



**DARLINGTON**

Borough Council

# Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee Agenda

10.00 am

Thursday, 17 February 2022

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT

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

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To approve the Minutes/Notes of the meeting of this Scrutiny held on :-
  - (a) 9 December 2021 (Pages 3 - 6)
  - (b) 6 January 2022 (Pages 7 - 10)
4. Darlington Cultural Strategy 2022-2026 –  
Report of the Group Director of Services  
(Pages 11 - 38)
5. Local Transport Plan –  
Report of the Group Director of Services  
(Pages 39 - 80)
6. Arriva - Operational Issues –  
Discussion with Arriva representative

7. Management of Grass Verges - Final Report –  
Report of the Chair of the Management of Grass Verges Task and Finish Group  
(Pages 81 - 90)
8. Work Programme –  
Report of the Assistant Director Law and Governance  
(Pages 91 - 114)
9. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are  
of an urgent nature and can be discussed at the meeting.
10. Questions



**Luke Swinhoe**  
**Assistant Director Law and Governance**

**Wednesday, 9 February 2022**

**Town Hall**  
**Darlington.**

**Membership**

Councillors Allen, Bartch, Cossins, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Haszeldine, B Jones, McCollom, Tait, Wallis and Willis

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Hannah Miller, Democratic Officer, Operations 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: [hannah.miller@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:hannah.miller@darlington.gov.uk) or telephone 01325 405801

## COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 9 December 2021

**PRESENT** – Councillors Tait (Chair), Allen, Cossins, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Haszeldine, B Jones, McCollom and Willis

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Bartch and Wallis,

**ABSENT** –

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillors Keir

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Ian Thompson (Assistant Director Community Services), Anthony Hewitt (Assistant Director Highways and Capital Projects), Ian Stewart (Capital Programme Manager), Brian Graham (Head of Environmental Services) and Hannah Miller (Democratic Officer)

### CLS23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

### CLS24 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2021

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 21 October 2021.

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 21 October 2021 be approved as a correct record.

### CLS25 BANK TOP MASTERPLAN

The Assistant Director – Highways and Capital Projects gave a presentation (previously circulated) updating Members on the Bank Top Masterplan and in doing so outlined the project objectives to transform Darlington Train Station into a modern transport hub; to provide more frequent and faster local and national services and futureproof the station for future services; and to support and enhance the wider Darlington Regeneration initiatives.

The presentation outlined the component parts of the project which included Darlington Station, Victoria Road Interchange, Cattle Market, Victoria Road improvements, New Station, Multi-storey car park and Interchange and link to Central Park; details were provided of the key feature of Station East, Darlington Station and the Transport Interchange – Victoria Road; and delivery timescales were outlined.

The presentation provided a number of graphics, including the station entrance, multi-storey car park and interchange; and Members were provided with details of the latest position of the project.

Discussion ensued on the toilet and changing facilities for the new station; the availability of bicycle parking; and following a question on the anticipated impact of timetable changes, Members were advised that a net overall increase in footfall was predicted, with faster services and an increased number of trains per hour which would assist in futureproofing the station for future services.

**RESOLVED** – That the presentation be noted.

## **CLS26 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - QUARTER 2 2021/2022**

The Assistant Director Community Services and Assistant Director Highways and Capital Projects submitted a report (previously circulated) together with detailed performance scorecards (also previously circulated) advising Members of the Quarter 2 performance against those key indicators for 2021/2022 which were within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee.

It was reported that of the 25 indicators that were reported six monthly at quarter 2, seven were showing performance better than the same period in the previous year; one indicator was showing performance the same; four indicators were showing performance not as good as the same period in the previous year; and five indicators did not have comparative information from last year due to Coronavirus restrictions.

In relation to the Culture indicators, particular reference was made to CUL 037 – Number of shows held at the Hippodrome and CUL 038 – Number of individual attendances at theatre shows which had both started to see an increase as restrictions were eased ; and reference was made to ENV 002 – Street Champions, which had seen a significant increase in the number of active Street Champions.

Particular reference was also made to the performance indicators relating to Road Traffic Accidents, with the majority seeing a reduction; this was attributed to significantly less traffic as a result of the pandemic and periods of lockdown.

Discussion ensued on fly tipping and the need for improved monitoring via cameras; Members were assured that whilst there were some resource constraints, a significant amount of work was being done to tackle fly tipping, this included the use of covert and overt cameras and the Back Lanes Project. Reference was made to the My Darlington App which could be used by residents to report fly tipping; it was suggested that Members be provided with a presentation on the new My Darlington app and that the use of incentives to encourage usage by the public, be explored.

In light of the changes to the management of large fly tips, Members were informed that work was being undertaken to review the performance indicators and that two separate targets, Civic Enforcement to investigate and Street Scene to clear, may be reported in the future.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received.

## **CLS27 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Assistant Director Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to this Scrutiny Committee's work programme and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest should be included in the previously approved work programme.

Councillor B Jones requested that an item on the availability of wheelchair accessible taxis be included in the work programme and a Quad of Aims would be submitted for Members consideration; and Members were informed of a safety campaign that was being run over the festive period to address safety concerns in relation to taxi availability for the night time economy.

It was suggested that the Darlington Cultural Strategy be brought to the next meeting of this Scrutiny Committee, prior to consideration by Cabinet.

**RESOLVED** – That the work programme be updated to reflect discussions.

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## COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 6 January 2022

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS WAS NOT A FORMALLY CONSTITUTED MEETING, AND THAT THIS IS A 'NOTE' OF THE INFORMAL MEETING THAT TOOK PLACE.**

**PRESENT** – Councillors Tait (Chair), Allen, Bartch, Cossins, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Haszeldine, B Jones, McCollom and Willis

**ABSENT** – Councillor Wallis

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillors Dulston and Keir

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Elizabeth Davison (Group Director of Operations), Brett Nielsen (Assistant Director Resources), Ian Thompson (Assistant Director Community Services), Anthony Hewitt (Assistant Director Highways and Capital Projects), Brian Graham (Head of Environmental Services) and Hannah Miller (Democratic Officer)

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

### **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Assistant Director Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that Members give consideration to the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022/23 to 2025/26.

In introducing the report, the Group Director of Operations reminded Members of the MTFP Briefing that was delivered to Members in December outlining the overall position of the MTFP, and advised that Members now had the opportunity to ask questions relating to the remit of this Scrutiny Committee and to forward any views or comments to the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for consideration at its meeting scheduled to be held on 20 January 2022.

The Group Director of Operations provided an update on the finance settlement which had been received subsequent to the draft MTFP.

It was reported that the Council Tax and Precept levels remained as expected at 2 per cent and 1 per cent respectively; that the £1.5B additional funding announced in the Autumn Statement had been split into £822M Services Grant and £636M Social Care Grant; the Council would be receiving £1.579M from the Services Grant and £1.162M from the Social Care Grant, which was higher than the estimate included within the draft MTFP; and Members were advised that the Services Grant was a one-off payment whilst a further review of Local Government funding was conducted.

Members were also advised that the New Homes Bonus had been extended for a further year, and that this would net a further £1.4M above anticipated levels. It was reported that there were also a number of deductions from initial draft figures, however overall there

would be an additional £1.073M funding for 2022/23.

Discussion ensued regarding staffing savings within Children's Social Care and the provision of home carers; and Members sought clarification regarding increased demand in relation to Highways - responsive repairs.

Following a question regarding the provision for increasing staffing levels on the ground, with particular reference made to the arboricultural team, the Assistant Director Community Services advised Members that there was provision in the budget to recruit additional arboricultural officers; recruitment to these posts had been challenging however the posts had been reviewed and recruitment would continue.

Discussion also ensued regarding the Futures Fund and impacts of this being mainstreamed into the budget from 2025/26 onwards; the anticipated allocation of the additional £1.073M from the settlement; and Members sought clarification in respect of the allocation of the £310M that the Tees Valley Combined Authority had been allocated from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That this Scrutiny Committee has no comment to make on the MTFP 2022/23 to 2025/26.

(b) That the Chair, in consultation with the Lead Scrutiny Officers supporting this Scrutiny Committee, be given authority to agree the Notes of this Meeting of the Committee, to enable the Notes to be considered at a Special Meeting of the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee, scheduled to be held on 20 January 2022.

### **STRONGER COMMUNITIES FUND**

The Stronger Communities Portfolio Holder submitted a report (previously circulated) updating Members on the spend to date against the Stronger Communities Fund and requesting that Members give consideration to continuation of the pilot scheme into the next financial year.

In introducing the report the Stronger Communities Portfolio Holder advised Members that the fund had been introduced to give all Councillors autonomy within their community to support local projects and community groups at a grass roots level and Members were requested to provide feedback in respect of the process.

The submitted report stated that Cabinet agreed, at its meeting held on 13 April 2021, to establish a pilot scheme enabling Members to use an allocated amount of money to deliver the objectives of building stronger communities; that each Councillor had been allocated £1k; and details were provided of the spend against the £50k to date, together with information on what had been delivered in wards on an individual Councillor basis.

Following a question the Stronger Communities Portfolio Holder advised Members that the £1K should be spent before the end of the financial year; and that any funding not spent by Members may be carried forward to the next financial year however Members individual budget would remain at £1K.



Members felt that the deadlines and timescales for the process should be clearer and acknowledged the Credit Union and Democratic Services for their support with the process; and discussion ensued regarding the key themes from Members allocations.

Following a question regarding the possibility of training for Members to identify and access other funding opportunities to help local projects and community groups, the Stronger Communities Portfolio Holder advised Members that discussions were ongoing to identify how the Council could support not only Members but residents to access funding opportunities; and it was suggested that an All Member briefing be arranged to help Councillors identify and access support for local communities.

Members expressed their views regarding the continuation of the scheme in 2022/23.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That the current spend against the £50k be noted.

(b) That the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee be advised that the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee support the continuation of the scheme in the 2022/23 financial year.

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**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
17 FEBRUARY 2022**

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**DARLINGTON CULTURAL STRATEGY 2022-2026**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To request comments from the Communities and Local Services Committee on the draft Darlington Cultural Strategy 2022–2026 to pass to Cabinet for them to consider at their meeting on 8 March 2022.

**Summary**

2. The Darlington Cultural Strategy for 2022 to 2026, attached at **Appendix 1**, is focused on maximising the social and economic benefits which culture can bring to people across Darlington, including residents, visitors, and those working and investing in Darlington.
3. In the approach to 2026 there are opportunities where a Cultural Strategy is expected to assist Darlington Borough Council in developing and allocating resources to address priorities, including the bicentenary in 2025 of the Stockton and Darlington Railway.
4. The Cultural Strategy has been informed by research, discussion with Arts Council England and Tees Valley Combined Authority, discussion at the Creative Darlington board meeting in September 2021, with comments received from partners including Darlington for Culture, Darlington Hippodrome, The Forum Music Studios and Theatre Hullabaloo.

**Recommendation**

5. It is recommended that: -
  - (a) Members of this Committee provide comment on the Cultural Strategy which will be considered by Cabinet on 8 March 2022.

**Dave Winstanley  
Group Director of Services**

**Background Papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Ian Thompson : Extension 6628  
CD

S17 Crime and Disorder	Cultural activities can have a positive impact on crime and disorder by engaging individuals in positive activity.
Health and Wellbeing	Culture can have a positive impact on Health and Wellbeing.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	This report will not make a significant Carbon Impact or impact on Climate Change.
Diversity	One of the priorities within Darlington’s Cultural Strategy 2022–2026 is for Darlington to have an accessible, diverse and vibrant culture.
Wards Affected	Darlington Cultural Strategy 2022–2026 recommendations address all wards in Darlington Borough.
Groups Affected	The Cultural Strategy 2022–2026 is focused on the population of Darlington Borough.
Budget and Policy Framework	There is no impact on the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This report is not a Key Decision.
Urgent Decision	This report is not an Urgent Decision.
Council Plan	The cultural strategy has set out how the Council will deliver its cultural ambitions.
Efficiency	There is no impact on the Council’s efficiency agenda.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

6. Darlington’s Cultural Strategy takes note of the vision and drivers of national strategies, including Arts Council England’s Let’s Create strategy to 2030, the North East Cultural Partnership’s Case for Culture strategy to 2030 and the priorities of the Tees Valley Combined Authority.
7. This strategy uses a definition of Culture as set out by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport which covers the following areas:
  - (a) arts (including visual arts, literature, music, theatre and dance),
  - (b) architecture
  - (c) crafts
  - (d) creative industries
  - (e) design
  - (f) heritage
  - (g) historic environment
  - (h) museums and galleries
  - (i) libraries
  - (j) archives

- (k) film
- (l) broadcasting and media

8. Agreeing a Cultural Strategy for Darlington from 2022 to 2026 will help in communicating our cultural vision and priorities for cultural investment to members of the public and potential partners and funders, and support decisions around where we focus resources to benefit residents, visitors and potential investors in the Borough of Darlington, alongside the development of the sector.
9. It is proven that a vibrant cultural offer can bring both economic and social benefits to places including Darlington. Within their 'Cultural Strategy in a box' publication the Local Government Association advise culture should be seen as *'not only the commissioning of arts and the production of events, but also as a tool; that builds upon the heritage of the area; that builds a shared vision and identity for the area that is steeped in history and has a wealth of cultural assets; that builds the local economy particularly in the context of tourism and creative industries; that improves the local quality of life and encourages engagement in community activities; and that provides new ways of tackling challenges around health and well-being.'*
10. The 'Contribution of the arts and culture industry to the UK economy' report by the Centre for Economics and Business Research for Arts Council England, May 2020 advised that *'in 2018, the arts and culture industry supported £64bn of turnover, £29bn of GVA, 461,000 FTE jobs and £16bn of employee compensation in the UK economy'*. This research identified direct economic contributions made by the sector alongside the indirect impact through supply-chain purchases and the induced impact through the wider spending of employees. These benefits are felt in Darlington with people employed and working freelance in the cultural and creative sectors and through cultural assets, events and programmes attracting visits to and investment in the borough.
11. People are key to Darlington's cultural offer with many creative enterprises, organisations roles contributing alongside audience members, customers, networks, participants and volunteers. Darlington is home to Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisation Theatre Hullabaloo, a pioneering organisation which makes, tours and promotes theatre for young audiences, aged 0–16 years old, and has a particularly strong cultural offer for young people.
12. Darlington for Culture and Darlington Cultural Volunteers also support a diverse cultural offer for adults, through network and voluntary support.
13. Besides social capital, Darlington has a strong selection of building and place-based cultural assets including the Head of Steam railway museum, Theatres, Cinemas, 20 archaeological sites within the Borough registered as Scheduled Monuments, Libraries, The Forum Music Studios, Parks and Green Spaces, Festivals and Events and The Bridge Centre for Visual Arts.
14. Various aspects of Darlington's cultural offer have secured investment over the last decade with significant achievements made. These include the opening of the Vue cinema in Darlington in 2016, the restoration and re-opening of Darlington Hippodrome in 2017, the opening of The Hullabaloo in 2018, Stockton & Darlington Railway declared a Heritage

Action Zone in 2018, the Enjoy Darlington events programme and Darlington securing Purple Flag status in 2020 with our nightlife deemed one of the safest in the North-East.

15. Darlington has also secured significant support to establish a Rail Heritage Quarter and invested in refurbishment of Darlington Library, with both programmes expected to be completed during the timescale of this strategy. Darlington secured £22.3 million in 2020 through the Town's Fund to support regeneration including the acquisition of key properties on Northgate, to protect heritage assets.
16. The pandemic presented significant challenges to the creative and cultural sector. Government invested significantly in a programme to support cultural recovery and both Darlington Hippodrome and The Forum Music Studio have received support through Arts Council England's Culture Recovery Fund. Additional enterprises, organisations and individuals have received secured support through other Arts Council England programmes, Tees Valley Combined Authority programmes and Darlington Borough Council to support both sustainable operation and recovery. In 2021 Arts Council England identified Tees Valley Combined Authority as one of 54 priority places in England for investment during the first period of their Let's Create strategy 2020–2030.
17. The Cultural Strategy for 2022–2026 will look to build on momentum gained in the last decade and will be reviewed regularly. The vision and priorities for investment within the 2022–2026 timeframe are informed both by our current cultural assets and strengths, and by recognition of opportunities to further enhance Darlington's cultural offer to benefit people and place.
18. The cultural strategy will support the council in delivering its vision:  
  
*Darlington is a place where people want to live and businesses want to relocate, where the economy continues to grow, where people are happy and proud of the borough and where everyone has the opportunity to maximise their potential.*
19. The Council's Priorities are to:
  - (a) Grow Darlington's economy
  - (b) Maximise the potential of our young people
  - (c) Support the most vulnerable in the Borough
  - (d) Working with communities to maximise their potential
20. The cultural strategy builds on the Council vision and priorities, setting out the actions that ensure the Council is in a position to create a place to be proud of that values its heritage and culture, placing them at the heart of the town's economic growth.
21. The proposed vision for Darlington's Cultural Strategy for 2022–2026 is:  
  
***"Darlington will be a place in 2026 and beyond where culture enriches lives, involves people and is central to identity and prosperity."***
22. Five priorities are identified within the Draft Darlington Cultural Strategy 2022-2026, with accompanying action plan to address each priority:

- (a) To creatively celebrate Darlington's contribution to the birth of the modern passenger railway.
  - (b) For Darlington to have an accessible, diverse and vibrant culture, encouraging economic growth.
  - (c) For Darlington to champion engagement with culture, particularly amongst children and young people.
  - (d) For culture to thrive within Darlington borough and attract visitors to the Town Centre.
  - (e) For Darlington to have a thriving theatre offer involving people of all ages.
23. Darlington Borough Council will implement the Cultural Strategy working with other partners where appropriate, such as Tees Valley Combined Authority, North East Culture Partnership, organisations including Arts Council England, National Heritage Lottery Fund, residents and cultural organisations, sharing information on progress through the Creative Darlington Board. Action Plans for each of the priorities have been developed, attached at **Appendix 1 (Section 4)**, and will be reviewed and updated annually. An annual report on progress will be presented to the Creative Darlington Board.

#### **Outcome of Consultation**

24. The Draft Cultural Strategy has been informed by research, discussion with Arts Council England and Tees Valley Combined Authority, discussion at the Creative Darlington Board meeting in September 2021, and been informed by comments received from partner including Darlington for Culture, Darlington Hippodrome, The Forum Music Studios and Theatre Hullabaloo.

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## **Darlington Cultural Strategy 2022-2026**

- Section 1**                    **Darlington, People, Place and Culture**  
Introduction  
What is culture  
Current assets  
Cultural highlights since 2016  
Impact of the pandemic
- Section 2**                    **Vision, priorities, opportunities and how this strategy will impact on Darlington's culture**  
Vision  
Priorities  
Opportunities  
How the strategy will impact on Darlington's culture
- Section 3**                    **Where the Culture Strategy sits and how it is actioned**  
Where the Culture Strategy sits  
How we will act on the Cultural Strategy and where we aim to be in 2026
- Section 4**                    **Action plans to take forward cultural priorities**

## **Section 1: Darlington, People, Place and Culture**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Darlington is known for many things including its railway heritage, connectivity, a fantastic theatre offer and as a distinctive and attractive market town. It is an ingenious and welcoming place where commercial, industrial, scientific and social innovations have been nurtured and supported.

