

Council Agenda



**6.00 pm Thursday, 25 March 2021
via Microsoft Teams**

**In accordance with Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, this meeting will be held on a virtual basis. Members of the Public can view a live stream of the meeting at:
<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/livemeetings>**

Members of the Public may submit questions to be asked on their behalf of the relevant Portfolio Holder. Questions should be submitted to Paul Dalton (paul.dalton@darlington.gov.uk) by 6.00 pm on Wednesday, 24 March 2021.

1. Introductions / Attendance at Meeting.
2. Minutes - To approve the Minutes of the Meetings of this Council held on 28 January 2021 and 18 February 2021 (Pages 5 - 18)
3. Declarations of Interest.
4. Sealing.
5. Announcements.
6. Questions - To answer questions (where appropriate notice has been given from):-
 - (a) The Public;
 - (b) Members to Cabinet/Chairs;
7. Council Reports.
 - (a) Pay Policy Statement 2021/2022 – Report of the Managing Director (Pages 19 - 30)
8. Cabinet Reports.

- (a) Overview Report of the Leader of the Council; (Pages 31 - 34)
 - (b) Overview Report of the Stronger Communities Portfolio; (Pages 35 - 42)
 - (c) Overview Report of the Adults Portfolio; (Pages 43 - 46)
 - (d) Overview Report of the Children and Young People Portfolio; (Pages 47 - 50)
 - (e) Overview Report of the Economy Portfolio; (Pages 51 - 56)
 - (f) Overview Report of the Health and Housing Portfolio; (Pages 57 - 62)
 - (g) Overview Report of the Local Services Portfolio; and (Pages 63 - 66)
 - (h) Overview Report of the Resources Portfolio. (Pages 67 - 70)
9. Scrutiny Reports - To consider Scrutiny Overview Reports:-
- (a) Adults Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 71 - 72)
 - (b) Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 73 - 76)
 - (c) Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 77 - 80)
 - (d) Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee; and (Pages 81 - 84)
 - (e) Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee. (Pages 85 - 86)

10. Notice of Motion

- (a) To consider a Motion submitted by Councillor Crumbie, and seconded by Councillor Newall –

Council believes:

1. The Covid Pandemic has accelerated the devastating issue of food insecurity.
2. Headline findings from a new report released by the Food Foundation states that food insecurity remains at crisis levels, with devastating impact on the most vulnerable.
3. Food insecurity remains higher than pre- covid levels, affecting an estimated 4.7 million adults (9% of households) over the last six months, compared to pre covid levels of 7.6%. 55% of those experiencing food insecurity an estimated 2.5 million) said it was because they did not have enough money for food.
4. Groups found to be at higher risk were People with disabilities, BAME households, households with children and food sector workers.

5. Although we recognize and welcome the holiday activity funds this is only a temporary measure and food banks and The Bread and Butter Thing are only masking the serious issue of food insecurity.
6. The UK Government must act now to address this for the long term. The UK Government needs to make food security a priority in the recovery phase. We must move away from short term solutions and prioritise policies that will address the underlying causes of this issue.

Council resolves to:

1. Ask the UK Government to conduct an urgent review of the current eligibility threshold for Free School Meals to ensure no disadvantaged child is excluded.
2. Request to the UK Government that a designated authority be appointed to be responsible for monitoring and tackling food insecurity long term.

(b) To consider a Motion submitted by Councillor Ali, and seconded by Councillor Wallis –

Council believes:

1. Fireworks are a traditional way of celebrating key dates such as Guy Fawkes Night, New Year's Eve, Chinese New Year and Diwali.
2. Public fireworks displays at such occasions can foster a great community spirit.
3. However, it is well known that fireworks can cause serious trauma to some people with autism, war veterans suffering PTSD, and pets/other animals.
4. Fireworks are often set off throughout the year, often just for the purpose of causing a nuisance, and are even thrown at emergency service personnel on occasion.
5. Hi tech alternatives to fireworks, e.g. drone displays or lasers, can be an even more spectacular way to mark special events.
6. That the creation of a new Office for Product Safety and Standards, which will support local authorities in reviewing and enforcing the current guidance materials on the safe and responsible use of fireworks, is a positive step.

Council resolves to:

1. To ask Cabinet to consider requiring all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable

people;

2. To ask Cabinet to consider actively promoting a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on vulnerable people and animal welfare – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks;
 3. To write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays as per RSPCA guidance;
 4. To back the RSPCA campaign to encourage suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display;
 5. To promote alternatives to fireworks.
11. Membership Changes - To consider any membership changes to Committees, Subsidiary Bodies and Other Bodies.



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Wednesday, 17 March 2021

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Baldwin, Bartch, Bell, Boddy, Dr. Chou, Clarke, Cossins, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, Holroyd, Howell, C L B Hughes, L Hughes, Johnson, B Jones, Mrs D Jones, Keir, Laing, Layton, Lee, Lister, Lucas, Marshall, McCollom, Mills, Newall, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Paley, Preston, Renton, A J Scott, Mrs H Scott, Snedker, Tait, Tostevin, Wallis and Wright

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Paul Dalton, Elections Officer, 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 Email: paul.dalton@darlington.gov.uk or Telephone 01325 405805

COUNCIL

Thursday, 28 January 2021

PRESENT – The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Bartch, Boddy, Dr. Chou, Clarke, Cossins, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, Holroyd, C L B Hughes, L Hughes, Johnson, B Jones, Mrs D Jones, Keir, Laing, Layton, Lee, Lister, Lucas, Marshall, McCollom, Mills, Newall, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Paley, Preston, Renton, A J Scott, Mrs H Scott, Snedker, Tait, Tostevin, Wallis and Wright.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin, Bell and Howell.

43 **MINUTES - TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS COUNCIL HELD ON 26 NOVEMBER 2020**

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Council held on 26 November 2020.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Council held on 26 November 2020, be approved as a correct record.

44 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

45 **SEALING.**

Presented – The Register showing the documents which had been sealed since the last meeting of Council.

46 **ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

Death in Service - The Mayor reported on the Death in Service of Steven Taylor, who had sadly passed away on the 8th January 2021. The Mayor advised that Steven joined the Council on 11 March 2019, and worked as a Cleaner in the Dolphin Centre. It was reported that Steven was a well-respected member of the team, and would be greatly missed. As a mark of respect, Members observed a short silence in memory of Mr. Taylor.

Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 – The Mayor acknowledged Holocaust Memorial Day, which had taken place the previous day, and marked the 76th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The Mayor advised Members that, due to the current restrictions around the Coronavirus pandemic, the National Ceremony had been a virtual event, with the theme of 'Be the Light in the Darkness', and that households up and down the country had lit candles at 8pm to remember those who were murdered for who they were, and to make a stand against prejudice and hatred.

The Queen's New Year Honours 2021 – The Mayor advised Members that Stuart Errington, Chief Fire Officer, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue

Service, had been awarded the Queen's Fire Service Medal in the Queen's New Year Honours.

RESOLVED – That the congratulations of the Council be conveyed to Mr. Errington for the receipt of his Award.

Appointment of Director of Children and Adult Services – The Mayor informed Members that, since the last meeting of the Council, James Stroyan had been appointed to the post of Director of Children and Adult Services on a permanent basis, and congratulated Mr. Stroyan on his appointment.

47 QUESTIONS - TO ANSWER QUESTIONS (WHERE APPROPRIATE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN FROM):-

(1) THE PUBLIC;

There were nine questions, with notice, from Members of the Public, who each received an answer thereon.

(Note: The questions, with notice, were asked by The Mayor on behalf of the Members of the Public, in accordance with Paragraph 27 of the Meetings (Coronavirus) Protocol).

(2) MEMBERS TO CABINET/CHAIRS;

Councillor Newell asked a question to Councillor K. Nicholson, Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Housing, and Councillor K. Nicholson replied.

48 COUNCIL REPORTS.

(1) COUNCIL TAX CALCULATION OF TAX BASE 2021/22

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) to determine the Council's tax base for 2021/22.

The submitted report stated that, in accordance with Section 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the Council had to decide its tax base by 31 January in the year preceding that for which the tax base applies.

RESOLVED – (a) That the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2021/22, be approved.

(b) That the tax base for the Council and the individual tax base for the parishes, as set out at Appendix 2 of the submitted report, be approved.

REASON - To comply with statutory requirements, enabling the Council Tax for 2021/22 to be set by Council in February 2021.

49 CABINET REPORTS.

The Cabinet Members each gave a report (previously circulated) on the main areas of work undertaken under their relevant portfolio since the previous meeting of the Council. Members answered questions on their portfolio thereon.

(1) REVISION TO THE COUNCIL'S SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) proposing a new Senior Management Structure for the Council, and to recommend appointments to three posts.

The submitted report presented a new senior structure which had been developed with input from Cabinet to better align with the Council's priorities, and realigned services to ensure delivery of priorities. The submitted report recommended the creation of a post of Chief Executive which had the lead for Economic Growth, as well as the Head of Paid Service.

The submitted report also included a proposal to create a Group Director for Operations and a Group Director of Services, and recommended the deletion of the posts of Managing Director and Assistant Director of Housing and Building Services, following the retirement of the current postholders. A new post of Assistant Director (Housing and Revenues) was to be created by merging the existing Head of Housing and Revenues post with the relevant responsibilities previously held by the Assistant Director of Housing and Building Services.

The submitted report included recommendations as to the appointments to the newly created roles.

RESOLVED – (a) That the Senior Management Structure, as set out in Appendix A of the submitted report, be approved, with an implementation date of 1 June 2021.

(b) That the views of the Human Resources Committee be noted.

(c) That the appointment of Ian Williams as Chief Executive be approved.

(d) That the appointment of Elizabeth Davison as Group Director of Operations be approved.

(e) That the appointment of Anthony Sandys as Assistant Director (Housing and Revenues) be approved.

(f) That power be delegated the Assistant Director Law and Governance to make any consequential changes to the Constitution that are needed.

REASON – To amend the structure and to make key internal appointments.

(2) MID YEAR PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT 2020/21

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) on the revised Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and to provide a half-yearly review of the Council's borrowing and investment activities.

The submitted report stated that the mandatory Prudential Code, which governs Council borrowing, required Council approval of controls, called Prudential Indicators, relating to capital spending and borrowing. It was reported that the Prudential Indicators were set in three statutory annual reports to Council, and the submitted report followed the Council's approval in February 2020 of the 2020/21 Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy.

The submitted report highlighted that the key objectives of the three annual reports were to ensure that governance of the large amounts of public money under the Council's Treasury Management activities complied with legislation and met the high standards set out in the codes of practice, to ensure that borrowing was affordable, and to report performance of the key activities of borrowing and investments.

The submitted report also outlined revisions to the Prudential Indicators in terms of a reduction to Operational Boundary to £188.018M, and a reduction to the Authorised Limit to £229.233M to allow for any additional cashflow requirement. It was noted that investments now included £30M in property funds, which were expected to increase the Council's net return on investments by around £0.500M in future years.

RESOLVED – (a) That the revised prudential indicators and limits within the report in Tables 1 to 6, 8, 11 and 13 to 18 be approved.

(b) That the proposal detailed in Paragraph 32 of the submitted report, in relation to the potential of Darlington College accessing the Council's loan facility in accordance with the Capital Strategy, be noted.

(c) That the underspend in the Treasury Management Budget (Financing Costs) of £0.110M, as detailed in Table 12, be noted.

REASONS – (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.

50 SCRUTINY REPORTS - TO CONSIDER SCRUTINY OVERVIEW REPORTS:-

The Scrutiny Committee Chairs each submitted a report (previously circulated) on the main areas of work undertaken by their relevant Scrutiny Committee during the last cycle of Committee meetings.

51 NOTICE OF MOTION

(1) TO CONSIDER A MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR L. HUGHES, AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR C. L. B. HUGHES

The following Motion was moved by Councillor L. Hughes, and seconded by Councillor C. L. B. Hughes:

‘That this Council notes:

This April the Government plan to cut the benefit level for millions of claimants by ending of the time limited increase to the basic rate of Universal Credit (and the tax credit equivalent) announced by the Chancellor on 20th March 2020 as part of his pandemic response package.

The £20 a week boost reflected the reality that the level of benefits were not adequate to protect the swiftly increasing number of households relying on them as the crisis hit. Exactly because that increase was a very significant and welcome move to bolster low- and middle-income families living standards, its removal will be a huge loss.

Pressing ahead would see the level of unemployment support fall to its lowest real-terms level since 1990-91, and it’s lowest ever relative to average earnings. Indeed, the basic level of out-of-work support prior to the March boost was – at £73 a week (£3,800 a year) – less than half the absolute poverty line.

The increase in benefits have had a positive effect on the lives of thousands of local claimants who are better able to pay for life’s essentials such as food, clothing and utilities.

The local economy has also benefited from the increase in benefit levels as claimants spend their money locally thereby supporting local businesses and jobs.

That this Council resolves to:

- (a) Write to the Chancellor, Rushi Sunak and to the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson demanding that the £20 increase to Universal Credit is made permanent and extended to claimants on legacy benefits.
- (b) Work with other local government organisations to form a coalition to pressure the government to make the £20 increase to Universal Credit permanent.

The Motion was Carried.

52 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - TO CONSIDER ANY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO COMMITTEES, SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND OTHER BODIES.

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.

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COUNCIL

Thursday, 18 February 2021

PRESENT – The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Bartch, Bell, Boddy, Dr. Chou, Clarke, Cossins, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, Holroyd, Howell, C L B Hughes, L Hughes, Johnson, B Jones, Mrs D Jones, Keir, Laing, Layton, Lee, Lister, Marshall, McCollom, Mills, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Paley, Preston, Renton, A J Scott, Mrs H Scott, Snedker, Tait, Tostevin, Wallis and Wright.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Lucas and Newall.

ABSENT – Councillors Baldwin.

53 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

54 **ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

Death of former-Councillor Peter Jones - The Mayor reported on the death of former-Councillor Peter Jones, who had sadly recently passed away.

As a mark of respect, Members observed a short silence in memory of their former colleague.

55 **QUESTIONS - TO ANSWER QUESTIONS WHERE APPROPRIATE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no questions, with notice, from members of the public.

56 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Chief Officers Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) to seek approval for a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2021/22 to 2024/25, including setting a budget and Council Tax increase for 2021/22.

The submitted report stated that the Council had faced significant challenges over the previous decade following the economic downturn and reduction in public sector spending. It was reported that the Council had been successful in responding to these challenges, however it was becoming more difficult particularly in respect of a growing elderly population, pressure in the Children's Social Care sector, and the major economic impact of Covid-19, which had had a direct impact on the Council's finances this year, and would be felt for years to come.

The submitted report stated that the Council had received its definitive financial settlement on 17 December 2020, and confirmed a number of funding streams announced in the spending review for 2021/22, including Social Care Grant, Covid-19 support, the continuation of the Revenue Support Grant and an Adult Social Care precept.

The submitted report outlined that the Council had undertaken a significant consultation exercise in 2016, following an in-depth and detailed review of all services, which had resulted in the agreement of a Core Offer budget and allowed for a small futures fund allocated to discretionary services. In addition, in subsequent MTFPs, Members agreed to use unallocated balances of £6.5m to invest in five areas which hold great value to the community.

The submitted report stated that the core offer remained challenging, with some significant pressures arising in social care and the ongoing impact of Covid-19, however through tight financial management, innovative financial investments, and increased income from economic growth successes, it was anticipated that the Council could deliver the agreed balanced plan, extend the MTFP for a further year to 2024/25, whilst retaining usable balances of £3.738m.

