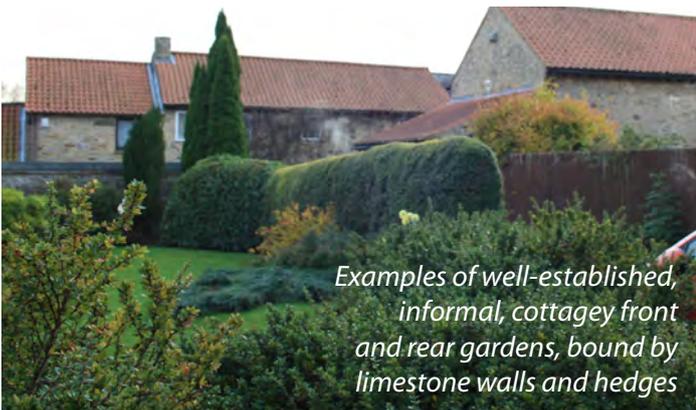
- **Red brick** is used in the 20th century buildings, a more uniform, urban material which tends to look out of place in this rural village. In some older buildings, small handmade red bricks have been used for older repairs to stonework.

1.52 Two types of **roof covering** are seen:

- Traditional **clay pantiles** are most common. Handmade tiles have the most authentic and warm appearance; modern machine-made and concrete tiles have a visual deadness in comparison. Modern tile detailing can add unnecessary visual fiddliness.
- Natural **Welsh slate** is also used, its variegated grey-purple tones adding distinctive depth. Man-made and imported slate is less visually suited, having a plainer, smoother, shinier look. On pantile roofs, Welsh or stone slates are traditionally used for the bottom few courses to aid water run-off into gutters.
- Modest rooftop features such as vents or pigeon lofts are seen on some outbuildings.

1.53 Architectural features are plain and traditional:

- **Window openings** are vertical or square, most with plain stone lintels and cills. The grander houses often have full stone window surrounds. Windows are set back in a reveal. They are mostly traditional timber vertical sliding sashes with glazing bars. Large quantities of 18th and 19th century thin profile joinery and historic glass survive (plus many accurate replicas), adding immense authentic architectural character. Smaller



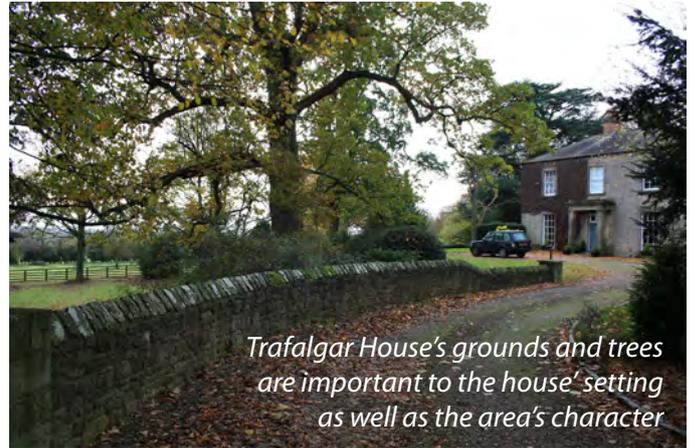
Examples of well-established, informal, cottagery front and rear gardens, bound by limestone walls and hedges



side-sliding 'Yorkshire' sash windows are also seen on rears. Later timber casements are often sub-divided in an artificial cottage style. Modern PVCu windows are common and almost always out of place because of their stark white or brown colour, thick profile members, clumsy detailing and unbalanced opening arrangements. Wide bow windows in PVCu are a mock-cottage feature which are unlikely to have any historic precedent here.

- **Door openings** are usually plain. Some have plain timber surrounds or modest hoods; the grander houses often have larger Classical door cases in timber or stone. Timber doors are panelled and often part-glazed. As with windows, PVCu doors are clumsy, inauthentic and not suited to this vernacular village. Painted timber plank doors are used for rears and outbuildings; traditional openings in outbuildings add character. Metal roller and PVCu garage doors are very intrusive.
- **Rooflights** are rare. Where used (mostly on rear slopes) metal 'conservation' style rooflights are the neatest solution for the area.
- **Eaves and verges** are plain with only a small overhang. Fascia boards and bargeboards are not used. Grander houses have watertabling.
- **Chimneys** are usually brick and modest in detail. Clay chimney pots are common.
- **Rainwater goods** are traditionally metal; modern plastic replacements are common, lowering the quality of the scene. Gutters are held on bracket spikes.
- **Lead** is common in high level detailing.