Darlington is located within County Durham for ceremonial purposes and Darlington Borough Council was established as a unitary authority on 1 April 1997 as the administrative authority. Tees Valley Combined Authority was established in 2016 to further the sustainable and inclusive growth of the economy of the Tees Valley and their remit includes Darlington.

Looking to the future, Darlington Borough Council recognises economic growth as its priority in delivering a long-term vision for the borough and the importance of working alongside Tees Valley Combined Authority to support economic growth. Darlington Borough Council aims to provide the opportunity for everyone to access a good job and a good home and is committed to maximising the potential of young people, working with communities and supporting the most vulnerable in the borough, so people can play their part in Darlington's success.

Darlington is bordered by County Durham to the north and west, Stockton-on-Tees to the east and North Yorkshire to the south, along the line of the River Tees. The borough includes a number of villages and settlements. This Cultural Strategy is informed by dialogue with local people and reflects Darlington Borough Council's recognition of the importance of economic growth within the Delivering Success for Darlington Council Plan to 2023.

Darlington's Cultural Strategy takes note of the vision and drivers of national strategies, including Arts Council England's Let's Create strategy to 2030, the North East Cultural Partnership's Case for Culture strategy to 2030 and the priorities of the Tees Valley Combined Authority, as befits an outward looking place. It recognises the importance of the contributions made by people from the private, public and voluntary sectors to Darlington's current cultural offer and their potential to further develop Darlington as a Creative Place.

Within Let's Create, Arts Council England advise they will *'focus a large part of our development role on ensuring that children and young people are able to fulfil their creative potential, and access the highest-quality cultural experiences where they live, where they go to school and where they spend their free time.'*

Darlington's Cultural Strategy to 2026 is informed by our longstanding engagement with agencies including Durham Music Service and Theatre Hullabaloo, who have secured national recognition for their work with children and young people. We plan to continue to work with these partners and to learn from Darlington Hippodrome's In2 programme to ensure that children, young people, their families and the adults in their lives have opportunities to experience Darlington as a creative place.

Our Cultural Strategy for 2022 to 2026 is focused on maximising the social and economic benefits which culture can bring to people across Darlington Borough, including residents, visitors, those working and investing in Darlington. It considers the fantastic opportunities Darlington has via investment through the Towns Fund, through the expected upgrade of Darlington Station, the Rail Heritage Quarter and celebrations in 2025 of the bicentenary of the birth of the modern passenger railway marking the momentous journey of Locomotion No. 1 on the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1825:

### **1.2 What is culture and why does it matter?**

This strategy uses a definition of Culture as set out by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport which covers the following areas:

- arts (including visual arts, literature, music, theatre and dance)
- architecture
- crafts
- creative industries
- design
- heritage
- historic environment
- museums and galleries
- libraries
- archives
- film
- broadcasting and media

We recognise this definition of Culture does not include Sports and Leisure, which are considered in other strategies covering Darlington and will support ongoing dialogue between both sectors.

Recently published national research shows the value of culture to the UK economy, and that while the arts and culture industry receives public funding it makes a significant contribution to the exchequer through VAT, corporation tax, income tax and national insurance and is highly productive. There are direct economic contributions made by the

sector alongside the indirect impact (demand supported through supply-chain purchases) and the induced impact (demand supported through the wider spending of employees).

*In 2018, the arts and culture industry supported £64bn of turnover, £29bn of GVA, 461,000 FTE jobs and £16bn of employee compensation in the UK economy.*

The Contribution of the arts and culture industry to the UK economy report by the Centre for Economics and Business Research for Arts Council England, May 2020

Culture plays an important role in making Darlington a vibrant place, it adds life and energy to the borough, helps define Darlington as place and provides opportunities for people to explore their own potential, enjoy themselves, work together and to explore and enrich the world.

*Culture should be seen as not only the commissioning of arts and the production of events, but also as a tool; that builds upon the heritage of the area; that builds a shared vision and identity for the area that is steeped in history and has a wealth of cultural assets; that builds the local economy particularly in the context of tourism and creative industries; that improves the local quality of life and encourages engagement in community activities; and that provides new ways of tackling challenges around health and well-being.*

Local Government Association: Cultural Strategy in a box

### **1.3 Current Assets**

Culture harnesses, nurtures and shares the talents of the people involved, bringing economic and social benefits to places. The Forum Music Studios is a major cultural asset in Darlington, which attracts visitors alongside highly acclaimed artists and has launched and supported many musical careers through the facilities and services it provides whilst housing activities that bring people together. As a Community Benefit Society, they have contributed to the growth of the UK Music Industry and create a first-class music experience at a grassroots level that inspires people of all ages and demographics to engage with music through participation in a range of social, education, enterprise or entertainment activities. Since they began trading as a social enterprise in 2010, they advise they have introduced over three million pounds into the local economy, over half a million of which has been grant funding from bodies including National Lottery providers and local funding and donations, whilst generating income through the provision of services, activities and reinvesting into the cultural economy of Darlington.

Darlington for Culture currently promote and support culture through advocacy and initiatives including Darlington Cultural Volunteers, their Small Grants programme and network. They came into being in late 2010 and became established as a co-operative in 2011. Members include representatives from arts and community groups from across the

borough, and networks and organisations including Darlington for Culture play a significant part in advocating for culture and making things happen.

*'Darlington for Culture has become an important organisation through its ability to provide a network through which the arts can be promoted, supporting Creative Darlington.'*

On With the Show, Supporting Local Arts & Culture, Dr Claire Mansfield, New Local Government Network

Going forward to 2025 and beyond we recognise the importance of bringing together voluntary, public and private sector parties, including Darlington for Culture, to make Darlington Borough the best creative place it can be.

Many people, organisations and enterprises animate our cultural offer. Those involved include actors, architects, archivists, artists, broadcasters, crafts people, ceramicists, choreographers, comedians, creatives, curators, dancers, designers, directors, filmmakers, librarians, musicians, performers, poets, photographers, producers, readers, singers, technicians, writers, not forgetting audience members, participants and volunteers, the list goes on. A selection of the current cultural assets in terms of buildings, resources and events in Darlington is shown below.

### **Museums and Galleries**

- The Head of Steam railway museum
- Crown Street Art Gallery in Darlington Library

### **Theatres**

- Darlington Hippodrome
- The Hullabaloo
- The Majestic

### **Cinemas**

- Odeon Luxe
- Vue Cinema

### **Heritage**

- Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter
- Darlington Market
- A section of the Stockton & Darlington Railway Heritage Action Zone
- Tees Cottage Pumping Station
- There are 20 archaeological sites within the borough registered as Scheduled Monuments

### **Libraries**

- Darlington Library
- Cockerton Library

### **Music Venues**

- The Forum Music Studios

### **Parks and Green Spaces**

- 16 parks (including South Park)
- 10 nature reserves

### **Festivals and Events**

- (In 2025) the bicentenary of the 1825 passenger journey on the Stockton & Darlington Railway
- Darlington Arts Festival
- Darlington Community Carnival
- Darlington Food Festival
- Darlington Pride
- Darlington R 'n' B Festival
- Last Train Home and Mish Mash music festivals

### **Visual Arts**

- The Bridge Centre for Visual Arts
- Gallerina

### **1.4 Cultural highlights from 2016 to 2021**

There have been many highlights in Darlington's cultural offer in recent years including:

- The opening of the Vue cinema in Darlington in 2016
- The Bridge Centre for Visual Arts secured charitable status, focusing on the connections between art and health (particularly mental health)
- The restoration and reopening of Darlington Hippodrome in 2017
- The opening of The Hullabaloo, home of Theatre Hullabaloo, in 2018
- Stockton & Darlington Railway declared a Heritage Action Zone in 2018
- The Enjoy Darlington campaign launched, and a cohesive Town Centre events programme promoted
- Commercial concerts promoted successfully at The Darlington Arena
- Refurbishment of the Odeon Luxe cinema in Darlington

- Darlington Borough Council allocating capital to refurbish Darlington Library
- Darlington securing Purple Flag status in 2020 and the Town's nightlife deemed one of the safest in the North-East
- Tees Valley Combined Authority allocating budget to create a Rail Heritage Quarter in Darlington which is expected to become a significant visitor attraction in Tees Valley by 2025
- Darlington securing £22.3 million in 2020 through the Town's Fund to support regeneration schemes in Darlington including the acquisition of key properties on Northgate, to protect heritage assets and within the Rail Heritage Quarter, including supporting the creation of a 26-mile walking and cycling route along the track-bed of the original Stockton and Darlington Railway
- Support the ongoing recovery from the pandemic
- The re-opening of Cockerton Library following a refurbishment programme and Darlington Library refurbishment underway in 2021/22

### **1.5 Impact of the pandemic**

The Covid-19 pandemic has inevitably impacted on Darlington's culture and the lives of those providing services or employed in the cultural sector. The pandemic necessitated temporary closure of cultural venues and facilities and either cancellation or postponement of cultural programme. Government announced the largest ever one-off investment in UK Culture of £1.57 billion. Several Darlington residents secured support through Arts Council England's Emergency Funds and The Forum Music Centre and Darlington Hippodrome secured awards from both rounds of Arts Council England's Culture Recovery Programme.

North East Culture Partnership commissioned research to assess the regional impact of the pandemic on the sector, which has helped to identify prevailing issues. Tees Valley Mayor, Ben Houchen announced the establishment of a new, independent and sector-led Task Force to advise on the development and delivery of a £1million Recovery Programme for the Visitor Economy and Cultural Industries sectors through Tees Valley Combined Authority in June 2020, and a number of programmes have been delivered and are in development. Darlington Borough Council led programmes to support resilience and recovery during the pandemic. It is expected that national, regional, sub regional and local bodies will continue to monitor recovery and that further research will inform measures taken to encourage recovery.

## **Section 2: Vision, priorities, opportunities and how this strategy will impact on Darlington's culture**

The Cultural Strategy for 2022 – 2026 will look to build on momentum gained in the last decade and will be reviewed regularly. The vision and priorities for investment within the 2022 – 2026 timeframe are shown below.

### **2.1 Vision:**

*Darlington will be a place in 2026 and beyond where culture enriches lives, involves people and is central to identity and prosperity.*

### **2.2 Priorities**

1. To creatively celebrate Darlington's contribution to the birth of the modern passenger railway.
2. For Darlington to have an accessible, diverse and vibrant culture, encouraging economic growth.
3. For Darlington to champion engagement with culture, particularly amongst children and young people.
4. For culture to thrive within Darlington Borough and attract visitors to the Town Centre.
5. For Darlington to have a thriving theatre offer involving people of all ages.

### **2.3 Opportunities to 2026**

In recent years, Darlington has worked with Tees Valley Combined Authority and other parties to secure investment to create a Rail Heritage Quarter around the current site of the Head of Steam railway museum, adjoining North Road Station, which is expected to open in advance of 2025 and to become a significant and distinctive visitor attraction in Tees Valley. The Rail Heritage Quarter will be one of the North East's tourism assets and a catalyst for regeneration in the Northgate area.

Work is also underway to preserve and promote public engagement with rail heritage within the Stockton & Darlington Railway Heritage Action Zone. The original track-bed of the railway runs 26 miles from County Durham, through Darlington, to Stockton and several programmes of work are moving forward to safeguard this heritage and build public engagement.

Darlington was involved in a significant programme of events in 1925 to mark the centenary of this historic journey, which is the birth of the modern passenger railway, and again in the



Stockton & Darlington Railway Pageant 1975. Given the importance of railway heritage to Darlington, and the worldwide significance of railways, we aim for the 2025 bicentenary to celebrate and safeguard our heritage and to leave a legacy for people in the borough and the wider area working with partners. The bi-centenary events programme is expected to be of significant scale and to attract visitors to Darlington, Tees Valley. and County Durham. Subject to budget the programme may include live steam and motive power, the exhibition of early steam locomotives, education projects, knowledge sharing activity, community events and large scale outdoor cultural events.

Darlington secured a significant Town's Fund Award in 2020 which is supporting significant regeneration activity within Darlington and will help develop the Rail Heritage Quarter as a visitor attraction and to protect key heritage assets. It is expected Darlington Borough Council will seek support from other government programmes for regeneration and that culture can be a component of these programmes subject to successful application, through protecting heritage and improvements to the public realm.

Culture is making a strong contribution to our Town Centre offer, and the Enjoy Darlington and Enjoy Tees Valley campaigns, and regular festivals and events play a part in attracting people to visit Darlington and add value to their visits, whether residents, tourists or people working here. Culture is contributing to encouraging extended visits and to the vibrancy of the daytime and evening economy, and we will continue to explore opportunities to share local, Tees Valley, regional and national events with people in Darlington.

Darlington Borough Council expects to work closely with Tees Valley Combined Authority in addressing shared cultural priorities up to 2026 and beyond, and recognises the importance of culture as a high growth sector of the economy, in encouraging sustainable growth, encouraging investment, supporting place promotion, and contributing efficiently to agendas including education, health and quality of life. Tees Valley Combined Authority area was identified by Arts Council England in 2021 amongst 54 priority places for their focus during the first period of their Let's Create strategy 2020 - 2030.

Darlington is the home of pioneering theatre company, Theatre Hullabaloo, who have recently delivered successful programmes engaging parents, babies and young children to support positive health outcomes. Darlington Borough Council has commissioned collaborative programmes including In2 led by Darlington Hippodrome and work involving Blue Cabin and our Virtual School, which help to maximise the potential of young people. We will explore opportunities to extend programmes of this nature working with Tees Valley Combined Authority and other partners in the health and education sectors.

Darlington Hippodrome has developed significant programmes to engage residents in Darlington's theatre heritage and we intend to maintain this work and to build on successful initiatives to make Darlington Hippodrome a place for everyone. Alongside celebrating the

heritage of theatre in Darlington we intend to develop the reach of other assets including Darlington Library by exploring their heritage with people in Darlington.

Tees Valley has established a well-earned reputation for innovative practice in film, animation and creative digital practice. The Northern School of Art, Teesside University and Northern Film + Media through Tees Valley Screen are working alongside various partners, with Tees Valley Combined Authority support, to promote Tees Valley as a fantastic location for film and television productions. Successful film and television productions have provided significant economic returns for the locations in which they are housed, including employment and place promotion. Darlington has distinctive locations for film and television productions to utilise, given our railway, engineering and agricultural heritage and as a market town. Popular television series 'Vera' and films, including 'Atonement' and '1917', have utilised locations in Tees Valley successfully. We applaud the work undertaken in recent years in developing production facilities within Tees Valley, working with the sector to support progression routes and retain talent, and to attract film and television productions here.

#### **2.4 How the strategy will impact on Darlington's culture**

We will use this strategy to inform:

- Where Darlington Borough Council focuses resources
- Our engagement with people living in Darlington Borough around culture
- Darlington Borough Council's engagement with Arts Council England, National Heritage Lottery Fund, North East Cultural Partnership and Tees Valley Combined Authority and other bodies
- Our fundraising strategy

This Cultural Strategy has been informed by dialogue with people resident in, working in, visiting and invested in the borough, and by strategic priorities in Darlington, Tees Valley, the North East of England and Nationally, given Darlington's connectivity and outward looking instinct (see **Appendix 1**).

### **Section 3: Where the Culture Strategy sits and how it is actioned**

#### **3.1 Where the Culture Strategy sits**

The Cultural Strategy is informed by Darlington's Borough Council's Delivering success for Darlington Council Plan to 2023, by Tees Valley Combined Authority's work on culture and tourism, by the North East Cultural Partnership's Case for Culture and by Arts Council England's Let's Create strategy to 2030.

**Darlington Borough Council's Council Plan 2020 – 2023 Delivering success for Darlington** vision sees:

*Darlington is a place where people want to live and businesses want to locate, where the economy continues to grow, where people are happy and proud of the borough and where everyone has the opportunity to maximise their potential.*

It is focused on growing Darlington's Economy by delivering more sustainable well-paid jobs, more businesses and more homes and commits Darlington Borough Council to supporting economic growth by keeping the borough clean, safe, healthy, sustainable, well-planned and on the move, whilst valuing our heritage and culture.

The Council's overarching focus on growing Darlington's Economy feeds into commitments to:

- Maximise the potential of our young people by working with partners to maximise educational achievement, working to remove barriers to young people reaching their potential, working at a Tees Valley level to match jobs with skills and training.
- Work with communities to maximise their potential by maximising the benefits of a growing economy for all communities, targeting services where they are most needed, working with partners and working with communities.
- Support the most vulnerable in the borough by providing care and support when needed, working with people to build on their strengths to maximise their potential, working with partners.

Darlington Borough Council aims to promote equality in everything it does. This means treating people fairly, valuing diversity and removing barriers that prevent people being able to fully participate in public life and fulfil their potential. Much of the local authority's work, together with its partners, is focused on narrowing the gaps in health, attainment, prosperity and quality of life between more vulnerable and disadvantaged people and the Darlington community as a whole. Darlington's Cultural Strategy 2022 – 26 embodies the local authority commitment to equality in various measures, including programming and

supporting diverse public events, festivals and programmes and continued support for bespoke activity and the promotion of opportunities for people with protected characteristics.

Darlington Borough Council is also committed to promoting a sustainable approach, which means balancing different, and often competing, needs against an awareness of the economic, social and environmental limitations that we face as a society. In July 2019, Members acknowledged the threat of climate change and passed a motion committing Darlington Borough Council to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Plans to develop or refurbish cultural assets within Darlington by 2026 are informed by our commitment to Darlington's sustainability.

**Tees Valley Combined Authority** are leading significant work around Culture and Tourism and Darlington Borough Council and organisations and enterprises working in Darlington, regularly engage with Tees Valley Combined Authority around Culture and Tourism. Through its Culture and Tourism programme, the Combined Authority is currently taking the Stockton and Darlington Railway Heritage Programme forward and has allocated significant budget to support development of a Rail Heritage Quarter in Darlington. Tees Valley Combined Authority is included amongst 54 Priority Places that Arts Council England will prioritise working with between 2021 and 2024. Darlington Borough Council engages with Tees Valley Combined Authority around culture through a variety of mechanisms, including Creative Darlington board meetings.

**North East Culture Partnership's The North East Case for Culture 2015 – 2030** vision is *'is a positive statement of ambition for the next 15 years, building on the strengths of our diverse communities and pointing to the opportunities for further investment in arts and heritage right across the North East'*.