The following amendment to the Motion was moved by Councillor Harker, and seconded by Councillor McCollom:

'To replace paragraph 7 of Item 5 (Medium Term Financial Plan) with the following:

Council are requested to:

(a) Approve the Revenue MTFP as set out in Appendix 7 including the following:

- (i) Council tax increase of 1.99% for 2021/22.
- (ii) The Schedule of Charges as set out in Appendix 3.
- (iii) The Futures Fund investment into 2024/25 as set out in paragraph 62.

(b) Approve a delegation for Cabinet to vary the Revenue Budget for 2021/22 by up to £0.5m without further Council approval.

(c) Defer the Adult Social Care Precept of 3% until 2022/23'

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, a request was made by five Members for a named vote on the Amendment. A named vote was taken of those Members present at the meeting and there appeared:-

For the Amendment – The Mayor; Councillors Ali, Cossins, Crumbie, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, Holroyd, C. L. B. Hughes, L. Hughes, Layton, Lister, McCollom, M. Nicholson, Paley, A. J. Scott, Snedker and Wallis (18)

Against the Amendment – Councillors Bartch, Bell, Dr. Chou, Clarke, Crudass, Mrs. Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Howell, Johnson, B. Jones, Mrs. D. Jones, Keir, Laing, Lee, Marshall, Mills, K. Nicholson, Preston, Renton, Mrs. H. Scott, Tait, Tostevin and Wright (25)

Abstentions – Councillors Allen, Boddy and Curry (3)

The Amendment was Lost.

In accordance with the requirements of the Budget and Policy Framework Rules a vote on the recommendation was taken of those Members present at the meeting and

there appeared:-

For the Motion – Councillors Bartch, Bell, Dr. Chou, Clarke, Crudass, Mrs. Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Holroyd, Howell, Johnson, B. Jones, Mrs. D. Jones, Keir, Laing, Lee, Marshall, Mills, K. Nicholson, Preston, Renton, Mrs. H. Scott, Snedker, Tait, Tostevin and Wright (27)

Against the Motion – The Mayor; Councillors Ali, Cossins, Crumby, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, C. L. B. Hughes, L. Hughes, Layton, Lister, McCollom, M. Nicholson, Paley, A. J. Scott and Wallis (16)

Abstentions – Councillors Allen, Boddy and Curry (3)

Motion Carried.

RESOLVED - (a) That the Revenue MTFP, as set out in Appendix 7 of the submitted report, be approved, including the following;

- (i) Council tax increase of 1.99% plus a 3% Adult Social Care Precept to help fund social care for 2021/22 totalling 4.99%.
- (ii) The Schedule of Charges as set out in Appendix 3.
- (iii) The Futures Fund investment into 2024/25, as detailed in Paragraph 62 of the submitted report.

(b) That a delegation for Cabinet to vary the Revenue Budget for 2021/22 by up to £0.5m without further Council approval, be approved.

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.

57 **DARLINGTON CAPITAL STRATEGY**

The Chief Officers Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Council's Capital Strategy for 2021/22, which incorporated the capital programme priorities for approval.

The submitted report stated that the production of a Capital Strategy was a requirement for Councils following the publication of the revised Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2017. It was reported that the Strategy provided an overview of how capital expenditure and financing plans are decided upon, and provided a framework for the development, management and monitoring of the Council's capital investment plans. The submitted report stated that the Strategy also highlighted the resource streams available in terms of funding to the Council and the risk management approach taken.

RESOLVED – (a) That the Capital Strategy for 2021/22–2024/2025, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be approved.

(b) That the Capital Programme, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the submitted report, with the priorities summarised in Annex A, be approved.

(c) That a delegation for Cabinet to vary the capital programme for 2021/22 by up to £0.5m without further Council approval, be approved.

REASONS - (a) To ensure the Council adopts the Prudential Code for Capital Finance 2017.

(b) To enable the Council to invest in its assets.

(c) The Strategy is approved by Council.

58 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - MTFP 2021/22 TO 2024/25

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to proposals for the revenue budget, rent levels and service charges for the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the financial year 2021/22 in the context of the HRA Medium Term Financial Plan to 2024/25, and the 30 year Investment Plan.

The submitted report stated that Local Authorities had the discretion to inflate rents by CPI plus 1%, which meant an average £1.46 increase in weekly rents. It was also recommended that, where appropriate, service charges had an inflationary increase.

The submitted report highlighted that since the Government had lifted the borrowing cap on the HRA, the Council had used this additional capacity to invest in building much needed new homes. It was reported that in 2021/22 the Council planned to borrow an extra £8m to fund the new build programme, which could be supplemented with Homes England grant, and that the Council planned to build 100 affordable homes per annum over the next 10 years.

RESOLVED - (a) That an average weekly rent increase of 1.7% for 2021/22 be implemented giving an average social rent of £73.11 and affordable rent of £83.62.

(b) That garage rents and service charges are increased as detailed in Table 3 of the submitted report.

(c) That the budget, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be approved.

(d) That the Housing Investment Plan, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the submitted report, be agreed.

(e) That the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services be given delegated powers to proceed with new build schemes for affordable rent using the funding as identified in Paragraph 16 of the submitted report.

(f) That the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services be given

delegated powers to acquire dwellings in the private sector as opportunities arise, particularly as part of regeneration initiatives as highlighted in Paragraph 17 of the submitted report.

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.

59 PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021/22

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) which requested that Council adopt the Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2021/22 to 2023/24 relating to capital expenditure and Treasury Management activity, a policy statement relating to the Minimum Revenue Provision, and the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22, which includes the Annual Investment Strategy for 2021/22.

The submitted report outlined the Council's Prudential Indicators for 2021/22 – 2023/24, and set out the expected treasury operations for this period. It was stated that the report fulfilled key legislative and guidance requirements.

The information contained within the submitted report regarding the Council's capital expenditure plans, treasury management and prudential borrowing activities indicated that they were within the statutory framework and consistent with the relevant codes of practice, prudent, affordable and sustainable, and an integral part of the Council's Revenue and Capital Medium Term Financial Plans.

RESOLVED - (a) That the Prudential Indicators and limits for 2021/22 to 2023/24, as summarised in Tables 1 and 2 of the submitted report, be approved and adopted.

(b) That the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement, as detailed in paragraphs 33 to 37 of the submitted report, be approved and adopted.

(c) That the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24, as summarised in paragraphs 41 to 69 of the submitted report, be approved and adopted.

(d) That the Annual Investment Strategy 2021/22, as contained in paragraphs 70 to 107 of the submitted report, be approved and adopted.

REASONS - (a) To comply with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities and the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) 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.

60 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX FOR 2021/22

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that

consideration be given to setting this Council's Council Tax for 2021/2022, which was required to be set before 11th March 2021.

In accordance with the requirements of the Budget and Policy Framework Rules a vote on the recommendation was taken of those Members present at the meeting and there appeared:-

For the Motion – Councillors Bartch, Bell, Dr. Chou, Clarke, Crudass, Mrs. Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Holroyd, Howell, Johnson, B. Jones, Mrs. D. Jones, Keir, Laing, Lee, Marshall, Mills, K. Nicholson, Preston, Renton, Mrs. H. Scott, Snedker, Tait, Tostevin and Wright (27)

Against the Motion – The Mayor; Councillors Ali, Cossins, Crumbie, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, C. L. B. Hughes, L. Hughes, Layton, Lister, McCollom, M. Nicholson, Paley, A. J. Scott and Wallis (16)

Abstentions – Councillors Allen, Boddy and Curry (3)

Motion Carried.

RESOLVED – (a) That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for 2021/22 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Act and relevant regulations:-

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| (i) the aggregate of the amount which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils, which is its expenditure | £221,356,072 |
| (ii) the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act, which is its income | £166,143,000 |
| (iii) the amount by which (i) exceeds (ii) calculated by the Council for the year in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax Requirement | £55,213,072 |
| (iv) The amount at item 5(iii) above, divided by the council tax base in paragraph 13 below, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish Precepts) | £1.649.16 |
| (v) the aggregate of all special items (Parish Precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act as in the attached Appendix 1 | £183,072 |
| (vi) the amount at 5(iv) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 5(v) above by the amount at paragraph 13 below, calculated by the Council in | |

accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish Precept relates £1,643.69

(vii) That the basic council tax for 2021/22 calculated for dwellings in those areas that have parish precepts be as set out in **Appendix 1**, column 5

(viii) That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Act, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in **Appendix 2** as the amount of Council Tax for 2021/22 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings

(b) It be noted that for the year 2021/22 The Office of the Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner has stated the following amounts in the precept issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown : -

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
Police Authority	153.49	179.08	204.66	230.24	281.40	332.57	383.73	460.48

(c) It be noted that for the year 2021/22 County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service has stated the following amounts in the precept issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown: -

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p	£ p
Fire Authority	71.70	83.65	95.60	107.55	131.45	155.35	179.25	215.10

(d) The Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Act hereby sets the amounts set out in **Appendix 3** as the amounts of council tax for 2021/22 for each of the categories of dwellings.

REASON – To set the Council Tax for the Council's area in accordance with statutory requirements.

61 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER, TEES VALLEY COMBINED AUTHORITY AND BY-ELECTIONS - MAY 2021

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to changes to a number of polling places (commonly known as polling stations) to be used at the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Tees Valley Combined Authority Mayoral (TVCAM) Elections, and any by-elections, scheduled to be held on Thursday, 6 May 2021, and the delegation of power to the Assistant Director Law and Governance (the Returning Officer) to change the location of polling places in the event that a designated polling place is no longer available or

suitable.

The submitted report stated that when booking the polling places for the elections scheduled to be held in May 2021, Officers were made aware that number of the polling places were unavailable, and that as a result of this unavailability a number of alternative polling places had been proposed.

RESOLVED – (a) That the following changes to polling places, commonly known as polling stations, for all elections scheduled to take place on 6 May 2021, be noted and approved:-

- (i) College Ward (Polling Districts COA, COB and COC) to vote at the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College Sports Pavilion, Abbey Road Playing Field, Abbey Road, Darlington, in place of the classrooms in the main Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College building.
 - (ii) Hummersknott Ward (Polling Districts HKA and HKB) to vote at Salutation Hall, Salutation Road, Darlington, in place of Carmel College.
 - (iii) North Road Ward (Polling District NRA) to vote at Darlington Elim Pentecostal Church, Bowman Street, Darlington, in place of St. Thomas Aquinas Church Hall.
 - (iv) Park East Ward (Polling Districts PEA) to vote at the Friends Meeting House, Skinnergate, Darlington, in place of St. Augustine's Parish Centre.
 - (v) Park West Ward (Polling District PWC) to vote at Darlington Baptist Church, Grange Road, Darlington, in place of St. Augustine's Parish Centre; and
 - (vi) Sadberge and Middleton St George Ward (Polling Districts SMA and SMC) to vote at Bishopton Village Hall, Bishopton, in place of Great Stainton Church Hall.
- (b) That power be delegated to the Assistant Director Law and Governance (the Returning Officer), in consultation with Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio, Group Leaders and relevant Ward Members, to change the location of polling places in the event that a designated polling place is no longer available or suitable.

REASONS - (a) To comply with the requests received from Carmel College and Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College to use alternative premises and to find alternative venue(s) for those polling places that are unavailable; and

(b) To allow further changes to be made to the approved list of polling places should they be unavailable or unsuitable.

**COUNCIL
25 MARCH 2021**

PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/2022

**Responsible Cabinet Member –
Councillor Charles Johnson, Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director –
Paul Wildsmith, Managing Director**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To present the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2021/2022 in line with the requirement of the Localism Act 2011 and Local Government Transparency Code 2014 and request members to approve it.

Summary

2. The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to agree a written Pay Policy on an annual basis.
3. The Act requires the Council to publish specific information relating to the Council's highest and lowest paid employees.
4. The proposed Pay Policy for 2021/2022 is attached at **Appendix A** and meets the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and associated guidance.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that that Council agree and approve the proposed Pay Policy 2021/2022 (Appendix A). If approved, arrangements will be made to publish the Policy on the Council's intranet for public access.

Reasons

6. The recommendation is supported to enable the Council to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

**Paul Wildsmith
Managing Director**

Background Papers

- (i) Localism Act 2011

- (ii) Openness and accountability in local pay: Guidance under section 40 of the Localism Act 2011 published by the Department for Communities and Local Government: February 2012
- (iii) Improving Local Government Transparency Consultation published by the Department for Communities and Local Government: October 2012
- (iv) Supplementary guidance to The Localism Act requirements (Openness and accountability in local pay: Guidance under Section 40 of the Localism Act 2011) dated February 2013 issued by Department of Communities and Local Government
- (v) Local Government Transparency Code 2014 dated October 2014 issued by Department of Communities and Local Government.
- (vi) Local Government Transparency Code 2015 dated February 2015 issued by Department of Communities and Local Government
- (vii) The Repayment of Public Sector Exit Payments 2015
- (viii) Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations 2016
- (ix) Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017
- (x) Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payments : Guidance on the 2020 Regulations issued February 2021

Elizabeth Davison extension 5830

S17 Crime and Disorder	The report does not contain any Crime and Disorder implications
Health and Wellbeing	This report has no implications for the Council's Health and Wellbeing agenda
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no carbon impact implications in the report
Diversity	There are no diversity implications in this report
Wards Affected	No wards are affected
Groups Affected	No groups are affected
Budget and Policy Framework	This does not impact on the budget or policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report has no particular implications for the Substantiable Community Strategy
Efficiency	There are no efficiency implications in this report
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

7. The Council is required to adhere to The Localism Act 2011 and the duty to agree a written Pay Policy on an annual basis.
8. The Pay Policy sets out the ratio of the highest paid employees against the workforce median earnings and principles associated with the payments and remuneration packages of Chief Officers both during and on termination of employment.
9. Any decisions relating to the pay and remuneration of Chief Officers must comply with the Pay Policy Statement in place at the time for that financial year and whilst the Statement can be amended in year as required, any changes must be subject to the approval of full Council. Failure to do so would be contrary to the Council's Statutory Duty under the Localism Act and would result in legal action being taken against the Council.
10. There have been no amendments to the Pay Policy since the publication in March 2020.
11. Supplementary guidance to The Localism Act - Local Government Transparency Code 2014 dated October 2014 issued by Department of Communities and Local Government sets out the requirements for calculating the pay multiple and further publication of senior salaries which the Council has implemented.

Pay Multiple

12. The Council's Pay Multiple is based on highest paid taxable earnings and median taxable earnings for the whole authority (excluding casuals, apprentices and community schools) is;

	Highest paid Employee based on taxable earnings	Workforce Median Taxable earnings	Median taxable earnings Pay Multiple
Taxable Earnings Pay Multiple 2019/2020 ¹	£12,917.25	£1939.58	6.66

¹ – Based on figures 31st December 2020 (December Pay Only)

13. The December 2020 multiple was 6.66, a reduction of 0.32 on the pay multiple reported in December 2019 (6.98). The whole year multiple for 2019/20, which is reported after 31st March 2020 was also 6.89.
14. This reduction is largely associated with the fact that between January 2020 and December 2020, there were more new employees earning over the median average (£1939.58) than under (61% v 39%). Also, during the same period more of the leavers earned under the median average (59% v 41%).
15. The Council aims to ensure that the pay multiple does not exceed 10. This is a Tees Valley wide agreement which was agreed in 2013.

16. The 2014 Code stipulates that the Pay Multiple will be calculated each year on a fixed date coinciding with reporting at the end of the financial year. Locally the Pay multiple is calculated each December for the approval of the Pay Policy by Council to allow publication and approval before 31 March each year. Arrangements will also be made to update the Pay Multiple with year-end figures in April which will be published on the Council's internet pages alongside other Transparency Code information requirements.