- 1.54 Although plain, the grocery store's **shopfront** is a modern interpretation with overly chunky members. Large modern fascia signage, bright window vinyls and plastic clutter create an unsympathetic look. The PVCu hair salon shopfront, and franchise signs at the fish and chip shop, are intrusive. **Satellite dishes** are seen in the area and can be visually intrusive.
- 1.55 Features and materials in **backland housing** generally do not follow historic precedent, eg. using modern brick, wide window openings, fascia boards and few chimneys. Some do use stone well on main elevations, eg. on Hall Lane, but the overall impact of the area's modern architecture is against the grain.
- 1.56 The powerful window openings, chimneys and other details of the **village hall** give it great status as a historic communal building. The **church's** phased masonry reveals its great age. Its tower features and clock are a focal point.



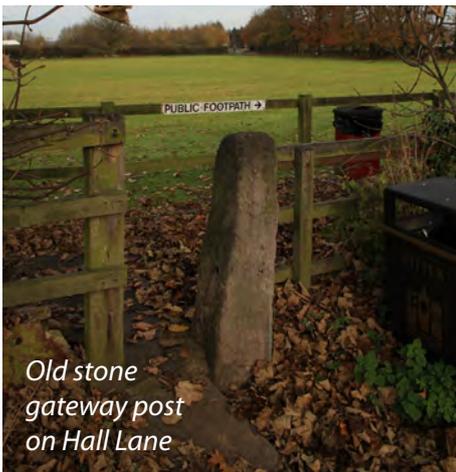
Trafalgar House's grounds and trees are important to the house's setting as well as the area's character

Gardens and yards

- 1.57 Medieval layout gives a **large amount of land** over to gardens and yards. Once used for cultivation and work, today they are mostly ornamental and add rich greenness to the area.
- 1.58 **Front gardens** are very visible on the green, making a strong contribution to charming village appearance. Most are rich, informal and 'cottagey' adding significant residential pride to the scene. **Back gardens** tend to be more secluded but are also full with lawns, hedges, ornamental planting, climbers, topiary and small trees. Yards also tend to be well-planted. Trafalgar House's grounds are much larger and suited to the scale of the house. The scale of trees and the size of the main east garden area are very important to the house's setting.
- 1.59 Established gardens add strong 3-dimensional greenness and reinforce the area's relaxed, secure domestic character. They provide an ideal setting for the historic housing. The layout of larger gardens can be historically important. Loss of some rear gardens to backland development has harmed these characteristics over time. Nonetheless, gardens help link backland housing back to the area's character. In gardens with drives, gravel better suits rural character than tarmac or blocks. Un-planted gardens detract from the area; total loss of a few West Green front gardens to hard-standing greatly harms the area's character. Conversely, some gardens facing East Green have no walls or hedges but remain green, positively blurring the garden with the village green. Exposed rear yards on to Church View would be enhanced by planting. The Bay Horse pub's large exposed rear plot would be enhanced by trees.
- 1.60 Tall local stone **boundary walls** add crucial integrity to the area's character, defining the medieval plot patterns and the village's early



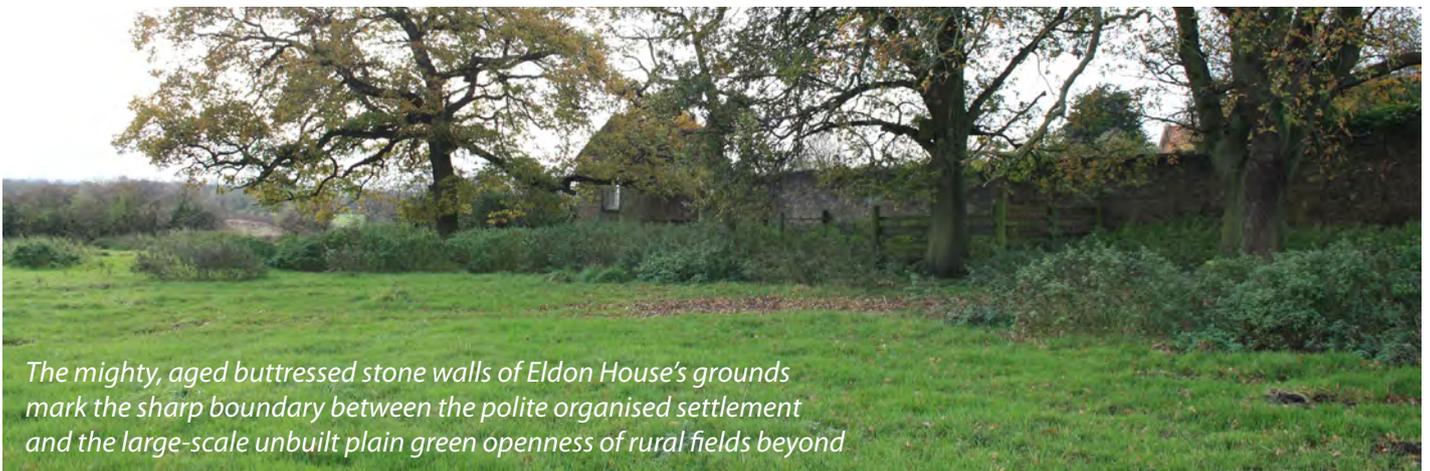
The enormous village green is the neat, simple, graceful heart around which all the area's character revolves. Details (below) include timber posts and the late Georgian pant