North East Culture Partnership's five aspirations address Participation, Children and Young People, Talent and Progression, Economic Value and Quality of Life. The partnership is backed by the region's arts and heritage sector, the business and private sector, North East universities, the further education sector and the twelve local authorities in the region including Darlington Borough Council. They have reached out beyond the cultural sector to universities, business networks, the health and well-being sector, and organisations working with children and young people.

**Arts Council England's Let's Create strategy 2020 – 2030** will inform their work with the arts, libraries and museums and contains their vision that *'by 2030, we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences'*. The strategy seeks three outcomes, Creative People, Cultural Communities and A Creative

and Cultural Economy and recognises the importance of involving people in shaping culture, the value of culture to communities and the economic value of the sector and the importance of leadership and diversity. Arts Council England have shared four investment principles for the first period of the Let's Create strategy, these being Ambition and Quality, Dynamism, Environmental Responsibility and Inclusivity and Relevance.

Arts Council England have a National Portfolio of Organisations they support through regular funding, co-ordinate support for Music Hubs, lead strategic programmes and manage Project Funding (Lottery). Within Darlington as of May 2021 Theatre Hullabaloo are the sole Darlington based National Portfolio Organisation, although Darlington Borough is within the remit served by Tees Valley Museums who are a National Portfolio Organisation. Darlington Borough is also served by Durham Music Hub, who receive support through Arts Council England.

### **3.2 How we will act on the Cultural Strategy and where we aim to be in 2026**

Darlington Borough Council will implement the Culture Strategy working with partners including Tees Valley Combined Authority, North East Culture Partnership, organisations including Arts Council England, National Heritage Lottery Fund, and sharing information on progress through the Creative Darlington Board and Darlington Partnership as appropriate.

Detailed annual action plans will be presented to Darlington Borough Council on an annual basis. Annual reports on progress will be made to the Creative Darlington Board, which includes board members from Darlington for Culture, Darlington Partnership and Arts Council England. Darlington Borough Council will consider climate change and other environmental concerns when taking forward these action plans.

Subject to our success in taking forward the cultural strategy by 2026 and beyond Darlington will be where culture enriches lives, involves people and plays a central role in the identity and prosperity of the borough.

We will have creatively celebrated the birth of the modern railways in 1825 and the bicentenary celebrations in 2025, investment in our Rail Heritage Quarter and the Stockton & Darlington Railway Heritage Action will have left a positive legacy for the borough, Tees Valley and the North East region. Darlington will have a distinctive, accessible and vibrant culture, encouraging economic growth. Culture will be a significant component of our vibrant Town Centre offer, enriching the lives of those living, working or visiting the borough, contributing to place promotion and encouraging investment here. Darlington's theatres and cultural assets will be vibrant, thriving and known for their innovative work and Darlington will be known for its creative people, creative communities and making a positive contribution to England as a creative and cultural country. Equality and environmental

sustainability will underpin our cultural offer. We encourage all people interested in culture in Darlington to get involved with this strategy and welcome your comments.

#### Section 4: Darlington Culture Strategy Annual Action Plan for 2022 – 2023

The five priorities of Darlington Culture Strategy 2022 – 2026 are listed below. Annual action plans will be presented to Darlington Borough Council to address these priorities and to consider and respond positively to unforeseen opportunities and circumstances. We recognise these priorities overlap to some degree, and that particular actions address more than one priority:

1. To creatively celebrate Darlington’s contribution to the birth of the modern passenger railway
2. For Darlington to have an accessible, diverse and vibrant culture, encouraging economic growth
3. For Darlington to champion engagement with culture, particularly amongst children and young people
4. For culture to thrive within Darlington Borough and attract visitors to the Town Centre
5. For Darlington to have a thriving theatre offer involving people of all ages

Priority	What	Lead	Partners	Action	Measure(s) of success
1	Develop the content of the 2025 bi-centenary programme proposal	Darlington Borough Council	Darlington Borough Council, Durham County Council, Stockton Borough Council, Rail Heritage Board, Tees Valley Combined Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply to Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants for National Activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme agreed and application submitted</li> </ul>
1	Stockton & Darlington railway Heritage Action Zone includes cultural activity in their programme where appropriate	Stockton & Darlington railway Heritage Action Zone	Darlington Borough Council, Durham County Council, Stockton Borough Council, Rail Heritage Board, Tees Valley Combined Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and progress projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programmes involving culture developed, funding secured, programme outputs</li> </ul>

Priority	What	Lead	Partners	Action	Measure(s) of success
1	Creatively celebrate Darlington's engagement with railways	Darlington Borough Council	Creative Darlington, Darlington Borough Council, Rail Heritage Board, Tees Valley Combined Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the development of creative proposals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposals developed, funding secured, programme outputs</li> </ul>
2	Work within Darlington Town's Fund programme brief to encourage visitor spend, enhance place promotion and encourage investment in Darlington borough through culture where appropriate	Darlington Borough Council	Darlington Borough Council, Darlington Borough Town Centre Partnership, Tees Valley Combined Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities for cultural sector to further contribute to improvements in the Town Centre streetscape</li> <li>Progress Rail Heritage Quarter capital programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact on Town Centre economy and footfall</li> <li>Rail Heritage Quarter capital programme underway in 2022/23</li> </ul>
2	Darlington to participate in Tees Valley wide programme to boost screen industries	Tees Valley Combined Authority	Darlington Borough Council, Northern Film + Media, Tees Valley Screen, Northern School of Art, Teesside University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to promote opportunities for talent development and locations for filming in Darlington borough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Darlington participants involved in sector development programmes, filming enquiries answered, and, subject to enquiries, filming undertaken in Darlington borough</li> </ul>



Priority	What	Lead	Partners	Action	Measure(s) of success
3	An excellent cultural offer is accessible to children and young people across Darlington borough	Darlington Borough Council	Sector individuals, organisations and enterprises, Creative Darlington, Culture Bridge North East, Darlington Borough Council, Darlington Academies and Schools, Darlington and Durham Music Hub, Further Education providers in Darlington, Teesside University, Tees Valley Combined Authority, Tees Valley Museums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Darlington Borough Council will provide a Children's Library Service, an Events Service, and a Museum's Service providing opportunities for children and young people to engage with their culture and support Darlington Hippodrome's work with children and young people</li> <li>Allocate part of Darlington Borough Council's Arts and Heritage budget to support programme with and for children and young people, led by other parties</li> <li>Darlington Borough Council will work with Tees Valley Museums to support their</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service delivery and outputs, successful application by Tees Valley Museums to operate within Arts Council England's National Portfolio from 2023/34 onwards</li> </ul>

Priority	What	Lead	Partners	Action	Measure(s) of success
				application to remain within Arts Council England’s National Portfolio from 2023/24	
3 & 5	Support Theatre Hullabaloo’s pioneering work, putting young people at the heart of the creative process, with those aged 0 – 16 years in Darlington	Theatre Hullabaloo	Theatre Hullabaloo, Creative Darlington, Darlington Borough Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through its Arts and Heritage budget Darlington Borough Council will support an agreed programme of activity in Darlington led by Theatre Hullabaloo in 2022/23</li> <li>• Darlington Borough Council will work with Theatre Hullabaloo to support their application in 2022/23 to remain within Arts Council England’s National Portfolio from 2023/24</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theatre Hullabaloo deliver agreed programme in 2022/23</li> <li>• Theatre Hullabaloo apply successfully in 2022/23 to remain in Arts Council England’s National Portfolio of Organisations from 2023/24</li> </ul>

Priority	What	Lead	Partners	Action	Measure(s) of success
3	Durham Music Service receive funding to support their core offer to schools through Arts Council England as the Music Hub for Darlington and Durham, supporting children's engagement in choral and ensemble music	Durham Music Service	Darlington Academies and Schools, Durham Music Service, Darlington Borough Council, Darlington Hippodrome, Orchestras Live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Darlington Borough Council will continue to support children's engagement in music in Darlington through partnership working with Durham Music Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme for Darlington pupils involving Durham Music Service, Darlington Hippodrome and Orchestras Live delivered successfully in 2022/23</li> </ul>
3	Darlington Borough Council will support children and young people's cultural engagement through intervention programmes	Darlington Borough Council	Darlington Borough Council, particular Darlington Academies and Schools, Durham University, cultural sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Darlington Hippodrome will continue to deliver the In2 programme, and undertake fundraising to extend the programme, subject to positive evaluation</li> <li>Darlington Borough Council will programme additional cultural opportunities for children and young people supported by</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In2 programme outputs</li> <li>Holiday Activities Fund backed cultural programme outputs</li> </ul>

Priority	What	Lead	Partners	Action	Measure(s) of success
				the Holiday Activities Fund	
4	Support economic growth through the Enjoy Darlington campaign, including accessible, diverse and vibrant cultural events, festivals and programmes which enhance Town Centre animation	Darlington Borough Council	Darlington Borough Council, Darlington Borough Town Centre Partnership, Darlington Partnership, Tees Valley Combined Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote and manage a year-round Town Centre events programme</li> <li>Extend the scope of Darlington R 'n' B festival and Darlington Pride</li> <li>Mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a celebratory programme attracting Town Centre visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town Centre footfall, estimated attendance at cultural events, media coverage secured</li> </ul>
5	Audience development, youth theatre programmes and sector development programmes are led by, promoted by, or held at Darlington Hippodrome	Darlington Hippodrome	Darlington Hippodrome, Cultural Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Theatre programme promoted</li> <li>Youth Dance programme promoted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme outputs</li> </ul>

Priority	What	Lead	Partners	Action	Measure(s) of success
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1281 233 1644 432">• Audience development programme supported</li></ul>	

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## **COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY 17 FEBRUARY 2022**

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### **LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN**

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#### **SUMMARY REPORT**

##### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The report provides Members with an annual update on highways and transport from a regional and local perspective. It outlines delivery, performance and public satisfaction in 2021/22 and outlines the 2022/23 programme, including details of funding. It also provides an update on the delivery of the Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan and the Darlington Transport Plan.

##### **Summary**

2. Changes in travel behaviour have been one of the very visible signs of the restrictions we have continued to face during 2021/22 as a result of Public Health England and Government advice, and the significant impact of the omicron covid-19 variant on the delivery of bus and rail services.
3. The challenges continue and as we have already seen, vehicle traffic levels are quick to recover. The increase in online shopping and home deliveries which in turn increases the number of vans and lorries onto our roads is unlikely to abate. This is balanced with many people continuing to work from home and a move to more agile working combining home and office work. There is already recognition that the transport sector will need to work hard to increase bus and rail services back to full capacity and encourage passengers back on to them.
4. There has been good progress on the delivery of the transport capital programme and design work is well underway on more schemes to provide a pipeline of delivery during 2022/23 and beyond.
5. TVCA continues to deliver elements of the strategic transport plan including a new contract for an all-electric Wheels 2 Work scheme; a new contract for the continuation and expansion of TeesFlex; and the appointment of a supplier to install Electric Vehicle Charging Points in car parks.
6. There is a focus by the Department for Transport on progressing the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and the Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP). Darlington has started the delivery of one of two priority schemes in the LCWIP with the creation of phase one of a cycling route on Woodland Road. The BSIP has been submitted and progress is being made on the Bus Enhanced Partnership.

7. Details of the Performance Indicators are set out in the report. These reflect the challenges being faced by public transport and a continuing requirement to invest in the maintenance of the highway asset, with an increasing issue on the condition of footways.
8. Policy development has continued. A Transport Strategy for the Borough, Town Centre Transport Plan and Parking Strategy will be brought to Scrutiny for consideration. In the meantime a revised Travel Plan Policy is included in this report to ensure that high quality travel plans and personalised travel planning can be delivered as an integral part of the Planning Process, in particular on large scale housing developments.

**Recommendation**

9. It is recommended that :-
  - (a) Members note the progress in delivering the Transport Programme in 2021/22.
  - (b) Members note the changes to the funding process and how the funding is proposed to be used in 2022/23.
  - (c) Members note the Travel Plan Guidance and how this can secure better quality development in Darlington.
  - (d) Members note the proposal for Darlington Borough Council to become party to the ‘shell’ bus Enhanced Partnership agreement, noting that there are no direct obligations at this stage.

**Dave Winstanley GROUP DIRECTOR OF SERVICES**

**Background Papers**

Sue Dobson : Extension 6207  
SD

S17 Crime and Disorder	Crime and disorder implications were considered in the preparation of the Third Local Transport Plan and will be considered in the development and delivery of specific transport schemes or measures.
Health and Wellbeing	Health and wellbeing implications have been considered in the preparation of the Third Local Transport Plan and its implementation. The transport strategy seeks to achieve better health and longer life expectancy for everyone by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness from transport and by providing travel options to keep people active and independent. This will be



	reviewed as part of the development of the next Darlington Transport Plan.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	Carbon emissions and their impact have been considered in the preparation of the Third Local Transport Plan and its implementation. The transport programme seeks to reduce carbon emissions from transport through a shift towards electric and hydrogen vehicles from petrol and diesel. The programme also seeks to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport and mass public transport, as well as seeking ways to reduce the need to travel or travel shorter distances.
Diversity	Multi-strand Equalities and Disability Impact Assessments were undertaken in the preparation of the Third Local Transport Plan. The Plan seeks to achieve a fairer society by enabling people to access jobs, education, training, health, food and green spaces; and to achieve a better quality of life for all by improving the journey experience and minimising the negative impacts of transport such as noise, air pollution and accidents on the natural environment, heritage, landscape and people. This same approach will be applied in the development of the next Darlington Transport Plan. As highway schemes have an impact on the built environment, disability groups are consulted to ensure the needs of disabled people are considered.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	There are no proposals that impact on specific groups.
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework. The Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan was adopted by TVCA Cabinet on 31/01/2020 as the Local Transport Plan for the Tees Valley including the constituent local authorities. A new Darlington Transport Plan will be developed during 2021 (delayed from 2020) which will set out local priorities and will provide an overarching policy framework for other subsidiary documents such as the Asset Management Plan and Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This will also form part of the policy framework once it has been approved by Cabinet and adopted by Council.
Key Decision	This is a Key Decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent Decision
Council Plan	The report demonstrates how the transport programme is supporting delivery of the key actions in the Council Plan, namely reviewing and

	delivering a revised parking strategy and working with TVCA to deliver improved transport links within Darlington and the Tees Valley.
Efficiency	The Transport Strategy seeks to implement schemes that demonstrate value for money and/or deliver the greatest outcomes at a local level. An evidence-based approach is used to identify schemes that have higher benefit cost ratios, reduce maintenance liabilities and/or seek to reduce revenue costs. Maintaining the highway network will reduce traffic disruption in the longer term and improve network management. Vehicle delay has a negative impact on the economy, including logistics and freight.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

#### Context

1. National restrictions and guidance relating to the covid pandemic have continued to impact on the delivery and use of transport services and the highway. With the reintroduction of lockdowns, working from home, school disruption, reductions in capacity on bus and rail services and the ongoing impact of people self-isolating transport has still not returned to normal. This can be observed in the monitoring data set out in the report, in both the use of and people’s satisfaction with highways and transport.
2. All of the transport funding from the Department for Transport is now awarded to Tees Valley Combined Authority, including the Local Transport Funding which was previously awarded directly to Darlington Council. All this funding is now included in the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). TVCA has submitted its CRSTS business case and the outcome is awaited.
3. TVCA as the Transport Authority is working in partnership with the local authorities and bus operators to establish an Enhanced Partnership to deliver the Bus Service Improvement Plan. This will be key to securing a commercial network that meets the changing needs of local people. This work has included the extension of the Tees Flex service to operate in more areas and the introduction by the bus and rail operators of more flexible ticket options to reflect changing working patterns.
4. There are programmes that are supporting the move from diesel and petrol to electric and hydrogen fuelled vehicles. The new Wheels To Work (W2W) contract provides e-scooters (mopeds) to enable people to access employment when there are no public transport options. The all electric fleet replaces a previous petrol fleet. A contract has

been signed to install Electric Vehicle Charging Points across the Tees Valley in a number of public car parks.

5. Consultation on the Tees Valley Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan was completed and construction of the first two priority schemes are underway in Middlesbrough and Darlington.

### **Progress on delivery in 2021/22**

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

- (i) The major improvement programme for Darlington Station has made significant progress. Design of the Gateways East and West are being progressed by the Council and these are currently in detailed design stage (RIBA 4). Planning permission for Gateway East was granted in September 2021 and planning approval and listed building consent for Gateway West in October 2021. Planning approval for a temporary car park on the former cattle market site was granted on 14th January 2022. Construction of the temporary car park and the demolition of properties the Council and TVCA have already acquired will begin in Spring 2022. In January 2021 Cabinet resolved to make a Compulsory Purchase Order to assemble land for the Darlington Station Improvements Scheme. A Public Inquiry into the CPO is being held by the Planning Inspectorate 18<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> January 2022. The construction of the Gateway schemes will begin following conclusion of the CPO process in September 2022, and anticipated to complete in Spring 2024. Network Rail continue to progress their designs for track, platforms, new station fit out, overbridge and existing station enhancements. The full business case will be submitted by TVCA to the Department of Transport in Spring 2022 with a decision to deliver anticipated in Summer 2022.
- (ii) Darlington Northern Link Road – Darlington Northern Link Road remains a Strategic priority for both Tees Valley Combined Authority and the Council. We have continued to work together to try and secure appropriate funding from Government for this strategic link road. Many funding options have been and will continue to be explored.
- (iii) The ‘Rethinking Victoria Road’ scheme was completed. This included new traffic signals at the junction with Clifton Road and Park Place to improve the pedestrian crossing facilities; a 20mph speed limit and traffic calming; widened footways; improvements to the cycle route via Back House Street; and new street trees and landscaping. Following feedback from residents the bus stop that was removed has been reinstated in Park Place and additional bollards have been ordered to prevent illegal obstructive parking on the footways;
- (iv) Work started in November 2021 on the first phase of the West Park to Darlington town centre walking and cycling scheme. This is one of the priority routes in the Tees Valley Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and is being funded from Department for Transport’s Active Travel and Transforming

City Fund monies. The stepped cycle lane will separate cyclists from pedestrians as well as provide segregation from vehicles. The section of the route on Duke Street received objections and was redesigned to better meet the needs of local businesses. However following further consultation and dialogue, 3 objections were received to the final design. A Public Inquiry will therefore be held in Spring 2022. Consultation on the second phase of the scheme from Hollyhurst Road junction to the roundabout junction with Staindrop Road took place in January 2022, with a business case submitted to TVCA for funding in February 2022. It is anticipated that work on the second phase will start in the summer 2022 following completion of phase 1.