Senior Salaries

17. The Code requires that the Council publishes Senior Officers Salaries exceeding £50,000. There is also a requirement to publish the services, functions, the budget held, and the number of employees' senior officers are responsible for. This information is available on the internet with other Transparency requirements.

Revisions to the Pay Policy Statement

18. Revisions to the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2020/2021, are summarised as follows:
- (a) Update and insertion of the lowest minimum pay rate for Council staff (*Appendix A – paragraph 7a*)
 - (b) Removal of Director of Public Health on NHS Very Senior Managers salary following retirement of post holder (*Appendix A – paragraph 8*).
 - (c) Insertion of Head of Education on Soulbury Grade as part of Chief Officer structure (*Appendix A – paragraph 8*)
 - (d) Update and reference to National Living Wage rates (*Appendix A – paragraph 24*)

Points to Note

19. The Chief Officer and Chief Executive salary ranges are subject to a national pay award increase but at the time of writing these have not been agreed by the recognised National Trade Unions and Local Government Employers. When confirmation is available, references to the updated salary ranges will be updated in the Pay Policy – (*Appendix A – paragraph 8*).
20. Since last year's Pay Policy Statement being published, the 2019/20 Council report referred to the proposed Repayment of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations (*yet to be implemented and no future date proposed*) and the Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations 2020 which came into force on 4th November, 2020.
21. The Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations 2020 set a £95,000 cap on exit payments for public sector authorities and offices. However, after an extensive review of the application of the Cap the Government have concluded that the Cap may have unintended consequences and the Regulations have been revoked with effect from 12th February, 2021. No employees were impacted by the implementation of the Cap from 4th November, 2020 to 12th February, 2021.

Financial Implications

22. There are no financial implications associated with the Pay Policy.

Legal Implications

23. It is a statutory requirement to calculate and publish a Pay Policy and associated ratio on an annual basis.

HR Implications

24. There are no HR implications associated with the publication of the Pay Policy. The only personally identified employee is the Head of Paid Service, Managing Director.

Equalities Considerations

25. There are no specific equality considerations associated with the Pay Policy that impact on protected characteristics as detailed in the Equality Act 2010.

Consultation

26. There is no formal requirement to consult the community, employees, trade unions or management to implement the revised Pay Policy.

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Pay Policy Statement 2021/2022 (in accordance with Section 38, Localism Act 2011)

Introduction

1. This document sets out the Council's Pay Policy in relation to the remuneration of its Chief Officers and staff in accordance with Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011.
2. The policy is subject to annual review and must be approved by the Council each financial year. This statement is valid from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.
3. Subject to specific circumstances it may be necessary to amend the Pay Policy statement during the financial year. Any changes or amendments made will be subject to full Council approval.
4. The policy will be published on the Council's website as soon as reasonably practicable after Council approval or amendment.
5. The arrangements set out within this document do not extend to those members of staff who are employed within schools. This is because the scope of the Localism Act does not require Council's to consider individual schools.
6. The Council is mindful of its duty as defined in the Equality Act 2010. This Pay Policy Statement forms part of a range of Pay Policies to promote equality in pay practices and assists in ensuring that the Council is promoting transparency of senior managers pay and a fair approach to pay related equalities objectives.

Definitions

7. The following definitions will apply throughout this policy statement:
 - a. '**Lowest-paid employees**' are those who are employed in jobs which are paid at Band 1, spinal column point 3 (£9.6213 per hour as at 1st April 2020 and pending pay award from 1st April 2021). This is the lowest salary paid other than National Minimum Wage Apprentices.

The salaries attributable to Apprentices depend on age and rates set out within the National Minimum Wage legislation or national agreements. Given the specific nature of these appointments, it is felt inappropriate to include apprentices within the definition of lowest paid for the purposes of this policy statement.

- b. '**Chief Officers**' are those who are defined as;
 - i. Head of Paid Service designated under section 4(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;
 - ii. Monitoring Officer designated under section 5(1) of that Act;

- iii. Any statutory Chief Officer mentioned in section 2(6) of that Act;
 - iv. Any non-statutory Chief Officer mentioned in section 2(7) of that Act;
 - v. Any deputy chief officer mentioned in section 2(8) of that Act.
- c. **Remuneration**¹ as defined in the Localism Act associated with Chief Officers relates to;
- i. the chief officer's salary
 - ii. any bonuses payable by the authority to the chief officer
 - iii. any charges, fees or allowances payable by the authority to the chief officer
 - iv. any benefits in kind to which the chief officer is entitled as a result of employment
 - v. any increase in or enhancement of the chief officer's pension entitlement where the increase or enhancement is as a result of a resolution of the authority
 - vi. any amounts payable by the authority to the chief officer on the chief officer ceasing to hold office or be employed by the authority, other than amounts that may be payable by virtue of any enactment

Remuneration of Chief Officers and Second Tier officers

8. Chief Officers and the attributable salaries (which are payable from appointment and with incremental progression) are as follows;

Post	Terms	Salary / Salary Band	Other variable Pay
Darlington Borough Council Chief Officers			
<i>Note: the salaries quoted below are based on full time equivalent hours and salary bands are from 1st April 2020. There is not yet an agreement for a pay award from 1st April 2021 for Chief Executives or Chief Officers. These details will be updated when available.</i>			
Managing Director	JNC ¹	£155,007 (Spot Salary)	None
Director	JNC ¹	£111,633 - £126,198 p.a.	None
Service Director	JNC ¹	£92,833 - £103,008 p.a.	None
Assistant Director (AD1)	JNC ¹	£77,862 - £93,434 p.a.	None
Assistant Director (AD2)	JNC ¹	£71,188 - £82,311 p.a.	None
Assistant Director (AD3)	JNC ¹	£60,065 - £73,412 p.a.	None
Darlington Partnership	JNC ¹	£55,615 p.a. (Spot Salary)	None
Public Health Specialist	A4C ²	£55,548 to £67,805 p.a.	None
Head of Education	Soul ³	£67,257 to £74,311 p.a.	None

¹JNC - Joint National Council ²A4C – Agenda for Change ³Soul – Soulbury

Level of Remuneration Paid Upon Recruitment

9. The Council's policy on pay upon recruitment is set out in the Council's Recruitment and Selection policy which applies to all employees.
10. The Council's Constitution states that any salaries / salary packages assigned to new appointments which exceed £100,000 will be subject to full Council vote prior to an appointment being made. In order for Council to make an informed vote on the proposed salary package, detail of the component parts of the package will be disclosed, for example, the basic salary, any additional fees, charges or allowances that would be routinely payable as part of undertaking the duties of the post.
11. The salaries attributable to Chief Officer posts are subject to job evaluation and are based on:

- a. clear salary differentials which reflect the level of responsibility attached to any particular role; and
 - b. rates which are reasonably sufficient to recruit and retain senior officers taking into account market conditions.
12. Increases in pay for Chief Officers will occur only as a result of the following:
- a. pay awards agreed by way of national / local collective pay bargaining arrangements; or
 - b. significant changes to a Chief Officer's role which result in a higher salary being appropriate as confirmed by the outcome of an appropriate job-evaluation process and subject to a report to Council; or
 - c. recruitment and / or retention payments which, in all the given circumstances at the relevant time, are deemed necessary in the best interests of the Council and which are determined under a relevant policy relating to such payments and subject to a report to Council.
13. It is expected that senior officers will perform to the highest level and performance related pay and bonuses do not, therefore, form part of current remuneration arrangements. This position will be reviewed if legislation and / or guidance relating to senior posts changes.

Election Duties undertaken by Chief Officers

14. Fees for election duties undertaken by Chief Officers are not included in their salaries. For Parliamentary, European elections, other elections and national referenda, payments are set by central government and vary depending on the nature of the poll and the size of the electorate. For the Tees Valley Combined Authority Mayoral election, the fee is set by the Combined Authority. In respect of local elections, the fees are determined separately in consultation with the other Tees Valley Councils. For contested elections, the fees are based on an agreed sum for the first 1000 electors and a further sum for each additional 1000 electors or fraction thereof, and a set agreed sum for uncontested elections.

Payments to Chief Officers on Termination of Employment / Severance

15. Chief Officers who cease to hold office or be employed by the Council will receive payments calculated using the same principles as any other member of staff; based on entitlement within their contract of employment, their general terms and conditions and existing policies.
16. In the case of termination of employment by way of early retirement, redundancy (voluntary or otherwise) or on the grounds of efficiency of the service, the Council's "Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) 2014 and Local Provisions Policy" and "Management of Change" Policies set out provisions which apply to all employees, regardless of their level of seniority.
17. Where a termination of employment / severance payment equates to be single payment in excess of £100,000, full Council will be given an opportunity to vote prior to the package been approved.
18. As part of making an informed vote on severance / termination payments full Council will be presented with detailed components of severance payments including, where

appropriate, salary paid in lieu of notice, redundancy compensation, pension entitlement, holiday pay and any bonuses, fees or allowances paid.

19. The detail of Council voting on severance payments is set out in the Council's Constitution which is available on the Council's internet pages.

Publication of and access to Information Relating to Remuneration of Chief Officers

20. The Council publishes on its website all senior salaries in line with The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency and Local Government Transparency Code 2014 which have been published by the Department of Communities and Local Government. These Codes stipulate that Councils should make senior employee salaries available to the public where they exceed £50,000.
21. For transparency purposes the Council also publishes details of any posts who have received a total pay in excess of £50,000, the number of redundancies and payment bands of all relevant employees. These figures are updated annually based on figures as at 31st March of the relevant year. This is in line with Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.
22. The Council also publishes responsibilities (for example, the services and functions Senior officers are responsible for, together with the budget held and the number of staff) for all employees whose salary exceeds £50,000. Employees whose salaries are £150,000 or more will also be identified by name; locally this will only include the Managing Director.

Remuneration of Lowest Paid Employees within the Council

23. The Council introduced 'single status arrangements' in July 2006. The lowest paid employees within the authority are appointed to posts which have been evaluated using an agreed job evaluation scheme and are remunerated accordingly or are determined within national or local agreements.
24. The Council will comply with the National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage rate of £8.91 (April 2021) for all its employees, this is exceeded for all employees (with the exception of Apprentices as detailed in paragraph 7a) as Council's National Terms and Conditions have a minimum hourly rate of £9.6212ph. (pay award depending from 1st April 2021).

Relationship between Chief Officer and non-Chief Officer Remuneration

25. The Pay Multiple is calculated in line with the revised Local Government Transparency Code 2014, using the ratio between the highest paid taxable earnings for the given year (including base salary, variable pay, bonuses, allowances and the cash value of any benefits in kind) and the median earnings figure of the whole authority's workforce.
26. The Council's Pay Multiple based on highest paid taxable earnings and median taxable earnings for the whole authority (excluding casuals, apprentices and Community Schools) is

	Highest paid Employee based on taxable earnings	Workforce Median Taxable earnings	Median taxable earnings Pay Multiple
Taxable Earnings Pay Multiple 2021/2022 ¹	12,917.25 (12,571.50)*	£1939.58 (£1801.45)	6.66 (6.98)

¹ – Based on figures December 2020 pay only (*December 19 Pay Only)

27. Using December 2020 taxable pay figures, the Pay Multiple based on the Median pay was 6.66. The Council aims to ensure that the pay multiple does not exceed ten. This figure was agreed across the Tees Valley.
28. In line with the Local Government Transparency Code 2014, the Pay Multiple will be calculated each year on a fixed date coinciding with reporting at the end of the financial year. Locally the Pay multiple will also be calculated each December for the approval of the Pay Policy by Council to allow publication and approval before 31st March each year. Pay Multiples will be published on the Council's internet pages alongside other Transparency Code information requirements.

General Principles Regarding Remuneration of Staff

29. The salaries attributable to posts are determined via job evaluation. Employees are remunerated according to the evaluated score of the post they hold and by reference to the salary band existing at any given time. Most posts include an entitlement to incremental progression.
30. New appointments are subject to the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy and will generally be made at the bottom spinal column point of all pay bands (unless there are special circumstances and payment at a higher level can be objectively justified).
31. The Council will appoint employees based on the best person for the role in line with the Recruitment and Selection policy. The Council does not exclude the re-employment of former employees who have previously worked for the Council and is in receipt of a redundancy / compensation payment.
32. Where an employee secures a higher-graded post via internal promotion / recruitment then the Council will generally pay the salary on the next nearest point to the previous spinal column point.
33. Where an employee is redeployed because of redundancy or ill health, they will generally be appointed to the highest spinal column point within the lower grade to minimise financial loss.

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COUNCIL 25 MARCH 2021

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL OVERVIEW

Council's Continued Response to COVID19

1. It is pleasing to see that infection rates and hospital admissions have come down considerably during the lockdown period and we now have a road map to recovery, however we are still at an early stage and as restrictions are relaxed, we must all do our best to maintain the low levels of infection by following Hands, Face and Space guidance.
2. The vaccination programme continues at a pace which will help us tackle the virus, but there is still much to do, including continuing our asymptomatic testing centres to identify those in our population who are carrying the virus without knowing it. We will be reviewing our overall approach to testing given the new options available to the public.
3. Support to businesses via Government grants will continue and our great teams will no doubt once again be among the leaders of the Country in terms of speed of getting grants into business bank accounts. We have also been working with businesses in the town centre to get the recovery underway, this will be a fine balance between getting the economy going and the safety of the public.
4. Once again, I wish to thank all our teams for their continued great work in responding to the pandemic and now getting ready for the recovery. Also, a special thanks to NHS colleagues for their work on the vaccine roll-out.

Treasury Campus

5. I am sure that you were all thrilled to see the announcements made by the Chancellor in the Budget that Treasury for the North campus is to be based in Darlington. The news that 750 senior civil servants representing the Treasury, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy, will locate here is a tremendous fillip for the town and wider area and nods to our ambitions for the Town.
6. The Mayor of TVCA has set up a task force, and the Council will work closely with Officials to help Treasury deliver this campus.

Locomotion No 1

7. A Memorandum of Understanding was agreed for the return of Loco No 1 in 2025 and twice between 2026 and 2030 and for up to 24 months in each 5 year period going forward. I would like to thank Dame Mary Archer and Sir Peter Hendy for their input and assistance in this matter. It was a very difficult issue to resolve and whilst I would have wished we could have kept Loco in Darlington permanently

legally we had no option and unless an agreement had been achieved we could have lost Locomotion to Darlington for ever. We are able to use “Darlington the Historical Home of Locomotion No 1” on any publicity or promotional material in the future.

8. An agreement has been reached with Beamish Museum for the replica of Loco to be a permanent exhibit in the Head of Steam and it will be removed from Shildon in time for reopening of the museum in May. There are plans for it to be restored into working condition for the 2025 celebrations which will be a great attraction along with other exciting events which will be shared very soon.
9. The installation of the 4 train sculptures on the ‘2025’ roundabout will celebrate Darlington’s past, present and future Rail Heritage engineering. They will be formally opened on 19 March 2021 by Councillors Scott, Keir and Renton.

Strategic Transport

10. The Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan was adopted in January 2020 and good progress has been made on the actions and delivering a programme of projects. A formal annual progress report will be produced early in the new financial year. We await further detail on a new £4.2billion Intra-City Transport fund that is to be split across eight city regions, the Tees Valley being one of those, which should significantly boost funding and the ability to develop further transformational transport projects from April 2022.
11. A programme of Electric Vehicle charging points is being procured to accelerate the availability of charging facilities to encourage the switch to electric vehicles. It is anticipated this will start to roll out later in 2021.