Old stone gateway post on Hall Lane



The weight of established tree cover at the church is key to the appearance of the village green, and of the conservation area in its landscape setting



The mighty, aged buttressed stone walls of Eldon House's grounds mark the sharp boundary between the polite organised settlement and the large-scale unbuilt plain green openness of rural fields beyond

enclosed layout. Some have been lost (eg. most but not all of South View), but many do survive (eg. Hall Lane, Millbank, and most of East Green). Rarity increases their significance. Some have interesting stone gateways. Walls have been incorporated into later developments (eg. The Orchard). Boundary wall fabric can archaeologically reveal an understanding of a plot's evolution. Timber five-bar gates add suitable rural character; metal drive gates are too suburban. Well-kept **hedges** are seen in a many places across the area to great effect, particularly Hall Lane and Manor Court.

Outbuildings are discussed at 1.51 above.

- 1.61 As well as trees on the green, in church garth and in hedgerows, **trees** in gardens also make a strong contribution to the area's character. They are numerous, well-established and add grace, shape and maturity to the rural village scene. They are important to the setting of buildings.

Open spaces and details

- **Simplicity and restraint in design, materials and detailing are key to spaces and roads.**
- **Open fields 'outside' the village contrast with the intensity of development 'inside'.**
- **Trees and grass dominate, adding grace and well-established greenness.**
- **Modernisation and suburbanisation can remove spaces' rural village character.**

- 1.62 The main open spaces are the **village green**, and **agricultural and recreational fields**. **Roads and paths** are also important spaces. (See previous page for **gardens and yards**.)

Village green

- 1.63 The **village green** is a microcosm of the area's history. Its form and size define the settlement's early planning and status, and it has evolved as Heighington has changed from hard working rural centre to conserved dormitory village. It is the neat, simple, graceful heart around which all the area's character and appearance revolves.
- 1.64 The powerful, soft, simplicity of sloping grass defines the green's contribution, with minimal detailing and features. A small number of large trees are significant, especially in West Green where they visually dominate buildings, adding structure and rich established greenness.
- 1.65 The stout sandstone pant and timber shelter illustrate the green's high standing and pride of place, when built and today. Other positive features include the timber 'village cross' sign,

timber village notice board and a pillar box. Steps, railings and street furniture are suitably modest and plain. Small timber bollards and large old stones are neat solutions to vehicle control where needed. Clutter is minimal but commemorative benches are numerous. The rockery garden at the village hall uses natural materials but could have a greener appearance.

- 1.66 **Roads and paths** across and around the green make a good contribution through the restraint in their design, using grey tarmac, minimal lines and very little clutter. Stone kerbs are important to historic character. Some stretches are unmetalled which enhances modest village simplicity; cobbled areas are particularly important (eg. The Old Hall or Trafalgar House). In contrast, modern man-made block drives harm appearance. Parked cars can intrude in some parts (eg. Church View); strong prevention of parking on the green is an important policy.
- 1.67 Simple **grassed verges** are a common feature across the conservation area, adding softness and rural character to the scene, eg. on Hall Lane, Highside Road, South Lane and Millbank.

Church garth

- 1.68 St Michael's **church garth** is a rich, time-deep open space, adding strong historic character. As with the green, simple mown grass dominates this anchor space, here acting as a canvas for scores of grave monuments recording parish life and death. A great wealth of ornamental trees adds thick greenness to the heart of the area, so tall and heavy that they help identify the village in long views from the surrounding countryside. Ever-present in views across the green are the garth's long limestone boundary walls. Metal railings, gates and overthrow (the frame over the gate designed for a lantern) illustrate quality. The granite war memorial on the south side is modestly-sited evidence of community pride. The rare hearse house on the north side adds unusual distinctiveness. Parking east of the garth is neat and plain but can intrude in views of the church tower.