- (v) Winton Street West car park was reopened to the public providing additional parking near Duke Street and Skinnergate.
- (vi) Initial design work has been completed on two major schemes on Woodland Road – firstly changing the mini roundabout in Cockerton to a roundabout with a new cycle link along the A68, pedestrian improvements and changes to the landscaping; and secondly changing the 2 mini roundabouts at the junctions of Woodland Road/Staindrop Road/Carmel Road North to two roundabouts with pedestrian and cycle improvements. Public consultation has taken place in January and February 2022 and the next stage is to review the designs in light of the comments. Subject to the completion of consultation and design reviews the next stage will be further consultation and consideration of the submission of planning applications.
- (vii) A programme of dropped kerbs has been implemented to assist residents with mobility issues including along Outram Street and Charles Street;
- (viii) Bus stop improvements have been carried out in Heighington, School Aycliffe, Harrowgate Hill turning circle, Parkside, Hurworth, Middleton St George and Whessoe Road. Many of these stops have been relocated in order to provide raised kerbs to improve access for passengers to bus services. Bus shelters have been provided at two stops that serve Amazon which the company has funded.
- (ix) Safer Routes to School schemes have been designed for Hurworth Primary School and Mount Pleasant Primary School (schemes on Newton Lane and Whitby Way). The schemes incorporate 20mph speed limits, traffic calming and improved pedestrian crossing points to improve safety outside of these schools. Consultation with local residents is complete and the schemes will be constructed in 2022 mainly during school holidays to minimise disruption.
- (x) A bridge design has been commissioned for the next section of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) walking and cycling route in Middleton St George which will replace an existing bridge over Goosepool Beck. This will then be included in a planning application to create the route from where it currently ends on Yarm Road near the roundabout with Woosington Drive to Yarm Road near the airport roundabout. In addition Darlington, Stockton and Durham Councils have agreed to fund a new Development Officer to lead and coordinate the creation of the 26 mile walking and cycling route along the alignment of the S&DR in time for the bicentenary in 2025.

- (xi) 4,490 potholes have been reported and repaired up until the end of December 2021, significantly more than in the same period in 2020/21 (3,165). A greater emphasis is now being placed on preventing potholes and the Pothole Fund has also been used to target surfacing works. A programme of Micro Asphaltting works has been carried out on unclassified roads in 50 residential streets (listed on the Council website).
  - (xii) It is now possible to report highway defects digitally though the Report It portal. This feature went live in June 2021 and 880 defects were reported via this method up until the end of December 2021.
  - (xiii) A programme of maintenance schemes was carried out including A167 Merrybent, Heighinton By Pass, Tornado Way and Victoria Embankment. An innovative approach to using recycled materials was implemented on schemes on the road between Sadberge and Middleton St George and Hewitson Road in Darlington. This had environmental benefits as well as minimising disruption to local residents as the work was completed more quickly as waste material was not transported off site.
  - (xiv) A new design has been developed for the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme to incorporate the new Darlington Borough Council branding. This will be used for all new bus passes. Old passes will still be valid for up to 5 years and will not be replaced.
11. In addition to the Darlington Council transport programme we have worked in partnership with TVCA to develop transport initiatives that benefit Darlington residents.
- (a) A new contract has been awarded to continue the W2W scheme, an all-electric fleet of mopeds, leased to people so that they can access training and employment opportunities when there are no alternatives such as public transport;
  - (b) The Tees Flex service has been expanded to include the rural western part of Darlington borough which is not served by public transport;
  - (c) Whole Route Improvement Plans have been produced for 9 bus corridors across the Tees Valley to identify options to improve bus reliability and punctuality. In Darlington this includes the bus routes Darlington to Durham, Darlington to Middlesbrough and Branksome to Red Hall. The next stage is to develop a programme with timescales, costs and detailed designs; and
  - (d) A contract has been awarded by TVCA to install Electric Vehicle Charging Points in car parks in Darlington to facilitate the uptake of electric cars, taxis and vans.
12. During the year monitoring information is collected and used to monitor how the transport system is operating and being used by the public. This data informs the asset management programme and plans for speed and traffic management, as well as informing discussions with stakeholders including bus and rail operators and the Police. In 2021/22 transport continued to be affected by Government guidance for covid 19 restrictions which in turn impacted how people were able or chose to travel. The data is set out in **Appendix B** and the headline results are:-

- (a) Walking trips into the town centre fell by 50% during 2020/21 compared to the pre-pandemic levels but are currently on track to recover to approximately 75%. The reduction reflects the ongoing guidance to work from home, with significantly less office workers travelling to the town centre, as well as the reduction in retail footfall.
- (b) The cycling data is mixed. The automatic counters across the town show a possible decline on previous years as of December 2021 but the latest quarterly count of cycling into and out of the town centre show that cycling levels have recovered to pre pandemic levels.
- (c) Bus patronage has inevitably reduced due to covid restrictions limiting bus capacity; covid infections reducing driver availability (and thus reductions in service frequency); people having less reasons to travel due to people working from home, home delivery, children studying at home; and vulnerable people continuing to shield and limit contact with others. The number of trips has fallen from 5.5million in 2019/20 to less than 2million estimated for 2021/22. Trips by people using a concessionary bus pass have also remained lower than normal (down by 50%). Bus reliability continues to be an issue due to driver availability, but we continue to work closely with operators to ensure changes are communicated quickly via multiple channels.
- (d) Rail patronage has followed a similar pattern to bus patronage with a reduction of 45% on pre pandemic levels, and there continues to be issues with driver availability with associated impacts on services.
- (e) Vehicle traffic levels reduced significantly during the lockdown in early 2021 to 30% of normal levels. Traffic levels have recovered and are forecast to be at near normal levels by the end of the financial year. Part of this is fuelled by a reticence amongst some people to share their journey with others either on public transport or in car. It is too early to say whether this is a permanent trend; it is hoped that people will start to car share and use public transport in greater numbers.
- (f) The road safety statistics show a continuing reduction in casualties on a three year rolling average. However, the number of seriously injured remains stubbornly high in relation to previous years (there were no fatalities) at 38 of which 4 were children. Of the 142 casualties, 90 were car occupants and 24 were pedestrians. During early 2021 lockdown rules were in place and therefore traffic levels were lower and young people were not travelling to school. This reduced the road traffic risk. As lockdown restrictions lifted traffic levels increased again but casualties overall have remained low.
- (g) The road condition data shows that the structural maintenance programme continues to keep the % of principal and non-principal roads requiring interventions at low levels. However the condition of footways is getting worse with almost 20% being structurally unsound. In 2021/22 three footways schemes have been completed in Heighington, Hurworth and Clifton Road in Darlington. More schemes will be identified in 2022/23.
- (h) Each year Darlington takes part in the National Highways and Transport Network Public Satisfaction Survey. Full results can be seen in Appendix B. In 2021/22 overall satisfaction was down from 55% to 53%. Whilst the reduction in satisfaction is

disappointing it reflects the national trend. In summary 128 of the indicators were above the national average and 33 were below average; 51 of the indicators were improving compared to the previous year and 105 were reducing. Due to the impact of covid restrictions on people’s ability to travel and the transport options that have been available, people’s views have been distorted. For instance the results for public transport show a significant decrease reflecting the reductions in capacity (i.e. less seats available due to social distancing) and changing timetables, very often at short notice due to driver availability. This has an impact on the availability of public transport information and consequently satisfaction has fallen.

- (i) Like bus and rail, the taxi trade has also faced pressure. Many drivers have left the trade to find alternative employment and have not returned leading to an under provision of service for the borough.

### Proposed delivery in 2022/23

13. The Department for Transport will now award Tees Valley Combined Authority a City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), a 5 year budget to deliver the Tees Valley transport strategy. This is expected to be announced in February 2022. This will include the funding to deliver Darlington’s transport plan, including funding for structural maintenance of highways and structures, schemes for traffic and speed management, road safety including Safer Routes to School and 20mph schemes, bus stop improvements and walking and cycling schemes, including dropped kerbs. It is anticipated that TVCA Cabinet will approve the continuation of this funding to the individual local authorities to deliver local priorities. This provides the Local Transport Plan maintenance and integrated transport block funding as detailed below. Other funding is bid for as part of a competitive process, usually from the Department for Transport but is administered by TVCA. The following is a summary of the anticipated transport capital funding for 2022/23 compared to 2021/22:

Funding source	Basis of allocation	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000
LTP Highway Maintenance / CRSTS	Formulaic	964	2175
Maintenance Incentive Fund / CRSTS	Performance	241*	
Pothole and Challenge Fund, DfT	Formulaic	969	
LTP Integrated Transport Block / CRSTS	Formulaic	893	893
Active Travel Fund (LCWIP Phase 1)	TVCA programme, following successful bid to DfT	300	Increased to 1402** (includes contingency of £262k)
TCF (LCWIP Phase 2)	TVCA programme, following successful bid to DfT		1700
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,367</b>	<b>6,170</b>

\* Subject to assessment of maintenance questionnaire by DfT

\*\* Initial budget allocation of £905k in 2021/22 was increased to £1,702K following detailed design

14. In addition, there will be funding from the Bus Service Improvement Plan (not yet announced) and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (£310m over 5 years) that will be available for schemes and initiatives in Darlington.
15. The Local Transport Plan programme comprises a programme of schemes to manage and improve the highway network funded from the Integrated Transport Block. The programme consists of small scale schemes to address road safety, network and speed management, parking and sustainable travel. Details are included in **Appendix A**.
16. TVCA worked with the five local authorities to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Subsequently the Department for Transport announced the Active Travel Fund as a mechanism to start delivering the LCWIPs. Darlington was allocated £1.702m to deliver the first phase of the West Park to town centre walking and cycling route, with new segregated cycle lanes on Woodland Road. Work started on site in November 2021 and will continue until Autumn 2022. Funding has been secured in principle for the next phase from Hollyhurst Road junction to Deneside Road and consultation has taken place. The budget estimate is £1.7m
17. Darlington Northern Link Road remains a Strategic priority. We will continue to work together with TVCA to try and secure appropriate funding from Government for this strategic link road. Many funding options have been and will continue to be explored.
18. A bid for a series of improvements along the A68 was submitted to DfT in January 2020 to the Pinch Point Fund. In February 2021 DfT advised that the Pinch Point Funding had been moved into the Levelling Up Fund and Councils were invited to submit the scheme to that fund. Darlington Council is currently developing a bid to that Fund. Other funding opportunities are being pursued including delivering elements of the scheme through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement as the A68 is both a bus and cycle corridor. Consultation is taking place on the first elements of this scheme, namely the roundabouts in Cockerton and Woodland Road/Staindrop Road/Carmel Road. Subject to the completion of consultation and design reviews the next stage will be further consultation and consideration of the submission of planning applications
19. The Access Fund which has funded travel behaviour change programmes in the Tees Valley for the last 4 years has been replaced by the Capability Fund. Initial funding has been awarded until March 2022 and an announcement of future funding is awaited. Darlington delivers a programme of Personalised Travel Planning across the Tees Valley, working with housing developers, employers, colleges and Employment Hubs to support people in travelling sustainably. The team provides support and information to enable people to access public transport, TeesFlex, W2W and car sharing, as well as cycling for local utility trips. Darlington also delivers the public transport marketing programme in collaboration with the Connect Tees Valley team in Stockton. The Active Travel programme which was delivered in Darlington has now moved to TVCA.
20. Design is now underway on 20mph schemes for Reid Street Primary School, St Bede's Catholic Primary School, St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School and Federation of Abbey Schools (schemes on Abbey Road and Cleveland Terrace). Consultation will take place in



2022 with the schools and local residents and subject to support the schemes will be programmed for implementation.

21. Whole Route Improvement Plans - Optioneering Reports have been produced for 3 bus service corridors in Darlington – Branksome to Red Hall, Darlington to Durham and Darlington to Middlesbrough. These have been used to inform the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Business Case that has been submitted to Government by TVCA for a five year funding deal. Once funding is awarded a programme will be agreed to develop the options to detailed highway designs and then construction. This capital programme will link to other elements in the CRSTS programme and Bus Service Improvement Plan, managed through the Enhanced Partnership with bus operators.
22. TVCA is working with the highway authorities to procure a new supplier of bus shelters across the Tees Valley, ensuring that we continue to cleanse, inspect and maintain bus shelters and invest in new shelters at existing and new locations.
23. TVCA has awarded a contract for the installation, maintenance and management of Electric Vehicle Charging Points in car parks including car parks in and around Darlington town centre. These will be installed in 2022.
24. Durham, Darlington and Stockton Councils are jointly funding the appointment of an Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) Development Officer to progress the delivery of the 26 mile S&DR Walking and Cycling route for the bicentenary celebrations in 2025.

### **Policy development in 2022/23**

25. Since the first national lockdown in March 2020, the government has provided financial support to the bus sector to ensure the continued provision of services despite significantly reduced passenger numbers. This recovery funding was intended to support the bus sector return to financial sustainability.
26. In March 2021, the Government published *Bus Back Better: national bus strategy for England*. The strategy sets out the long-term vision and opportunity to deliver better bus services for passengers across England.
27. It should be noted that Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), the five Tees Valley local authorities and the Tees Valley bus operators have a history of collaboration and the work being progressed in response to the national bus strategy builds upon this.
28. There are two requirements that must be met, to be eligible for potential future funding to support bus provision:
  - submit a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) by 31 October 2021. The BSIP should set out a vision for delivering a step-change in bus services. A local public and wider stakeholder engagement process was undertaken during the development of the BSIP to inform priorities and this targeted both users and potential users of bus services. The Tees Valley BSIP was published in accordance with the deadline and can be viewed at [Tees Valley BSIP](#);
  - implement an Enhanced Partnership (EP), which is a statutory agreement between TVCA, the five Tees Valley local authorities and the Tees Valley bus operators. The EP is

made up of two parts: the EP plan, which mirrors the content of the BSIP; and the EP Scheme where the detailed requirements and actions for services and infrastructure in the area are set out specifically. The original deadline was for submission of the final scheme to the Government by the 31 March 2022, but this has recently been amended to submission of a draft scheme by the end of April 2022. However, given how advanced Tees Valley already is in the statutory process, the intention is to continue to work to the original deadline.

29. The BSIP and EP have been structured around a five-point delivery plan:
  - **decarbonisation** – one of the first regions in the UK to have an entirely zero emission local bus fleet;
  - **fares** – simpler fares and targeted promotions to drive passenger growth;
  - **customer experience** – putting the needs of customers at the heart of service delivery and improving information provision with one brand identity;
  - **infrastructure** – new infrastructure investment to prioritise bus on core corridors and improve passenger experience; and
  - **network** – a collaborative approach focused on core corridors and integration with the Tees Flex on-demand bus service.
30. It should be noted that the delivery of much of this five-point plan is dependent on securing revenue funding from government and it is understood that details of the indicative funding to support delivery of the BSIP will be provided by February 2022. The government has made it clear that should an area not implement an EP scheme, then future funding to both the Tees Valley Combined Authority, as local transport authority, and local bus operators could potentially be withheld.
31. As part of Spending Review 2021, it was announced that TVCA had an indicative capital allocation of £310m from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) for the five-year period from 2022/23 to 2026/27. The capital funding needed to deliver the infrastructure priority has been included in the CRSTS programme business case.
32. It is important to understand that TVCA is party to the agreement as the local transport authority and the five Tees Valley local authorities in their capacity as local highway authorities. An officer governance structure has been established, involving TVCA, the five Tees Valley local authorities and bus operators, to oversee the work and updates have been provided to the TVCA Transport Committee.
33. Coronavirus continues to impact on bus services in terms of patronage, service delivery and operational timetabling. These impacts coupled with uncertainty around the potential funding to support the delivery of the BSIP has made the process more challenging. It therefore needs to be recognised that the BSIP and EP need to be fluid and will be adapted as there is more certainty, particularly around the funding allocation.
34. In recognition of this challenge, the EP is in the form of a 'shell' agreement, which sets out the high-level priorities. There are no direct obligations on TVCA, the Tees Valley local authorities or bus operators at this stage. The EP Plan includes a bespoke variation mechanism, which enables further detail to be added at the appropriate point in time.

35. Any scheme that impacts on the local highway will therefore be subject to confirmation of funding and satisfactory completion of the necessary statutory processes.
36. The Tees Valley Design guidance will be updated during 2022 to reflect new national guidance, specifically LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design.
37. Darlington's Transport Strategy, Darlington town centre transport plan and a revised parking strategy have been drafted. These will be presented to Scrutiny before public consultation.
38. Darlington's Travel Plan policy which forms part of the Supplementary Planning Document, used to set the policy basis for consideration of planning applications, needs revising. A draft policy is attached at **Appendix C**. This sets out:
  - (a) What travel plans are and why we ask for them
  - (b) Types of travel plan
  - (c) When a travel plan is required – thresholds for travel plan submissions
  - (d) The process of submitting a travel plan -
    - (i) Modeshift registration
    - (ii) Required standards
  - (e) How we evaluate travel plan submissions
  - (f) Obligations – fees, bonds, and conditions

#### **Outcome of Consultation**

39. No specific consultation has been done on this report. Consultations are carried out on specific schemes and policies and will be considered as part of the processes for decision making.

## Transport Capital Programme 2022/23

## Appendix A

**Maintenance Block** – funding to maintain the highway network including structures and street lighting. Until we receive confirmation on funding levels from TVCA the programme is based on previous years levels of funding.

Department for Transport Allocation	£'000
Bridge structural maintenance	212
Highway structural maintenance	637
Incentive funding	241
Fees	116
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1,206</b>
Pothole and Challenge Fund 2022/23	969
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,175</b>

1. The following maintenance schemes have been identified as the priority based on the condition data surveys. This is a rolling programme and subject to tender returns.
  - (a) Swan House roundabout
  - (b) Rotary Way to A1 outbound dual carriageway
  - (c) Faverdale
  - (d) Newbiggin Lane – a recycling scheme using reclaimed tar bound planings from other schemes
  
2. In addition priority footpath schemes will be identified and the micro asphalt and patching programmes will include roads across the borough. This continues the investment in unclassified roads, which are predominantly residential streets.

**Integrated Transport Block** - funding to Manage and Improve the highway network

Manage/ Improve	Scheme	2022/23 (£k)	Notes
Network management			
Manage	North West Growth Zone Corridor - A68	250**	£805k** LTP + £100k section 106 funding is already secured. Consultation has taken place and further consultation will be required before consideration of submission of planning applications
	Traffic monitoring	20	
	Traffic counter replacement programme	20	
Sustainable and public transport			

Improve	Improvements to bus passenger and cycle facilities	50	Includes raised kerbs, bus shelters and cycle parking
Improve	Dropped kerbs	80	Improves access for all, includes a scheme for Milbank Road
Improve	Public Rights Of Way	35	Improves access for all including £25k for Patches Lane bridleway improvements in partnership with Brightwater
Improve	Walking and cycling route in Middleton St George between Yarm Road and Mill Lane	30	Improves access for all and supports the delivery of the 26 mile S&DR route - additional funding for a bridge
<b>Speed Management and Road Safety programme</b>			
Manage	School speed management and safety schemes	200	Schemes for Abbey Federation, St Augustine's, St Bede's and Reid Street Primary
	speed management schemes	40	Bonomi Way/Whessoe Road roundabout; village gateways
	VMS signs for speed management	50	Sites to be identified through speed and accident data
Sub total		775	
Fees		111	
Total		893	

\*\* In January 2020 an Expression of Interest was submitted to the Department for Transport's Pinch Point Fund to implement a programme of improvements on the A68 corridor. In March 2020 Darlington Council's Cabinet agreed to underwrite the local contribution element required by the Department for Transport for the bid for Pinch Point Funding, on the basis that other funding sources may become available over the next 12-36 months and, if the bid was successful, the most appropriate source of funding would be utilised at the time. If the bid was unsuccessful the available local funding would be used to start implementing the A68 corridor pinch point improvements. This funding is to build up funding for the scheme as either match or delivery money. This will not be sufficient to deliver the scheme in 2021/22 unless other bids are successful.