Towns Fund

12. The delivery of the accelerated funding projects from within the £1M is progressing well. Expectations are that the new free Town Centre Wifi will be available within coming weeks, and new lighting enhancements to the clock tower, Pease statue and St Cuthbert’s Church will be undertaken and visible in early April. Work to Buckton’s and Clarks Yards has now commenced and physical improvements will begin to be visible within both Yards.
13. The main Towns Fund is now in the stage which will take forward project development and engagement with stakeholders, which will establish a business case for each of the nine interventions. Which can then be summarised and presented to Government later in the year.
14. Discussions are ongoing to develop proposals for the new Adult Learning facility, which is proposed within the Northern Echo building and early engagement is taking place for other projects, including the Northgate area and the Skinnergate and Yards area.

Climate Change

15. The action plan is going through final amendments before it is ready for internal discussion. Feedback has been received from members of the Cross-Party climate change working group.

16. The group has met twice, under the chairmanship of Councillor Snedker and will continue to meet every two months.
17. We have begun the process of recruiting a technical consultant to carry out the district heat network feasibility study. The consultant is expected to be in place by the end of March.

Youth Unemployment

18. In December 2020 the 18-24 year old claimant count stood at 12.1% (890 young people) this was above the North East average of 10.1% and the Great Britain average of 8.9%.
19. The Darlington 18-24 year old claimant count is the lowest in the Tees Valley and ranks seventh out of 12 in the North East.
20. The Council, alongside CAB and Morrison Trust, continue to support young people who are unemployed through the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). The Council YEI Team are currently supporting 112 young people.
21. We acknowledge that the impact of Covid on youth employment has been severe, and the Director of Economic Growth has called together a task group of key agencies. Their first tasks will be to get an up to date understanding of the nature of youth unemployment, and to marry the immediate needs of employers supporting young people to gain quality employment. Longer term we aim to assess and influence delivery of effective support by partner agencies.

**Councillor Mrs Heather Scott OBE
Leader of the Council Portfolio**

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COUNCIL 25 MARCH 2021

OVERVIEW OF STRONGER COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Stronger Communities Portfolio.

Community Safety

Purple Flag

2. Darlington was the first town in the North East to be awarded Purple Flag status in January 2020 and more recently successfully completed the re-accreditation process for interim renewal in January 2021. Purple Flag is nationally recognised as those destinations which promote a safe and enjoyable night-out.

Darlington Borough Council COVID Pandemic Prevention and Compliance Group

3. Since the initial outbreak was reported in March 2020, members of the group have dealt with 2,260 reported incidents, completed 1191 checks, provided guidance on 3,161 occasions and taken enforcement action in 249 cases (majority of enforcement relates to police issue of fixed penalty notices for breach of Covid restrictions).

Pavement Cafés

4. Members of Community Safety, the Town Centre Team, Highways and Licensing supported by Cabinet are currently reviewing the approach to Pavement Cafés in Darlington town centre. The group are actively considering several issues around demand and user requirements, accessibility, public safety, implications for highways, licensing arrangements, operational delivery and fees.
5. The work is linked to the Town Centre Recovery Plan and will report April 2021.

Begging

6. Members of Darlington Borough Council, Police and charitable organisations continue to meet bi-monthly to tackle problems associated with begging in Darlington.
7. Since inception in 2018, the group has worked closely with several people with complex needs which has resulted in a low number of presentations on the street.
8. The strategy and associated action plan are now under review and will be refreshed for implementation on 1 April 2021.

Civic Enforcement Service

Back Lanes Project

9. The Back Lanes Project is ongoing, and 40 streets have now been issued with Section 46 legal notices which focus on the responsibilities of householders for the management of waste. Action is taken on failure to adhere to the notice in the form of Community Protection Notice warnings and notices. Early evidence indicates that this approach is proving successful with reduced levels of complaints in targeted streets.

Responsible Dog Ownership Project (Dog Watch)

10. The project is gaining momentum and the group have renamed themselves 'Dog Watch'. The current focus of the group includes:
 - (a) An article has been drafted for the March edition of One Darlington Magazine in relation to dog fouling and health messages associated with failing to clean up after pets.
 - (b) Evaluation of the dog waste bag dispenser's trial.
 - (c) Code of conduct for dog walkers; creating a scheme similar to the Falkirk scheme.
 - (d) Linking with partners in relation to information for the public around a recent national increase in dog thefts.
 - (e) Raise awareness/build intelligence in relation to illegal breeding (linked to above point).
11. The 'We are Watching you' campaign which is designed to prevent fly tipping and dog fouling is now live throughout the Borough.

Anti-Social Behaviour/COVID breaches Multi Storey Car Park

12. Civic Enforcement Officers, Police and CCTV Operatives are currently working together to tackle problems involving skateboarders in the multi storey car park. Groups of young people are visiting the car park, causing nuisance and breaching current COVID legislation. Civic Enforcement have warned, educated and, for repeat offenders, conducted interviews resulting in Acceptable Behaviour Agreements and referrals to the Youth Offending Service for early intervention. Police Officers have issued fines to repeat offenders for COVID breaches.

CCTV

Review of CCTV

13. A review has commenced in relation to the future provision of CCTV in Darlington. A working group involving DBC Cabinet, DBC officers, Police and Fire and Rescue will examine existing provision and develop (with specialist support) a future specification to meet the Council's ambitions and the changing environment for public safety.

14. The initial findings and report are expected in May 2021.

Trading Standards

Investigations

15. On 22 December 2020, Etris Hassan Moulod of Trinity Mews, Thornaby was sentenced to 20 weeks imprisonment suspended for 12 months and ordered to pay costs and a victim surcharge totalling £1,371 after being found guilty at an earlier hearing at Peterlee Magistrates' Court of four offences of possessing to supply counterfeit goods under the Trade Marks Act 1994 and four offences relating to Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015. All the products that were seized were forfeited.
16. Hemin Hussain Mohammed of Wilson Street, Darlington pleaded guilty to one offence of possessing for supply counterfeit cigarettes contrary to the Trade Marks Act 1994 and three charges relating to the Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015 when he appeared before Newton Aycliffe Magistrates' Court on 14th January 2021. He was fined £240 and ordered to pay £706 costs and a £32 victim surcharge. The court also granted a forfeiture of all the products seized.
17. The above cases were brought following an investigation by Trading Standards under Operation Sirenian, aimed at tackling the supply of illegal tobacco in Darlington.

Private Sector Housing

Regulation for Private Landlords

18. The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 require landlords to have the electrical installations in their properties inspected and tested by a person who is qualified and competent, at least every 5 years. Landlords must provide a copy of the electrical safety report to their tenants, and to their local authority if requested. The regulations are intended to ensure that tenants can enjoy a safer living environment. Since July 1 2020, landlords issuing new tenancy agreements must have an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) carried out. The report must also be given to all tenants, while any remedial work required should be carried out. Private Sector Housing will be promoting that, from 1 April 2021, EICRs will become mandatory for all private tenancies.

Community Resilience

Darlington Open Water Safety Group

19. A new multi-agency working group was convened in March 2021 to complete a risk-based approach of the dangers associated with open water and develop a series of actions to mitigate "high risk" areas. The group intends to build on work completed in 2020, when a number of staff were trained in water safety site risk assessment.

20. The working group, chaired by the Head of Community Safety, includes representatives from Community Safety, Law and Governance, Highways, Environmental Services, Health and Safety and Estates departments, in addition to external colleagues from the Police, Fire and Rescue and North East Ambulance Service.

Home Office Violence and Vulnerability Group - County Lines Locality Review

21. The County Lines Locality Review was held virtually on 10 February 2021. There were 55 attendees representing a range of organisations working in Darlington. Seven separate themed workshops were facilitated by the Violence and Vulnerability Unit staff.
22. A 'hot debrief' was held immediately following the completion of the workshops and an interim report sent to key individuals. The hot debrief highlighted that, overall, the outcome was extremely positive and reflected the passion, professionalism and determination of all concerned in making Darlington a better and safer place.
23. The full report will be made available to DBC within 10 working days of the review and the recommendations will then be considered by a multi-agency group.
24. The Community Resilience Officer is currently developing a County Lines training package which will be available for DBC staff in April 2021.

Road Safety Scheme for Schools

25. COVID-19 restrictions continue to impact on the delivery of the scheme. Funding has been secured from Durham Police Crime and Victim Commissioner to purchase branded high-visibility jackets, banners for roadways and the 'Road Safety Great Britain' packs all of which will be made available to schools when restrictions allow.

Community Engagement

26. The Community Resilience Officer is maintaining contact with Arcus (LGBTQ+), Darlington Association on Disability and the UNITY group via e-mails/telephone calls and information from Police Community Cohesion Officers.

UNITY Group

27. The Community Resilience Officer is working with Andy Whittam (DBC Young People's Involvement and Opportunities Worker) to develop a UNITY youth group as there is no direct representation from young people on the current UNITY group.

CONTEST

28. Community Safety are currently working with colleagues in Child and Adult Services and Police to consider recent changes in CONTEST which is the government's response to counter-terrorism in the UK.

29. The reforms include the transfer of statutory responsibilities to local authorities, the delivery of the CHANNEL programme, the development of the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP), the delivery of the County Durham and Darlington Silver Contest Board Strategic Delivery Plan, training for partners, staff and Members, increased public engagement, security in crowded places and increased levels of scrutiny for local authorities.
30. The revised framework will be implemented April 2021.
31. The first meeting of DBC Counter Terrorism Local Champions took place on Wednesday 17 March 2021. The meeting included national and local updates, continuous professional development activities and the opportunity for champions to share their experiences and suggest how to improve engagement within DBC and beyond.
32. No Tension Monitoring Reports have been received during the period of this report.

Eyes and Ears

33. Although COVID restrictions continue to impact on the delivery of the project, joint virtual briefings with the Police on 'Confidence Academy' and Eyes and Ears were delivered to Councillors on 27 January 2021 and 10 Feb 2021. 23 Members attended and the presentations / schemes were well received.

Home Office Safer Streets Fund

34. Safer Streets is a Home Office initiative designed to reduce residential burglaries through target-hardening measures.
35. Following the launch of the scheme in Northgate and North Road, Darlington on 7 September 2020, 331 premises have received a visit from a Police Community Support Officer, 32 properties have had all safer streets works completed, 48 are part completed and 14 properties remain outstanding.
36. In anticipation of surplus funding (due to a reduced number of burglary dwelling) an additional bid for funding was submitted to the Home Office to support tackling environmental crime, defensive planting, CCTV, crime prevention packs, home security cameras, engagement activity and targeted advertising. This bid was successful and awarded £112,000.

Licensing

37. A new Taxi Policy was approved by Full Council and implemented on the 1 January 2021. This policy incorporated all the new Statutory Standards required by the Department for Transport. It will also see the introduction of an age restriction for vehicles after April 2023 to ensure they will be compliant with Euro 6 engine emissions. This is in line with a regional approach by Local Authorities to help reduce harmful emissions.
38. Darlington's Licensing Act Policy was due to be reviewed by January 2021 however, concerns were expressed nationally that with the closure of many licensed premises it is impossible to adequately consult with the hospitality industry.

A delay until April 2021 was approved by the Licensing Committee on the 28 July 2020. Since this decision, with the introduction of a tier system and subsequent lockdown due to COVID-19, it has been impossible to consult with the hospitality trade, so Licensing will seek approval for the current policy to be carried over until such a time that meaningful consultation with the trade can take place. This pragmatic approach has been suggested by the Home Office as a solution to what remains a legal requirement under the Licensing Act 2003.

39. A new on-line taxi licensing application system (IDOX) has commenced the testing phase and implementation is anticipated for early spring. A small number of IT and Licensing staff have been trained by IDOX for them to cascade to other team members. In addition to this, an electronic workflow monitor called Enterprise will be introduced to manage all licensing applications with greater speed and efficiently.
40. There has been recent national media attention given to the increase in dog breeding activities as a means of making money for people during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This activity also exploits those seeking a dog as a companion whilst in lockdown. Licensing have been working with partners to establish the intelligence picture of dog breeding in Darlington, to develop a coordinated strategy should any issues be identified.

Crime and Disorder

41. There has been an 18 per cent reduction in the number of reported crimes in Darlington during the period 1 April 2020 to 31 January 2021 compared to the same period in 2019/20. This equates to a decrease of 1911 crimes. The only crime showing an increase is Arson (17 crimes). All other categories of crime are showing a significant decrease.
42. There has been a 1 per cent increase in the number of reported anti-social behaviour incidents in Darlington during the period 1 April 2020 to 31 January 2021 compared to the same period in 2019/20. This equates to an increase of 43 incidents. Incidents showing an increase include Alcohol related ASB and Drugs related ASB.
43. There has been a 57 per cent reduction in the number of reported crimes in Darlington Town Centre during the period 1 April 2020 to 31 January 2021 compared to the same period in 2019/20. This equates to a decrease of 860 crimes. All crimes are showing a significant decrease.
44. There has been a 55 per cent reduction in the number of reported anti-social behaviour incidents in the Town Centre during this period compared to the same period in 2019/20 and this equates to 217 incidents.

Progress Against the Council's Equality Objective

45. The objective agreed for the period 2018-22 is :-

“To remind all Members and staff of their duties under the Equality Act 2010, demonstrate how the council has done this via training and engagement with services users and support organisations, and publicise the differences that this work has made.”

46. A training programme is now underway which was launched in January 2020, with the intention of training all staff and Councillors over a two-year period. The half day sessions were initially delivered in person, these are now being delivered via Teams to those staff who are able to access online training, due to Covid-19. Since the start of the training programme to the end of January 2021, 733 members of staff have received a half day of Equality training, representing 43 per cent of staff. Training for Councillors was split into two sessions; 58 per cent of Councillors have attended at least one session. Of the attendees of the sessions, 61 per cent said they would change the way they approach Equality and Diversity as a result of the training.
47. An accelerated in person training is being planned for staff who cannot access Teams once it is safe to be delivered. An additional specific module on Equality Impact Assessments and ensuring the Public Sector Equality Duty is considered in decision making, is currently being rolled out to relevant staff.

Climate Change

48. Funding for the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme is due to be submitted on 26 March 2021. The primary purpose of the LAD scheme is to raise the energy efficiency rating of low income and low Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rated homes (those with E, F or G).
49. The LAD Scheme aims to deliver energy efficiency upgrades to low income and low energy efficiency rated homes, including those living in the worst quality off-gas grid homes. Funds under this scheme will enable Local Authorities to support low-income, fuel-poor households in their local area.
50. Funding will therefore be shared across all tenures and housing providers with properties in the Private Sector, those rented and owner occupied, being targeted where there are known low EPC ratings and high levels of fuel poverty.

**Councillor Jonathan Dulston
Stronger Communities Portfolio/
Deputy Leader of the Council**

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**COUNCIL
25 MARCH 2021**

OVERVIEW OF ADULTS PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform and update Members on progress within Adult Services since the last meeting of Council. The following are the main areas of work under the Portfolio for Adult Services.

Operational Services**Staff testing and vaccinations**

2. From early January, social care staff have been participating in the community testing programme. Staff have been able to utilise the facilities at a range of designated venues, including the Dolphin Centre. This has given staff and the individuals they have contact with additional reassurance against transmission of the virus. From the 19th January, front line social care staff have been able to access the COVID vaccine. This has represented a significant step forward in enabling the social care workforce to continue to provide an essential service to the most vulnerable within the community.