Agricultural and recreational fields

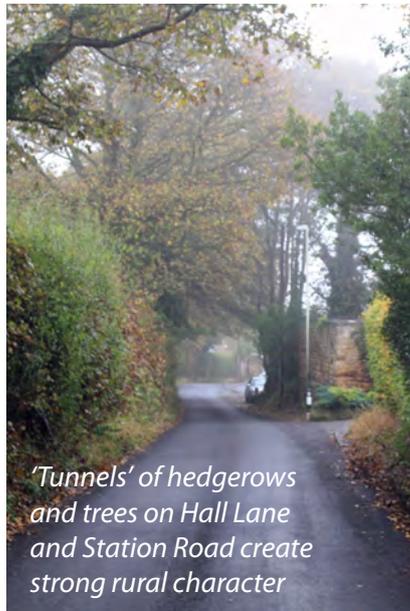
- 1.69 The significance of the **agricultural and recreational fields** within the conservation area is largely spatial (rather than visual) as they are open and unbuilt (see *Spatial characteristics*, above). The significance of these fields stretches beyond the area's existing boundary (see *Boundary and setting*, above, and *Boundary review*, below).

1.70 **Agricultural fields** south and east of the village, inside the conservation area, provide a strong foil to the relative intensity of village development. Green, open pasture and arable fields provide crucial rural setting to the settlement, enhanced by the south-sloping topography. Boundary trees and thick hedgerows are very important contributors.

1.71 Fields inside the **south-east quadrant of the conservation area** are an excellent illustration of the stark historical difference between 'inside' and 'outside' the old village. The mighty, aged buttressed stone walls of Eldon House's grounds mark the boundary between polite organised settlement and working rural fields beyond. The intact survival of this sharp contrast is very important to understanding Heighington's historical development pattern, and this part is one of its best representations in the conservation area. Similar boundary wall appearance also survives just to the north, south of Manor Court and Trafalgar House. The use of the eastern-most field here as a market garden continues a tradition of cultivation in Heighington's setting, yet modern paraphernalia (eg. poly-tunnels) can be visually intrude. This is partly mitigated by screening, but it is no longer a low-intensity green field like the others around it.

1.72 The plain green openness of fields inside the **north-east quadrant of the conservation area** also contributes spatially, but less so visually due to flatter topography and thicker screening of the fields by tree belts and hedgerows. These fields are important to the setting of the old settlement within the conservation area.

1.73 North of Hall Lane, **recreational fields** stretching from the primary school to Beech Crescent, including former sports fields at Cumby buildings, are significant for their large-scale unbuilt plain green openness. This highlights the contrast between the built-up land 'inside' the historic village and open land 'outside' it. The play equipment and modest sports pavilion do not detract from this, but the spaces do have a more municipal feel than the agricultural fields. The best boundaries here are hedges and timber post-and-rail fences. Large old stones at some gateways are important



historic features. Thick belts of trees on Redworth Road and Beech Crescent are suitably dominant features on arrival from the north.

Roads and paths

- 1.74 Most **roads and paths** in Heighington are characterful spaces. Positive roads and paths are plentiful, all defined by simple grey tarmac, many with the added softness of grass verges:
- Roads around and across the **village green**, as discussed from 1.30-1.32 above.
 - From the south, **Darlington Road / Coatsay Moor Lane** is a very strong contributor to significance, its symmetrical hedgerows rising up towards village tree cover framing the church tower on the horizon. Grass verges add rural character. The concrete flagstone pavements look too urban. From the north, Darlington Road is widened and modernised but wide grass verges add character.
 - Winding **Hall Lane** is the richest part of the back lane ring, illustrating very well its place outside the historic settlement. No paths or markings, and a heavy 'tunnel' of trees (created by the important hedgerow on the north side and trees in gardens on the south side) give it a strongly rural appearance.
 - The corresponding **South View** feels less like the back lane outside the village, but it retains a narrow feel, including fragments of grass verge. At the Millbank junction, the historic finger post in black-and-white highway livery is an important survivor.
 - Being a dead-end, **Station Road** has the positive character of a forgotten rural lane, its 'tunnel' of trees created by important hedgerows to the north and trees in Trafalgar