The Department for Transport has now announced that the Pinch Point funding will be added to the Levelling Up Fund and Darlington and TVCA will need to work together to secure funding from this new fund. The A68 is also a bus corridor and the WRIP identifies the roundabouts in Cockerton and Woodland Road/Staindrop as key elements to deliver traffic management benefits. The A68 is also an LCWIP corridor delivering a high quality cycle route from West Park to the town centre via Cockerton. The City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement may therefore also provide part of the funding for these schemes.



## Performance Data and Public Satisfaction

*\*estimated \*\* 2019/20 onwards only Northern Rail data is reported*

## APPENDIX B

Performance Measures	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Peak period traffic count (average) (data from traffic counters on inner cordon on the approach roads to the Inner Ring Road)	19,528	19,514	20,287	20,419		19,417	19,090	19,524	19,023	14,753	18,466*
24 Hour traffic count (average) (data from traffic counters on inner cordon on the approach roads to the Inner Ring Road)	127,306	125,642	123,847	124,764		126,801	125,519	127,938	125,017	94,007	118,412*
Bus Punctuality % on time	64%	64%	63%	87%		89%	86%	86%	Unavailable	93%	Available Autumn 2022
Bus Patronage (all operators)	6,605,517	6,604,117	6,505,849	6,422,947		6,240,594	5,972,163	5,741,507	5,457,204	1,826,616	1,991,239*
Concessionary fares patronage	2,750,929	2,744,792	2,673,485	2,627,062		2,607,611	2,450,526	2,347,694	2,167,240	628,055	1,046,752*
Rail Patronage (all 4 Darlington stations)**	2,241,390	2,279,159	2,322,927	2,337,809		2,368,780	2,417,328	2,498,158	1,256,241	236,013	703,495*
Number of cycling trips (automated cycle counters)	1224.50	1,450	1,556.50	1,315.75		1,618	1,585	1,650	1,614	1,637	1500*
No. of walking trips in the town centre	119,163	121,876	133,983	126,687		124,608	120,359	104,825	111,042	48,958	76,864*

Roads and Footway Conditions											
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
% of principal roads where maintenance should be considered ('A' class)	6%	5%	3.3%	4%	3.4%	1.6%	1.1%	2.2%	3%	1.9%	1.0%
% of non-principal roads where maintenance should be considered ('B' & 'C')	11%	12%	14%	11%	9%	6%	6%	7%	6%	6%	5%
% of unclassified roads where maintenance should be considered	7%	9%	10%	10%	12%	15%	22%	16%	8%	13%	15.8%
% of footways which are structurally unsound			10%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%	11%	17%	19.2%
Cost to restore the highway network and assets to original condition (Accumulated depreciation – Whole of Government Accounts)		£59.3 million	£74.2 million	£81.7 million	£92.2 million	£84.0 million	£90.3 million	£88.1 million	£78.3 million	Not available	Not available
Street Lighting											
% of street lighting columns over 40 years		29%	26%	20%	24%	3.8%	Not available	0	0	0	0
% of street lighting columns 20-40 years old		56%	51%	45%	44%	14%	Not available	15%	17%	17.5%	17.5%



	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Bridges											
Bridge Condition Index (average across all bridges; work programme developed from individual inspection reports)				85%	85%	Not available	71%	75%	81%	82%	Not available
Bridge Condition Index (Critical Elements i.e. relating to structural integrity) (average across all bridges; work programme developed from individual inspection reports)				74.6%	74%	Not available	71%	72%	69%	71%	Not available
Inspections											
Number of potholes repaired			9,490	8,004	6,611	6,246	6,582	6,631	5,075	5,942	4490 by 31/12/21
Public Rights of Way											
% of rights of way open and available for use – urban fringe leisure routes	63%	75%	67%	84%	79%	86%	75%	85%	85%	82%	84%

Road Safety and Sustainable Transport (figures in brackets are the three year rolling average)											
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	36 (37)	35 (35)	41 (37)	41(37)	32 (31)	39 (31)	45 (39)	52 (45)	52 (50)	26 (43)	38 (39)
Number of people slightly injured in road traffic accidents	296 (321)	309 (303)	285 (297)	285 (297)	242 (270)	256 (260)	230 (243)	208 (231)	161 (200)	106 (158)	104 (124)
Number of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	4 (2.6)	3 (3)	7 (4.6)	7 (4.6)	2 (4)	4 (3)	5 (3)	5 (5)	6 (5)	2 (4)	4 (4)
Number of children slightly injured in road traffic accidents	32 (36)	45 (37)	34 (37)	34(37)	32 (43)	27 (41)	24 (28)	28 (26)	13 (22)	12 (18)	7 (11)
% of children taking part in pedestrian training from participating schools	80	85	91	91	86	90	87	86	86	78	Not yet available
% of children taking part in cycle training (Year 5) from participating schools	45	54	56	56	50	52	66	63	63	95	Not yet available

## NHT Satisfaction Survey Results

Public Satisfaction – National Highways and Transportation Survey (NHT)										
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Overall public satisfaction</b>	55.7	54.9	55.1	56	56	54	54	55	55	53
<b>Public transport overall</b>	54	-	-	59	59	60	62	64	58	55
Local bus services	54	58	60	60	62	60	62	63	63	58
Local bus services (BVPI 104)	47	53	55	60	61	64	66	62	59	56
Public Transport Info (BVPI 103)	39	41	48	48	51	47	51	51	41	39
Taxi/Mini cab services	67	68	70	69	67	66	68	69	69	64
Community Transport	57	57	58	56	55	55	55	59	62	59
<b>Walking &amp; Cycling overall</b>	58	57	55	57	58	56	56	56	53	53
Pavements and footpaths	56	55	55	55	55	54	53	54	53	51
Pavements and footpaths (aspects)	57	58	57	61	61	58	58	60	56	55
Cycle routes and facilities	59	55	53	54	55	55	54	53	50	51
Cycle routes and facilities (aspects)	60	57	55	58	58	55	59	55	49	52
Rights of Way	57	60	58	58	60	57	58	59	58	56
Rights Of way (aspects)	56	55	52	58	56	56	56	56	54	53
<b>Tackling congestion overall</b>	52	54	53	53	51	48	49	50	49	48

Traffic levels and congestion	49	49	44	47	46	44	46	45	49	49
Management of Road works	54	53	51	56	50	51	53	55	54	53
Traffic management	55	54	54	56	56	55	57	56	42	40
<b>Overall road safety</b>	59	57	57	62	58	57	60	59	56	55
Road safety locally	62	59	61	63	60	57	58	59	58	55
Road safety environment	58	56	57	61	57	57	59	59	57	56
Road safety education	58	57	56	61	58	58	61	59	54	54
<b>Overall highways maintenance</b>	50	46	47	52	53	50	49	51	49	46
Condition of highways	34	28	31	34	38	34	30	35	35	31
Highways maintenance	48	48	48	54	53	51	51	53	51	43
Street lighting	69	69	71	70	69	66	65	65	65	65
Highway enforcement/obstructions	49	49	48	51	50	48	49	52	46	45



# Travel Plan Guidance



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council

# Travel Plan Guidance

**DRAFT**

**DRAFT**

## **Foreword (Lead Member)**



### **The Purpose of this Guidance**

This guidance is aimed at people who are involved with the planning of new developments within the boundary of Darlington Borough Council, particularly those responsible for the preparation, submission, and implementation of the development's travel plan. This will include but not be limited to developers, transport consultants, schools, and planners.

The guidance is designed to ensure developers produce and implement travel plans to a consistent format and standard contributing to the goals and objectives of national and local policies (as outlined in (Appendices 1 and 2)

The guidance will outline

- 1. What travel plans are and why we ask for them**
- 2. Types of travel plan**
- 3. When a travel plan is required – thresholds for travel plan submissions**
- 4. The process of submitting a travel plan -**
  - a. Modeshift registration**
  - b. Required standards**
- 5. How we evaluate travel plan submissions**
- 6. Your obligations – fees, bonds, and conditions**

Although this guidance has been written to ensure consistency and quality, the system allows flexibility to adapt travel plans to site specific conditions. The guidance will be reviewed annually to ensure it is fit for purpose and we welcome feedback at any time.

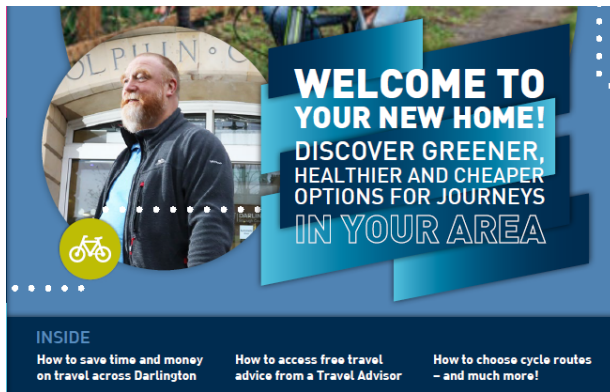
## 1. What Travel Plans are and why we ask for them

- 1.1 A travel plan is a site-specific document for travel behaviour change that can be applied to any setting (education, business, community). Its purpose is to ensure developments within the Darlington Borough Council area minimise the negative impacts of traffic as result of their development and facilitate and promote the use of alternative sustainable transport. Its ultimate objective is to change the behaviour of individuals to more sustainable modes of travel and maintain that change once it has occurred
- 1.2 A travel plan is not a one-off document; it is a long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that is regularly reviewed and monitored to ensure it continues to achieve its objectives. Darlington Borough Council will be actively involved in this process alongside the owner of the travel plan for the lifetime of the document. It requires the author of the document and the subsequently appointed Travel Plan Coordinator to be familiar with the local transport options and maintain an ongoing communication with all transport suppliers and Darlington Borough Council's Transport Planning team.
- 1.3 Implementing a travel plan is of benefit to both the developer and the user of the site. Different settings may dictate the focus of attention of the plan's action and its subsequent benefits, but popular benefits can include:
- For businesses and their employees
- Enhancing image and supporting environmental responsibilities
  - Improved staff recruitment and retention
  - Reduced car parking spaces and associated costs
  - Healthier staff/ reduced sickness levels
  - Greater accessibility to site
- For housing developers and their residents
- Improved lifestyles offer
  - Enhancing image and supporting environmental responsibilities
  - Increased and inclusive transport choices for residents
  - Reduced car travel contributing to improved air quality and safer streets
- For schools and the pupils/ parents
- Reduced traffic congestion leading to:  
Improved traffic safety around the school  
Better air quality
  - Helping to maintain good relationships with residents
  - Enhancing Ofsted reports
  - Improved physical and mental health for pupils
  - Increased and inclusive transport choices for parents and pupils
- 1.4 The actions within a travel plan can, and should be, adapted to suit the local needs in the Darlington area. It is therefore essential that the author of the plan has good local knowledge to maximise the benefits of the plan.



## Case Study – Housing Developer Brochure

An example of how literature can be adapted to appeal to local residents



## 2. Types of Travel Plan

- 2.1 This guidance refers to travel plans as a holistic description of the document. However, Darlington Borough Council recognises and accepts two types of travel plans. Any plan submitted should aim to support the aims and objectives of the local and national policies (Appendices 1 and 2).
- 2.2 **Framework** - A Framework Travel Plan is a document submitted when the occupiers of the development are unknown. It sets out basic principles for the site as whole in preparation for the future occupier's plans.
- 2.3 **Full Travel Plan** – A Full Travel Plan is submitted where the proposed use and accessibility needs are known, and targets can be set. All elements of the plan should be tailored to the end occupier(s) – eg residential / school / workplace.

## 3. When a Travel Plan is required – Thresholds for Travel Plan Submissions

- 3.1 Travel plans will be required for all development proposals exceeding the council's thresholds (Appendix 3 - Travel Plan Thresholds), and in other circumstances where local factors make one necessary. Local factors could include but are not limited to:
  - Change of Use applications Change of use applications will be considered as new development and will require a travel plan if the thresholds set out in Appendix 3 or 3a are exceeded.
  - Multi-occupation of one site Where several small developments or an initial small-scale development is incrementally increased or different use types on one

site may individually fall below the thresholds set out in Appendix 3. The cumulative impacts of these individual developments or uses can be enough to justify a travel plan for the site.

Increased Car Parking Applications from existing businesses, organisations and schools seeking to increase car parking capacities without linked development will be required to show that a travel plan has been in place and fully implemented and other options to reduce car use have been implemented.

Town Centre Development Any development within the Town Centre will require a travel plan.

- 3.2 It should be noted that although Appendix 3 sets out the development thresholds above which travel plans would normally be expected, the Highways Authority will assess applications on their own merits. This may result in some cases where a smaller development warrants a travel plan or larger sites where a travel plan is not justified. Applicants should assume, however, that where a threshold is exceeded a travel plan document will be required and discuss the need and scope for the document with the Highways Authority at the earliest possible stage of the application.
- 3.3 We stipulate a threshold of over 50 C3 dwelling houses for a travel plan, however the Highways Authority retain the right to request a travel plan for developments with fewer dwellings in circumstances where it is considered/likely to impact on sustainable transport in that area. Again, discussion with the Highways Authority is recommended at the earliest possible stage of the application.
- 3.4 The submission of a travel plan is not a guarantee that a proposed development will not be objected to on highways grounds if other supporting documentation, such as a Transport Assessment, does not demonstrate acceptability in highways terms

#### 4. **The process of submitting a Travel Plan -**

##### **a) Modeshift Registration**

##### **b) Required Standards**

##### **a) Modeshift Registration**

- 4.1 Framework and Full Travel Plans are to be submitted using the Modeshift STARS platform.

The platform is a comprehensive travel planning tool that:

- Creates, develops, and supports travel plans
- Assists in monitoring and evaluation
- Recognises and rewards excellence for the promotion of sustainable and active travel

- 4.2 The platform is divided into three areas:

**STARS Education** – for all travel plans relating to educational establishments up to and including KS4

**STARS Community** – for all residential and community travel plans

**STARS Business** – for all other travel plans including business, FE/HE, retail and NHS sites

- 4.3 Modeshift STARS allows users to collect data and information linked to a site or a collection of sites and to input into the system. This process is more efficient than paper and PDF travel plans. Users of the system will save time when putting together a travel plan and they will be able to access their site's information online at any time. By providing clarity and a standardised approach towards what is required in a travel plan, this will allow the quality of travel plans submitted in support of planning applications to be assessed in a fair and consistent way.
- 4.4 Any previously written documents not using this format will need to be transferred and adapted to use this system. Requests for exemptions to this process will need to be submitted in writing to the Highway Authority for consideration. The Modeshift licence for Darlington Borough Council travel plans is paid for by the council and organisations can therefore utilise the platform free of charge, up to and including the Bronze level of accreditation. (Schools can utilise the platform free of charge to any level of accreditation). Further information on the Modeshift fees can be found [here](#) and details of accreditation for business, residential and educational plans can be found [here](#).
- 4.5 Registering to use the system can be undertaken in one of two ways:
- By completing the contact/register section at [www.modeshiftstars.org](http://www.modeshiftstars.org) website or
  - By contacting the Transport Planning section at Darlington Borough Council.
- 4.6 Once you register and gain access to the platform you will be able to locate your development/organisation and begin to input the required information into the headings. A full range of guidance is included within the platform.  
**Note** Darlington Borough Council's Transport Planning Officer will assign a travel survey through the system. Currently this can be completed electronically or on paper (and inputted into the system).
- b) Required Standards**
- 4.7 Framework Travel Plans – If a Framework Travel Plan is submitted, the Green standard must be attained prior to planning permission, being granted. Following this, individual Travel Plans for site occupiers (when known) must be written and submitted within three months of occupation. These subsequent plans must attain Bronze Standard within 12 months of occupation. The Modeshift platform allows multiple occupier travel plans to be linked to their framework plan for administrative purposes.
- 4.8 Full Travel Plans – If a Full Travel Plan is submitted it must attain Green standard prior to planning permission, being granted. Upon occupation all Travel

Plans must attain Bronze standard within 12 months of occupation (unless agreed otherwise with Darlington Borough Council)

- 4.9 It is hoped that all travel plans will go on to achieve higher standards in subsequent years and be recognised with a higher-level award. Details of the standards to be achieved for business residential and educational plans can be found [here](#).
- 4.10 Baseline monitoring is required for Bronze Standard and will typically be within three months of first occupation. For residential developments trigger points for baseline monitoring will be agreed in relation to anticipated build out schedule and development size but will be in the region of 50% occupation and yearly thereafter for the life of the plan (five years post completion/full occupation). Prior to development, baseline data can be ascertained using census data for the ward, or data from a similar development. All travel plans must be updated on an annual basis until post five years, completion/full occupation of the site.
- 4.11 **NOTE** As you will read, all plans submitted using the Modeshift platform require the planning and implementation of 'Travel Initiatives' and 'Supporting Initiatives'. There are however initiatives that will be compulsory elements of travel plans submitted to us and these will be in addition to the required number of initiatives required by Modeshift. These compulsory elements will be secured via s106 agreements and/or planning conditions, details of which are included in the section – 'Your Obligations – Fees, Bonds and Conditions'.