Digital survey/working group

3. As part of the Adults Transformation Programme, a new digital strand has been included, to explore the potential benefits to the service that the use and implementation of digital technologies could bring. Social care staff have participated in a recent survey and the results of this will frame a workshop where this can be explored further. This is a particularly relevant area as the reliance of digital technology has increased since the pandemic

CHC training

4. Social care staff have benefited from attending Continuing Health training facilitated by a national expert in the field. The training has been valuable in increasing social workers skills in joint assessment work with health colleagues. This work is essential in not only identifying the appropriate care and support for individuals with complex needs but also the most appropriate funding stream to meet their needs.

Carers

5. Operational services continue to work closely with carers, to ensure their needs are recognised and addressed. Social workers continue to ensure support is in place to provide respite for carers. There is still some anxiety from carers regarding the use of respite facilities due to COVID 19. Alternatives such as sitting services have been arranged. Day opportunities for older adults remain closed. St Hilda's staff have maintained telephone contact with existing families that attended prior to the closure. Working age adults' services for carers at Mind and DAD Independent

Living Hub are still operational. The Young Cares service has continued to operate. A Welfare list of all known carers is in place. This is RAG rated to identify carers with the greatest level of need to ensure we target our support and resources most effectively.

Commissioning and Contracts

6. Since 28 September 2020, care homes have reported that 284 residents and 271 staff tested positive for the Covid 19 virus. Infection rates are now plateauing which reflects the reduction in community transmission rates, the testing programme and the infection control support that the Council has provided. There are currently five care homes that have been classified as an outbreak and are currently being supported by Public Health colleagues.
7. Monitoring calls continue to be made to all care homes on a twice weekly basis with calls being made more frequently if the home has an outbreak. Additional support continues to be provided into care homes from the CCG Infection Control Team as appropriate.
8. As of 1st March 2021, 94 per cent of care home residents have been vaccinated. In addition, 95 per cent of Priority 1 social care eligible staff (older people care homes, older people domiciliary care, assisted living, private sheltered housing and Direct Payment personal assistants) who want to have the vaccine have now received their first dose of the Covid vaccine. Over the next few weeks, vaccines will continue to be given to the remaining staff (newly recruited as well as a small number of staff who weren't able to be vaccinated earlier due to being tested positive for COVID). The vaccination programme is now being undertaken for residents within Learning Disabilities or Mental Health care homes and is also being extended by the PCN to carers. We continue to work with Public Health and PCN colleagues to encourage those staff who are currently not engaging with the vaccine programme.
9. Alongside Darlington's mass community testing programme, Care Homes are also continuing to administer the COVID-19 lateral flow testing of visitors. This programme is specifically for families of residents as well as visiting professionals.
10. Darlington's Carers' Action Plan for 2020-22 has been developed by the Carers' Strategy Steering Group as a local response to the needs of carers and continues to be based on themes identified in the national Carers Action Plan 2018-20, which remain relevant:
 - (a) Services and systems that work for carers
 - (b) Employment and financial wellbeing
 - (c) Supporting young carers
 - (d) Recognising and supporting carers in the wider community and society
 - (e) Building research and evidence to improve outcomes for carers
11. The aim is to ensure the continuation of responsive support to carers in particularly challenging times as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to look ahead to the broader needs of carers as the effects of the pandemic ease.
12. The commissioned Carers Support and Young Carers Services have continued to operate throughout the pandemic by rapidly developing a remote service offer including: virtual carers groups and events for both adult and young carers; well-

received courtesy calls for carers aged 70+; setting up a chat facility on the Carers Support Service website; use of Facebook pages by both the Carers Support and Young Carers Services. The Carers Support Service has also sent out hard copy newsletters to those individuals for whom they do not have an email address.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

13. The Statutory Safeguarding Partners (SSP) continue to meet monthly. In December, partners were provided with an overview of current safeguarding arrangements within the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service. Robin Turnbull, Group Manager, assured partners of the fire service's commitment to continually raise awareness of safeguarding across its workforce including the delivery of mandatory training packages to provide all staff with the skills to identify safeguarding concerns.
14. Elective Home Education was an area Partners were keen to seek assurance as there has been an increase in parents electing for home education since the start of the Pandemic, a picture being seen nationally. Partners were assured of ongoing work by the EHE Advisor, Education Safeguarding Officer, Vulnerable Pupil Panel and Monitoring Panel who continue to make every effort to ensure all children are seen.
15. In January, partners were provided an overview of current safeguarding arrangements within the National Probation Service (NPS) and Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). At the start of the Pandemic, only the very high risk service users were being seen. Both services have reported, as offices begin to open they are now able to see more service users. NPS continued to undertake interventions and accredited programmes and the courts continue to hear priority cases, with no outstanding backlogs as was seen in the first lockdown. CRC is running unpaid work and accredited schemes and are now providing more face to face engagement for critical cases including MAPPA and safeguarding. It was highlighted that CRC will become the responsibility of NPS from June 2021 and both organisations working through how they will operate in readiness for this.
16. Partners continue to receive an overview of child and adult multi-agency performance data on a quarterly basis. Partners were assured measures are in place to address themes or trends highlighted to further understand the changing landscape which will shape what needs to be taken forward.

Climate Change

17. The service continues to promote the completion of the Climate Change Academy 10 module for all current staff and new-starters to encourage awareness.
18. Throughout the COVID period, a huge reduction in the use of paper and printing has been noted as the service operates electronically. This way of working reduces our carbon footprint and it will be carried over into the post-COVID period.
19. The Council's electric car leasing scheme has been positively received by staff.

**Councillor Rachel Mills
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Adults**

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**COUNCIL
25 MARCH 2021**

OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Children and Young People Portfolio.

School Admissions 2022/23

2. In line with the School Admissions Code, Members considered and approved the Local Authority's admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for which Darlington Local Authority is the admission authority for the 2022/23 academic year.

Health and Wellbeing Board

3. The Health and Wellbeing Board met on the 18 March 2021. The main discussion item was an update on the COVID-19 local outbreak. This discussion was informed by a presentation by the Director of Public Health which outlined some key data describing the impact of the pandemic on local communities in Darlington.
4. Other issues considered at the meeting included an update on the Darlington Carer's Action Plan 2020-22. Members of the Board have endorsed the Action Plan and will act as champions for carers in Darlington.

Early Intervention and Front Door

5. Children's Information and Access Team received 551 contacts in November and 515 contacts in December. The numbers are broadly consistent with those seen in September and October and relate to increased activity as a result of schools reopening, and other services increasingly working with children and the increased contact with children relating to concerns for children being more frequently seen.
6. Early Help Services have continued to offer a rapid response service to families who need help and support. When a family are identified at the Front Door as requiring early help and support, a member of the Early Help team has continued to offer a same day visit, to consider their support needs and explain in person the services that Early Help can provide. This has led to a continued increase in families accessing the service and improved performance in terms of how quickly Early Help are engaging with families and the timeliness of assessments. Despite being voluntary there has been a strong take up from families with the service, with 112 Early Help assessments started in November and December 2020. Of the Early Help assessments completed, 72.6 per cent of families report positive changes as a result of Early Help support.
7. Service delivery has continued to involve a combination of services delivered face to face where necessary, but with a continued reliance on delivering services online, with advice about children's development, school readiness and regular video sessions around play and positive interaction, proving very popular with

families. For the families who need more than virtual contact, home visits to families have continued to be undertaken.

Safeguarding Assessment and Looked After Through Care:

Corporate Parenting Panel

8. The Panel met on 16 February 2021, with young people involved, alongside Members and Officers. The Panel received and discussed:
 - (a) A report on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic of the education of Children in Care;
 - (b) An updated report on the support provided for Care Leavers during Christmas and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic;
 - (c) An update report on the “lockdown diary;”
 - (d) A verbal update regarding how Darlington Borough Council’s foster-carers and residential staff have been managing during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic;
 - (e) A formal review of the Promises Tree.

Child Protection, Looked After and Care Leaver statistics.

9. At the end of January 2021 there were:
 - (a) 352 children being supported through a child in need plan
 - (b) 82 children, subject to child protection plans
 - (c) 284 children in care – this number is comparable with the end of January 2020. There continues to be significant drive to progress children’s permanence plans enabling them to safely leave the care of the local authority
 - (d) All 146 Care Leavers between 18-25 years have access to a personal advisor for support, advice and guidance

Fostering, Residential and Lifestages Disabled Children’s Team

10. There is a continued focus on the recruitment of mainstream foster carers to help meet the needs of looked after children. We have seen an increase in enquiries about mainstream fostering, and we are receiving support from the Marketing and Communications Team to ensure interesting articles and messages are regularly added to social media. There is a Strengthening Families workstream focussing on increasing the number of in-house mainstream foster carers to provide high quality placements for our looked after children.
11. Foster carers have consistently cared for children, with support from their supervising social workers and placement stability with both mainstream foster carers and connected kinship carers has been very good during the Covid-19 pandemic. Foster carers with capacity have, where possible, provided placements to enable sibling groups to remain together. We have had foster carers who have

been unwell with covid, and in the majority of cases placement stability has been maintained.

12. Foster carers have been offered a covid vaccination, and there has been a high take up rate. For those foster carers who live out of area, we are liaising with the relevant Local Authority to arrange a vaccination where possible.
13. The three mainstream residential homes are providing placements to 5 young people who have largely adhered to covid regulations, with very few missing from placement episodes. Staff encourage young people to engage with their education provision to help provide structure and focus as well as learning opportunities.
14. Harewood Hill Lodge has been providing respite to approximately 25 children since summer 2020, with staff groups and children working in “bubbles” as far as possible to minimise the potential for the spread of infection. Parents have provided positive feedback in relation to the service.
15. The Disabled Children’s Team (Lifestages 0-25 team) continue to support disabled children and their families. Direct home visits are made where possible, but where children or family members have medical vulnerabilities, doorstep or virtual visits are arranged.

Education

16. Officers continue to work with the Education Strategy Group to support schools to reopen from 8 March. Pupils returning to secondary schools will be tested three times on site and then once at home in the first two weeks back. After that, they will be expected to be tested twice weekly at home and report results to schools to record. Secondary staff will also get twice weekly home tests. There will be no tests for primary school pupils, though staff will continue to have to test themselves at home twice a week
17. Secondary schools will also be expected to retain a small testing site for those unable to test at home. Pupils will be allowed to attend lessons as normal after their first negative result. Secondary staff will also get twice weekly home tests. Officers continue to offer support and advice on testing to schools and weekly Public Health Clinics for school leaders continue to be held.
18. Darlington School Forum meet on 9 March. The Forum was given an update on the current year budget. The Forum also noted the high needs budget and the early years hourly rates for 2021/22.

Children’s Commissioning and Contracts

19. The Community Short Breaks Framework for Children and Young People with SEND has been reopened via the NEPO portal enabling new providers to join the contract. An additional provider has been appointed to deliver Sport, Art/Craft, Drama, Recreational and Personal Development Activities, Holiday Club and After School Club provision. The Tees Valley Residential Homes Framework has also been reopened with two new providers appointed to operate from January 2021.
20. Regional provider risk management approaches have remained in place throughout the second wave of the pandemic. All providers commissioned by Darlington

Borough Council for care, support and accommodation of Darlington Children and Young People have remained operational.

21. The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination to external and internal providers of front line children's social care services in Darlington has been very successful with an exceptionally high take up of vaccinations. All vaccinations appointments were offered within required timeframe of the 15 February 2021.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership (DSP)

22. The Statutory Safeguarding Partners (SSP) continue to meet monthly. In December, partners were provided with an overview of current safeguarding arrangements within the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service. Robin Turnbull, Group Manager, assured partners of the fire service's commitment to continually raise awareness of safeguarding across its workforce including the delivery of mandatory training packages to provide all staff with the skills to identify safeguarding concerns.
23. Elective Home Education (EHE) was an area Partners were keen to seek assurance as there has been an increase in parents electing for home education since the start of the Pandemic, a picture being seen nationally. Partners were assured of ongoing work by the EHE Advisor, Education Safeguarding Officer, Vulnerable Pupil Panel and Monitoring Panel who continue to make every effort to ensure all children are seen.
24. In January, partners were provided an overview of current safeguarding arrangements within the National Probation Service (NPS) and Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). At the start of the Pandemic, only the very high-risk service users were being seen. Both services have reported, as offices begin to open they are now able to see more service users. NPS continued to undertake interventions and accredited programmes and the courts continue to hear priority cases, with no outstanding backlogs as was seen in the first lockdown. CRC is running unpaid work and accredited schemes and are now providing more face to face engagement for critical cases including MAPPA and safeguarding. It was highlighted that CRC will become the responsibility of NPS from June 2021 and both organisations working through how they will operate in readiness for this.
25. Partners continue to receive an overview of child and adult multi-agency performance data on a quarterly basis. Partners were assured measures are in place to address themes or trends highlighted to further understand the changing landscape which will shape what needs to be taken forward.

Climate Change

26. Children's Services continue to reduce the carbon footprint by moving to paperless practice, reducing printing and post is also impacting positively on the budget. Agile and home working has reduced the need to occupy large office buildings and the declining use of personal vehicles, ensures emissions are reduced. Staff are encouraged to complete training on climate change on Academy 10.

Councillor Jon Clarke
Children and Young People Portfolio

COUNCIL
25 MARCH 2021

OVERVIEW OF ECONOMY PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Economy Portfolio.

Central Park – CPI, Hybrid Business Innovation Centre and Landscaping Works

2. Cabinet received an update on the progress being made on Central Park and noted the work done so far to develop the plans for the Hybrid Business Innovation Centre (HBIC), which will accommodate 2,370 sq. m of business space.
3. Cabinet has authorised the release of £10,737,855, subject to formal approval of ERDF funding and have authorised the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services to proceed with the project including applying for planning permission.
4. Cabinet have designated the construction of the HBIC as a strategic procurement and the landscaping works and procurement of operator as non-strategic. Cabinet also delegated powers to the Procurement Board to progress the procurements in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules.
5. A very small part of the corner of Springfield Park adjacent to the existing Thompson Street mini roundabout has been identified for highway improvement and S.106 Agreements have been completed. A Deed on the whole of the site would have serious implications for that proposed highway improvement.
6. It was good to see in the Budget Announcement that CPI have received a £5m investment from the Government to develop a library of vaccines to fight Covid-19 variants. The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy visited CPI on 11 March 2021 to reinforce the strategic importance of this work being carried out in Darlington.

Local Plan

7. The Local Plan is currently being examined by Will Fieldhouse an independent Inspector appointed by the Government. The Inspector has issued a revised timetable and Hearings will be in the following weeks:
 - (a) 17 May
 - (b) 24 May
 - (c) 14 June
 - (d) 21 June (Reserve Days)
8. The Inspector intends to finalise the hearing programme by 15 March. At the moment we are planning for the hearings to be hybrid. The Inspector will be in the Town Hall with necessary officers and everyone else online.