- House grounds to the south.
 - The historically divided **Highside Road** is mostly positive with grass verges and trees, yet the prefabricated garages, in poor condition, are in need of enhancement.
 - **The Courtine** is a richly historic path evoking the tightness of historic access into the village and lined with tight limestone walls.
 - **Manor Court's** road and paths (including part of the original back lane) use hedges and stone walls to take on good village character.
- 1.75 Roads which do not make a positive contribution have been overly modernised:
- **Beech Crescent** is modernised; only established trees give it historic character.
 - Much of **Millbank** is straightened and modernised with little historic character despite grass verges. However, north of Water Lane it retains a positive narrow village look.
 - As it enters the village, **Redworth Road** is modernised with necessary crossing clutter.

Management Issues

- **Managing the conservation area is important to protecting its significance.**
 - **Boundary review concludes that modest enlargement should be pursued.**
 - **When managing the area, there are a series of generic and specific issues to consider.**
 - **Enhancement opportunities can be pursued when the opportunity arises.**
- 1.76 This appraisal has identified opportunities and threats which, if carefully managed, will help conserve the area's special interest and bring enhancement of character and appearance.

Boundary review

- 1.77 Local authorities must review their conservation areas from time to time (Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s69). Boundaries should be reviewed as part of this, and Historic England sets out guidance on how this can be done (*Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal & Management, Historic England Advice Note 1, 2016, especially paras 7, 11-13, 17, 18*). It suggests considering places where conservation area controls would be of benefit, and encourages consideration of:
- varied areas with numbers of designated heritage assets,
 - areas with particular architecture or materials,
 - areas linked to a theme of local interest such as an industry or a notable person,
 - areas with historical layouts visible in the

- modern street pattern or built development,
 - areas with special public realm, designed landscapes or open spaces.
- 1.78 It also encourages consideration of:
- development from more recent times,
 - development patterns as well as buildings,
 - areas with archaeological potential,
 - the setting of settlements.
- 1.79 This appraisal confirms that Heighington is a worthy designation, yet the boundary has not been reviewed since 1999. In reviewing it now, the Historic England guidance says (paras 17-18) to consider whether setting is sufficiently protected (eg. has the boundary been drawn too tight in the past), or whether there are parts which have been so eroded over time that there is no longer enough special interest to warrant designation. It goes on to give guidance on how the boundary should be drawn (para 66), including ensuring it runs around rather than through a space or plot.
- 1.80 The boundary of Heighington Conservation Area has been reviewed as part of this appraisal. Changes are recommended to take in more of the settlement's open setting to the south. This is coupled with an analysis in this document of how those spaces contribute to the area's significance, because some contribute more than others (see pages 6-9 and Figs 3 and 4). Thus, designation can be used to guide future development with informed analysis.
- 1.81 The recommended revisions are shown in Fig 5 and are identified below. First, the additions:
- **Add fields to the south and east of Coatsay Moor Lane.** Fields on the east side of Coatsay Moor Lane significantly help define the landscape presence of the settlement in its setting. They best illustrate the crisp boundary between the intensity of development 'inside' the historic village and its open, agricultural setting, which is a fundamental part of the area's special interest. Some of these fields are already included but more extensive recognition would reinforce this significance, particularly as it has been eroded elsewhere. Views to and from the village across this land are very distinctive. The boundary should extend to the first clear ridge south of the village, just past Page Farm, where an outbuilding, trees and a hedgerow form a crisp horizon in views south from Darlington Road, and the boundary should then follow natural features back to the bypass in the east.
 - **Add verge, hedgerow and trees north**

of Millbank in the north-west corner of the area. The thick green boundary south of the primary school, on the north side of Millbank from Redworth Road to Hopelands, is very strong and should be included. It is a continuation of the great significance of Hall Lane, which is defined by heavy rural greenness on both sides of the road. So both sides of Millbank should be protected as part of the same back lane loop around the village. Several visually powerful trees near the junction of Millbank and Hopelands make a very strong contribution.

- **Add Nos.1-9 (odd) Snackgate Lane, and green verges at the junction of Snackgate Lane, Millbank and Walworth Road.** The junction of these roads is as important to the area's development pattern as the junctions at Station Road/Beech Crescent, and Redworth Road/Hall Lane, which are already included. The verges here are as strong as at Darlington Road and also contain the rare historic finger-post sign. Houses to the south do not have enough special interest but Nos.1-9 Snackgate Lane are a short terrace of Edwardian cottages in local stone, some of the earliest housing to be built outside the old village. They are well-detailed, simple period architecture with good gardens behind matching retaining walls.