## 5. How we Evaluate Travel Plan Submissions

5.1.1 Evaluation criteria to approve travel plans submitted on the Modeshift Platform will include:

- All sections of the plan need to be completed as required for the Green or Bronze standard and kept up to date.
- We require a named Travel Plan Co-ordinator. Where the TPC has yet to be appointed, an interim named contact (such as the author of the travel plan) will need to be retained and held responsible for the plan until the TPC is appointed.
- Baseline survey data is required to set targets from
- Targets need to be set
- A commitment to annual monitoring is required for a period of the life of the travel plan

## 6. Your Obligations – Fees, Bonds and Conditions

- a. Monitoring Fee
- b. Personalised Travel Advice Fee
- c. Travel Implementation Bond
- d. Conditioned Initiatives

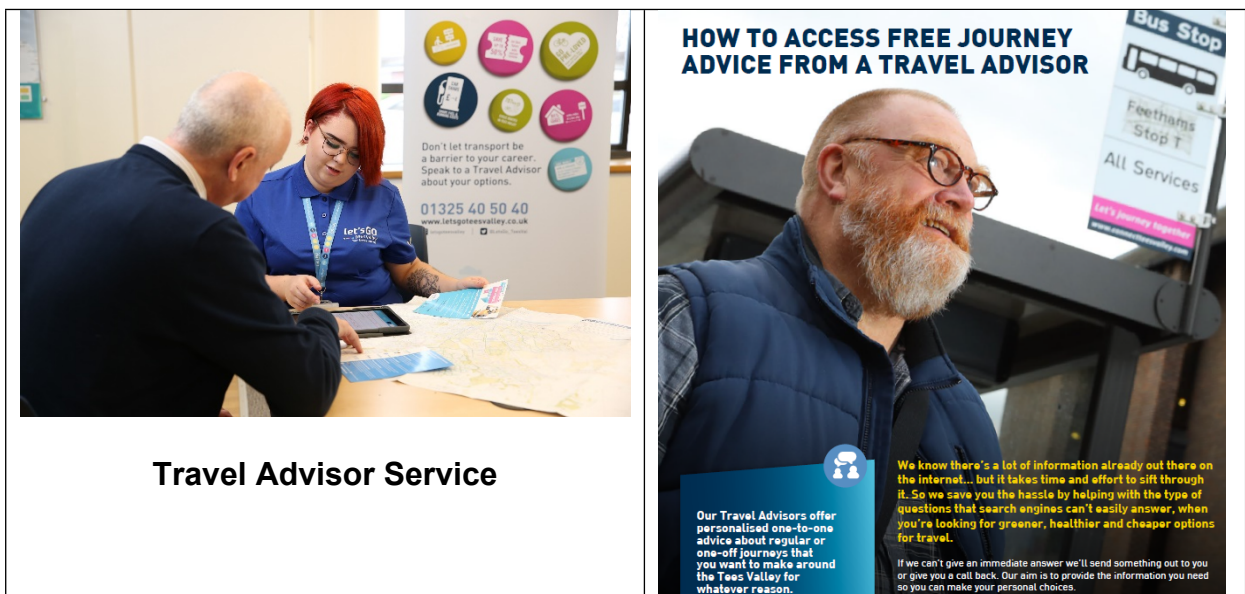
### **a) Monitoring Fee**

- 6.1 In all cases where a travel plan is required, the Council will require the developer to enter into a Section 106 Agreement. This will include payment of a travel plan monitoring fee of £2850, which will be payable to the Council by the developer. The full fee amount should be submitted in one payment on signing the Section 106 agreement and is non-refundable. This fee does not apply to educational travel plans.
- 6.2 The fee amount is based on 15 hours per year of Darlington Borough Council officer time @ £38 per hour (RPI index linked from a base of 2021) to carry out the following duties over five years of the life of the Travel Plan:
- Modeshift user system set up
  - Administrative duties including survey set up and monitoring of deadlines
  - Evaluation of travel plan submission
  - Ongoing annual review of the travel plan and subsequent feedback/discussions with the Travel Plan Coordinator for the next year's measures.
- 6.3 In some cases, particularly for residential developments, monitoring may be required beyond the five-year period. In these circumstances, fees required beyond five years will be agreed on a case-by-case basis.
- 6.4 The fee does not cover the actual conducting of surveys, data inputting onto the Modeshift platform or analysis as this is the responsibility of the Travel Plan Coordinator.
- 6.5 Guidance on local authorities' ability to use fees is available in DfT/CLG's Delivering Travel Plans through the Planning Process. In addition, Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 gives the power to local authorities to charge for discretionary services. These are services that an authority has the power, but not a duty, to provide.

### **b) Personalised Travel Advice (PTA) Fee**

- 6.6 In all cases where a travel plan is required, a personalised travel advice fee **will/may** be payable to the Council by the developer. In all cases where a personalised travel advice fee is required, the Council will require the developer to enter into a Section 106 Agreement. The full fee amount should be submitted in one payment on signing the Section 106 agreement and is non-refundable. This fee does not apply to educational travel plans.
- 6.7 The fee required will be dependent on the type of development:
- For residential developments the fee will be £300 per household
  - For business developments the fee will be £100 per full time employee (cumulative). (FTE)
- The full fee amount should be submitted in one payment on signing the Section 106 agreement, is non-refundable and is RPI index linked from a base of 2021.

- 6.8 Monies secured by this process will be utilised by the travel advisors from the Tees Valley behaviour change programme to offer a personalised travel advice service. As a minimum this offer will include:
- Face to face meetings using techniques such as motivational interviewing to have discuss the travel choices available to staff or residents.
  - Surveying of current and potential travel habits
  - The provision of a bespoke journey plans to encourage a more sustainable option
  - The provision of travel resources to enable people to plan their own sustainable journeys
  - The provision of incentives such as taster tickets to encourage sustainable transport take-up
  - Follow up surveys to assess modal shift for those accepting incentives
- 6.9 The process will require close cooperation with the development's Travel Plan Coordinator and reference to this will be required in the travel plan document. It is anticipated that the PTA will be delivered within 3 months of individual house occupation or employment start date.



### c) Travel Plan Implementation Bond

- 6.10 In all cases where a travel plan is required, a travel plan implementation bond will be payable to the Council by the developer. In all cases where a travel plan implementation bond is required, the Council will require the developer to enter into a Section 106 Agreement The full bond amount should be submitted in one payment on signing the Section 106 agreement. This bond does not apply to educational travel plans.

The bond required will be dependent on the type of development:

- For residential developments the bond will be £200 per household
- For business developments the bond will be £50 per full time employee (cumulative). (FTE)

The bond is RPI index linked from a base of 2021.

- 6.11 This bond would be repayable on successful completion of the travel plan for its full term. Successful completion of the plan is deemed as:
- The developer/owner retaining responsibility for funding and implementing the travel plan, its incentives and initiatives, (PTA services excepted if PTA fee paid)
  - The appointment and retention of a travel plan coordinator
  - The surveying, monitoring, and annual reporting for the lifetime of the plan
  - The achievement of targets at full build out
- 6.12 Darlington Borough Council would retain the bond to implement remedial measures if the developer/owner did not meet the agreed set targets and / or comply with the agreement. The payment of the bond cannot be used as mitigation to the production and implementation of the travel plan.

Examples of remedial measures could include – but are not limited to:

- Further personalised travel advice and incentives
- Additional promotional events
- Additional promotional resources
- Cycle training /Buddy up scheme for individuals or teams
- Implementation of a car sharing scheme
- Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)
- Provision of sustainable transport infrastructure
- Bus service subsidies

#### **d) Conditioned Initiatives**

- 6.13 In appropriate circumstances specific initiatives, as listed in the Modeshift platform, will be conditioned within the planning consent. These incentives must be included within the actions of the travel plan and are in addition to the number and type of incentives required to achieve the Modeshift standards.
- 6.14 These initiatives could include (but are not limited to):

##### Car clubs for residential developments

Car clubs should be provided/investigated for residential developments where Darlington Borough Council is of the view that the conditions are suitable to support their set-up and ongoing success. In these circumstances, measures such as the provision of infrastructure (such as marked parking bays and electric vehicle charging points for car club vehicles), the promotion of the car club, and a contribution towards the set-up costs of the car club should be provided by the developer.

##### Working with the local authority to support sustainable travel in the community

The developer must include in their travel plan how they intend to work with staff at Darlington Borough Council and the Tees Valley behavioural change programme to maximise the impact of their initiatives. This would include specific actions and SMART targets.

New residents or employee welcome pack with travel information

Developers must provide appropriate information on travel options to and from the development including the promotion of sustainable transport. Developers must consult with Darlington Borough Council prior to the development and publication of any information to ensure accuracy and obtain approval.

Secure discounts with local bike shops and/or public transport operators

Discounts should be investigated and provided at developments where Darlington Borough Council is of the view that the conditions are suitable to support their set-up and ongoing success.

Assistance with this document can be provided by contacting:

Transport Planning Officer  
Darlington Borough Council  
[Janet.easley@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:Janet.easley@darlington.gov.uk)



[Appendices:](#)

Appendix 1 Travel Plan Policy Context – National

Appendix 2 Travel Plan Policy Context – Local

Appendix 3 Travel Plan Thresholds

## Appendix 1 Travel Plan Policy Context – National

[National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's approach to the location and design of developments to ensure that plans protect and explore opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. A core planning principle of the NPPF is to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable. The framework promotes the hierarchy of preferred modes of transport, from walking and cycling, public transport, car sharing, the use of electric vehicles and finally to single occupancy car use, as the last option.

[Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy \(DfT\)](#) This Strategy aims to create a walking and cycling nation; with a long-term goal (up to 2040) that walking, and cycling become a normal part of everyday life, and the natural choice for shorter journeys such as the commute to school, college, and work or leisure trips.

[Gear Change](#) A bold vision for cycling and walking 2020 (DfT) This plan describes the vision to make England a great walking and cycling nation. It sets out the actions required at all levels of government to make this a reality.

[Cycle Infrastructure Design 2020 \(DfT\)](#) This guidance supports the delivery of high-quality cycle infrastructure to make cycling and walking the natural choices for short journeys or as part of a longer journey with supporting objectives to increase cycling and walking levels. It reflects current good practice, standards and legal requirements.

[Education and Inspections Act 2006 \(DfE\)](#) The Act requires local authorities to promote sustainable travel and to support choice and flexibility of educational provision. It also extends the right to free transport for children living in lower income households.

### Public Health and NICE Guidelines

- [Promoting physical activity for children and young people, NICE Guidelines \[PH17\] January 2009](#) Provides guidance on promoting physical activity among children and young people, including parents and carers, with a series of recommendations.
- [Public Health Guideline PH41 Physical Activity: Walking and Cycling](#) Sets out how people are encouraged to increase the amount they walk or cycle for travel and/or recreation purposes.
- [NICE Guidelines NG13 Workplace Health: Management Practices](#) Examples of how to improve the health and wellbeing of employees, placing it at the core of the organisation.
- [Working Together to Promote Active Travel - \(Public Health England\) - May 2016](#) Looks at the impact of current transport systems and sets out the many benefits of increasing physical activity through active travel.
- [NICE Guidelines NG70 Air Pollution: Outdoor Air Quality and Health](#) This guide brings together air quality, active travel and car transport

**Further historical information on travel planning can be found in the following publications:**

- Delivering Travel Plans through the Planning Process (DfT / CLG, 2009)
- Building Sustainable Transport into New Developments (DfT, 2008)
- The Essential Guide to Travel Planning (DfT, 2008)
- Guidance on Transport Assessments (DfT & CLG, 2007)
- The Travel Plan Resources Pack for Employers (DfT, 2006)
- Making Residential Travel Plans Work: Guidelines for New Development (DfT, 2005)
- Behavioural Insights Tool Kit, Social Research and Evaluation (DfT, 2011)

## Appendix 2 Travel Plan Policy Context – Local

### [Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy 2010-2020](#)

This strategy represents how the five Local Authorities within the Tees Valley will come together with one aim and vision; to reduce their carbon footprint. As part of this there are opportunities that can be used to reduce emissions from cars by using technology and different behaviours, this includes workplace travel plans, school travel plans personalised travel planning, public transport information and marketing, travel awareness and car clubs. The actions within this strategy state the following -

- Prioritise improving public and sustainable transport in local transport planning and increase the provision of facilities for cyclists throughout the Tees Valley.
- Develop travel plans to influence people's travel behaviour towards more active and sustainable options such as walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
- Prioritise active and sustainable travel. Public sector organisations will improve the environmental impact of their fleet vehicles.
- Include climate change impacts in Transport Asset Management Plans and ensure that footpaths and cycle routes are maintained in good condition so that people are encouraged to use them.

[Darlington Borough Council Local Plan](#) – to be adopted but will include high level linkages.

[Darlington Borough Council Transport Plan](#) - yet to be consulted upon and adopted.

[Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan](#) - yet to be consulted upon and adopted.

[Darlington Borough Council Parking Strategy](#) - yet to be consulted upon and adopted.

### [Darlington Borough Council Planning Obligations - Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\)](#)

This document provides clarity and detail about the Council's approach to secure planning obligations, which are also known as developer contributions or S106 agreements. These are legal agreements negotiated between the Council and developers or landowners as a result of a planning application, to secure infrastructure required to help mitigate the impact of new residential or non-residential development. As part of this document there is a requirement for new residential and non-residential developments (of a certain size) to provide a travel plan to help mitigate the impact of the development with regard to travel options.

This Travel Plan Guidance document updates the SPD and will be integrated into future revised versions of the SPD.

### [Darlington's Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2022](#)

The Health and Wellbeing plan for Darlington places the community at the heart of commissioning intentions to improve health and wellbeing and to reduce health inequalities for the population. This plan seeks to turn that strategy into action which makes a difference in people's lives, and helps the residents of Darlington live healthier lives for longer; that makes Darlington a "Healthy Community" -

*A healthy community encourages:*

- *Active healthy lifestyles that are made easy through the pattern of development, good urban design, good access to local services and facilities; green open space and safe places for active play and food growing and is accessible by walking and cycling and public transport.*
- *The creation of healthy living environments for people of all ages which supports social interaction. It meets the needs of children and young people to grow and develop, as well as being adaptable to the needs of an increasingly elderly population and those with dementia and other sensory or mobility impairments.*

### Appendix 3 Travel Plan Thresholds

Land Use Pre 2020	Land Use Post 2020	Measure	Travel Plan Required
A1 Food retail	E(a) Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food	Gross Floor Area	>800 sq. m
A1 Non-food retail	E(a) Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food	Gross Floor Area	>1500 sq. m
A2 Financial and professional services	E(c)(i) Financial services, E(c)(ii) Professional services (other than health or medical services)	Gross Floor Area	>2500 sq. m
A3 Restaurants and cafes	E(b) Sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises	Gross Floor Area	>2500 sq. m
A4 Drinking establishments	Sui Generis	Gross Floor Area	>600 sq. m
A5 Hot-food takeaway	Sui Generis	Gross Floor Area	>500 sq. m
B1 Business	E(g) E(g)(i) E(g)(ii) E(g)(iii)	Gross Floor Area	>2500 sq. m
B2 General Industry	B2 General industrial E(g) (previously class B1) (	Gross Floor Area	>4000 sq. m
B8 Storage or distribution	B8 Storage or distribution.	Gross Floor Area	>5000 sq. m
C1 Hotels	C1 Hotels - Hotels, boarding and guest houses	Bedrooms	>100 bedrooms
C2 Residential institutions— hospitals, nursing homes	C2 Residential institutions – Residential care homes, hospitals and nursing homes	Beds	>50 beds
C2 Residential institutions— residential education	C2 Residential institutions - Boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres	Students	>150 students
C2 Residentials institutions— institutional hostels	C2A Secure Residential Institution -	Residents	>400 residents
C3 Dwelling houses	C3 Dwelling houses - C3(a), C3(b), C3(c), C4 Houses in multiple occupation	Dwelling unit	>50 units
D1 Non-residential institutions	E(e) E(f) F1(a) F1(b) F1(c) F1(d) F1(e) F1(f)	Gross Floor Area	>1000 sq. m

D2 Assembly and leisure	F2(c) F2(d) Sui generis:	Gross Floor Area	>1500 sq. m
Education establishments	Increase in pupil numbers and/or further development of the site		
Others	Discuss with Darlington Borough Council		

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**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
17 FEBRUARY 2022**

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**MANAGEMENT OF GRASS VERGES – FINAL REPORT**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update of the Management of Grass Verges Task and Finish Group, established by this Scrutiny Committee to assist the development of a new operational policy in relation to the management of grass verges; and to consider and endorse the adoption of a flow chart to address a range of issues associated with grass verges.

**Summary**

2. At a meeting of the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee held on 25 February 2021, Members received a report which set out the current position adopted by the Council in relation to the management of grass verges.
3. Members of the Scrutiny Committee 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. All Members of the Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate.
4. An initial meeting of the Task and Finish Group was held on 9 April 2021 and a further meeting was held on 12 November 2021. The notes of the meeting are attached (**Appendix 1**).
5. It was agreed at the meeting held on 12 November 2021 that a flow chart, which would provide a toolkit of options to address a range of issues associated with grass verges, would assist Members. A draft flow chart has been developed by Officers and shared with all Councillors for comment.
6. The final draft of the flow chart is attached (**Appendix 2**).

**Recommendation**

7. It is recommended that the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee considers and endorses the adoption of the flow chart attached at Appendix 2.

**Councillor Steven Tait  
Chair of Management of Grass Verges Task and Finish Group**

**Background Papers**

None

Hannah Miller : Extension 5801

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Health and Wellbeing	This report has implications on the Health and Wellbeing of residents of Darlington.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Diversity	There are no issues relating to diversity which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	All wards
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Group is considered to be minimal
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	Not a key decision
Urgent Decision	Not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This report contributes to the Council Plan through the involvement of Members in contributing to the development of operational policy.
Efficiency	The outcome of this report does not impact on the Council efficiency agenda
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

8. The Review Group held its initial meeting on 9 April, 2021 where Members agreed to undertake a table top exercise to trial the draft verge damage assessment form on a number of locations in their wards, covering various circumstances. It was also agreed that the task and finish group would be reconvened to review the results of this exercise and finalise the assessment process. This work was not progressed.
9. A progress report was submitted to the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee on 21 October, where Members agreed to continue with the Task and Finish Group, adopting an Officer led approach with Member involvement.
10. A further meeting of the Review Group was held on 12 November 2021. Members were provided with details of a draft flow chart, which would provide a toolkit of options to address a range of issues associated with grass verges. Members were in agreement that the flow chart would be beneficial but required further development to ensure all possible issues were covered.
11. The flow chart has been developed by Officers and circulated to all Members on 14 January 2022 for comment. Comments have been incorporated where appropriate and the final version of the flow chart is attached at Appendix 2.
12. Members are requested to consider and endorse the adoption of the flow chart to assist with the management of grass verges.

## MANAGEMENT OF GRASS VERGES – REVIEW GROUP

9 APRIL 2021

**PRESENT** – Councillors Renton (Chair), Bartch, Culley, Donoghue, Haszeldine, McCollom and Tait

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Cossins and Durham

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Dave Winstanley (Assistant Director – Transport and Capital Projects), Steve Pryke (Head of Highways Asset Management), Andrew Casey (Head of Highways Network Management), Andrew Cruddace (Surveying and Street Works Manager), Anna Willey (Anti Social Behaviour and Civic Enforcement Manager), Melanie Emmerson (Highways Inspector) and Hannah Fay (Democratic Officer)

Following a query from a Member regarding enforcement and legal matters, reference was made to the summary note circulated to Members prior to the meeting which outlined the general highway legislation and traffic regulation orders, byelaws, community protection notices, PSPO and the highway code in relation to parking on grass verges.