Planning, Development Management and Environmental Health

9. Work on the new Development Management Charter is now complete and a report will be brought to Members of the Planning Committee for consideration. The Charter sets out the reasonable expectations of applicants, agents and objectors when they become involved in the planning process. The Charter also references the relevant guidance and policy documents we use to arrive at planning decisions listed on our web pages.
10. The Planning enforcement/compliance service is operating as normal. There are currently 64 planning enforcement cases under investigation. 89 Cases have been satisfactorily resolved by the Monitoring and Compliance Officer since the beginning of August.
11. Since the beginning of August 2020, we have received 729 applications which can be broken down into 26 major and 703 others. We have made 565 decisions in this period which include Committee Decisions, Chairs Delegated and Delegated decisions.
12. Enforcement notices have been served on two gypsy sites which have been appealed against to be heard by hearing. In addition, an enforcement notice has been served on unauthorised activity including the stationing of a caravan near Sadberge. Direct action in default is being taken on a property in Montrose Street. The works are being taken under section 215 [untidy land and buildings]. It will result in a significant improvement in the street scene and the amenity of residents. An appropriate charge on the property will be made on the property to recover the Council's costs.
13. Further negotiations are ongoing relating to the Supermarket proposal at Faverdale which will be presented to the Planning Committee in due course.
14. The section 106 agreement associated with the Lidl supermarket application already granted planning permission at Faverdale has now been signed, to make the permission 'live' and ready to commence.
15. Significant progress is now being made with regard to the fire damaged building at Skinnergate. Negotiations are ongoing with Historic England and architectural agents have been appointed to move the project forward as quickly as possible to planning application stage.
16. The Environmental Health Department responded to 1641 requests for service in Q3. The main categories of these requests are:
 - (a) Food 106
 - (b) Licensing 42
 - (c) Noise 148
 - (d) Planning Enquiries 95
 - (e) Refuse 65
 - (f) Pest 177
 - (g) Personal Search 450
 - (h) Covid 461

17. In October 2020, an officer from Environmental Health took part in a 'virtual' Business Week Webinar to give businesses advice and guidance on the Covid restrictions and business closure legislation.
18. An item was brought to Members of the Planning Committee in February regarding the work that has been undertaken to produce a design code for the Faverdale Garden Village. The design code will let out design criteria that will be used when planning applications are received. The intention of the guidance is to ensure that a consistent approach is taken to ensure higher design standards are achieved reflecting the garden village status of the site. A Member briefing took place on Wednesday 3 March.

Darlington Towns Fund

19. The aims and purpose of the Towns Fund is to drive the sustainable economic regeneration of towns to deliver long term economic and productivity growth.
20. The four project areas identified as part of the Â£1m Forward Funding programme have been unanimously supported by the Town Board and the necessary procurement, tender and engagement exercise have commenced. These areas are:
 - (a) The Yards Phase1 (Clark's and Buckton's Yards) – transform and improve public space;
 - (b) Town Centre lighting enhancements;
 - (c) Town Centre Wi-Fi; and
 - (d) the acquisition of properties along Northgate which contribute to the wider Railway Heritage Quarter project.
21. Officers have facilitated two positive and productive stakeholder meetings where local businesses took the opportunity to pass comments on the proposed designs. Improvement works include enhanced public realm and seating areas, new doors, windows, guttering and downpipes, new lighting and new paintwork and artwork, which will encourage people to visit the ever growing number of independent shops and allow people to dwell for a time in these attractive historic yards. Works associate with the Yards Phase 1 have recently commenced and will be completed in the springtime.
22. Terms for the acquisition of 142/144 Northgate have been agreed and signifies the first step towards the Council's intention of trying to acquire the remaining units which make up the whole of the former Edward Pease residence. Discussions regarding the acquisition of further premises on Northgate are continuing.
23. The Heads of Terms for the main Towns Fund programme have been agreed and signed by all parties, including the Secretary of State.

Business Investment Team Update

24. As well as supporting the on-going business development enquiries, the Business Investment team have focussed on the following.

Local Restrictions Support Grants

25. The Government has provided funding for local authorities to support local businesses adversely affected by the Covid-19 restrictions. Support is in the form of grants to individual businesses. The business support schemes are as follows:

- (a) Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) - running from 14 October to 4 November 2020.
- (b) Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) - running from 5 November to 2 December 2020.
- (c) Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) - Tier 3 restrictions – running from 2 December to 30 December 2020.
- (d) Additional Restrictions Scheme.
- (e) Christmas Support Payment for wet-led pubs.
- (f) Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) - Tier 4 restrictions – running from 31 December 2020 and Closed Business Lockdown Payments running from 5 January 2021.

26. The Business Investment Team are administering the LSRG (Open) and the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme. Business Rates team are administering the LSRG “closed” schemes.

	Applications	Approved	Declined	Awaiting Decision	Amount Paid
LRS Open	353	218	131	4	£192,809.26
LRS (Closed Addendum) National Lockdown	1,040	830	207	3	£1,262,774.00
LRS Tier 3	411	251	153	7	£405,592.43
Christmas Support Payment for Pubs	73	48	24	1	£48,000.00
LRS Tier 4/National Lockdown	1,093	790	290	13	£1,964,657.20
Closed Business Lockdown Payment					£3,512,000.00
Additional Restrictions Grant	404	137	252	15	£497,940.31
TOTAL:	3,374				£7,883,773.20

27. Darlington Borough Council has undertaken a review of the discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant scheme to support local business during the national lockdown restrictions.

28. It has now been agreed that the eligibility criteria for this discretionary grant be expanded. This will allow more businesses to access financial support, including support for home-based and mobile businesses. The additional business sectors now eligible for support include:

- (a) Garage Services – repair and maintenance of motor vehicles
- (b) Children’s nurseries

- (c) Pet Welfare Support Services – such as boarding, day-care, walking and grooming
 - (d) Live Event Support Services
 - (e) Wedding Support Services, including photographers & videographers
29. In addition, the Council has introduced new one-off grants for self-employed taxi-drivers, registered childcare providers and approved driving instructors.
30. So far, Covid-19 business grants awarded via DBC since the start of the pandemic is as follows:
- (a) 735 Small Business Grants - £17,350,000
 - (b) 364 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants - £6,520,000
 - (c) 105 Discretionary Grants - £1,170,000
 - (d) 3,374 Local Restriction Support Grants - £7,883,773
31. The total value of grants awarded in Darlington since the start of the pandemic in March 2020 is £32,923,773.

Climate Change

32. The climate change action plan is receiving final amendments before it will be seen again by the Climate Change Working Group and is then sent to Asset Hub. Procurement of a technical expert to carry out the district heat network feasibility study is in train.

Councillor Alan Marshall
Economy Portfolio

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COUNCIL 25 MARCH 2021

OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the main areas of work under my Health and Housing Portfolio were as follows: -

Overview

2. A national lockdown for England continues to be in effect. On 22 February 2021 the Prime Minister set out roadmap to cautiously ease lockdown restrictions.
3. The roadmap, which has been published on gov.uk outlines four steps for easing restrictions. Before proceeding to the next step, the Government will examine the data to assess the impact of previous steps.

This assessment will be based on four tests:

- The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully.
 - Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated.
 - Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS.
 - Our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new Variants of Concern.
4. The rate of infection in Darlington has shown a sustained reduction since the beginning of January 2021. The current rate is now similar to that of the beginning of October 2020.
 5. The data from Public Health England indicates that the new variant is now the most common variant in new cases in Darlington
 6. The latest hospital data showing a decrease in hospital bed occupancy with patients with COVID -19. The numbers of those in ITU have shown a decrease across County Durham and Darlington Trust compared to previous weeks. The numbers of new patients admitted as emergencies with COVID 19 has also continued to show a decrease
 7. Overall, the numbers of deaths are higher than the five-year average for January although there have been several weeks where the death rate has been lower. Darlington continues to have the lowest overall rates in the North East.

8. Our 'Keep Darlington on the right track' campaign continues to evolve with adverts running across various social media platforms, helping to engage with a range of audiences. Our response based on the relevant public health data we review weekly. Information was also advertised in the March edition of the One Darlington magazine.

Community Testing

9. As of 16 March 2020, the Council had undertaken 25,757 community tests across all our sites in the borough. I continue to urge all Members to do everything they can to help drive uptake of appointments across all our community sites.
10. Community testing for asymptomatic people started on 14 December 2020 at the Dolphin Centre and then rolled out to five community sites at Firthmoor Community Centre, Head of Steam Railway Museum, Heighington Village Hall, Middleton St George Community Centre and Red Hall Community Centre on 11 January 2021. A site was also opened at the Council Depot to provide regular testing for operational staff.
11. Darlington's community testing programme is leading the way not only in the North-East, but in the UK. Our efforts are helping to interrupt community transmission of COVID-19 and is helping to protect communities right across Darlington.
12. I was delighted that the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care recently acknowledged Darlington's great work in response to the pandemic and commended our community testing programme.
13. There are currently 160 staff involved in the community testing programme mainly drawn from Dolphin Centre and Hippodrome whilst those facilities have been closed.
14. As the testing environment continues to develop and the country works through the road map to reopening, testing being a key element of this journey, we will need to adapt and evolve our approach to accommodate both public behaviour changes and staffing challenges that will be presented as we progress.
15. All schools have been providing students and staff with regular lateral flow tests since the beginning of term on 8 March as part of the actions to keep staff and pupils safe in school and support learning. There have been a range of other testing programmes launched to support more people to have regular tests to support the exit from lockdown. This includes employers undertaking their own Workplace Testing and Community Collect Testing which allows individuals and families to collect test kits and undertake their own tests at home.

Community Collect

16. Community Collect is a new channel where members of the public can pick up self-test kits from Community Test Sites in Darlington. Community Collect enables twice-weekly testing kits to be used at home.
17. The introduction of self-test, where people can carry out rapid lateral flow tests themselves at home or where they work, will significantly expand asymptomatic

testing, building on the capability that has already been established through community asymptomatic test sites and national workplace testing.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

18. I was delighted to observe the opening of Darlington's mass vaccination centre at Mowden Park Rugby Club on 1 March, this was fourth Vaccination Centre for our region and the first in Tees Valley.
19. This site is part of the national network of mass vaccination sites and will be available to local residents as well as people from surrounding areas. Those in the wider population cohorts of younger aged adults are now receiving their notification for their appointments for vaccination.
20. Large Vaccination Centres can see up to 1,000 patients a day, running 12 hours a day, seven days a week.
21. The vaccination programme in Darlington continues to progress well with 94 per cent of all those aged 70 or over now having received their first dose of the vaccine.
22. Council teams continue to support the NHS and PCN. Our Council team have been supporting the vaccination site at Feethams House with the organisation of volunteers, parking arrangements and have provided several call centre staff to support local residents with booking vaccine appointments over the telephone.
23. There is now a wide range of data available regarding National vaccination progress on the NHS website: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/>

Public Health

24. In the next couple of months Healthwatch Darlington will be distributing 200 suicide prevention tins on behalf of the Council as part of the regional roll out. These tins will be placed in a range of venues including foodbanks, schools, colleges, primary care and with large employers.
25. The tins contain information to support people who need help themselves in relation to suicidal thoughts or who have family or friends they are concerned about. Alongside the distribution, key contacts in the venues will be asked to undertake a 20-minute training session. This will provide them with the tools and confidence to have difficult conversations around suicide. The training is free and open to everyone and the link is: https://www.relias.co.uk/hubfs/ZSA-FullTraining-10012020/story_html5.htm
26. Work is underway to get MECC (Make Every Contact Count) training implemented through the Council workforce. This will be done via Academy 10, Workforce Development and Customer Services with a view that interactions with members of the public can be used as opportunities to promote wellbeing and individualized signposting.
27. This training will also be offered to voluntary sector organisations to reach a wider audience and more beneficiaries.

Health and Wellbeing Board

28. The Health and Wellbeing Board met on the 18 March 2021. The main discussion item was an update on the COVID-19 local outbreak. This discussion was informed by a presentation by the Director of Public Health which outlined some key data describing the impact of the pandemic on local communities in Darlington.

Darlington PING! 2021 Table Tennis Project

29. Darlington Move More Team has been successful with a £2500 application to deliver a new PING! 2021 Table Tennis project. The programme will use table tennis to remove barriers to physical activity, inspire behaviour change and deliver positive outcomes. The team has acquired three new outdoor tables and a full programme will be in place from April 2021 targeting families, offering over 50 sessions and adding into the Eastbourne Sports Complex membership offer, alongside the track and gym, and be utilised as part of the Darlington Move More Team outdoor activity programme.

Darlington Move More Team Virtual Classes

30. The Darlington Move More Team have offered virtual classes to encourage existing and new participants to stay active during the lockdown period. The classes have been extremely popular and are vitally important in such a challenging time. Classes have been offered in Keep Fit, Yoga and Pilates.

Darlington Rugby League Project

31. The Darlington Move More Team has been successful in gaining £2000 to develop a new Rugby League Club at Eastbourne Sports Complex. The project will involve working in partnership with Darlington Rugby League Club, Darlington School Sports Partnership and the Rugby Football League Development Officer. We will deliver Rugby League Activity at Eastbourne Sports Complex working in partnership with the local cluster of schools in the Stephenson Ward of Darlington.

Housing Services

Tenancy Policy 2020-2025

32. Cabinet has approved the Tenancy Policy 2020-2025 which has been updated to ensure that Housing Services make best use of the Council owned stock; to target Council housing for those in most need; and to ensure that properties continue to meet resident's needs.
33. The policy has been updated to amend flexible tenancies to apply to properties that have been extensively adapted and to properties in areas of regeneration. This will allow Housing Services to ensure the properties and adaptations continue to meet resident's needs and reduce homes that have been highlighted for regeneration standing empty for longer than necessary.

Housing Management and Maintenance

34. Customer Engagement is a high priority for Housing. Part of the digital inclusion strategy for Housing is the introduction of the Facebook page, where we can keep

residents up to date with services, good news stories and details of local events. The page went live just before Christmas and has over 500 followers, which is approximately 10 per cent of our current stock.

35. Gas servicing and repairs to Council properties continue to be facilitated throughout the Pandemic, ensuring the safety of Council tenants' is paramount. All employees are continuing to wear PPE and maintain safe working procedures when entering tenants' homes to provide additional protection
36. We are currently looking for people to join our tenants board. The tenants board are consulted on any key changes that the housing team want to make and are an important part of ensuring we do right for all our tenants. People interested are encouraged to email the housing team: customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk

Housing Income

37. Our arrears recovery process has continued to provide a balanced style of support and enforcement and has continued to prove successful. Current rent arrears have continued to reduce and are lower than this time last year, the national average in January 2021 was 3.69 per cent compared to our figures which are 2.9 per cent with over £21.6 million having been collected since April 2020. The number of tenants claiming Universal Credit has continued to increase however, average arrears for these customers is still less than five weeks, indicating how this approach has supported customers throughout these difficult times.

Lifeline Services

38. Following a successful bid for funding through the infection control fund, the Lifeline Team have continued to roll out the delivery of iPads to our sheltered and extra care schemes to support the tenants around social isolation. The iPads help support the activities and communication within the schemes.
39. Over the last month these devices helped facilitate:
 - 50 video calls to family and friends.
 - 3 digital tenancy sign ups.
 - 100 puzzle pages.
 - Promoted keeping active with some tenants logging their pedometers to devices and doing step challenges in the schemes.
 - Tenants can use them to liaise with their GP for consultations where needed.
40. They have proved invaluable and will be increasingly promoted and used throughout the schemes and while some tenants were a bit apprehensive about technology at the beginning, are now using them and finding them a helpful tool.

Housing Options

41. Over the course of the last couple of months, there have been several severe weather warnings, meaning we have needed to follow Severe Weather Emergency Protocol to ensure that anyone presenting as homeless is provided with emergency accommodation to prevent them rough sleeping in adverse weather conditions.