1.82 As well as the additions, a minor deletion from the boundary should be made:

- **Remove the two late 20th century houses south of Page House, Darlington Road.** The boundary set in 1972 followed a large curving plot south of Page House. This was later developed with two detached houses making the plot rectilinear. The boundary now cuts the plot awkwardly in half. The houses have no special interest, so removing them from the area removes a management anomaly. The houses would still impact on the setting of the area on approach from the south.

1.83 These boundary changes should be pursued in the short term. It is important to note that, as set out in this document, the revised boundary would still continue to have a setting which would variously contribute to the conservation area's special interest (see Fig 3).

Other management issues

1.84 In exercising its planning powers, the Borough Council has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of its conservation areas (Planning (Listed Buildings &

Conservation Areas) Act 1990, s72).

- 1.85 The following generic issues should be considered when carrying out this duty:
- Promote the **special regulations** applying to conservation areas; these include restrictions on permitted development rights, the need for consent to demolish buildings over 115 cubic metres in size, and the need to give prior notice of undertaking works to trees.
 - Encourage **pre-application discussions** with the Council to give applicants guidance and advice on proposals that may affect the area.
 - Require applicants to show in a **heritage statement** how proposals respond to the area's special interest set out in this appraisal.
 - Apply **design guidance** in a way which understands and responds to the specific characteristics of this conservation area.
 - Encourage flexibility over **other measures** (eg. Building Regulations, parking standards and sustainability measures) where this would better protect character and appearance.
 - From time to time, consider the impact of **permitted development rights** on special interest, and consider whether control using an Article 4 Direction should be pursued.
 - Consider when **enforcement** is needed or when other **statutory powers** (including s215 notices) could be used to tackle heritage which is at risk from its condition or vacancy, or where local amenity is adversely affected.
 - Encourage a sensitive, good practice approach to the **public realm** in addressing highways, public realm and statutory undertaker activity affecting the area.
 - Encourage **community engagement** in managing the area, and in understanding and promoting its special interest.

- 1.86 Specific issues to be considered for this conservation area include:
- Protect special interest gained from **location, topography** and **limestone geology**.
 - Respond to the area's still-evident **medieval** history and the great survival of a wealth of **17th, 18th and 19th century** buildings.
 - Recognise that the **setting** of the old village inside the conservation area is very significant, and that the landscape setting of the area itself variously contributes to its significance.
 - Recognise the significance of fields is **spatial** as well as visual; unbuilt, plain green openness contrasts positively with the built-up village.
 - Protect significant **views** of, from and through the area, including long views south to the North York Moors, and views of the area from

Coatsay Moor Lane.

- Protect the spatial significance of the **green**, linear development **plots**, and historic **routes**.
- Protect the contribution made by **single family dwellings** and traditional village uses.
- Protect **plot layouts** (from para 1.39), and **form, height, scale** and **massing** (para 1.43).
- Protect the use of **natural local** materials and **simple, restrained** features (from para 1.50).
- Recognise that the area is **rural**, not suburban or urban; keep design plain and robust, and avoid mock-cottage forms or detailing which are out of character with the old village.
- Recognise that most **post-WWII backland houses** have little significance, even if the land and built pattern they have been added to, and their older boundary walls, do have.
- Protect the strong contribution made by **front and rear gardens and yards**, including outbuildings, boundary walls and hedges.
- Promote the care and protection of the public realm including the **green, church garth, grass verges** and the many **roads and paths** which contribute to special interest.
- Protect the great significance of established **trees**, which add grace, shape and maturity.
- Recognise the need to sustain the generally very good **condition** of the area, with well-kept buildings and public realm in good order.
- However, promote repair and re-use where condition or disuse cause concern, especially in **vacant or derelict outbuildings** which, as a building type, do contribute to the area.
- Recognise the benefits to the conservation area of strong **civic pride** and village spirit, evident in the communal village green and in the care of privately owned historic buildings.



Grocery store on Church View



Historic outbuilding north of Church View



Offshots and yards on Church View



Lost front garden on West Green

Enhancement opportunities

1.87 Opportunities to enhance the conservation area include the following (some of which are illustrated, right). These could be pursued where the opportunity arises. Some should be pursued by owners or the community rather than the Borough Council:

- Reinstating traditional timber **shopfronts** at Church View's grocery store and hair salon.
- Repairing and re-using disused **outbuildings** including that west of No.39 Church View.
- Repairing offshots and greening rear yards on the south side of **Church View**.
- Removing **cement** pointing and render from limestone masonry and boundary walls across the area, and re-pointing or re-rendering in suitable lime-based materials (see page 15).