A discussion ensued in respect of the options available to deter, prevent or accommodate parking and enforcement options:

- Members were in favour of a number of options to deter and prevent parking including the use of signs; planting of wildflowers, however as this was seasonal it would not address the issue in the winter months; the use of temporary markers, however these could be subjected to vandalism; and the use of fake parking tickets. Members felt that tree planting should be considered but noted that this was not suitable in many residential areas.
- It was highlighted that the use of planters was a good option as these would act as a direct deterrent to parking on verges. In rural areas residents often placed stones on grass verges however these could be replaced with planters. Members queried whether the Council would be required to install planters or whether residents could be provided with a list of approved planters that they could purchase and maintain. The Assistant Director, Transport and Capital Projects advised that the Council may need to provide the service; assessments would be required for each location identified; would require liaison with streetscene regarding maintenance; and further investigation into the legalities surrounding the purchase and maintenance of planters by residents. It was highlighted that planters would need to be heavy duty to ensure these could not be moved or vandalised and that planters were not a viable option in some streets.
- It was highlighted that residents would either take pride in their street or they wouldn't and it was suggested to offer free garden waste bins to those residents who agreed to maintain the grass verge outside their property.

- Members felt that verge hardening should be avoided where possible and that prevention and deterrent measures were preferred. Members were informed that Grasscrete blocks had been used in the past however these were very expensive.
- Members highlighted that many of the options discussed would only displace the issue of parking on verges however were assured that a robust assessment process should identify any impacts.
- Members also highlighted the need to consider residents with disabilities, some residents need to be able to park close to their property; and Members needed to be mindful of access to utilities that were held in grass verges.
- Members felt that there was a role for enforcement, however the layout of some residential streets meant that parking on the paths and verges was a necessity. If enforcement action was taken this may cause obstructions in these streets. It was felt that for streets where the majority of residents looked after their verges and a small minority of residents caused damage, then enforcement could be the way to go.
- In relation to the general byelaw that was in place, the maximum penalty for a breach was £20; due to the time and effort involved in bringing a prosecution it would not make commercial sense and would not be in the public interest to enforce this. Members noted that currently the enforcement around parking on verges was sporadic and undertaken as and when requested.
- The Anti Social Behaviour and Civic Enforcement Manager advised Members that other local authorities had used community protection notice (CPN) warnings and CPNs; the warnings gave residents the opportunity to change their behaviour before a fine was issued; and Stockton had used this approach with a 90 per cent success rate. Members were informed that this approach may have resource implications for the enforcement team.
- In relation to the budget for grass verge management Members noted that there was previously a small budget, however this was no longer available and repairs to verges were included in the reactive maintenance budget which was £400k.
- In terms of the scale of the problem Members noted that there was 17,000 km of footway, not all had verges but many residential streets had verges and trees; and complaints in respect of damage to verges were seasonal with more received in the Autumn/Winter time. Reference was made to a rough costing exercise undertaken a number of years ago in relation to verge hardening which identified the cost to be in the millions; however there were now a number of alternative options available for at least half of the streets in Darlington.

Discussion also ensued on the draft assessment process and Members reviewed the draft verge damage assessment form. Members agreed that the form was comprehensive and noted that this would be available as an online form once the assessment process had been agreed.

Members discussed the next steps and agreed to undertake a table top exercise to trial the draft verge damage assessment form on a number of locations in their wards, covering various circumstances. The task and finish group would be reconvened to review the results of this exercise and finalise the assessment process.

Future steps included a trial of the assessment process on a small number of pilot areas and Members were informed of a small pot of money available for this pilot.

Members held a discussion in respect of an assessment process to future proof housing estates and how this could be embedded in the planning process; a Briefing note would be circulated to Members to provide context in respect of planning policy and parking standards.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That the draft verge damage assessment form be circulated to members, along with a list of options to deter, prevent or accommodate verge parking, to enable Members to undertake a table top exercise to trial the draft verge damage assessment form on a number of locations in their wards, covering various circumstances.

(b) That a further meeting be arranged in June for Members to review the results of the trial of the draft verge damage assessment form and to finalise the assessment process.

(c) That a briefing note in respect of planning policy and parking standards be circulated to members.

## **MANAGEMENT OF GRASS VERGES – REVIEW GROUP**

**12 NOVEMBER 2021**

**PRESENT** – Councillors Tait (Chair), Allen, Culley and Willis

**APOLOGIES** – Councillor Donoghue

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Anthony Hewitt (Assistant Director – Transport and Capital Projects), Steve Pryke (Head of Highways Asset Management), Andrew Casey (Head of Highways Network Management) and Hannah Miller (Democratic Officer)

Reference was made to the comments submitted by a number of Councillors in respect of the Ward specific issues associated with grass verges. The Assistant Director, Transport and Capital Projects advised Members that these comments could be broadly separated into categories; and outlined the key comments relating to home deliveries, resident protection, environmental/wildlife benefit and enforcement.

Discussion ensued in respect of the option to develop a flow chart; the Assistant Director, Transport and Capital Projects gave details of a draft flow chart, which would provide a toolkit of options to address a range of issues associated with grass verges.

Following a question, Members were advised that it was an offence for residents to place objects on grass verges and any residents doing so would be informed of this.

Members were in agreement that that the flow chart would be useful for Members and should be developed further, and to ensure that the flow chart covered all possible issues, this should be shared with all Councillors to review, prior to sign off by the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee.

**IT WAS AGREED** – (a) That the draft flow chart be further developed and shared with all Councillors for comment.

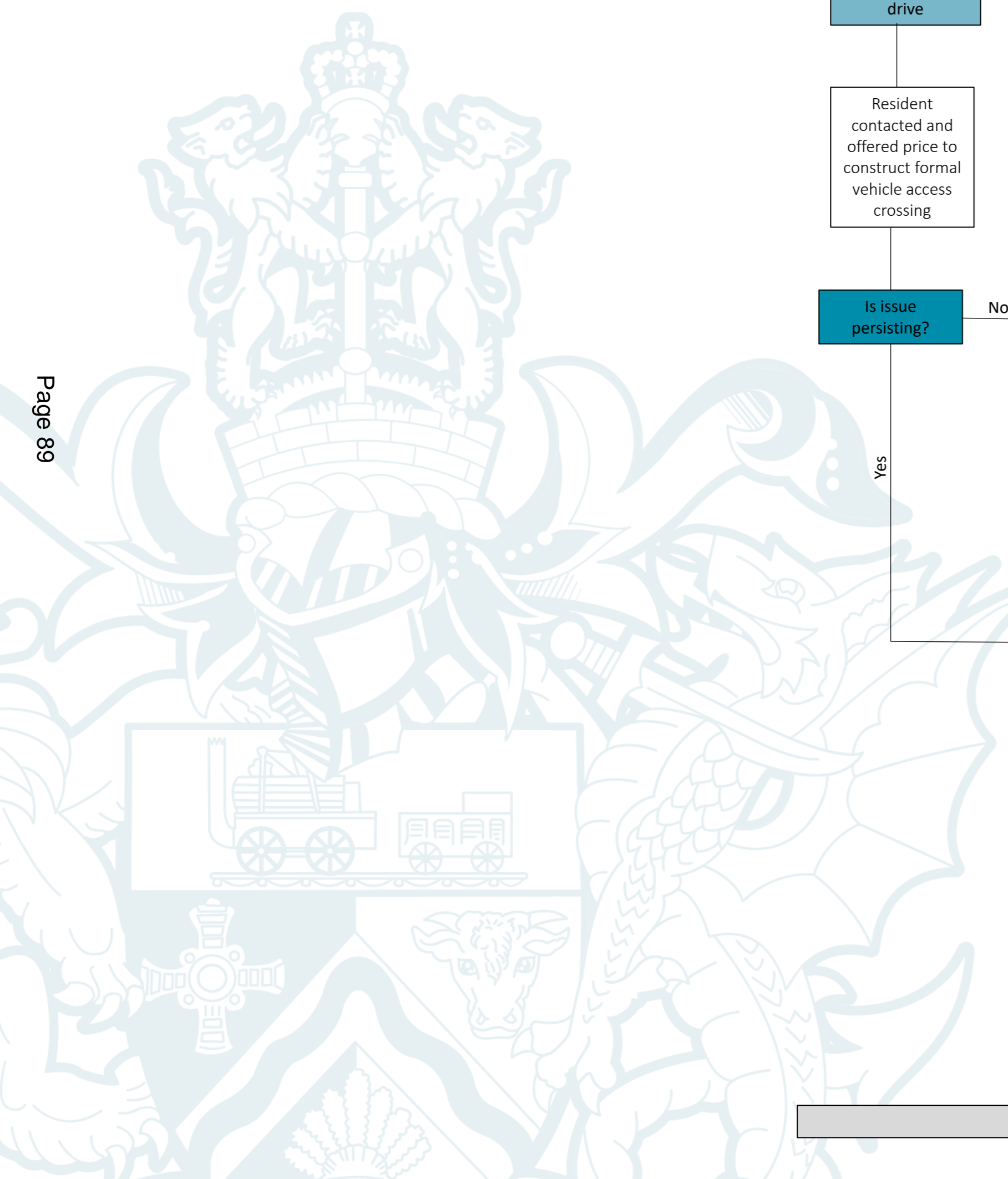
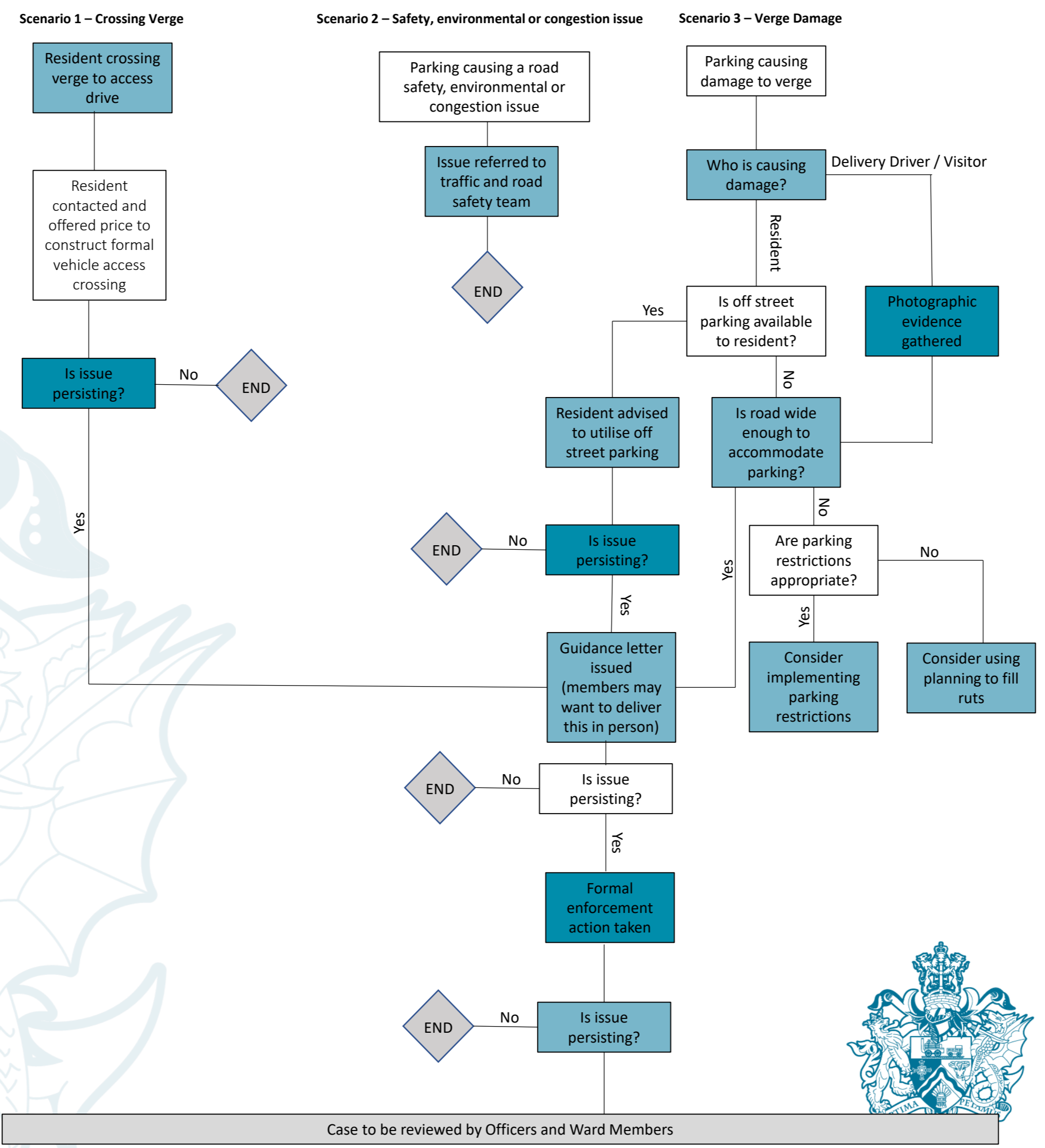
(b) That, following comment from all Councillors, the flow chart be considered at a future meeting of the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee for approval.

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### Verge Issue Flow Chart

What is the nature of the issue? Please choose from the scenarios below.



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**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
17 FEBRUARY 2022**

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**WORK PROGRAMME**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during the 2021/22 Municipal Year and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest should be added to the previously approved work programme.

**Summary**

2. Members are requested to consider the attached work programme (**Appendix 1**) for the remainder of the 2021/22 Municipal Year which has been prepared based on Officers recommendations and recommendations previously agreed by this Scrutiny Committee.
3. A request has been received (**Appendix 2**) from a Member to investigate options to increase the number of wheelchair accessible taxis in Darlington and improve on the current situation.
4. In accordance with the agreed procedure (**Appendix 3**), the request was forwarded to the Group Director of Services for a view on its merits, using the identified criteria. The response of the Group Director of Services is attached (**Appendix 2**).

**Recommendation**

5. It is recommended that Members note the current status of the Work Programme and consider any additional areas of work they would like to include.
6. In accordance with the agreed procedure, taking into account the views of the Group Director of Services, this Scrutiny Committee is requested to make a decision about whether the item on the wheelchair accessible taxis should be added to its work programme and, if so, how it wishes to proceed.

**Luke Swinhoe  
Assistant Director Law and Governance**

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Author : Hannah Miller 5801

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Health and Wellbeing	This report has no direct implications to the Health and Well Being of residents of Darlington.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no issues which this report needs to address.
Diversity	There are no issues relating to diversity which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Ward is considered to be minimal.
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Group is considered to be minimal.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	The report contributes to the Council Plan in a number of ways through the involvement of Members in contributing to the delivery of the Plan.
Efficiency	The Work Programmes are integral to scrutinising and monitoring services efficiently (and effectively), however this report does not identify specific efficiency savings.
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 format of the proposed work programme has been reviewed to enable Members of this Scrutiny Committee to provide a rigorous and informed challenge to the areas for discussion.
8. The Council Plan sets the vision and strategic direction for the Council through to May 2023, with its overarching focus being 'Delivering success for Darlington'.
9. In approving the Council Plan, Members have agreed to a vision for Darlington which is a place where people want to live and businesses want to locate, where the economy continues to grow, where people are happy and proud of the borough and where everyone has the opportunity to maximise their potential.
10. The visions for the Stronger Communities and Local Services portfolios are:-  
  
    'to build Stronger Communities that are resilient, sustainable and safe to ensure everyone has the best opportunities to succeed' and 'a borough that is attractive, green and clean, with a wide variety of activities to be enjoyed, and a transport offer that facilitates efficient movement and reduced carbon emissions in the borough'.

### Forward Plan and Additional Items

9. Once the Work Programme has been agreed by this Scrutiny Committee, any Member seeking to add a new item to the work programme will need to complete a quad of aims.
10. A copy of the Forward Plan has been attached at **Appendix 4** for information.

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**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved</b>	<b>Link to Performance Management Framework (metrics)</b>	<b>Scrutiny's Role</b>
<b>Darlington Cultural Strategy</b>	17 February 2022	Ian Thompson		To give Scrutiny Members the opportunity to consider prior to Cabinet.
<b>Local Transport Plan</b>	17 February 2022  Last considered 25 February 2021	Sue Dobson		To scrutinise and undertake any further work if necessary.
<b>Arriva – Operational Issues</b>	17 February 2022	Kim Purcell		To scrutinise and undertake any further work if necessary.
<b>Public Sector Executive Group 6 Month Review</b>	7 April 2022	Seth Pearson		To scrutinise and undertake any further work if necessary.
<b>Northgate Initiative</b>	7 April 2022  Last considered 19 August 2021	Seth Pearson		To update Scrutiny Members and undertake any further work if necessary.
<b>Restoration of Locomotion No 1 Replica</b>	7 April 2022	Ian Thompson		To give Scrutiny Members the opportunity to consider prior to Cabinet.
<b>Hippodrome</b>	7 April 2022  Last considered 22 April 2021	Ian Thompson		To scrutinise and undertake any further work if necessary.

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to Performance Management Framework (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
<b>Library Services</b> To include digital offer	7 April 2022  Last considered 19 August 2021 (verbal update)	Ian Thompson		To scrutinise and undertake any further work if necessary.
<b>Tees Valley Combined Authority Transport Strategy</b> (to include Bus Services in the Tees Valley)	Last considered 19 August 2021	Dave Winstanley/ Tom Bryant TVCA		To contribute to and influence the Strategy to ensure the best outcomes for residents.
<b>Waste Management (to include Tees Valley Energy Recovery Facility)</b>	Last considered 21 October 2021	Ian Thompson		To give Scrutiny Members the opportunity to consider prior to Cabinet.
<b>Rail Heritage Quarter–</b> To include Head of Steam and 2025 Review group also established	Last considered 21 October 2021	Ian Thompson		To contribute to the development of 'Experience Darlington' Strategy.
<b>Performance Management and Regulation/ Management of Change</b>  Regular Performance Reports to be Programmed  End of Year Performance (including Compliments Comments and Complaints)	2022 TBC	Relevant AD	Full Performance Management Framework suite of indicators.	To receive quarterly monitoring reports and undertake any further detailed work into particular outcomes if necessary.



Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to Performance Management Framework (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
<b>Bank Top Masterplan</b>	Last considered 9 December 2021	Anthony Hewitt		To influence the Bank Top Masterplan and ensure the best outcomes for Darlington's residents and its economy.
<b>Stronger Communities Fund 6 Month Review</b>	Last considered Special MTFP 6 January 2022	Seth Pearson		To scrutinise and undertake any further work if necessary.

**REVIEW GROUP**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved</b>	<b>Link to PMF (metrics)</b>	<b>Scrutiny's Role</b>
<b>School Streets Initiative</b>	<p>Group met on 16 December 2020 and 14 January 2021</p> <p>Report to Scrutiny on 25 February 2021</p> <p>Meeting to be arranged once Quad of aims submitted to establish T&amp;F to review additional measures</p>			<p>To enable Scrutiny members to understand the work to date, input their experience and their perspectives to inform the work going forward.</p>
<b>Management of Grass Verges</b>	<p>Group met on 9 April 2021</p> <p>Update report to scrutiny 21 October 2021</p> <p>17 February 2022</p>			<p>To assist development of a new operational policy in relation to the management of grass verges.</p>

**JOINT COMMITTEE WORKING – HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved</b>	<b>Link to PMF (metrics)</b>	<b>Scrutiny's Role</b>
<b>Drug and Alcohol Service Contract</b>	Briefing on 13 July 2021  (Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee)	Ken Ross		To update Scrutiny Members undertake any further work if necessary.

**ALL MEMBER BRIEFINGS**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved</b>	<b>Link to PMF (metrics)</b>	<b>Scrutiny's Role</b>
<b>Water Safety</b>	All Members briefing  9 July 2021	Andrew Allison/Steve Owers, Teesdale and Weardale Search and Mountain Rescue		To update Members and undertake any further work if necessary.
<b>CCTV</b>	All Members briefing To be arranged early 2022	Ian Thompson/ Graham Hall		To update Members and undertake any further work if necessary.
<b>Community Safety</b>	All Members Briefing To be arranged early 2022	Ian Thompson		To update Members on Community Safety.
<b>Environmental Health</b>	All Members Briefing  19 November 2021	Carol Whelan/ Stephen Todd	ENV 002 ENV 006 ENV 009 ENV 021 ENV 022 ENV 023 REG 803	To gain an understanding of Environmental Health and current and future challenges.

**ARCHIVED ITEMS**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved</b>	<b>Link to Performance Management Framework (metrics)</b>	<b>Scrutiny's Role</b>
<b>Playing Pitch and Facilities Strategy</b>	19 August 2021	Ian Thompson		To give Scrutiny Members the opportunity to consider prior to Cabinet.
<b>Back Lanes</b> To include dog fouling and fly tipping	All Members Briefing held on 8 October 2020  Last considered 10 December 2020	Ian Thompson		To update Scrutiny Members and undertake any further work if necessary
<b>Indoor /Outdoor Market</b>	Last considered 22 April 2021	MAM/Mark Ladyman		To update Scrutiny on the development of the Indoor/Outdoor Market.

**Performance Indicators**

<b>DBC Number:</b>	<b>Definition:</b>
CUL 037	Number of shows held at the Hippodrome
CUL 038	Number of individual attendances at theatre shows
CUL 070	Reservations - where an item is reserved from stock or from another library and is supplied within 7 days, shown as a %
CUL 071	Number of visits to the Head of Steam
CUL 078	% of ticket sales for the Hippodrome
CUL 079	% of ticket sales for the Hullabaloo
CUL 100	Number of items borrowed
CUL 101	Physical Stock borrowed from Darlington Library
CUL 102	Physical Stock borrowed from Cockerton Library
CUL 103	Number of physical visits to Darlington Library
CUL 104	Number of physical visits to Cockerton Library
CUL 105	Number of group engagements
CUL 106	Number of group engagements at Darlington Library
CUL 107	Number of group engagements at Cockerton Library
CUL 108	Number of educational interactions
CUL 109	Number of enquires directed to the Centre for Local Studies
ENV 002	Number of Street Champions who are actively involved in litter picking a minimum of once per month
ENV 006	Total number of fly-tips reported
ENV 006a	Total number of large fly-tips reported

ENV006b	Total number of small fly-tips reported
ENV 009	% household waste that is collected that is either reused, recycled or composted
ENV 021	% of small fly tips removed within target time
ENV 022	% of large fly tips removed within target time
ENV 023	Number of prosecutions for fly-tipping
ENV 024	Land Audit Management System - Litter Score
REG 803	Trading Standards : Percentage of high risk inspections carried out
TCP 101	Bus punctuality - percentage of non-frequent bus services running on time
TCP 200	Percentage of principal roads where maintenance should be considered (A class)
TCP 202	Percentage of non principal roads where maintenance should be considered (B and C class)
TCP 203	Percentage of unclassified roads where maintenance should be considered
TCP 600	Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
TCP 601	Number of people slightly injured in road traffic accidents
TCP 602	Number of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
TCP 603	Number of children slightly injured in road traffic accidents
TCP 900	Overall Public Satisfaction with Public Transport Theme (National Highways and Transport Survey)

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## QUAD OF AIMS (MEMBERS' REQUEST FOR ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED BY SCRUTINY)

### SECTION 1 TO BE COMPLETED BY MEMBERS

**NOTE** – This document should only be completed if there is a clearly defined and significant outcome from any potential further work. This document should **not** be completed as a request for or understanding of information.

REASON FOR REQUEST?	RESOURCE (WHAT OFFICER SUPPORT WOULD YOU REQUIRE?)
Complaint from wheelchair user re lack of wheelchair 'friendly' taxis in Darlington	<u>Licensing Manager and clerk</u>
PROCESS (HOW CAN SCRUTINY ACHIEVE THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOME?)	HOW WILL THE OUTCOME MAKE A DIFFERENCE?
Investigate possibilities for improving the current situation.	Increase the number of wheelchair accessible taxis in the Borough.

Signed Councillor B Jones.....

Date ...4<sup>th</sup> January 2022.....

**SECTION 2 TO BE COMPLETED BY DIRECTORS/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS  
(NOTE – There is an expectation that Officers will discuss the request with the Member)**

	<b>Criteria</b>
<p>1. (a) Is the information available elsewhere? <span style="float: right;"><b>Yes</b></span></p> <p>If yes, please indicate where the information can be found (attach if possible and return with this document to Democratic Services)</p> <p><b>See Section 6</b></p> <p>(b) Have you already provided the information to the Member or will you shortly be doing so?</p> <p><b>Cllr Keir and Cllr B Jones have been advise of the position in email .</b></p> <p>2. If the request is included in the Scrutiny Committee work programme what are the likely workload implications for you/your staff?</p> <p><b>This will require both legislative and policy changes and potentially have a financial impact on the council and operators at a time when the focus is restoring numbers of drivers to address the current pressures and demands on the taxi trade.</b></p> <p>3. Can the request be included in an ongoing Scrutiny Committee item of work and picked up as part of that?</p> <p><b>A liaison group with the taxi trade has already been established to deal with this issue but has not met for a while due to covid restrictions. Covid has made the situation worse as many drivers left the trade meaning there are often no drivers for the wheelchair accessible vehicles currently on the fleet.</b></p> <p>4. Is there another Council process for enquiry or examination about the matter currently underway?</p> <p><b>This complaint is a direct consequence of a national shortage of taxi drivers following the removal of covid restrictions, however it is recognised that there is little incentive for taxi owners to invest in a wheelchair accessible vehicle as they are considerably more expensive. There is an action plan in place to address the shortage of drivers</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information already provided/or will be provided to Member</li> <li>2. Extent of workload involved in meeting request</li> <li>3. Request linked to an ongoing Scrutiny Committee item of work and can be picked up as part of that work</li> <li>4. Subject to another Council process for enquiry or examination (such as Planning Committee or Licensing Committee)</li> <li>5. About an individual or entity that has a right of appeal</li> <li>6. Some other substantial reason</li> </ol>

5. Has the individual or entity some other right of appeal?

**Neither taxi legislation or our policy make having a wheelchair accessible vehicle a mandatory requirement**

6. Is there any substantial reason (other than the above) why you feel it should not be included on the work programme?

The Council are aware of the issue identified in the Quad of Aims and have considered local policies that are not feasible not financially practical for the Council or operators. The Council continues to keep this matter under review with a view to trying to assist and facilitate disabled users requirements for taxi trips. Some background on the matter is contained below.

The lack of wheelchair accessible taxis (WAV) is an issue that the Council has been aware of for a number of years. This has recently been exacerbated by a national shortage of taxi drivers, as covid restrictions forced many drivers to find new employment opportunities and they have not returned to the trade. We currently have 405 licensed drivers in Darlington, which is 100 less than the month preceding covid restrictions in 2020. We also recognise that a number of drivers still retain their taxi licence, however they no longer drive taxis. It is estimated that since July 2021, nationally the trade has 30 - 40% fewer drivers available, and this is reflected in Darlington. There are currently 10 WAV's licensed with us (6 hackney carriage and 4 private hire.)

The number of WAV's in Darlington has traditionally been low and this is the case for many smaller local authorities where taxi operators have smaller fleets. There is no mandatory requirement for a specific number of WAV's and market forces will generally determine whether an operator or independent driver is willing to invest in a WAV.

Buying a WAV is considerably more expensive than an ordinary saloon vehicle along with increased running costs, so businesses will only invest in these vehicles if there is sufficient demand. As a driver cannot by law charge more for a disabled person, there is no financial benefit for investing more in a WAV vehicle, which is one of the reasons why drivers are reluctant to invest in these vehicles at the moment. Drivers of WAV's also find that due to the small number available at any one time, they travel greater distances to collect passengers and they spend longer assisting the passenger in and out the vehicle, which again reduces their business opportunities.

Officers meet regularly with the trade prior to the covid pandemic and work closely with Darlington Association on Disability (DAD) in an attempt to resolve issues as they arise. We also offer a number of incentives for drivers to invest in

WAV's in our policy, which was published in 2021. This includes reduced licence fees and allowing these vehicles to remain on the fleet for longer. Measures such as making it a mandatory requirement for all vehicles to be WAVs has been discounted due to the huge cost to the taxi trade.

A requirement for all new taxis to be WAV's was also discounted as experience from other local authorities was that the number of new taxi applications dramatically reduced, with vehicles only being renewed on a like for like basis. Smaller vehicles adapted for wheelchairs are available, however they have a reduced capacity, meaning they are less attractive for businesses to purchase. Some of the operators in large towns and cities have been able to make bulk purchases of this type of vehicle to reduce their cost, however this is not something operators in Darlington are considering at the moment.

We, as a local authority cannot force businesses to make a purchase of a vehicle, even though we recognise there is a shortage. A few years ago DAD attempted to get round this problem by purchasing their own WAV to operate. This was at a huge cost and could not be financially sustained as it was heavily subsidised by public funding.

As a short term measure to address the shortage of taxis generally we are advising that people pre-book taxis well in advance of their intended journey whenever possible. Demand at peak times is high, so to ensure a taxi, it needs to be prebooked days ahead. Although there are a number of Hackney Carriage WAV's in Darlington, there is no guarantee that they will be waiting on the ranks.

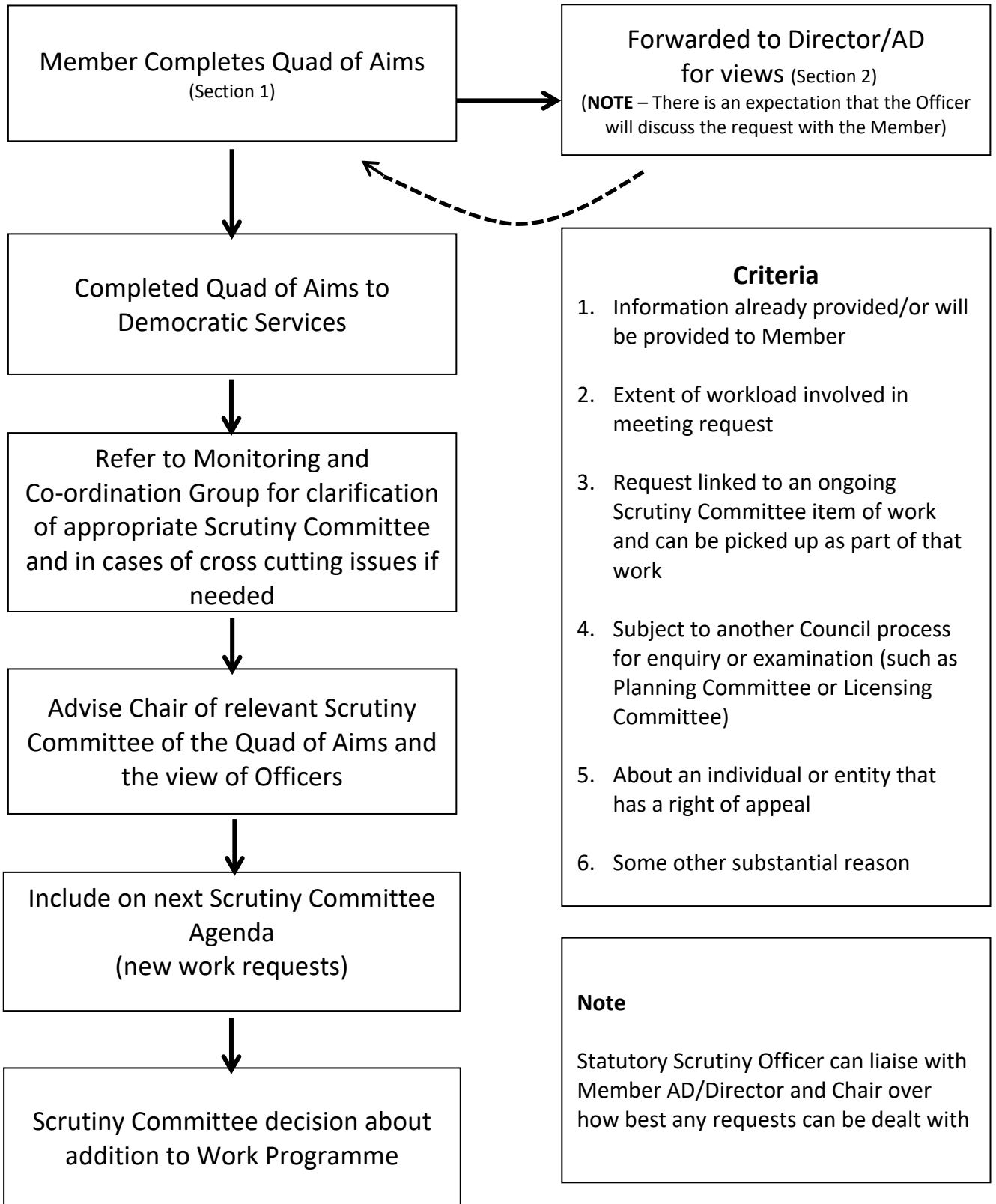
In accordance with government recommendations, the Licensing Department publishes an up to date list of all WAV's on its website <https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/7338/wheelchair-accessible-vehicles-2021.pdf> Within that list are hackney carriage drivers who provide direct contact details, as calls are not required to go through an operator. Wheelchair users who regularly require taxis often contact the same driver to make a booking, as that driver develops an greater understanding of the individual's needs. A recent complainant who was frustrated at not being able to book a WAV through an operator and was provided with direct contact numbers for the hackney carriage WAV vehicles.

Another consequence of the driver shortage is that demand is quite high during the day so drivers are not working late into the night, resulting in fewer taxis to service the night time economy.

Darlington work closely with neighbouring Tees Valley Authorities and are part of the North East Strategic Licensing network where this issue is frequently discussed.

Signed ...Dave Winstanley..... Position ...Group Director of Services ..... Date ...8<sup>th</sup> February 2022.....

### PROCESS FOR ADDING AN ITEM TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S PREVIOUSLY APPROVED WORK PROGRAMME



PLEASE RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

**QUAD OF AIMS (MEMBERS' REQUEST FOR ITEM TO BE CONSIDERED BY SCRUTINY)**

**SECTION 1 TO BE COMPLETED BY MEMBERS**

**NOTE** – This document should only be completed if there is a clearly defined and significant outcome from any potential further work. This document should **not** be completed as a request for or understanding of information.

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<b>REASON FOR REQUEST?</b>	<b>RESOURCE (WHAT OFFICER SUPPORT WOULD YOU REQUIRE?)</b>
<b>PROCESS (HOW CAN SCRUTINY ACHIEVE THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOME?)</b>	<b>HOW WILL THE OUTCOME MAKE A DIFFERENCE?</b>

Signed Councillor .....

Date .....

**SECTION 2 TO BE COMPLETED BY DIRECTORS/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS**  
**(NOTE – There is an expectation that Officers will discuss the request with the Member)**

	<b>Criteria</b>
1. (a) Is the information available elsewhere? Yes ..... No ..... If yes, please indicate where the information can be found (attach if possible and return with this document to Democratic Services) .....	1. Information already provided/or will be provided to Member
(b) Have you already provided the information to the Member or will you shortly be doing so? .....	2. Extent of workload involved in meeting request
2. If the request is included in the Scrutiny Committee work programme what are the likely workload implications for you/your staff? .....	3. Request linked to an ongoing Scrutiny Committee item of work and can be picked up as part of that work
3. Can the request be included in an ongoing Scrutiny Committee item of work and picked up as part of that? .....	4. Subject to another Council process for enquiry or examination (such as Planning Committee or Licensing Committee)
4. Is there another Council process for enquiry or examination about the matter currently underway? .....	5. About an individual or entity that has a right of appeal
5. Has the individual or entity some other right of appeal? .....	6. Some other substantial reason
6. Is there any substantial reason (other than the above) why you feel it should not be included on the work programme? .....	

**Signed** ..... **Position** ..... **Date** .....

**PLEASE RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

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**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
FORWARD PLAN**



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

**FORWARD PLAN  
FOR THE PERIOD: 1 FEBRUARY 2022 - 30 JUNE 2022**

Title	Decision Maker and Date	Page
Calendar of Council and Committee Meetings 2022/23	Cabinet 8 Feb 2022	5
Education Case Management System	Cabinet 8 Feb 2022	6
Housing Revenue Account 2022/23	Council 17 Feb 2022 Cabinet 8 Feb 2022	7
Levelling Up Darlington	Cabinet 8 Feb 2022	8
Local Plan Adoption	Council 17 Feb 2022 Cabinet 8 Feb 2022	9
Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26	Council 17 Feb 2022 Cabinet 8 Feb 2022	10
Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring - Quarter 3	Cabinet 8 Feb 2022	11
Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy	Council 17 Feb 2022 Cabinet 8 Feb 2022	12
Rail Heritage Quarter Update	Council 17 Feb 2022 Cabinet 8 Feb 2022	13
Revenue Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3	Cabinet 8 Feb 2022	14
School Admissions 2023/24	Cabinet 8 Feb 2022	15
Annual Audit Letter 2020/21	Cabinet 8 Mar 2022	16
Darlington Cultural Strategy 2022/26	Cabinet 8 Mar 2022	17
Local Transport Plan	Cabinet 8 Mar 2022	18
Regulatory Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)	Cabinet 8 Mar 2022	19
Schedule of Transactions - March	Cabinet 8 Mar 2022	20
Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Design Code - Burtree Garden Village	Council 12 May 2022 Cabinet 8 Mar 2022	21
Tees Valley Energy Recovery Facility	Cabinet 8 Mar 2022	22
Annual Procurement Plan 2022/23	Cabinet 5 Apr 2022	23

**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
FORWARD PLAN**

Restoration of Locomotion No 1 Replica	Cabinet 3 May 2022	24
Special Educational Needs (SEND) Accessibility Strategy 2021/24	Cabinet 3 May 2022	25
Representation on Other Bodies 2022/23	Cabinet 14 Jun 2022	26
<b>Reports Deferred</b>		
Land at Sparrowhall Drive	Cabinet	27
Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD) Design Code - Skertingham Garden Village	Council Cabinet	28