42. Since the first weather warning week commencing 21 December 2020, we have placed 59 individuals and families into temporary accommodation, with 43 of them still being provided with accommodation. We have had some positive move ons: Four individuals have been granted introductory tenancies with the Council, four individuals have moved into supported accommodation and two individuals have secure tenancies in the private sector.
43. We are currently putting together a bid for the next round of Rough Sleeper Initiative funding. We are looking at the funding application on both an individual approach from Darlington Borough Council and with our regional partners to ensure we can enhance our existing provisions and bridge the gaps around support for those with mental health conditions.

Energy Efficiency/Climate Change

44. As member will be aware, we have set aside £1M of Housing Revenue Account funding to put us in a strong position to bid for any future government grants which may require match funding. We have been successful in securing funding as part of round 1 of the Local Authority Delivery (LAD 1) for energy efficiency improvements. This work will include thermal efficient UPVC windows and improved insulation works.
45. In addition, the Tees Valley Combined Authority has secured regional funding on our behalf under the LAD 2 programme for all five local authority areas. This will include development funds to support data quality improvements as well as physical improvements to our Council housing stock
46. In addition, the Tees Valley Combined Authority has secured regional funding on our behalf to receive further funding under the LAD 2 programme for all five local authority areas. This will include development funds to support data quality improvements as well as physical improvements to our Council housing stock

Councillor Kevin Nicholson
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Housing

COUNCIL
25 MARCH 2021

OVERVIEW OF LOCAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Local Services Portfolio.

Transport Programme

2. A report providing details of works, achievements and performance during 2020/21 was presented to Communities and Local Services Committee and Cabinet. The report also sought approval for the 2021/22 programme and the framework for a new Darlington Transport Plan that will be consulted upon later in the year.

Highway Maintenance Schemes

3. Highway Maintenance schemes ongoing:
 - (a) C182 Longfield Road: Footway Reconstruction (0.113km).
4. Highway Maintenance schemes due to start:
 - (a) Stanhope Road South/Coniscliffe Road, West Street: Carriageway reconstruction (0.260km).

English National Concessionary Travel Scheme

5. During March 2021 over 14,000 bus passes reached their expiry date. Ahead of the expiry, pass holders in receipt of the Older Person's Bus Pass were asked to update their personal details and renew their pass through a new online system. Telephone support has been available to those who did not access to the internet or who do not have an email address. Disabled Person's and Disabled Companion's Bus Pass holders were sent their pass automatically in February. The new online system is available for new applications of all pass types going forward.

Woodland Road/Duke Street Walking and Cycling Route

6. Tees Valley Combined Authority has completed the consultation on the initial design for the new cycling route on Woodland Road, Outram Street and Duke Street. Overall, there was a high level of support for the scheme, in particular for the 20mph speed limit on Duke Street, which is currently in place on a temporary basis. Detailed comments from stakeholders and the public are being used to finalise the scheme design and a funding agreement should be signed by the end of March for the scheme to be implemented by March 2022.

Rethinking Victoria Road

7. The section from ring road to Clifton Road junction is programmed to be completed by the end of March 2021. At this point the footways on both sides of Victoria Road will have been improved and the carriageway will have been resurfaced and

relined. The phase between Clifton Road and Darlington Station will then commence.

Head of Steam

8. The museum is still working to engage with visitors digitally whilst the building remains closed. A new online exhibition featuring the work of local railway artist, Stephen Bainbridge went live on Saturday 13 February, remaining online until 26 March 2021.
9. Museum staff are working on an outdoor event plan for 2021 dependent on current COVID-19 rules and restrictions.
10. The museum hosted a virtual Station Scamps Make Along event via Zoom on Friday 19 February with the possibility of hosting other virtual family events.
11. The museum continues to be used as a community testing hub until the end of March 2021.

Creative Darlington

12. Darlington based music organisation Tracks have received support from Arts Council England and Creative Darlington to promote a Back on Track programme between January and April 2021, which includes Noisy Daughters workshops, Big Little Gigs concerts for parents with young children and Hark the Sound of Stories events, combining music and literature.
13. A Skerne focused music programme is currently taking place in schools including the Education Village. The project is expected to generate a short film and involves Durham Music Service, Orchestras Live, Creative Darlington and Darlington Hippodrome, The Discover Brightwater Landscape Partnership and Opera North.
14. Theatre Hullabaloo have applied to the Thriving Communities programme co-ordinated by Arts Council England with support from Creative Darlington. If successful, Theatre Hullabaloo, Foundation UK and Groundwork NE & Cumbria, the core partners in the proposal, would work with other parties including The Dolphin Centre and Darlington Library Service to offer a variety of activity and support to parents in Darlington on social prescription up to the end of March 2022.

Libraries

15. The library is currently operating on a Select and Collect basis, whereby customers can order their books online or over the phone and collect them from our doors. The library continues to offer free home deliveries to those aged 60 and over, delivering to 275 households each month. The online library continues to offer members eBooks, eAudio, digital magazines and newspapers to read from their device at home.
16. Libraries have introduced "5 Recommended Reads", a bag which customers can collect and borrow from the door containing staff picks based on themes such as Crime and Thriller, Romance, Teen and Young Adult.

17. To support Children's Mental Health Week, libraries created and lent over 70 free Wellbeing Bags. Each bag contains a book to borrow for an adult and child to support positive mental health, along with a bath bomb containing a toy, mindful colouring activities and information about the campaign for families to keep.

Darlington Hippodrome

18. A second submission has been made to the Arts Council's Cultural Recovery Fund requesting an additional £500,000 to cover overheads, staff costs, marketing re-launch campaign and purchase of cinema equipment. Art Council England are aiming to contact all applicants with their decision no later than 31 March 2021.
19. The online programme of events, engagement activities and classes continue to attract audiences. The weekly quiz has been the runaway success of the closure period attracting 170 households to the quiz on Facebook Live and regular weekly views of 1500.

Environmental Services

20. Staff in Street Scene and particularly those working on refuse and recycling collection have worked continually throughout the recent winter weather events ensuring residents' bins were collected and emptied.
21. Since December, which was the start of the cold weather period, Winter Maintenance staff have been out regularly gritting the highway network ensuring residents who needed to travel can do so safely. It was particularly challenging in late January/early February with road temperatures consistently below zero as well as a number of snow events to cope with.

Climate Change

22. In my transport report to Cabinet earlier this month, I outlined the street lighting LED programme that has generated a significant saving in both electricity costs and carbon reduction and that this year, signs would be changed to either LED or reflective types to further reduce our carbon footprint. Similarly, this year more recycling work will be undertaken as part of the highway maintenance programme. A significant project is being promoted seeing over 8000 tonnes of recycled material being re-used from the site and from other sites across the Borough. This saves on material going to land tip and the amount of newly manufactured material being required. A significant proportion of the budget is allocated to sustainable transport and road safety activity and further funds have been secured for sustainable travel initiatives from Tees Valley Combined Authority, which will help promote greener and healthier travel.
23. Work is currently underway to develop a campaign to encourage residents to reduce contamination within recycling bins by placing rubbish in the correct bin and increase the amount of waste recycled. A study of the Council's fleet of vehicles has recently been carried out with a view to moving to a more sustainable fuel source over a period of time as vehicles become due for replacement. Whilst unfortunately there was some vandalism to the trees on some sites, overall, the tree planting programme was a success as a result of the great work from the army of volunteers, and planning has now commenced for next season's planting.

**Councillor Andy Keir
Local Services Portfolio**

**COUNCIL
25 MARCH 2021**

OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

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

Modern.Gov

2. As Members will be aware, Democratic Services have recently rolled out the Modern.Gov app to Members. Modern.Gov is an electronic committee management system which is designed to facilitate committee and decision management within the Council and was implemented in Darlington in 2018. As well as providing good accessibility for members and the public to electronic meeting information and documentation it has enabled more efficient working in the Democratic Services Team.
3. The app which has now been rolled out, will enable Members to securely view, annotate and download Committee agendas and reports and, in enabling this, will help to reduce the organisations carbon footprint. Using less paper will also mean reducing our costs; we currently spend around £17,500 on paper every year.
4. Can I encourage all Members to use this app with the expectation that the Council will move to paperless committee meetings with effect from May 2021.

Police and Crime Commissioner Election and Tees Valley Combined Authority Mayoral Election (and the Red Hall and Lingfield Ward By-Election) – Thursday, 6 May 2021

5. Arrangements are now at an advanced stage for the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner Election and Tees Valley Combined Authority Mayoral Election, together with a local Ward By-Election which is to be held in the Red Hall and Lingfield Ward, following the resignation of Councillor Sam Howarth.
6. Due to the impact of Covid-19 on education and possible school closures as a result of schools being used as polling stations, the Rt Hon. Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for School Standards, and Lord True CBE., Minister of State for the Cabinet Office, wrote to all Returning Officers and Head Teachers on 11 February 2021. Following this all schools used as Polling Places were contacted to find out whether they remained available, or whether they wished to not be used for this election. A number of schools subsequently asked not to be used as Polling Places at this election.
7. Officers from Democratic Services have therefore been working hard over the course of the last few weeks to identify, visit and acquire suitable alternatives, which are listed below:

Original Polling Place	Polling District	New Polling Place
------------------------	------------------	-------------------

The Rydal Academy	BLB	King William Street Community Centre
The Rydal Academy	BLC	St. John's Church of England Academy
Holy Family RC Primary School	CKA	Cockerton Library
Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College	COA, COB, COC	Sports Pavilion, Abbey Road Sports Field, Abbey Road
Carmel College	HKA, HKB	Salutation Hall, Salutation Road
Mowden Junior School (Federation of Mowden Schools)	MOA, MOB	The Mowden Public House, Staindrop Road
St. Thomas Aquinas Church Hall	NRA	Darlington Elim Pentecostal Church, Bowman Street
St. Augustine's Parish Centre	PEA	Darlington Friends Meeting House, 6 Skinnergate
St. Augustine's Parish Centre	PWC	Darlington Baptist Church, Grange Road
Great Stainton Church Hall	SMA, SMC	Bishopton Village Hall, Church View

8. The Team have also been working closely with our Public Health Team and Health and Safety Team to ensure that Polling Stations will be safe places to vote. Face coverings will be required in Polling Stations, except where a medical exemption applies, with social distancing and hand sanitisation encouraged. Cleaning regimes will also be in place, and those staff working on Polling Stations will be required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) throughout the day.
9. Those residents wishing to vote at these elections, but who are not yet registered, must do so by Monday, 19 April 2021. In line with the Electoral Commission's national drive, we are encouraging as many registered electors as possible to apply for a Postal Vote for these elections, and to do so in good time. An Application Form to Vote by Post appeared in both January's and this month's 'One Darlington' magazine, and we continue to use our social media channels to promote postal voting. The deadline to apply for a Postal Vote is 5pm on Tuesday, 20 April 2021.
10. Residents displaying symptoms of Covid-19, or who are self-isolating should not attend a Polling Station, however provisions will be in place to apply for an Emergency Proxy Vote if required due to health circumstances. This is to ensure that no-one is disenfranchised from voting due the current pandemic.
11. The Verification and Count for these elections will take place in the Sports Hall at the Dolphin Centre over the course of two days, with the verification of all votes and the Count for the Red Hall and Lingfield Ward By-Election taking place on the morning of Friday, 7 May 2021, and the Count for the Tees Valley Combined Authority Mayoral Election taking place later that afternoon. The Count for the Police and Crime Commissioner Election will then take place on Saturday, 8 May 2021. Covid safety measures will be in place throughout the Count venue, with face

coverings required, and social distancing and hand sanitisation protocols to be observed.

Cabinet Updates for the Resources portfolio

12. At its meeting on the 9th February 2021, Cabinet received a number of reports, including the Medium Term Financial Plan which was agreed along with the Capital Strategy and forwarded to Full Council for approval on the 18 February 2021.
13. Cabinet received a presentation from the Council's external auditors EY who confirmed the Council's accounts give a true and fair view for the year ending 31 March 2020, and that the Council have put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in its use of resources.
14. At the meeting, Cabinet also received an up-to-date forecast (Quarter 3) of the 2020-21 revenue budget outturn as part of the Council's continuous financial management process and the latest projections demonstrated an overall improvement against the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) of £2.943m. The report also noted the Government's funding package of support to assist with Covid-19 was anticipated to adequately cover the Covid-19 pressures faced in 2020/21 and that any surplus would be earmarked to cover 2021/22 expenditure.
15. Cabinet gave consideration the latest Capital resource and commitment position, to inform monitoring of the affordability and funding of the Council's capital programme and received an update on the current status of all construction projects currently being undertaken by the Council.
16. At its meeting on the 9th March 2021, Cabinet approved a revised policy dealing with surveillance activity under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, which was updated following recommendations arising from a periodic inspection last autumn by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office and also to reflect staff retirements and senior management changes requiring changes to Authorising Officers and the Senior Responsible Officer.

Capital Projects and Design Services Management

17. The Council's Capital Programme has a wide range of exciting projects being developed and delivered.
 - (a) Design work is progressing on the programme, with a number of schemes recently submitted for planning consideration and more being prepared. A pre-planning consultation exercise for the Railway Heritage Quarter scheme proposals is under way.
 - (b) Business cases continue to be developed to secure additional projects from funding opportunities.
 - (c) A programme of demolition works is ongoing across a number of locations to facilitate future regeneration opportunities with the Union Street Church site recently reaching completion. The demolition of the former Audio nightclub on Commercial Street is due to commence shortly.
 - (d) The implementation of an integrated control point system 'Project in a Box' continues with training to be rolled out to team members from March.
 - (e) There remains a risk of delay costs from Covid-19 related effects and possible Brexit implications to ongoing projects. There are some signs that material

costs are rising, for example steel, and this will be monitored closely as schemes progress to understand the impact.

Furlough

18. The Governments Furlough scheme has now been extended until 30 September 2021. From July employers will need to contribute 10 per cent and from August to September 20 per cent. The Council will continue to use the flexible furlough scheme which allows employees to work some hours where possible and this has been invaluable in regard to flexibility when running the COVID testing sites.

Councillor Charles Johnson
Cabinet Member with Resources Portfolio

COUNCIL
25 MARCH 2021

OVERVIEW OF ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Adults Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Covid-19 Response

2. We received a verbal update on the ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically in relation to care providers. It was pleasing to hear that the number of positive cases across Darlington was dropping, from 61.8 per 100,000 on 25 January 2021, to 6.6 per 100,000 on 27 February 2021, and that this was reflected throughout care settings. Recent contact with care providers had revealed that there had been no deaths attributable to Covid-19 within a care setting within the previous two weeks.
3. Members were informed that since 28 September 2020, 271 care home staff had been diagnosed with Covid-19, with 284 care home residents receiving a positive diagnosis. During the same period, it was reported that 73 staff in domiciliary care had been positively diagnosed with Covid-19, and that 33 service users had contracted the virus.
4. The Committee were made aware that there were six ongoing outbreaks within care home settings, and that these were being carefully managed with support from the Public Health Team and the Outbreak Control Team.
5. We were pleased to understand that 95 per cent of staff across the provider sector had received their initial Covid vaccination, and that this figure rose to 99 per cent when considering staff solely in care and domiciliary settings. It was noted that these figures did not include those staff who had not engaged with the vaccination programme, or those who were currently ill with Covid-19. Members were informed that 94 per cent of care home residents in Darlington had also received their initial Covid-19 vaccination. We were keen to know whether arrangements were in place to deliver on the recent changes to the vaccination programme in relation to those with learning disabilities.
6. We heard that staffing levels remained high, with just a four per cent absence rate across the care and domiciliary sector, however concerns were expressed, and shared by the Committee, in relation to occupancy and void levels, introducing a threat of unsustainability within the sector. We were particularly interested to learn more about the psychological support available to staff who were employed in care home and domiciliary settings throughout the duration of the pandemic.
7. The Committee also heard from Hayley Robertshaw, Director of Care and Development at St. Martin's Care, who have six care homes across the North East, including within Darlington. Ms. Robertshaw provided Members with an overview of the support received from Darlington Borough Council and Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust, and this also provided a valuable insight into her

experiences of working in a local care home during the pandemic. Ms. Robertshaw was able to provide reassurances around the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in care homes, and we had an informative discussion on the approach being adopted by care providers whose staff refused the Covid-19 vaccine.