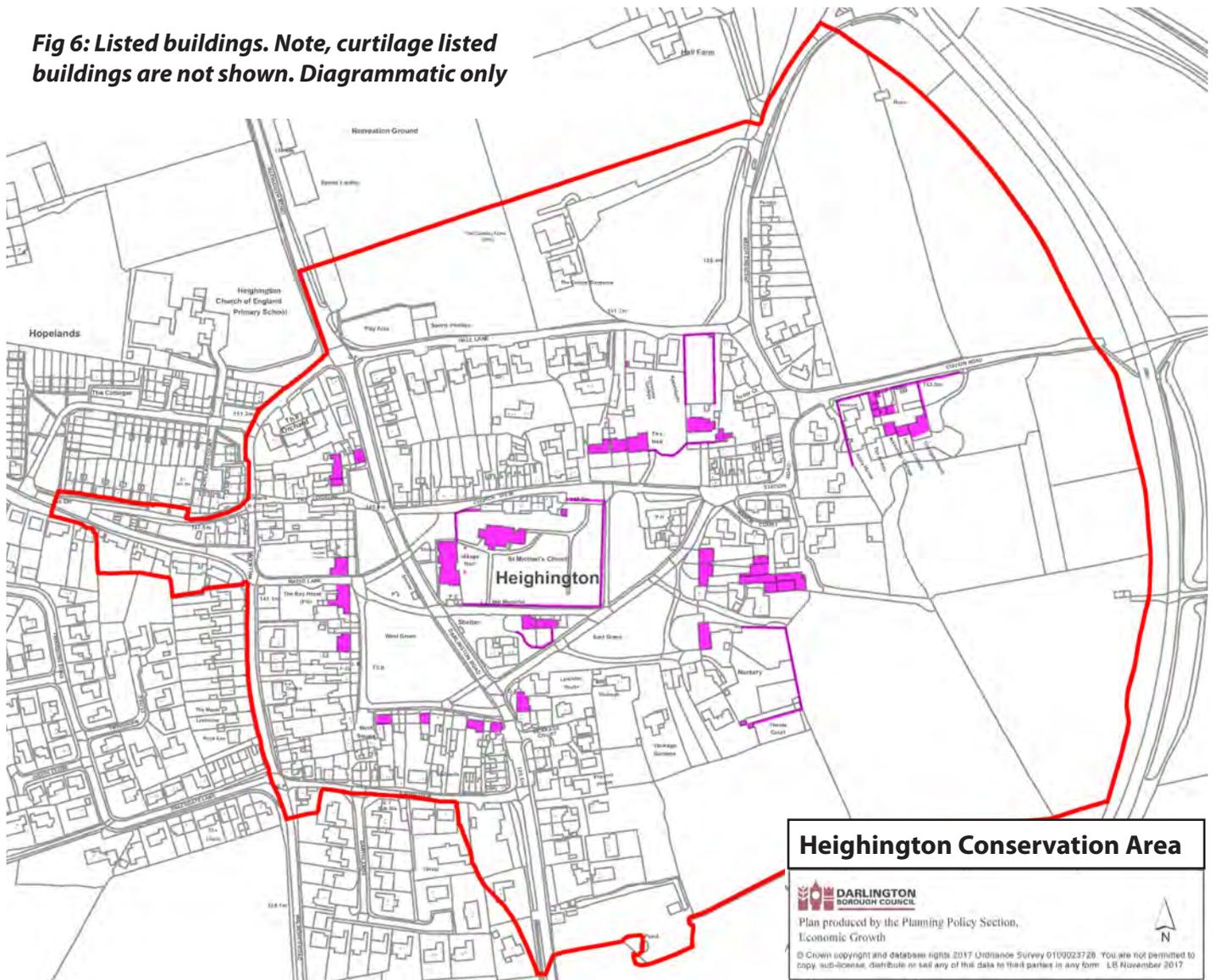


Pre-fab garages on Highside Road



Lack of verges on Darlington Road

Fig 6: Listed buildings. Note, curtilage listed buildings are not shown. Diagrammatic only



- Replacing strident render **colours** with lighter, more muted, earthy tones.
- Reinstating planting and boundaries to **front gardens** previously lost to hard-standing.
- Enhancing **Water Lane**, eg. with planting or trees in The Bay Horse pub's rear plot.
- Enhancing the prefabricated garages and associated land on **Highside Road**.
- Introducing **grass verges** on both sides of Darlington Road near Vicarage Court.
- Reinforcing **hedges and trees** on Hall Lane, Station Road and the top end of Millbank.

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- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Pryce_Cumby
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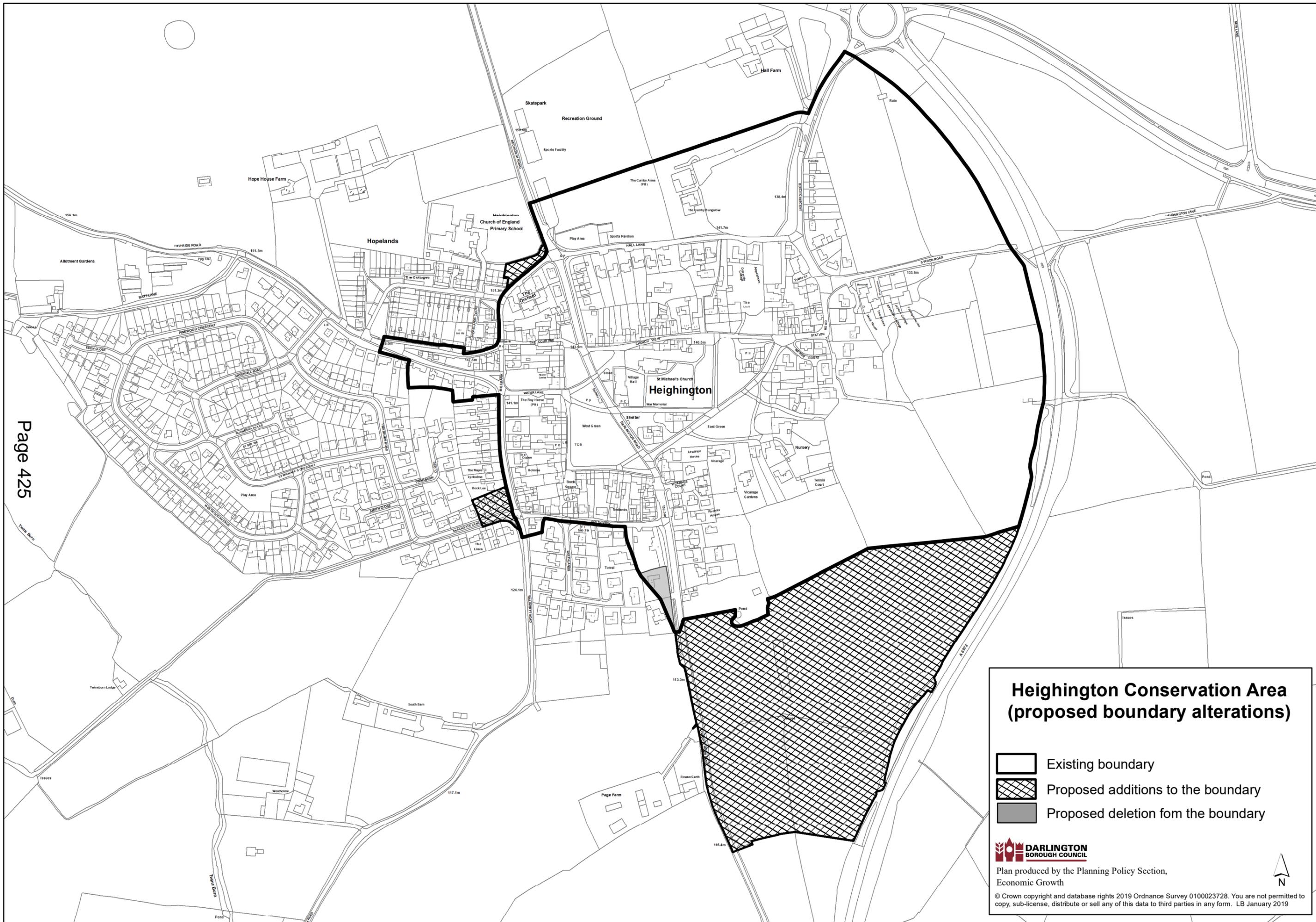
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Heighington East Green, January 2018

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Heighington Conservation Area (proposed boundary alterations)

- Existing boundary
- Proposed additions to the boundary
- Proposed deletion from the boundary

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Economic Growth

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