Councillor Anne-Marie Curry
Chair of Adults Scrutiny Committee

**COUNCIL
25 MARCH 2021**

OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Correction to Minutes of Meeting held on 4 January 2020

2. Committee voted at its meeting on 1 March 2021 to amend the minutes reported to this Council as Item 2 in the last Overview of Children and Young People Scrutiny report dated 28 January 2021. For this reason, I must make clear that under the item Medium Term Financial Plan, a majority of members indicated by rollcall vote the following: (a) That this Scrutiny Committee has no comment to make on the proposed schedule of fees and charges for those services within its remit (as there are none) and supports the budget lines set out within the Children's Services area of the budget.

Work Programme

3. Members gave consideration to the Work Programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during 2019/20, and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.

Children In Need Self Harm Project

4. Ian Neale, Darlington Mind Young Persons Co-ordinator gave an update on the Children in Need Self-Harm Project and the work of Darlington Mind in supporting young people in all mental health issues. He confirmed that young people are generally struggling with their mental health and, in particular, worried about the impact of Covid-19 and returning to school on 8 March.
5. We were advised that Darlington Mind has two counsellors offering help to young people and Members can also signpost young people for counselling to Ian, upon completion of a referral form. This service is available to young people aged 11-18 years.
6. Members discussed how to encourage more young people to take up mentoring roles as the 'drop in' funding unfortunately ceases in June/July and future plans to have peer mentors within schools. As Ian is relatively new to this post, we encouraged him to make contact with some other organisations who are already doing some fantastic work with young people to address mental health.

Development of the Darlington Care Collective

7. Members received an update report on the Developing Darlington Care Collective (DDCC) which was developed following the National Social Care Recruitment Campaign ("We need you now, they need you always") and was initially discussed during the first Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

8. The rationale of the DDCC is to provide support to the Care Sector in response to Covid-19, particularly in terms of low-level role capacity and need, supporting mental health and resilience, whilst creating opportunities to develop partnerships and multi-agency working across the health, social care and education sector in Darlington.
9. A number of priorities have been discussed with cross sector partners across the borough including support for the development of capacity across the Children and Adults Care Sector, particularly Care Homes and Children's Residential Care, should a second wave of Covid19 manifest and to promote good mental health and make every contact count (MECC); and a Workforce Development Team have linked with key partners from across the borough to gauge appetite in supporting and being part of the DDCC.
10. Martin Webster, Workforce Development Manager outlined the four key focus priorities of the Darlington Care Collective; ways to support the Adult Care Home Sector and Children's Residential Services and support across the board for those working with people; how the Collective were looking at ways to develop volunteering, training and employment opportunities through multi-agency working bringing together 50 key partners from across the Borough, including the Council, Care Homes, Health partners, the Police, Children's residential homes, colleges, universities and the voluntary sector; and the key drivers around supporting the sector in terms of bodes and designing consistent and sustainable models of training to link people into opportunities including access to Work Force Capacity Funding.
11. Members questions related to apprenticeship schemes and if adequate support was being provided to access funding; support for employment opportunities and getting people engaged into the process and progression of social work. We were also advised that of the National Social Work Apprenticeship Scheme and the work with Sunderland University regarding this.
12. Members welcomed the DDCC and have requested an update on the project at a future meeting.

Digital Inclusion

13. Tony Murphy, Head of Education and Inclusion gave Members a verbal update on the current position with regard to digital inclusion. We were advised that approximately 3,600 devices had been issued to schools and Academy Trusts prior to February to focus on disadvantaged children. The number of devices available to each school is based on the Department for Education (DfE) estimates.
14. Remote formal learning has developed throughout the pandemic and a higher degree of formal learning has been developed and therefore the limited number of devices in households is creating problems with some families. Detailed allocation and distribution data has been requested from the DfE so that this authority can support our schools in the best way. The Education Strategy Group also meet weekly with the DfE to examine the level of need and also to identify any other barriers to learning.

15. Members discussed with Tony the varied home learning experiences within families; the mental health impact on parents and in particular single parents; the barriers to accessing learning for some families who have multiple people trying to access remotely; access issues especially in rural areas; and the access to quiet space which is limited in some households. We acknowledged that despite schools returning on 8 March this still remained an issue of this Scrutiny Committee's agenda.
16. The chair provided members with a copy of her email to the North East Regional Schools Commissioner and the reply received regarding this Scrutiny Committee's continuing concerns over access to and provision of digital devices and connectivity for children and young people in Darlington.

Review Group

17. As part of the ongoing review to understand the impact that Covid-19 has had in Darlington on our children and young people and what future actions may be required, and the second virtual evidence gathering event to hear the 'voice of the child and young person' will now be held on 25 March 2021 after the schools return.

Councillor Cyndi Hughes
Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

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**COUNCIL
25 MARCH 2021**

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Community Safety Performance 2020/2021

2. Members welcomed a PowerPoint presentation from the Head of Community Safety and Chief Inspector, Durham Constabulary, providing an update on Community Safety Performance 2020/2021.
3. Members were provided with details of the Council's vision and Council Plan priorities 2020-2023, the Stronger Communities Portfolio vision and priorities 2020-2023 and the service objectives. We also acknowledged the role of the Community Safety team during the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. We noted the key headlines and figures for the service areas within the Community Safety team and we received a breakdown of crime and disorder figures for Darlington and the Town Centre, noting that all crime had decreased for the period of April 2020 to January 2021 when compared to the previous year.
5. We did discuss in particular fly tipping in back lanes and dog fouling and were assured that various preventative measures were in place to deliver on the Back Lanes Project Action Plan, with 28 of the 48 actions completed and that a number of streets had been issued with Section 46 legal notices. In relation to dog fouling we noted that additional dog waste bins had been introduced and that a working group had been established to identify a number of actions to address dog fouling and to promote a safer and cleaner environment.
6. Members did raise concern regarding the reporting of incidents by residents, highlighting that residents may be reluctant to report any issues via 101 due to the call queues, perceived lack of response to reports and unclear online reporting mechanisms. Members were assured by the Chief Inspector that the police respond as quickly as possible to reported incidents where resources allow and Members and residents were encouraged to engage with Neighbourhood police teams. In addition, PCSO's have been tasked to engage regularly with their Ward Councillors and PCSO's will continue to engage with young people through school visits and youth projects when restrictions allow.
7. We also welcomed an update in relation to dog thefts in Darlington, noting that there had been 19 reported dog thefts across County Durham and Darlington in the last year, with 8 of those being in Darlington. This was considered a pandemic crime resulting from an increase in demand and in the price of dogs. Members were pleased to note the actions in place to address dog theft in the town.

Grass Verge Management

8. Scrutiny received a report which provided Members with details of the current position adopted by the Council in relation to the management of grass verges and to seek Members agreement for a process of reviewing the current arrangements.
9. The Committee were informed that verge parking was a common issue across the Borough that was increasingly causing problems and that the Council receives complaints regarding the current approach to grass verge damage.
10. Details were provided of approaches taken by other local authorities to manage verges along with solutions that were available to the Council to either deter or prevent parking or to accommodate parking.
11. Members of this Scrutiny Committee have agreed that a Task and Finish Group be established to assist the development of a new operational policy in relation to the management of grass verges.
12. Members also considered and agreed to the proposed format of the review and proposed expected outcomes which were detailed in the submitted report. Members noted that the scope of the review could be informed and broadened by Members' input.

School Streets Initiative – Review Group

13. Scrutiny received a report presenting the outcome and findings of the School Streets Initiative Review Group, established by this Scrutiny Committee to review the initial findings of a commission considering the potential for School Street Initiative.
14. The Committee agreed that a Quad of Aims be submitted to establish a Task and Finish Review group to review additional measures available to address issues associated with traffic problems around schools.
15. We also agreed to the following recommendations and Cabinet were requested to consider the recommendations at its meeting on 9 March 2021 :-
 - (a) that the School Streets Initiative should be progressed to the next phase; and
 - (b) that the prioritisation of the top three schools for phase three be conducted using the 'Essential', Traffic Impacts' criteria and 'Supporting Criteria'

Local Transport Plan

16. Scrutiny received a report seeking Members' views and feedback on the draft Cabinet report on Local Transport Plan, prior to its consideration by Cabinet at its meeting on 9 March 2021.
17. The report provided Members with an annual update on highways and transport from a regional and local perspective; outlined delivery, performance and public satisfaction in 2020/21 and provided an update on the Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan and the Darlington Transport Plan.

18. Members noted the revised framework for the Darlington Transport Plan and were pleased to see the inclusion of safety as a specific aim following feedback received from the National Highways and Transportation Survey.
19. We also welcomed the framework for a specific Town Centre Transport Plan following the recommendation from this Scrutiny Committee in February 2020.
20. We did discuss in particular electric vehicle charging points, including the benefits and limitations associated with electric vehicles. We were informed that a procurement process would be undertaken to identify sites for electric charging points in Darlington and were pleased to note the £2M funding from the TVCA to appoint a provider to supply and manage the infrastructure.

Work Programme 2020/21

21. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2020/21 and possible review topics, the work programme is a rolling work programme and items can be added as necessary.

Councillor Mike Renton
Chair of Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee

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**COUNCIL
25 MARCH 2021**

OVERVIEW OF ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Business Grants Update

2. Scrutiny received a further update on the Governments various funding schemes to support local businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. Since our last update in January, the Government have announced a further two new schemes which have been launched for businesses to apply for which now means that there are eight different types of schemes for businesses to apply for across a range of different sectors and time periods.
4. Officers provided us with quantitative information on the number of applications under the various schemes which had been received up to 1 February 2021, together with the number of those applications which had been approved and declined and those still awaiting a decision. The total amount of grants paid up to 1 February, 2021 is £7,539,111.16. Information is also available on the reasons why those applications which were declined were unsuccessful.
5. Applications are continuing to be received and funding awarded and work is on-going to identify those businesses who have not applied for some of the grants for which they might be eligible to ensure all the schemes are maximised before they are closed.
6. We were also reminded of the Additional Restrictions Grant, which is a grant provided to the Local Authority to provide discretionary support to businesses. The criteria which has been put in place to help priority sectors in Darlington in relation to the discretionary grant scheme is currently being reviewed to enable the scope and scale of the businesses reached to be extended and we were advised that as much as possible, the criteria for the discretionary grants was synchronised with neighbouring authorities to ensure that there was some consistency on the criteria which was being applied within different areas.
7. Signposting is on-going for businesses to ensure that they apply for the correct scheme and to national support measures which they might be entitled to such as Universal Credit, self-employment income support scheme etc. Lobbying of Government is also on-going to highlight that there are a lot of businesses who are currently without support as they are not eligible to receive financial support through the various schemes and are not eligible for the self-employed income support initiative.
8. Again, we thanked Officers for the work they are doing.

Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 3

9. We received the quarter 3 information in relation to the capital resource and commitment position of the Council's capital programme. The Council currently has 40 live projects being managed with an overall projected outturn value of £127.405 million.
10. We were advised that the only project which was outside the tolerance set was Ingenium Park which was due to a time delay and the need to undertake drainage works at a certain point of the year for ecological reasons.
11. It is pleasing to note that the new electronic capital project reporting system is currently being rolled out and we will be able to see how it will work at the next reporting period. It will take time to migrate project management across the new system.

Revenue Budget Monitoring Quarter 3

12. We received the quarter 3 revenue budget outturn report prior to its consideration by Cabinet. Since the quarter 2 report, further Covid-19 funding has been announced by the Government in relation to the collection fund and £1 million has been received from the Arts Council England to subsidise the Hippodrome from October to March. It is planned to set up an earmarked reserve for Covid-19 which can be drawn on going forward.
13. The Council's projected revenue reserves at the end of 2020-21 are £22.306 million, £2,943 million higher than the initial 2020-24 MTFP position and includes a brought forward amount of £0.274 million from 2019-20 and the rebasing exercise of £0.897 million
14. Of the £22.306 million projected reserves, there is a risk reserve balance of £4.350 million and a commitment to use £11.330 million to support years two to four of the current MTFP, leaving a surplus of £6.626 million to assist with any unknown future pressures and Covid-19 impacts.

Work Programme

15. In discussing our work programme, I, as Chair, have had discussions with the Children and Young people Scrutiny Committee in relation to taking forward a piece of work in relation to youth unemployment as a result of the current pandemic. That Scrutiny Committee are currently undertaking a specific piece of work in relation to the impact COVID-19 has on families and young people and the Chair has confirmed that once this section of work has been completed they will set out a plan to look specifically at youth unemployment. This Scrutiny Committee will support that piece of work.
16. We are also going to undertake a piece of work to look at the performance indicators which are reported to our Scrutiny Committee in relation to the economy and agree which ones of those we would like to see on a regular basis to give us an indication as to how the Council in performing in supporting businesses and the economy going forward.

Councillor Scott Durham
Chair Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

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COUNCIL
25 MARCH 2021

OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Integrated Care System

2. Members welcomed a verbal update from the Director of Governance and Partnerships, North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System on the next steps for Integrated Care Systems (ICS).
3. Following the publication of the Policy paper 'Integration and innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all' in February 2021 it was reported that statutory status for the ICS was expected by April 2022 and that further guidance was anticipated from NHS England.
4. Members were advised of the obligation for all NHS organisations to develop plans for the next phase of COVID-19 response and service recovery.
5. We noted that there are 13 Local Authorities in the North East and North Cumbria ICS and the intention is to build on the existing arrangements in each of these areas.
6. It is anticipated that the name of the ICS body will be NHS North East and North Cumbria. The aims of the ICS are to pursue better health and wellbeing, better quality of services and sustainable use of NHS resources. The ICS will be accountable for the outcomes and health of the population, with the authority to delegate to a place level.
7. We noted that the ICS will be overseen by a twin board model consisting of an NHS Board, which would be accountable for NHS spend and performance and an ICS Partnership Board, which would be a forum to agree co-ordinated action, provide direction for the early stages of ICS formation and would be responsible for developing a plan to address the health, social care and public health needs of the system.

Covid-19 in Darlington

8. We received a presentation from the Director of Public Health and Public Health Principal updating us on the COVID-19 situation in Darlington (please see [link](#) to presentation).
9. We were provided with details and associated figures for the four tests that must be met for England to progress through the stages of the Governments road map out of lockdown.

10. Particular discussion ensued on the actions taken to improve the uptake of vaccinations by ethnic communities and the need for improved messaging in relation to the vaccination process, particularly for hearing and sight impaired residents was highlighted.

Director of Public Health Annual Report

11. We gave our consideration to the Director of Public Health 2020 statutory annual report which has a focus on Darlington: In the Time of COVID-19.
12. The annual report, which was written by the previous Director of Public Health, Miriam Davidson, discusses the early stages of Covid-19, the North East and the local Darlington response and details the Local Outbreak Control Plan and its key themes.
13. We would like to extend our thanks to Miriam Davidson for her work as Director of Public Health for Darlington.

Work Programme 2020/21

14. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2020/21 and possible review topics. The work programme is a rolling programme and items can be added as necessary.

Councillor Ian Bell
Chair of the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee