



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Council Agenda

6.00 pm

Thursday, 15 July 2021

Sports Hall, Dolphin Centre, Horsemarket, Darlington, DL1 5RP.

Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting

1. Introductions / Attendance at Meeting.
2. Minutes - To approve the Minutes of the Meetings of this Council held on 25 March 2021, 20 May 2021 and 9 June 2021 (Pages 5 - 16)
3. Declarations of Interest.
4. Sealing.
5. Announcements.
6. Questions - To answer questions (where appropriate notice has been given from):-
 - (a) The Public;
 - (b) Members to Cabinet/Chairs;
 - (c) Members to the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner for Durham and Darlington.
7. Council Reports.
8. Cabinet Reports.
 - (a) Overview Report of the Leader of the Council; (Pages 17 - 20)
 - (b) Overview Report of the Stronger Communities Portfolio; (Pages 21 - 28)

- (c) Overview Report of the Adults Portfolio; (Pages 29 - 32)
- (d) Overview Report of the Children and Young People Portfolio; (Pages 33 - 36)
- (e) Overview Report of the Economy Portfolio; (Pages 37 - 42)
- (f) Overview Report of the Health and Housing Portfolio; (Pages 43 - 50)
- (g) Overview Report of the Local Services Portfolio; and (Pages 51 - 54)
- (h) Overview Report of the Resources Portfolio. (Pages 55 - 58)
- (i) Partnership Working in Darlington –
Report of the Chief Executive
(Pages 59 - 64)

9. Scrutiny Reports - To consider Scrutiny Overview Reports:-

- (a) Adults Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 65 - 66)
- (b) Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 67 - 68)
- (c) Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 69 - 70)
- (d) Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee; and (Pages 71 - 74)
- (e) Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee. (Pages 75 - 78)

10. Notice of Motion

- (a) To consider a Motion submitted by Councillor McCollom, and seconded by Councillor Haszeldine –

This Council notes :-

- (1) The worrying official statistics published on 22nd June 2021 by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that show that hundreds more families in the North East have seen their benefits capped since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- (2) In Darlington, 184 families had their benefits capped during February 2021, which was a rise of 56% on the same period last year. Households impacted lose an average of £62 per week.
- (3) Most families affected by the cap cannot work to escape its effect— as many are looking after young children or cannot find affordable childcare they can combine with work and single parenting. In fact, of the households impacted this year in Darlington, 133 were headed by single parents.
- (4) Many households who have lost jobs to Covid-19 are now subject to the

cap, even though in the pandemic it is much harder to find ways to replace their lost earnings and thereby become exempt.

- (5) The cap limits the total amount of benefits low-earning or non-working claimants can receive. Universal Credit claimants are exempt if they earn at least £617 per month (equivalent to working 16 hours per week on minimum wage).
- (6) Many families are earning their poverty as three quarters of children in poverty live in working families.

This Council resolves :-

- (1) That the leaders of all political parties represented on this council write a joint letter to our two MPs seeking their support for a review of the benefit cap policy aimed at people who could work but chose not to being applied to single parents with young children and those, through no fault of their own, have been impacted by the structural economic changes brought on by Covid.
- (2) That data is collected and made available to the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis highlighting the number of applications (both successful and unsuccessful) for discretionary housing benefits from Darlington residents whose benefits have been capped.

11. Membership Changes - To consider any membership changes to Committees, Subsidiary Bodies and Other Bodies.



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Wednesday, 7 July 2021

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Baldwin, Bartch, Bell, Boddy, Dr. Chou, Clarke, Cossins, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, Holroyd, L Hughes, Johnson, B Jones, Mrs D Jones, Keir, Laing, Layton, Lee, Lister, Lucas, Marshall, McCollom, McEwan, Mills, Newall, K Nicholson,

M Nicholson, Paley, Preston, Renton, A J Scott, Mrs H Scott, Snedker, Sowerby, Tait, Tostevin, Wallis, Willis and Wright

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Paul Dalton, Elections Officer, Resources Group, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays Email: paul.dalton@darlington.gov.uk or Telephone 01325 405805

COUNCIL

Thursday, 25 March 2021

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

APOLOGIES – Councillors Newall and Paley.

62 **MINUTES - TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THIS COUNCIL HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2021 AND 18 FEBRUARY 2021**

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Council held on 28 January 2021 and 18 February 2021.

RESOLVED – (a) That the Minutes of the meeting of this Council held on 28 January 2021, be approved as a correct record; and

(b) That the Minutes of the meeting of this Council held on 18 February 2021, be approved as a correct record, with the exception that it be noted that Councillor Bell's non-attendance, and subsequent apologies were tendered, following connectivity issues which prevented Councillor Bell from attending the 'virtual' meeting.

63 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

64 **SEALING.**

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

65 **ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

Death in Service - The Mayor reported on the Death in Service of Reece Williams, who had sadly passed away on the 7th March 2021. The Mayor advised that Reece was employed as a Case Management Officer in the Civic Enforcement Team. It was reported that Reece was a valued member of the Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services team. As a mark of respect, Members observed a short silence in memory of Mr. Williams.

Retirement of the Assistant Director, Housing and Building Services – The Mayor advised Members that Pauline Mitchell, Assistant Director, Housing and Building Services, would be retiring on 30 April 2021, and paid tribute to Pauline's contribution to the work of the Council, particularly in relation to her work in Housing Services.

The Virtual Mayor's Ball – The Mayor reminded Members that tickets were available

for 'The Virtual Mayor's Ball', which was taking place on Saturday, 24 April 2021. The Mayor advised that the 'Ball' would have an 80's theme, and would also be celebrating the town's 'Lockdown Heroes'.

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

(1) THE PUBLIC;

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

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

(2) MEMBERS TO CABINET/CHAIRS;

There were no questions from Members, where notice had been given, for the Mayor, Members of the Cabinet, or the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees.

67 COUNCIL REPORTS.

(1) PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/2022

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting approval of the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2021/2022 in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and Local Government Transparency Code 2014.

The submitted report stated that the Localism Act 2011 required the Council to agree a written Pay Policy on an annual basis and publish specific information relating to the Council's highest and lowest paid employees.

RESOLVED – That the proposed Pay Policy 2021/22, as detailed at Appendix A of the submitted report, be approved, and arrangements be made to publish the Policy on the Council's intranet for public access.

REASON – To enable the Council to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

68 CABINET REPORTS.

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

69 SCRUTINY REPORTS - TO CONSIDER SCRUTINY OVERVIEW REPORTS:-

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

cycle of Committee meetings.

70 NOTICE OF MOTION

(1) TO CONSIDER A MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CRUMBIE, AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR NEWALL

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Crumbie, and seconded by Councillor Cossins (in Councillor Newall's absence):

Council believes:

1. The Covid Pandemic has accelerated the devastating issue of food insecurity.
2. Headline findings from a new report released by the Food Foundation states that food insecurity remains at crisis levels, with devastating impact on the most vulnerable.
3. Food insecurity remains higher than pre- covid levels, affecting an estimated 4.7 million adults (9% of households) over the last six months, compared to pre covid levels of 7.6%. 55% of those experiencing food insecurity an estimated 2.5 million) said it was because they did not have enough money for food.
4. Groups found to be at higher risk were People with disabilities, BAME households, households with children and food sector workers.
5. Although we recognize and welcome the holiday activity funds this is only a temporary measure and food banks and The Bread and Butter Thing are only masking the serious issue of food insecurity.
6. The UK Government must act now to address this for the long term. The UK Government needs to make food security a priority in the recovery phase. We must move away from short term solutions and prioritise policies that will address the underlying causes of this issue.

Council resolves to:

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

The following amendment to the Motion was moved by Councillor Curry, and seconded by Councillor Allen:

'That the following be added to the resolution:

3. That the Council seeks funding to ensure that all children that are currently identified as on Free School meals have free meals during the 6 weeks summer holiday in 2021. To identify and feed those children also in the family

of those identified for free school meals.’

The Amendment was Lost.

The Substantive Motion was subsequently put to the meeting, and was also Lost.

(2) TO CONSIDER A MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR ALI, AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR WALLIS

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Ali, and seconded by Councillor Wallis:

‘Council believes:

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

Council resolves to:

1. To ask Cabinet to consider requiring all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people;
2. To ask Cabinet to consider actively promoting a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on vulnerable people and animal welfare – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks;
3. To write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays as per RSPCA guidance;
4. To back the RSPCA campaign to encourage suppliers of fireworks to stock ‘quieter’ fireworks for public display;
5. To promote alternatives to fireworks.’

The following amendment to the Motion was moved by Councillor Dulston, and seconded by Councillor Tait:

'(a) Delete the following from the 'Council believes' paragraphs:-

3. However, it is well known that fireworks can cause serious trauma to some people with autism, war veterans suffering PTSD, and pets/other animals.
4. Fireworks are often set off throughout the year, often just for the purpose of causing a nuisance, and are even thrown at emergency service personnel on occasion.
5. Hi tech alternatives to fireworks, e.g. drone displays or lasers, can be an even more spectacular way to mark special events.
6. That the creation of a new Office for Product Safety and Standards, which will support local authorities in reviewing and enforcing the current guidance materials on the safe and responsible use of fireworks, is a positive step.

(b) Delete the following from the 'Council resolves' paragraphs :-

1. To ask Cabinet to consider requiring all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.
2. To ask Cabinet to consider actively promoting a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on vulnerable people and animal welfare – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.
3. To write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays as per RSPCA guidance.
4. To back the RSPCA campaign to encourage suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display.
5. To promote alternatives to fireworks."

And replace with :-

1. To encourage all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.
2. To run a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on vulnerable people and animal welfare – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.
3. Bring back the South Park Firework Display in 2022, as an organised and safe public firework display.'

Amendment Carried.

The Amendment then became the Substantive Motion and was put to the meeting and carried.

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

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.

ANNUAL COUNCIL
Thursday, 20 May 2021

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

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin, Lister and Paley.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

2 THE MAYOR OR MANAGING DIRECTOR TO MAKE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS THAT MAY BE NECESSARY.

Deaths of Honorary Alderman and former-Councillor Tony Richmond and former-Councillor Fred Lawton - The Mayor reported on the Deaths of Honorary Alderman and former-Councillor Tony Richmond, who had passed away on 12 May 2021, and former-Councillor Fred Lawton, who had passed away on 19 May 2021, and referred to their time and roles on the Council.

As a mark of respect, Members stood and observed a short silence in memory of both former-Councillors.

Welcome to Councillor Sowerby and Councillor Willis - The Mayor extended a warm welcome to Councillor Sowerby and Councillor Willis, who were attending their first meeting of the Council since their election on 6 May 2021.

The Mayor informed Members that the two new Councillors had drawn lots immediately prior to the meeting, and that Councillor Sowerby had drawn Position 49 in the Order of Seniority, and that Councillor Willis had drawn Position 50.

Retirement of Paul Wildsmith, Managing Director – The Mayor advised Members that the Managing Director would be retiring on 31 May 2021, and was attending his last meeting of the Council after over 21 years of service to the Council.

RESOLVED – That the formal thanks of this Council are due, and hereby tendered, to the Managing Director, Mr. Paul Wildsmith, for his outstanding service to the Council during his time in post.

3 TO ELECT A MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/2022.

Consideration was given to the election of a Mayor for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Cyndi Hughes be elected Mayor of the Borough of Darlington for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

Following her election, the Mayor made and subscribed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, and:-

- (i) Was invested with the Chain of Office;
- (ii) Tendered her thanks to the Members of the Council for having elected her;
- (iii) Announced her decision to support St. Teresa's Hospice and Darlington Mind; and
- (iv) Announced that her Escort for the Mayoral Year would be her husband, Mr. Stephen Hughes.

4 RETIRING MAYOR - VOTE OF THANKS

A vote of thanks was proposed to the retiring Mayor and Escort.

RESOLVED – That the cordial thanks of the Council are due, and hereby tendered, to Councillor Chris McEwan and Amanda McEwan, for the exemplary manner in which they have discharged the duties of the high office of Mayor and Mayoress of this Borough during the past Municipal Year.

5 TO APPOINT A DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/2022.

Consideration was given to the appointment of a Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

RESOLVED - That Councillor Curry be appointed Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Darlington for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

6 APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES 2021/2022

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the membership of the various Committees for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED – (a) That the appointment of Members to the various Committees, as detailed in the Appendix to the submitted report, be approved.

(b) That the appointment of Cabinet Members by the Leader and their respective Portfolios, as detailed in the Appendix to the submitted report, be noted.

(c) That any consequential changes be made to the Council's Constitution.

REASON - To comply with the nominations received.

7 REPRESENTATION ON OTHER BODIES 2021/2022

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to representation on other bodies for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED – That the nominations to the other bodies, as detailed in paragraph 6 of the submitted report, be approved.

REASON - To comply with the nominations received from the Political Groups.

8 TO APPROVE A PROGRAMME OF ORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE 2021/2022 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Submitted – A programme of Ordinary Meetings of the Council for the 2021/2022 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED – That the programme of ordinary meetings be approved.

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COUNCIL

Wednesday, 9 June 2021

PRESENT – The Mayor, Councillors Clarke, Cossins, Curry, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Haszeldine, Heslop, B Jones, Mrs D Jones, Layton, Lee, McEwan, Mills, Renton, Mrs H Scott, Snedker, Sowerby, Tait and Tostevin.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Ali, Allen, Baldwin, Bartch, Bell, Boddy, Dr. Chou, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Harker, Holroyd, L Hughes, Johnson, Keir, Laing, Lister, Lucas, Marshall, McCollom, Newall, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Paley, Preston, A J Scott, Wallis, Willis and Wright.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

10 MUNICIPAL APPOINTMENTS 2021/22

The Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) to confirm and approve the appointments required for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

The submitted report stated that the Council met on the 20 May 2021, and made decisions to appoint a Mayor and Deputy Mayor, to appoint Members to Council Committees, and to nominate Members to serve on outside bodies.

It was reported that a potential procedural issue had been subsequently identified, which could lead to the decisions made by that Annual Meeting of the Council being challenged, and therefore Council were being asked to confirm their approval of the matters decided at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED – That, for the Municipal Year 2021/22, the:-

- (a) Appointment of Members to the Offices and Committees, as set out in Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be confirmed and approved;
- (b) Appointment of Cabinet Members made by the Leader and their respective Portfolios, as set out in the Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be noted;
- (c) Nominations of Members to the other bodies, as set out in Appendix 2 of the submitted report, be confirmed and approved;
- (d) Schedule of meetings of Council, as set out in Appendix 3 of the submitted report, be confirmed and approved; and
- (e) That any consequential changes be made to the Council's Constitution.

REASONS - (a) To enable the appointments to offices, committees and external bodies to be confirmed and approved

(b) To enable Council and its committees to discharge their functions and responsibilities for the municipal year 2021/22.

COUNCIL
15 JULY 2021

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL OVERVIEW

Council's Continued Response to COVID19

1. The situation in relation to COVID – 19 in Darlington has been dynamic and changeable in recent weeks. The Delta variant is now the dominant variant found in all new infections in Darlington. With the Delta variant being more easily transmitted we have seen a rise in cases in Darlington after a sustained period of low rates of infection. This rise in cases has been largely concentrated on younger people in the community and particularly those people under 25 years old. This group has not been offered a vaccination as part of the routine programme until recently, and therefore have not had the benefit of the protection that vaccination provides.
2. The recent rise in infections did have an impact on local schools, colleges and nurseries, with large numbers of pupils and students having to isolate before the end of term. Schools, nurseries and colleges continued to work extremely hard to minimise the spread of the virus and keep their students and staff safe and protect their education.
3. The Authority continues to work with NHS and other partners to actively support the NHS in their efforts to ensure that those younger people are able to easily get vaccinated. The most recent vaccination data is very encouraging in showing a good response amongst the young people of Darlington.
4. Although we did see a rise in the rates of infection there was not a similar rise in the numbers of those who were ill in hospital and reports of deaths from COVID-19 remain very low.

Strategic Transport

5. There is a significant programme of Strategic Transport Projects being developed to deliver the ambition in the Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan. The current budget is £246m.
6. A Transport Investment Prospectus identified an ambitious future programme of £344m across the Tees Valley over five years. £3.5m has been allocated to TVCA to develop the schemes in this plan this year with a view to entering a competitive negotiation for a share of the £4.2bn intra-city transport settlement allocated to the eight mayoral city regions for 2022/23 – 2026/27. TVCA is seeking to develop the strongest possible case to maximise the allocation for Tees Valley
7. A summary of some of the key developments are:
 - (a) Darlington, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool Stations are all progressing as part of the strategy to unlock rail capacity and improve rail services across the Tees Valley. However, consultations have been launched recently by train operating

companies proposing a new timetable in 2022 to manage capacity issues before these projects are delivered.

These timetable proposals are complicated and do have an impact on services at Darlington. I am working with the Tees Valley Combined Authority to put a strong case forward to the operators and the Department for Transport not to implement any proposals that have a detrimental impact on services at Darlington given the growth projected in Darlington and across the Tees Valley.

The consultations clearly demonstrate the need for investment in the East Coast Mainline and the need for the Darlington Station project.

- (b) A rail freight project is progressing to improve connectivity to the port and the rest of the UK, without having to move freight through Darlington Station. This involves improvements on the line between the port and Northallerton, through Yarm.
- (c) The new Tees crossing road project is progressing with government seeking approval to progress to Full Business Case. This scheme is complex and expensive and will require a significant funding commitment from the national roads programme to deliver. Darlington Northern Link Road (DNLR) project is moving towards completing the outline business case and will look to emerging future funding opportunities to try and secure funding to move towards the full business case stage.
- (d) Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Projects are progressing at various stages across the Tees Valley. Darlington's first scheme is the Woodlands Road and Duke Street scheme.
- (e) A new capability fund has been allocated to the Tees Valley and £1.36m will be delivered on activities such as Active Travel Hubs, E-Cycle lease schemes, public transport marketing and promotion, cycle and pedestrian training and schemes to incentivise active travel.
- (f) TVCA, Local Authorities and Bus Operators are working together on an ambitious timetable to bring together and Enhanced Bus Partnership and Bus Service Improvement Plan to ensure bus services recover following COVID-19 and move forward to provide improved service and choices for customers.
- (g) To complement this work has commenced on a series of studies across the Tees Valley looking at corridors where bus services can be improved by physical infrastructure works.
- (h) Tees Flex continues to operate, and numbers of passengers are increasing. More promotion of the service will be undertaken and Members are encouraged to promote to eligible residents.

Towns Fund

- 8. The Towns Fund Investment Plan continues to progress. Works to improve the environment of both Buckton's Yard and Clark's Yard have commenced with new doors and general improvements finalised. New planters, pots and benches will be installed early in July and will make a significant visual difference. The installation

of free public Wi-Fi has been completed and new lighting has been installed around the town centre. This will be completed by underlighting of the new benches which are currently being installed along High Row

9. The business cases for the nine main Towns Fund interventions are being completed and will be submitted to government for funding over the forthcoming months. The first four submissions for the Adult Skills facility, Skinnergate and the Yards, the Rail Heritage Quarter and T-Levels (which offer students a mixture of classroom learning and work experience) are planned before the end of July. The remaining five submitted in advance of the end of October 2021. As part of the Towns Fund, the Council received £575,000 to part fund the acquisition of the Northern Echo building which will host the Adult Skills Hub.

Climate Change

10. The Cross-Party Climate Change Working Group continues to meet every two months; the latest meeting was on 14 June. Members have been supporting the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer in developing the Climate Change Action Plan, which is on track to be presented for approval at September Cabinet.
11. To help them with their roles on the Working Group, Members have been building their knowledge and understanding of the issues by taking part in webinars, such as the recent APSE Energy Conference. They also undertook a visit to Moor House Wind Farm.
12. The Group is working with the Communications team to strengthen our communication strategy to inform both residents and businesses and enable the whole Borough to join us as we take steps to reach net-zero.
13. The Tees Valley Strategic Transport programme will also contribute to climate change activity in Darlington:
 - (a) The active travel and bus service improvement plans will improve opportunities for cleaner and greener transport choices.
 - (b) A Tees Valley Hydrogen Transport hub will look to support the trial of hydrogen vehicles in real world situations.
 - (c) Electric vehicle charging infrastructure will start to be rolled out this year with a single supplier being procured to deliver £2m of investment at locations across the Tees Valley.
 - (d) Tees Valley wheels to work will provide access to electric motorbikes and e-cycle to assist people get to work.

Youth Unemployment

14. The 18-24 year old claimant count for April 2021 stands at 13.6% (1,005 young people, the same as March 2021 figures. The Darlington figure is above the North East average of 9.9% and the Great Britain average of 8.9%, both of which have seen slight declines (down 0.2% and 0.1% respectively). Darlington has the second highest youth claimant rate in the Tees Valley, where claimant counts range from 12.4% to 13.9%.

15. Young people continue to be supported through a range of local and national employability programmes, including DBC's Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and Routes to Work programme. DWP has now arranged for a dedicated Job Centre Youth Adviser to be co-located with the YEI team.

Councillor Mrs Heather Scott OBE
Leader of the Council Portfolio

COUNCIL 15 JULY 2021

OVERVIEW OF STRONGER COMMUNITIES' PORTFOLIO

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

Community Safety

Darlington Borough Council COVID Pandemic Prevention and Compliance Group

2. The Prevention and Compliance Group involving a range of partner organisations continues to meet on a weekly basis to discuss threat and risk and focus on the government roadmap to promote and support a safe and productive economic recovery. The group is working extremely effectively.

Safety on the Railway

3. Following recent reports, a working group involving British Transport Police (BTP), Durham Constabulary and Darlington Borough Council Community Safety are working together to tackle the problems associated with trespass on railways. The work will focus on education, sharing of intelligence, proactive operations and joint problem-solving activities.

Environmental Crime

4. An Environmental Crime Coordinator has been recruited by Darlington Borough Council (12-month contract) to tackle the problems associated with environmental crime and back lanes. Paul McQuillan, whose background is ex Police where he served in the British Transport Police in London will be exploring new ideas to deal with fly tipping and back lane waste issues, involving partners and residents.
5. The roll out of Section 46 Notices continues to address household waste compliance and 62 streets have now been issued with the legal notices. Recently, £400.00 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued for fly tipping offences and a number of cases are pending Court.

Operation Dissipation

6. Over several dates in May, Civic Enforcement Officers and Police colleagues conducted Operation Dissipation which targeted unlawful waste carriers in Darlington.
7. Numerous stop / checks were completed and fixed penalty notices were issued by the Police for a range of offences including transporting an unsafe load, using a mobile phone when driving and not wearing a seat belt.

CCTV

8. As part of the Northgate Project, four additional overt dome CCTV cameras have recently been purchased. All are strategically placed in the Northgate/North Road wards, in response to tackling environmental crime. These locations will be reviewed and future deployment will be in accordance with local information and intelligence.

Trading Standards

9. On 5 May 2021, the Trading Standards team led a multi-agency operation to raid business and residential premises in Darlington and Sunderland as part of a large-scale investigation into the importation and sale of suspected counterfeit watches.
10. As a result of a tip-off, Trading Standards launched an investigation into the activities of a trader that operates locally as well as online. This led to raids at the properties involving Trading Standards, Civic Enforcement and Licensing officers, Durham Constabulary and its financial investigators, National Trading Standards e-Crime Team, North East Regional Special Operations Unit, National Crime Agency and brand representatives.
11. Over 7,500 suspected counterfeit watches, listed assets and other material were seized during the raids; restraint orders, obtained under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, are in place. Investigations are ongoing.

Private Sector Housing

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

12. Planning applications for large HMOs have increased significantly over the last four months, with an additional 60 units of accommodation being proposed across Darlington. While the need for good quality shared accommodation is appreciated, there are a number of additional housing standards above those that are required as part of the planning approval process that need to be met prior to any newly developed properties obtaining a Mandatory HMO Licence. Therefore, the Private Sector Housing Team will continue to work with developers to ensure that the required space, amenity and fire safety standards are met and the relevant licences are obtained prior to occupation.

Local Authority Delivery Scheme - Phase 2 (LAD2)

13. Funding for the Local Authority Delivery Scheme has been confirmed and the programme of delivery commenced in July 2021, with all installations due to be completed by December 2021. The scheme aims to deliver energy efficiency upgrades to support 95 properties, with funding of up to £10,000 of measures to low income and low energy efficiency rated homes.

Darlington Open Water Safety Group

14. Partners are working together to tackle risks associated with open water in Darlington. Significant progress has been achieved which has included target-hardening / control measures at risk sites, increased press / media campaigns, involvement of education, targeted patrols at vulnerable locations and the development of a Water Safety Strategy.
15. RoSPA will be employed to conduct a risk assessment of the Broken Scar site and deliver risk assessment training to key DBC staff who are best placed to then complete risk assessments of the main areas of risk within Darlington.
16. Information on water safety has appeared on DBC and partners' social media, websites, etc. and there was a full page on water safety featured in the most recent ONE magazine. Another full page also appears in the July edition of the magazine.
17. Police and Civic Enforcement Officers carried out Operation StaySafe on the 28 May to safeguard young people (School leavers) on the last day of school. This included key locations close to open water known to be popular with young people.
18. A Presentation by the Head of Community Safety, Community Resilience Officer and the Team Leader of Teesdale and Weardale Search and Mountain Rescue Team will be delivered to the Community and Local Services Scrutiny Committee (date to be arranged).

Home Office Safer Streets Fund

19. The project was launched on Monday 7 September 2020. Following implementation 416 properties have been visited by Police Community Support Officers, 110 properties have accepted the offer of safer streets interventions, 81 properties have been completed and 29 properties are awaiting target-hardening measures.
20. 34 properties in some key areas have now been offered the chance to have trellis fitted along their wall at the rear of their home. When fitted this enhances the look of the area but also provides a visible and physical deterrent to potential thieves.
21. Crime prevention products, bought with surplus funds from the initial scheme, have now been purchased and are ready for use. These include fake TVs, door wedge alarms, personal attack alarms, window 'shock' alarms, PIR sensor alarms (to alarm houses or sheds/garages), patio door lock, and high-quality bike locks and UV marker kits. The Police Beat Team have been briefed and are able to offer the products to residents where applicable. This improves the security of the properties, but it also provides an enhanced opportunity for Police/PCSOs to engage with local people and improve confidence in the Police/DBC.
22. Deployable CCTV systems have been purchased and are now available. Crime data will be used to assist in their effective deployment and local Councillors have also been asked to suggest possible locations that would benefit from the installation of a camera.

Safer Streets 2

23. Following a submission to the Home Office Safer Streets 2 Fund earlier in the year, we have been successful in Round 2 of the funding and awarded £266,630 to support extended provision of CCTV and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) in Darlington.

Safer Streets 3

24. The Home Office Safer Streets 3 Fund which is aimed at preventing violence against women and girls launched in June 2021. DBC will be working closely with Durham Constabulary and the Police and Crime Commissioner to develop a bid in support of the above aim.

Arcus LGBTQ+

25. Arcus has been providing a valuable counselling and support line throughout the pandemic, to everyone, not just LGBTQ+ community. The support service is free and is currently averaging 12 calls per night. The counselling service is £1 per session and is dealing with 70 people a week.
26. The Community Resilience Officer continues to attend the Arcus LGBTQ+ Forum (every 4 – 6 weeks) to listen to the views and concerns of the LGBTQ+ community in Darlington and is now deputy chair of the group.
27. The Community Resilience Officer raised the group's concern regarding the UK Government's delay to the ban on 'conversion therapy'. A proposal for a consultation with Councillor Wright went to DBC Councillors and Peter Gibson MP.
28. As a result of conversations within the Forum, the Community Resilience Officer took the suggestion of DBC staff indicating their 'choice of pronouns' on their automatic e-mail replies e.g. he/him, she/her, them/they. The idea is to show solidarity with other staff members and also to prompt discussion with colleagues and partners about sexuality, gender fluidity, etc. The concept (which is voluntary) was advertised via the DBC weekly staff bulletin and has been adopted by an encouraging number of staff.

PREVENT

29. A CONTEST Silver Board (Counter-Terrorism) was held on 2 June 2021.
30. The DBC Local Engagement Plan has been updated to reflect the new Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) - which highlights potential threat, risk and mitigation in our communities – and shared with the Board.
31. DBC has submitted a response to the Home Office PROTECT Duty consultation which was live until the 2 July. This will have implications for DBC, other public sector organisations and businesses to varying degrees. If it goes ahead as detailed in the consultation, it will require the business owner to assess and mitigate the risk to their buildings, employees and public if a terrorist attack was to occur at their premises. The assessment and mitigation will operate in a similar way to current health and safety law – reasonably practicable and proportionate – but it will have an impact on the Council, who will have to assess their own buildings and

could possibly be tasked with inspecting/enforcing the new legislation locally.

32. DBC submitted its Channel Annual Assurance Statement to the Home Office on 19 April. This was the first submission and included the return being signed off by the Managing Director, signalling the level of importance the Home Office attach to the effective delivery of Prevent.
33. One Tension Monitoring Report has been received during the period of this report. This relates to the impact on the local community of an assault on a young Muslim male at the end of the holy month of Ramadan. This is being dealt with by the Community Resilience Officer and local community leaders.

Gambling Policy

34. There will be a requirement to review our Gambling Policy in 2022 and Licensing will soon be seeking approval from the Licensing Committee for a new policy to be consulted on. Licensing have been working on this with colleagues across the region who are in a similar position and seeking advice from the Gambling Commission. It is generally felt that there will be few proposed changes, as recent years have seen a move to online gambling, which is under the control of the Gambling Commission.

Premises Licence Review

35. Darlington Licensing Committee recently revoked the alcohol licence of Akbar Dynasty (on the A66 near Sadberge) following representations made by the Home Office that this premises had been using illegal immigrants to work both in the kitchens and front of house. The premises' licence holder has appealed this decision, which the Licensing Department will be defending in the Magistrates Court. The premises can continue selling alcohol lawfully until this appeal has been heard.

Dog Breeding

36. Licensing currently have two active investigations on-going into unlicensed dog breeding activities, both of which are linked to cross border organised crime. Locally, Licensing are working closely with Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Civic Enforcement and Police to provide a co-ordinated response to any suspected unlawful activity involving dogs, which is an extremely emotive issue for communities. Licensing are also working closely with colleagues in County Durham to develop a cross border action plan to deal with these issues and within that plan will be a joint media strategy.

Crime and Disorder

Darlington	Pre-COVID 01.04.2019- 31.05.2019	01.04.2021- 31.05.2021	% Increase/decrease
Crime	2109	1872	-11%
Incidents	5619	5195	-8%
ASB	613	675	+10%

Darlington Town Centre	Pre-COVID 01.04.2019- 31.05.2019	01.04.2021- 31.05.2021	% Increase/decrease
Crime	306	200	-34%
Incidents	616	368	-40%
ASB	85	50	-41%

37. Crimes showing an increase include: Robbery (5 crimes), Racially Aggravated Crime (3 crimes) and Public Order (35 crimes).
38. The increase in Public Order crimes is due to people shouting and swearing due to being intoxicated in the Town Centre.
39. The increase in ASB is due to reports of quad/off road bikes and loud music being played.

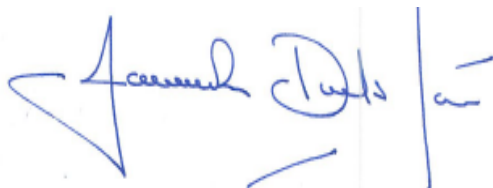
Equalities

40. Hidden Disabilities - Darlington has been asked to be a pilot town to be 'Sunflower friendly' for the Hidden Disabilities programme. Over 100 businesses have completed a training quiz to learn about who may have a hidden impairment and how to welcome them to Darlington, through good customer service skills. We have worked with DAD to refine the training to ensure the training is correct. To launch this programme, we commissioned artist Sarah Oatley who has been working with over 130 volunteers to create a yarn bomb of flowers which will be making the town centre more vibrant and welcoming. The Hidden Disabilities scheme is an internationally recognised brand and following our successful Purple Flag award we were asked to support this initiative. There is a huge number of people with a hidden impairment and Darlington looks forward to welcoming them to our town centre.
41. PRIDE 2021 - Darlington is looking forward to hosting PRIDE 2021 between 7-9 August in line with current guidelines and was also successful in being awarded funding from TVCA to support this event. PRIDE in Darlington runs across the whole weekend offering free, accessible and friendly entertainment, information and activity for all to enjoy. The three days are planned to create different atmospheres including live music, food and entertainment with information in the Market Square (subject to COVID guidelines) Saturday 7 August. On Sunday 8 August, PRIDE moves to a quieter more reflective day in South Park and the event finale is held on the evening of the 9 hosted and organised by the hospitality venues around Blackwellgate and the Market Square. Saturday and Sunday is family-friendly for all ages and Monday follows the usual 'Mongay' nights for the older audiences and offers a safe and welcoming evening. The event will be adapted to accommodate the government guidelines that we are following for August 2021.

Climate Change

42. The Private Sector Housing Team has submitted a bid to the Private Rental Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Compliance and Enforcement Competition, which if successful will strengthen the capacity of the team and to provide funding to: -

- (a) Identify the landlords who are not compliant with the minimum energy efficiency standard (MEES).
- (b) Provide engagement with non-compliant Private Rented Sector Landlords. It is expected that awareness raising of the MEES regulations will form a part of this engagement.
- (c) To develop a clear procedure for compliance and enforcement.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Dulston', with a vertical line to the right of the name.

**Councillor Jonathan Dulston
Deputy Leader of the Council**

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COUNCIL
15 JULY 2021

OVERVIEW OF ADULTS PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

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

Operational Services**COVID Funding**

2. The Government has extended COVID funding to facilitate hospital discharges and prevent hospital admissions. Up until the 30 June 2021, people will have up to six weeks of funded care. From 1 July 2021 and up to the 30 September 2021, the funding will reduce to up to four weeks of funded care. The reduction is not an issue for the operational teams as assessments are being completed in the specified timescales and the teams are confident moving forward.

Acute Frailty Team

3. Darlington Memorial Hospital recently established a front of house, Acute Frailty Team. This is a multidisciplinary team, with a focus on the completion of assessments of older adults, who are experiencing difficulties due to issues with frailty, such as falls or delirium. The team's aim is to complete assessments and devise management plans at the earliest point in an individual's stay in hospital. This then allows the team to plan safe discharges at the earliest point and ensure clear collaboration with community services. Social Workers are now proactively involved in the work within the Frailty Team and have been positively received by their health colleagues. They can share their knowledge and expertise, in the completion of assessments and offer guidance on the range of services available in the community to ensure the right support is identified and put in place.

Commissioning and Contracts

4. This year's Carers Week took place from 7-13 June 2021. As in previous years, the week was themed and this year's theme was "Make Caring Visible and Valued." This annual campaign raises awareness and highlights the considerable challenges that all carers face particularly during the current Covid 19 emergency pandemic. During this time, carers have played a vital role by providing support and taking on additional caring responsibilities for our most vulnerable residents in Darlington. Darlington Carers Support have also held a session for the Council's staff to raise awareness and provide support.
5. The vaccination programme within Darlington has been focusing on the rollout of the second dosage of the vaccine. On 10 June 2021, 96 percent of care home residents have now received the required two dosages of the vaccine. 84 per cent

of Priority 1 social care eligible staff which (as previously reported includes older people care homes, older people domiciliary care, assisted living, private sheltered housing and Direct Payment personal assistants) who want to have the vaccine, have now received two dosages. Following the recent Government announcement stating that all CQC registered care home staff had to be vaccinated, we can report that out of the 1211 staff working in Darlington 26 are medically able to receive vaccines but to date have not done so. We continue to work with care home management and health colleagues to address this issue.

6. The Commissioning and Contracts Team are now working with the Older Person's Care Home Sector to reinstate and conduct the annual quality standards assessments. The assessments consist of a review of essential care standards including effective recruitment procedures, social and leisure outcomes, medication management and health and safety. Levels of compliance and resulting grades are linked to the weekly fee levels for the Council's commissioned placements. This quality assessment programme was suspended for the year 2020/21 because of the Covid 19 pandemic emergency. The team has consulted closely with care homes to develop a process of self- assessments which are then evaluated by the Contracts Section. Care homes will be informed of the outcome of the assessments in August. Any amendments to fee levels will be back dated to April 2020 as agreed in the correspondence between the Council and the Care Homes during the pandemic suspension.
7. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Act places a duty on local authorities to provide accommodation-based support for victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. Local authorities will also need to ensure all victims of domestic abuse have access to the right support within safe accommodation when they need it. The Act requires tier one local authorities to:
 - (a) appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board
 - (b) assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims in their area, including those who require cross-border support
 - (c) develop and publish a strategy for the provision of such support to cover their locality, having regard to the needs assessment
 - (d) monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy
 - (e) report back to central government

The government has allocated £50,000 Capacity Building Funding and £222,365 Burdens Funding to Darlington Borough Council.

A Commissioning Officer for Domestic Abuse has been recruited on a one-year fixed contract to coordinate the local implementation of the Act.

Darlington Borough Council and Durham County Council are currently members of the Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) and work is nearing completion to agree how Governance arrangements are reconstituted moving forward

A local Implementation Plan has been developed to ensure that the following outcomes are achieved:

- (a) the completion of a Darlington Heath needs assessment which will inform Darlington's Domestic Abuse Strategy and identify any areas where Darlington may not be compliant with the new bill (deadline September 2021)
- (b) the completion of a detailed expenditure plan of the additional funding provided by the Government to the Council to fund new domestic abuse responsibilities (deadline September 2021)
- (c) increased engagement with key partners in relation to the new duty
- (d) mapping all existing local domestic abuse safe accommodation support providers both commissioned and non-commissioned to determine whether there are any gaps in service provision
- (e) a review of all current contracts/frameworks
- (f) a review of the expected accompanying Statutory Guidance and Regulations
- (g) demand modelling in the context of the Covid 19 pandemic emergency

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

- 8. Colleagues from TEWV attended the meeting of Safeguarding Partners to provide an update of measures implemented since the recent CQC inspections, which included West Park Hospital. As part of their response to the inspection findings, TEWV held a rapid improvement event on risk assessments and recovery plans. Improvements are to be reviewed by CQC and partners were informed that robust action plans are in place which NHSE/I improvement board have oversight of. Partners were assured of the high level of scrutiny in place through NHS Improvement Board and that TEWV were able to demonstrate a strong focus on improvement activity.

Climate Change

- 9. We have recently introduced Climate Change to the agenda for all Team Meetings. We are encouraging staff to identify possible efficiencies/reduction of waste and continue to promote paperless ways of working.

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

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**COUNCIL
15 JULY 2021**

OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

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

Ofsted Annual Engagement Meeting

2. Ofsted met with the Director of People, Assistant Directors for Children and Education Services and the Head of Performance on the 3 June 2021 for an annual discussion relating to the Children's Self-Assessment (SEF). It was a positive meeting with Inspectors reassured of our continuing journey of improvement in both practice and quality of services. The transition of our self-assessment from one of compliance to highlight quality of practice and the impact that our services have on children and families was noted. A suggestion for increased performance data to be included throughout the SEF, enabling challenge and scrutiny was made.
3. We continue to anticipate a SEND Inspection and a Focus Visit/Inspection, under the ILACS framework. No indication was given at the meeting as to when these visits would take place.

Early Intervention and Front Door

4. Both the Youth Offending Service and the Early Help Service have undergone a rebranding. Following engagement with key stakeholders including service users and partner agencies, the Youth Offending Service will now be known as the Young People's Engagement and Justice Service and the Early Help Service will now be known as the Building Stronger Families Service. The name changes recognises the up to date focus and remit of the respective services.

Safeguarding Assessment and Looked After Through Care:**Corporate Parenting Panel**

5. The Panel met on 20 April 2021, with young people involved, alongside Members and Officers. The Panel received and discussed:
 - (a) A positive report on Care Leavers who are in Employment, Education or Employment and those who are not.
 - (b) A report on how Care Leavers are being supported in respect of their cultural diversity.
 - (c) Photographs of Easter Eggs that had been donated for Care Leavers were circulated.
 - (d) Performance data for young people in Care and Care Leavers for Quarter 3 2020/21.

- (e) A presentation in respect of the impact that the pandemic has had on the mental health of young people in care and Care Leavers.
- (f) A verbal discussion regarding the impact of reintroducing face to face contact/family time for young people in Care and Care Leavers.

Child Protection, Looked After and Care Leaver statistics.

- 6. At the end of April 2021 there were:
 - (a) 304 children being supported through a child in need plan, which is a reduction from the 331 at year end 2020/21.
 - (b) 81 children subject to child protection plans, a reduction from 87 at year end 2020/21.
 - (c) As at 28 May 2021 there were 269 children in care. We continue to reduce the need for children to become looked after and safely return children home with the use of relational practices and safety planning, where appropriate.
 - (d) All 148 Care Leavers between 16 – 25 years have access to a personal advisor for support, advice and guidance.

Fostering Residential and Lifestages

- 7. There is a continued focus on the recruitment of mainstream foster carers to help meet the needs of children in care. There has been an increase in enquiries about mainstream fostering, with the service being supported by the Marketing and Communications Team to ensure interesting articles and messages are regularly added to social media. In May, we had a specific campaign during Foster Care Fortnight, where we attracted 36 initial enquiries during the month, which is the best response we have had for several years.
- 8. There is a Strengthening Families workstream focussing on improving efficiency and service delivery in the Fostering Team, with the aim of increasing and retaining the number of in-house mainstream foster carers to provide high quality placements for our children in care.
- 9. Harewood Hill Lodge has been providing respite to approximately 25 children since summer 2020, with staff groups and children working in “bubbles” as far as possible to minimise the potential for the spread of infection. Parents have provided positive feedback in relation to the service. From 1 June 2021 we have reverted to the “pre-COVID” delivery model with appropriate measures in place to ensure the safety of children and the staff team.
- 10. The Disabled Children’s Team (Lifestages 0-25 team) continue to support disabled children and their families. The team work closely with colleagues in health and education and with specialist service to ensure co-ordinated service delivery. An increased number of home visits are now taking place in accordance with the team’s “COVID recovery” plan.

Education

11. The newly commissioned SEND units at Red Hall primary school and Rise Carr College are progressing well and are scheduled to open to pupils in Autumn 2021.

Children's Commissioning and Contracts

12. Following the appointment of an additional provider to the Community Short Breaks Framework Contract. Officers have been working alongside contracted providers and the parent carer forum to co-ordinate a forthcoming virtual engagement event to raise awareness of the current community short breaks services available in Darlington both through the contract and providers own broader community initiatives.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

13. Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust provided an overview of current issues affecting service areas/safeguarding arrangements within CAMHS. An online virtual support pathway called CONTACT is currently being produced in conjunction with; parents and carers forum, the local authority and education colleagues to further support meeting the needs of children with neurological needs. Partners agreed to keep this issue on their radar and requested appropriate performance data is fed into the partnership.

Climate Change

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

Councillor Jon Clarke
Children and Young People Portfolio

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COUNCIL
15 JULY 2021

OVERVIEW OF ECONOMY PORTFOLIO

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

Planning and Development Management

2. The Planning enforcement/compliance service currently has 84 planning enforcement cases under investigation and 91 Cases have been satisfactorily resolved by the Monitoring and Compliance Officer since the beginning of August.
3. Since the beginning of August 2020, 803 applications have been received of which 28 are categorised as major. 603 decisions have been made in this period, including Committee Decisions, Chairs Delegated and Delegated decisions.
4. Progress is being made with regard to the residential/commercial development in Skinnergate. The appointed architectural agents have been able to move the project forward to planning application stage. It is anticipated that a decision will be made in July for this exiting transformational project.
5. Enforcement notices have been served on two gypsy sites which have been appealed against to be heard by hearing, and in addition, an enforcement notice has been served on unauthorised activity including the stationing of a caravan near Sadberge. Compliance has been secured in both cases.
6. Direct action in default being taken on a property in Montrose Street is nearing completion. An appropriate charge on the property will be made to recover the Council's costs.
7. Following a briefing with Members, pre-application negotiations are now complete and an application has been received regarding the North Road Railway Station scheme.

Environmental Health

8. The Environmental Health Department responded to 1709 requests for service in Q4.
9. The main categories of these requests are:
 - (a) Food 140
 - (b) Licensing 49
 - (c) Noise 166
 - (d) Planning Enquiries 90
 - (e) Refuse 90
 - (f) Pest 207
 - (g) Personal Search 484

(h) Covid 327

10. Additionally, the Commercial Team carried out the following proactive Food Inspections:
 - (a) Food Safety 30
 - (b) Food Standards 22
11. To support the Council's healthy weight plan, to support every child to feel emotionally and physically healthy, by providing opportunities to play and have access to and enjoy healthy foods, the public and environmental health teams are encouraging restaurants and cafes to offer families a wider choice of healthy food and receive recognition in the form of a healthy family catering award certificate.
12. Meals eaten out or from takeaways are usually much higher in fat, sugar, salt, and calories. A meal deal can often seem to be convenient and value for money but can increase the food ordered and consumed. Swapping the unhealthier meal deal items with healthier options can make it easier to eat well out of home, within budget.
13. With 'out of home' food often contributing to high calorie intakes, food business options can play a part in our children's health. With this in mind, two proactive restaurants in Darlington - Uno Momento and Al Forno - have worked with the Council to improve their healthy offering in their children's menus, with their meals not exceeding government guidelines for calories and portion sizing for children under the age of 11.
14. Both restaurants also achieved the gold extension of the award by incorporating techniques to support behaviour change, such as including fruits and vegetables on the menu and encouraging healthy drinks.
15. During the course of the Coronavirus Pandemic Officers from Environmental Health, Licensing and the Town Centre Management team have worked together to provide written guidance documents at each step of the Government's Roadmap.
16. The documents were hand delivered and were supported by face-to-face visits to the management of the businesses.
17. A Review and Update Report on the Council's Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy has been placed on the Council's website. This report gives an update of the work undertaken by Environmental Health from 2013 onwards, identifies the changes in guidance and approach taken since the publication of the 2013 Strategy and outlines the aims and work programme going forward.

Building Control

18. The Building Control section work is continuing as previously with some increases in: submitted applications, requests for inspections and actions due to unauthorised works, dangerous structures interventions due to lack of maintenance, and the work around issuing special safety certificates for the August events at the Arena. The section is also in the process of being ISO 9001 accredited through the LABC.

Darlington Towns Fund

19. The aims and purpose of the Towns Fund is to drive the sustainable economic regeneration of towns to deliver long term economic and productivity growth.
20. Improvement works within the Yards is progressing, which includes enhanced public realm and seating areas, new doors, windows, guttering and downpipes, new lighting and new paintwork and artwork, which will encourage people to visit the ever-growing number of independent shops and allow people to dwell for a time in these attractive historic yards.
21. The acquisition of 142/144 Northgate has now been completed and signifies the first step towards the Council's intention of seeking to acquire the remaining units which make up the whole of the former Edward Pease residence. Discussions regarding the acquisition of further premises on Northgate are continuing.
22. Progress is underway with Stage 2 of the Towns Fund which involves the completion of business cases and submission of summaries to government.

Victorian Indoor Market

23. Work is progressing well with the refurbishment of Darlington's Indoor Market. Phase 1, which includes the provision of new public toilets, bar, performance space, community dining area, and a selection of various street food vendors. Phase 2 which is the redevelopment of the traditional market area has commenced which will see overall improvements to the trading area. Phase 3, the Temperate Garden, has now received planning approval and consideration is being given to when works are best timed to commence.

Business Investment Team Update

24. Darlington Borough Council have administered the various financial support schemes for business on behalf of the Government.

25. The table below shows the number of grants awarded and overall values for the national Local Restrictions Support Grants:

Local Restriction Support Grants (October 2020 – March 2021)					
	Applications	Approved	Declined	Awaiting Decision	Amount Paid
LRSO Open	364	218	140	0	£192,075.70
LRSO (Closed Addendum) National Lockdown	1,099	870	229	0	£1,336,122.00
LRSO Tier 3	461	265	196	0	£427,264.43
Christmas Support Payment for Pubs	77	51	26	0	£51,000.00
LRSO Tier 4/National Lockdown	1,279	909	369	1	£4,416,912.37
Closed Business Lockdown Payment	893	893			£4,028,285.71
TOTAL:	4,173	3,206	960		£10,451,660.21

26. As part of the March 2021 Budget, the Government set out a new wave of support measure for the small businesses, including Restart Grants to support local economies as they emerge from the pandemic and lockdown restrictions and commence a path of recovery. The awards so far are as follows:

Restart Grants				
Applications	Approved	Declined	Awaiting Decision	Amount Paid
901	793	101	7	£5,666,064.00

27. In addition to the national government support schemes, Darlington Borough Council was allocated £3m for delivering local discretionary grants. The table below shows the current status of grant awards from this fund.

Additional Restriction Grants					
	Applications	Approved	Declined	Awaiting Decision	Amount Paid
ARG Phase I - Lockdown	1,009	614	395	0	£1,851,574.17
ARG Phase II - Recovery		472			£1,095,910.00
TOTAL:	1,009	1,086			£2,947,484.17

28. So far, the number and value of Covid-19 business grants awarded via DBC since the start of the pandemic is as follows:

- (a) 735 Small Business Grants - £17,350,000
- (b) 364 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants - £ 6,520,000
- (c) 105 Discretionary Grants - £ 1,170,000
- (d) 3,206 Local Restriction Support Grants - £10,451,660

(e) 793 Restart Grants	- £ 5,666,064
(f) 1,086 Additional Restriction Grants	- £ 2,947,484

29. The total value of Covid-19 financial support grants awarded to Darlington businesses since the start of the pandemic in March 2020 is £44,105,208.

Local Plan

30. The Local Plan Hearing sessions are now complete. The next stage will be the receipt of the Inspector's initial findings where modifications will be recommended to ensure the soundness of the Plan. The modifications will be placed on deposit for representations to be made, these representations can only be on the proposed modifications and not the whole Plan. Depending on the representations received the Inspector may decide to hold further hearing days but that is not necessarily the case.

31. The Inspector will then submit his final report with his recommendations on the soundness of the Plan (with the modifications). If the Inspector recommends the Plan is sound, a report will be prepared for Council to recommend Adoption of the Local Plan. A verbal update will be provided at Council.

Climate Change

32. It is the intention to submit the Draft Climate Change Action Plan to the September Cabinet for consideration.

33. An annual report for 2020/21 has also been produced. This shows an emissions reduction of just under 1000 tonnes CO₂. We have included an estimate of emissions from homeworking.

Councillor Alan Marshall
Economy Portfolio

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COUNCIL 15 JULY 2021

OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

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

Overview

2. From 8 March, restrictions in England started to lift and the government's four-step roadmap commenced as planned.
3. The roadmap, which has been published on gov.uk since February and it outlines the four steps for easing restrictions.
4. Step 3 commenced on 17 May which meant that gathering limits have been eased. Outdoor gatherings are limited to 30 people and indoor gatherings are limited to 6 people or 2 households and each household can include a support bubble, if eligible. People can attend indoor and outdoor events, including live performances, sporting events and business events. Attendance is capped according to venue type. Organised indoor sport can take place for all, all holiday accommodation can open, including hotels and Bed and Breakfasts.
5. A delay in 'Step 4' was announced in June and we are awaiting formal government guidance on plans to move to that step.
6. The situation in relation to COVID – 19 in Darlington has been dynamic and changeable in recent weeks. The Delta variant is now the dominant variant found in all new infections in Darlington. With the Delta variant being more easily transmitted we have seen a sharp rise in cases in Darlington after a sustained period of low rates of infection. This rise in cases has been largely concentrated on younger people in the community and particularly those people under 25 years old. This group has not been offered a vaccination as part of the routine programme until recently, and therefore have not had the benefit of the protection that vaccination provides.
7. With the rise in the rates of infection there has been a rise in the numbers of people who are ill in hospital, but this rise has been relatively modest compared to the rise in new infections. The latest hospital data shows that levels of hospital bed occupancy with patients with COVID-19 including those in ITU have recently risen, however the numbers of patients has not risen in line with the rate of infections and remains historically low.

COVID Communications

8. The 'Keep Darlington on the right track' campaign continues to evolve with adverts continuing to run across various social media platforms. These adverts are helping

to engage with a range of audiences. Information has also been advertised in the July edition of the One Darlington magazine.

9. The 'Don't Bring It Home' campaign ran from February to March, across Facebook and Instagram, with a billboard advertisement located near Sainsbury's in Darlington town centre. The digital advert gained 17,597 impressions from Darlington residents, which encouraged residents to book regular community tests to keep their families/households safe, particularly if they could not work from home.
10. The 'Teens are not immune to Covid-19' campaign ran in March and April, targeting teens aged 14 and above as well as parents of teens via multiple digital channels and digital radio. The YouTube advert gained 40,045 impressions, Snapchat advert gained 161,535 impressions, Facebook/Instagram advert for teens gained 234,772 impressions and the Facebook/Instagram advert for parents gained 127,541 impressions.
11. We also launched a 'Join the Thousands' campaign, which aims to encourage COVID vaccine uptake. We launched this community campaign in Darlington to encourage residents to get a Covid-19 vaccine when they become eligible. Inspired by the national NHS campaign, the local 'Join the Thousands' campaign aims to encourage Darlington residents to join the 67,941 residents to date who have had at least one dose of a vaccine. As part of this campaign, I'm delighted to see new lamppost banners being displayed in community locations for the first time ever. The initial chosen locations are High Northgate, Cockerton Green, Burnside Road, Haughton Road, Combe Drive and Neasham Road
12. I'm happy to consider additional locations for these new banners; should members identify suitable and safe locations within their respective wards.
13. More recently digital adverts PCR Testing – Don't guess, get a test reached 13,298 people with 874 clicks to get / book a test. The PCR verses Lateral Flow Test graphic advising which type of test to take and when reached 5,628 people with 283 results reported.

Community Testing & Community Collect

14. The government has announced a significant expansion of testing in England to support the roadmap for the easing of restrictions. Anyone will be able to access a free rapid lateral flow test for themselves and their families to use twice a week in line with current clinical guidance.
15. Darlington's community testing programme has led the way and is helping to protect communities right across Darlington.
16. Since our scheme launched in December 2020, about 200 council staff from a variety of roles, including front of house teams at the Darlington Hippodrome and Dolphin Centre were trained to undertake the community tests.
17. With lockdown restrictions easing, our community testing scheme has moved emphasise the click and collect service only. This has allowed our teams to return to their previous roles, whilst still providing a convenient and essential service to protect the people of Darlington.

18. The click and collect community testing service is running from three of the town's current sites (The Dolphin Centre, Head of Steam museum and Firthmoor community centre) as well as two new sites – Eastbourne Sports Complex and Darlington Hippodrome
19. In addition, orders can be made online for home delivered kits via:
www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests

You can only use this service if:

- you do not have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms
 - you're 11 or older
 - you have not been told to self-isolate
 - you cannot get tests from your work, school, college or university
20. Since the launch of click and collect, the total number of kits collected, as of 29 June, is 3,378 (or 23,646 total tests).

COVID-19 Vaccinations

21. The vaccination Programme in Darlington continues to progress well with around 79 per cent of all those aged over 18 having at least one dose of vaccine and around 61 per cent now having received two doses of vaccine. Everyone aged 18 years and over are now being offered the vaccine.

Public Health

22. The Public Health team have been successful in their bid to the Universal Grant scheme from Public Health England. The additional resource will be used to support new and innovative interventions to enable local areas to address and reduce elements of crime in their local communities which are associated with the illegal drug market, particularly acquisitive crime, violent crime and reducing drug-related deaths
23. This will be achieved through establishing a new ACCESS Team (Assertive Community Connection and Engagement Support Service). The team will deliver an intensive programme to improve the experience and outcomes for offenders in Darlington. An enhanced and focussed offer of support will increase treatment options, enhance recovery capacity, develop new diversionary interventions and accelerate and improve integration and improve care pathways with partners in the borough.
24. Public Health has been awarded a grant to increase healthy weight in adults living with Obesity in Darlington. The resource will be used to deliver a project around physical activity, diet, and behaviour change. This will be done in partnership with The Dolphin Centre and the existing exercise on referral scheme, alongside Primary Healthcare Darlington. There will also be an opportunity to trial a digital weight loss programme with Second Nature. For this pilot the target audience will be those who are at higher risk of Diabetes and with a high BMI.
25. As part of the suicide prevention work in Darlington 200 prevention tins are being rolled out. These have been distributed by Healthwatch Darlington as part of the Grassroots money from the region. These give information about what to do if

someone is having suicidal thoughts or have concerns about someone they know. Each receiving organisation is asked to identify a key contact who will undertake short online training to ensure they feel confident and resilient about these conversations. Training has also been made available to internal staff including library and housing staff and is available on the intranet.

26. A grant programme has opened to further support schools and colleges in relation to suicide, prevention, self-harm and mental health. The information has gone out to all secondary schools and colleges in Darlington and will provide up to £2000 for training that meets Health Education England standards. The funding has come from region and will be agreed by a panel and agreements sent out with performance criteria that must be met.
27. Work has recently commenced to look at postvention services within Darlington following bereavement by suicide. Public Health received some external funding from the CCG for this purpose. There is a need to increase the visibility of the service and ensure it supports not only next of kin but friends and colleagues of the deceased too. This is because statistically they are more at risk of suicide.
28. Two town centre restaurants working with the authority's Public Health and Environmental health teams have signed up to the Darlington Healthy Families Catering Award Standard. They are the first catering businesses in the town to apply and receive the award. Other businesses can apply for this award through the completion of a short self-assessment which can be found on the Council's website. This is one of the actions set out in the Childhood Healthy Weight Plan for the borough which aims to help tackle obesity rates in Darlington. This plan has a series of actions planned for all stakeholder which aims to improve the food and nutritional offer for families in Darlington.

Housing Services

Customer Engagement Strategy 2021-24

29. Social Housing Regulator's Consumer Standards places a duty on social housing providers to involve and empower our tenants in the delivery of housing services.
30. Cabinet has approved the Customer Engagement Strategy 2021-24, which sets out how the Council will meet the standards, including what specific activities will be undertaken, the expected outcomes that will be achieved and how these will be monitored and reported.

Housing Options

31. Our Housing Options service has successfully bid for Government funding through the Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) scheme.
32. The grant funding will provide additional resources to help us reduce the already low numbers of people in Darlington at risk of rough sleeping and also help us to manage the increase in homeless people presenting to the Council throughout the Covid pandemic.

33. Whilst significant support has already been provided to those people at risk of homelessness during the pandemic, we are expecting an increase in presentations following the lifting of the ban on evictions and the ending of the furlough scheme.
34. The funding will be used for the following services for 2021-22:
- (a) An Outreach Support Worker will be funded through the Street Link service operated by the 700 Club. This service provides direct engagement with anyone rough sleeping or begging, offering both accommodation and support. This service works alongside other organisations including the Police, Probation, Health services and Community Safety.
 - (b) A Homeless Navigator post will be funded, based in the Housing Options team. This post will work with agencies who have a Duty to Refer clients into homeless services or who support and work with those who may be at risk of homelessness. This role will have a prevention focus where they will negotiate to try and save tenancies by signposting, money management and accessing support services, including registering with a GP.
 - (c) Funding will be used to deliver 2 units of “Housing First” accommodation. This involves setting up a home for someone to give them an opportunity to learn what is required and expected by the landlord, as well as how to live independently. Support is provided through voluntary sector partners and is personalised to the individual needs of the client to allow them to move on to more permanent accommodation.
 - (d) Funding will also be used to help homeless clients in the Housing First properties with items such as mobile phones, travel costs and bonds to secure accommodation.
35. Part of the RSI bid was also to recruit a Rough Sleeper Co-ordinator for the Tees Valley. This post will support the delivery of the Rough Sleeper Action Groups and government returns for all the Councils in the sub-region and work with the Prison Service to secure accommodation for people coming out of prison. This post will be based in Darlington, reflecting our strategic position and excellent track record in dealing with homelessness.

Rent Collection

36. Rent arrears recovery continues to provide Council tenants with support and guidance. Legal enforcement action on the most severe cases have recommenced with the eviction ban ending in May and court hearings restarting in June.

The most egregious cases will be referred to court where tenants have failed to make payments despite support and assistance being offered on numerous occasions.

37. The number of tenants claiming Universal Credit (UC) has slowed with 1,539 Council tenants now claiming some form of UC instead of Housing Benefit. The average arrears for these tenants remains at less than five weeks, indicating how the supportive approach has assisted tenants throughout the last year.

New Build

38. Work has now started on the Neasham Road site, which will deliver 450 new homes for Darlington, 150 of which will be new Council housing. Esh Homes, who form part of the Joint Venture partnership with the Council, started the infrastructure works on the site on 17 May 2021. This work will include construction of the roads, utility services and drainage for the site, the first phase of which will be completed in early 2022.
39. At this point the Council's Building Services team will then start the construction of the new Council homes and this work is due to be fully completed by 2026.

The Dolphin Centre

40. On Monday 17 May the Dolphin Centre reopened indoor hospitality along with the rest of Darlington, welcoming customers back into 16 Horsemarket and the Bistro. The reintroduction of these facilities has complimented the popular outdoor pavement café offer that has been in place since Monday 12 April.
41. The bowling alley opened to public on Friday 21 May following a week of intensive training for the team. There has been an excellent response from residents and visitors to the town and in particular during the half term holidays. Feedback has been very positive around the quality, look and overall experience.
42. In addition, the fully refurbished soft play facility opened to public on Friday 28 May which was welcomed by many young families who have not been able to enjoy the facilities since February 2020. The new area boasts an extended toddler and baby area which was introduced in response to feedback from users and this has been very well received. The soft play again provides an outstanding quality facility brought to residents by Darlington Borough Council.
43. The Dolphin Centre also reintroduced swimming lessons in May for the first time since lockdown. Not all lessons could be offered due to Covid restrictions around teaching in the water for lower end stages, but this particular service was a high priority to restart children's water education journey.
44. Further to the above, school swimming returned to the timetable in June. The Dolphin Centre team has been delivering Key Stage 2 school swimming intensives as part of Public Health's Water Safety and Key Stage 2 Swimming School Package released to primary schools in May.
45. The purpose of the funded support was to provide Key Stage 2 children with a targeted programme of water and swim safety lessons before the end of the summer term. The programme filled in the deficit created by the last year of restrictions and missed curriculum time due to the pandemic and associated restrictions. The programme provided these young people with a life skill in swimming, was aimed to improve their confidence but also provided them with awareness and information about water safety before the summer holidays.

Darlington Dragons Rugby League Club

46. Darlington has a new club in town for aspiring Rugby League players. Darlington Dragons is a fledgling Rugby League club training at Eastbourne Sports Complex.

The club accepts players from U 5's to open age ranges and the training takes place at 10.00am on Saturday mornings at Eastbourne Community Complex; sessions commenced on 22 May.

Tees Valley Sport Inequalities Fund Round 3

47. Applications have been approved for Darlington RA to run community-based activities for children and young people, including Intro2 Archery sessions working with people with long term health conditions and/or learning difficulties/disabilities.
48. Applications are currently being reviewed from Middleton Rangers for disability football aimed at children and young people with learning difficulties/disabilities and return to walking football sessions with the Parkinson's Support Group and Step Forward Tees Valley, for people with long term health conditions. The Parkinson's Support Group is for people with Parkinson's and their carers and Step Forward Tees Valley supports activities for unemployed men. If successful, this will be £18,000 of external funding for all projects.



**Councillor Kevin Nicholson
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Housing**

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COUNCIL
15 JULY 2021

OVERVIEW OF LOCAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

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

Proposed Waiting Restrictions on George Stephenson Way – Objections

2. On-street parking on George Stephenson Drive has resulted in road safety concerns being raised for a number of years. The on-street parking causes visibility issues daily, which result in road safety concerns for residents and drivers entering and leaving the estate.
3. Cabinet considered two objections that had been received to a proposal for waiting restrictions on George Stephenson Drive and agreed to set aside those objections.
4. Introducing the waiting restrictions will improve the traffic flow, visibility and road safety of vehicles entering and leaving George Stephenson Drive.

Rethinking Victoria Road

5. Works are ongoing to complete the section of Victoria Road from Clifton Road to the station. Service diversions have been carried out to facilitate the installation of tree pits and the works to widen the footway has commenced. A surfacing contractor has been procured with the surfacing due to commence on 23 July and last approximately one week.
6. The new signals are installed but will not become operational until the surfacing works are complete.

Highway Maintenance Schemes

7. The annual programme of highway maintenance has commenced with a significant programme of works over the summer months. The Council will continue to address road condition and a large programme of residential streets is being included again this year. 52 streets are included in the microasphalt programme covering over 11km of road.
8. The Council has also launched the “Report it” function. An online reporting function for highways and street lighting issues. The map based system allows residents to report issues easily, get updates and also allows people to see if the issues has already been reported. Further promotion and integration of this system will follow to improve customer service and efficiency.
9. Highway Maintenance schemes complete:
 - (a) Stanhope Road South/Coniscliffe Road, West Street: Carriageway reconstruction (0.260km)

10. Highway Maintenance schemes on site:
 - (a) Carriageway Patching Contract (22 locations)
 - (b) Unc Victoria Embankment: Kerbing/Drainage Works (0.500km)
 - (c) Pendleton Road/Arkendale Street Back Street: Carriageway Reconstruction (0.128km)
 - (d) A6072 Heighington By-Pass: Carriageway Reconstruction (1.393km)
 - (e) B6279 Tornado Way: Carriageway Resurfacing (0.280km)
11. Highway Maintenance schemes due to start:
 - (a) A68 West Auckland Road: Carriageway Reconstruction (2.330km)
 - (b) A67 Merrybent -Phase 2: Carriageway Reconstruction (0.561km)
 - (c) Carriageway Micro-Asphalt Contract (52 locations, 11.124km)

Climate Change

12. The Council continues to expand its fleet of electric vehicles as they come up for replacement. 9 new electric vans have been added to the fleet making a total of 17.

Head of Steam

13. A new exhibition, 'All Aboard', opened on Tuesday 18 May. The exhibition, supported by NPO and co-curated by local children at Mowden Primary School and Reid Street Primary School, invites visitors to discover more about their favourite railway stories both old and new.

Creative Darlington

14. Creative Darlington is supporting the following festivals and programmes:
 - (a) Tracks (Community Interest Company) 'Mish Mash' and 'Last Train Home' music festivals.
 - (b) Neighbourhood Watch Stilts International (street theatre company) 'Insectopolis' programmes in Darlington Town Centre.
 - (c) Theatre Hullabaloo's 'Hullabaloo in the Park' programme in South Park.
 - (d) A satellite activity at the Head of Steam Railway Museum as part of the Middlesbrough Art Weekender 2021 programme.
15. A number of these programmes have been offered support from Arts Council England or Tees Valley Combined Authority, in addition to backing from Darlington Borough Council.

Libraries

16. The reopening of libraries is progressing, offering computer use and study space at Darlington Library, as well as book borrowing.

World Book Night

17. Darlington was one of ten authorities to successfully bid for 1000 copies of Matt Haig's 'The Midnight Library' for World Book Night. Copies of the book were given to groups of key workers, businesses and services to gift as a "random act of

kindness”, including COVID centres and the Arriva buses. The books were also gifted to young adults at Carmel College and to young adults in care and care leavers.

Reading Friends

18. The Library is providing a “window to the library” for a group of elderly, digitally excluded residents in Darlington. After a successful grant application, tablets have been purchased and will be loaned to a selected group of older adults who are using the home delivery service. Support will be provided by Library staff through the programme. Reminiscence boxes are also being piloted to support wellbeing in older people.

Darlington Hippodrome

19. The Hippodrome reopened on 17 May in line with the Government’s roadmap and is currently running a programme of classes, classic films, tours and encore West End screenings. The first live show is Darlington Operatic Society’s show ‘Come Back Home’ (24–27 June) with audience members booking on a 1 metre+ socially distanced seating plan.
20. A pantomime press launch was scheduled for Friday 25 June where it was announced that Faye Tozer (Member of British pop group Steps/Strictly Come Dancing) will be starring as the Fairy Godmother in Cinderella this Christmas. It is anticipated that the publicity will generate a boost in ticket sales and create a renewed excitement for the return of panto to the Hippodrome.

Town Centre Partnership and Events

21. The Government Welcome Back Fund 2021-22: £94,000 has been completed and submitted for review to support Animation and Marketing of the Town centre.
22. Within the Market square a roller rink and other sporting events will occur throughout the summer holidays, the roller rink has been booked for 19-30 July and will be accompanied by exciting activities taking place each Wednesday for young people.

Environmental Services

Grounds Maintenance

23. The Council is regularly increasing the number of wildflower areas located around the Borough. This summer, there is a total of 67 sections of wildflowers spread over 35 different locations, compared to 42 sections of wildflowers spread over 18 locations in 2020.

Garden Waste

24. The third year of the Garden Waste Subscription Service commenced in April, with 8,225 subscriptions at the time of writing. This is a further increase of 13 per cent on 2020 as the service continues to grow.

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COUNCIL
15 JULY 2021

OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

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

Climate Change

2. Funding has been secured through a successful Salix funding bid that will involve the installation of technologies within the Town Hall and Hippodrome which directly contribute to the heat decarbonisation of each building. Additionally, other works will be carried out at the same time to reduce energy demand as a secondary benefit to the scheme. (Salix provides Government funding to the public sector to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and lower energy bills).
3. The Hybrid Business Innovation Centre (HBIC) on Central Park that is progressing towards the construction phase will be constructed to BREEAM 'Excellent' standard (BREEAM - Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method).

Capital Projects and Design Services Management

4. The Council's capital programme has a wide range of exciting projects being developed and delivered:
 - (a) Planning applications for both Darlington Station scheme and the Railway Heritage Quarter scheme have been submitted.
 - (b) The Hybrid Innovation Centre on Central Park is progressing towards the construction phase.
 - (c) The new build Crematorium scheme progresses on site.
 - (d) The site requirements for the Treasury North Campus are being reviewed with the TVCA and meetings progress.
 - (e) A programme of demolition works continues across a number of locations to facilitate future regeneration opportunities. The demolition of the former Audio nightclub on Commercial Street is now complete.
 - (f) Business cases continue to be developed to secure additional projects from funding opportunities, including to support the Railway Heritage Quarter Scheme, Learning Skills Centre within the Northern Echo building and Central Park.
 - (g) The implementation of an integrated control point system 'Project in a Box' continues with the first phase of training to Capital Project Managers now complete. It is envisaged that read access can be provided to Cabinet

Members.

- (h) The construction sector nationally is seeing significant resource pressures and material price and supply issues. The impact on projects and programmes is being monitored.

Council Tax and Business Rates collection 2020-21

5. The Collection of Council Tax and Business Rates during 2020-2021 has been a significant challenge due to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic. Courts have been closed, which has meant that the Council has been unable to obtain liability orders for unpaid Council Tax or Business Rates, preventing any enforcement action, such as attachment of earnings and deductions from benefits from being taken. In addition, recovery action through the Council's Enforcement Agents (bailiffs) has been suspended.
6. However, despite the challenges, the following amounts have been collected. For Council Tax, a total of £59.3 million of the £61.9 million due was collected in 2020-21 (or 95.8 per cent). In addition, £1.2 million of Council Tax arrears relating to previous years was also collected.
7. For Business Rates, a total of £17.1 million of the £17.6 million due was collected (or 97.0 per cent). In addition, over £17 million of additional Business Rates reliefs were awarded in 2020-21 to support businesses in Darlington through the Covid 19 pandemic.
8. A supportive stance in relation to collection has been taken by staff throughout 2020-21 to assist residents and businesses to pay their Council Tax and Business Rates and claim the benefits and reliefs they are entitled to.

Medium Term Financial Plan

9. The draft 2020/21 accounts have been prepared and as anticipated there was an improvement against the original MTFP which has increased our reserves position. The outturn position was aided by the Government grants received for COVID expenditure and loss of income due to the pandemic which have adequately covered the pressures sustained in year.

Health and Safety

10. In situations where there is risk of threats or violence against the employee, a lone worker device can be used as part of a safe system of work. It is a discreet device carried by the employee as their ID badge. The device used can either be dedicated to one employee or else a pooled device which is shared between two or more employees.
11. The Reliance Protect ID Ultra currently used by the Council comes with e-learning training for employees. The employee will use the ID Ultra to record a message stating where they are working/visiting.
12. In the event of an emergency or threat they can raise a red alert (push a discreet button). The red alert is received by trained operatives who will assess the situation and take appropriate action. This action might be a call to the employee,

their manager (using a pre-determined escalation contact), or if needed, the emergency services.

13. A new contract for our lone working devices has been implemented and upgraded. ID Ultra devices were issued for use across 40 teams, with approximately 500 employees trained and having access to a device when lone working.

Elections

14. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Local Government Police and Crime Commissioner (Coronavirus) (Postponement of Elections and Referendums) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 postponed the elections scheduled to be held on 7 May 2020 and any other polls that arose between 7 April 2020 and 6 May 2021 to a 'backstop' of the 6 May 2021.
15. The postponed elections for the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Durham Police Area and the Mayor for the Tees Valley Combined Authority took place on Thursday 6 May 2021. Two ward by elections also took place on 6 May 2021, following the resignations of Councillors Paul Howell and Sam Howarth, and Councillors Jack Sowerby and David Willis were elected to fill those vacancies, in the Hummersknott and Red Hall and Lingfield Wards, respectively.
16. In response to the pandemic, Democratic Services introduced a number of new systems and processes for the elections, in order to adhere to public health guidance and to ensure that they were conducted in safe and secure covid environments keeping candidates, agents, staff and electors safe at each and every stage.

2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries

17. The Boundary Commission for England (BCE), which is an independent organisation responsible for reviewing Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries, published its initial proposals for new Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries on 8 June 2021, with consultation running on those proposals, until 2 August 2021. Hard copies of the proposals and maps for the North East Region are available to view, by request, at the Crown Street Library, Monday to Saturday between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. and on the BCE website at [North East | BCE Consultation Portal \(bcereviews.org.uk\)](https://www.bcereviews.org.uk).
18. For the 2023 Review, the Commission is promoting the use of a specifically-designed consultation website as the primary tool for receiving comments, from all interested parties and individuals, on the proposals. Further information on how to submit comments can be found at www.bcereviews.org.uk.
19. In early 2022, the next stage of the review will commence, when all of the responses received during the first consultation will be published on the BCE website, and a six-week period of 'secondary consultation' will be undertaken, during which people can give their views on what others have said in the first consultation. As part of this 'secondary consultation' stage, a limited number of public hearings in each of the nine English regions will be held. There will be no new proposals from the BCE at this stage.
20. After analysing all of the responses received during both consultations, the BCE will make appropriate changes to the initial proposals and these 'revised proposals' will

be published for a final four-week period of public consultation towards the end of 2022, with the final recommendations expected by July 2023.

Annual Canvass (Electoral Registration) 2021

21. This year's Annual Canvass commenced on 8 July 2021, and is the second such canvass under the new reformed process. An initial data match with national and local data sets suggested that a significant number of properties had no changes in composition of the household, and as such, the residents within these properties were only required to respond to the Annual Canvass Form where there was a change within the household composition.
22. This allows Officers to streamline their approach and target those non-responding properties where the data match suggests that there could be a potential change to the composition of the household. Annual Canvass Reminder Forms will be issued in August, and further action, including personal visits, will be undertaken throughout September and October to encourage the completion of outstanding forms.

Councillor Charles Johnson
Cabinet Member with Resources Portfolio

COUNCIL
15 JULY 2021

PARTNERSHIP WORKING IN DARLINGTON

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Heather Scott, Leader of the Council**

**Responsible Director -
Ian Williams, Chief Executive**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To update members on a new partnership approach to delivering success for Darlington agreed with partners and for Council to agree to amending the Council's constitution with regard to its lead strategic documents.

Summary

2. This report updates members on changes made to partnership working in Darlington where it has been agreed by partners that the Partnership Board cease and it is replaced by a Public Sector Executive Group and other partnership arrangements to be developed. Also, the report recommends as a result of the change in circumstances that the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) cease to be used as a strategic lead for the Borough and that the lead is provided to partners by the Council plan.
3. This changed approach was considered and approved by Cabinet on the 1 June 2021, subject to approval by Council of the constitutional changes required.
4. Following the receipt of a call-in from Cabinet on 1 June 2021 in relation to its decision in respect of the subject of this report, Partnership Working in Darlington, the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee held a special meeting on 25 June 2021. After carefully considering all of the points raised, the majority view of the Committee was that it was satisfied with the decision Cabinet took on 1 June 2021
5. The new approach requires amendments to the constitution with regard to the removal of the SCS from it.

Recommendation

6. That Members :-
 - (a) Note the new approach to partnership working in Darlington.

- (b) Recognise the great contribution to Darlington made by current and past Members of the Darlington Partnership.
- (c) Approve the change of emphasis with the Council Plan standing as the Council’s lead strategy and agree that the Council ceases to have a separate Sustainable Community strategy.
- (d) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Law and Governance to make consequential amendments to the constitution.

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

- (a) to refresh partnering in Darlington and continues to thrive and acknowledge the general work done.
- (b) for the matter to be considered by Council in accordance with the procedure for making changes to documents that are part of the policy framework.
- (c) to enable appropriate amendments to the constitution to be made.

**Ian Williams
Chief Executive**

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Luke Swinhoe : Extension 5490

S17 Crime and Disorder	No direct impact
Health and Well Being	No direct impact
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	No direct impact
Diversity	No direct impact
Wards Affected	No direct impact
Groups Affected	No direct impact
Budget and Policy Framework	No direct impact
Key Decision	No direct impact
Urgent Decision	No direct impact
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report recommends a replacement for the SCS.
Efficiency	No direct impact
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	No direct impact

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. The Darlington Partnership (DP) has for many years been seen as the overarching partnership across the Borough; it has its origins in economic growth and was established to bring together Public and Private sectors to grow the economy. When government legislation required local authorities to establish a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) as part of the overall governance of the Borough, the DP became the LSP.
9. The DP embraced numerous statutory roles such as holding to account the Community Safety Partnership and Children's and Young Peoples Trust Board. The DP had five themed groups as follows :-
 - (a) Prosperous Darlington
 - (b) Aspiring Darlington
 - (c) Healthy Darlington
 - (d) Greener Darlington
 - (e) Safer Darlington
10. The Partnership was well funded and supported mainly by the public sector, but private sector involvement particularly in economic growth was very visible.
11. The key role of an LSP was to agree and deliver a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). This sets out overall framework/policy direction within which the public sector partners would work to achieve better outcomes for the Borough and Private and Voluntary Sector partners where appropriate would work to support the aims of SCS.
12. The SCS was produced by the DP and adopted by the Council. The SCS was titled One Darlington Perfectly Placed (ODPP) with two key strands :-
 - (a) One Darlington – acknowledged the significant gaps in the opportunities in Darlington and it strived to work to narrow those groups.
 - (b) Perfectly Placed – acknowledged that Darlington had many strengths due to its location and strived to maximise the economic benefits of this in its plans.
13. The SCS was last refreshed in 2014 but has not been reviewed since. Although it is fair to say the overall aims of the two priorities remain very much engrained within the Council it will not be the case in other public sector organisations as time has moved on.
14. Following changes in direction from a new government in 2010, the statutory requirement to have an LSP and SCS ceased. Darlington decided to continue with its approach on a voluntary basis, however the partnership lost any legal status and became a coalition with moral rather than legal oversight of activities within the Borough.
15. In the following years, the reductions to public sector funding led to the reduction of support for the DP leading to a review which removed all the themed groups and

retained the DP board only.

16. Since the review, the DP has changed focus where originally as an LSP it set overall vision and strategy it has focussed more on delivering solutions to challenges identified by partners such as :-
 - (a) Foundation for Jobs
 - (b) Good Friends
 - (c) Darlington Cares
 - (d) A campaign for awareness of mental health in the Workplace
 - (e) A campaign to raise the awareness of Domestic Violence with employers
 - (f) Fairer Richer Darlington Programme aimed at tackling the short, medium, and long-term impacts and causes of poverty.
 - (g) The Bread and Butter Thing.
17. It is fair to say that a lot of the work has been done outside the Board and delivered by the Director of the Partnership and partners. The Director has been the driving force in delivering the many projects.
18. The DP Board met bi-monthly for approximately 2 hours between 12 noon and 2pm despite the good work achieved, discussions with the vast majority of partners revealed a general feeling that the Board itself is not where work gets done and although a useful networking opportunity it is generally felt that a new approach was required to partnering to deliver success for Darlington.
19. To this end, a meeting of the public sector funders of the partnership was arranged to discuss and develop a new proposal which is set out in the following part of this report.

Proposal

20. As the legal requirement and status of an LSP has ceased, the public sector partners were clear that Darlington Borough Council has the democratic mandate to set policy for the Borough in consultation with partners and the public. It was therefore suggested that the pretty much redundant SCS is stood down and that the Council fills that void by providing leadership to the Borough via its Council Plan – Delivering Success for Darlington (DSFD). Partner agencies would seek where possible to take a lead from the plan and align their plans where appropriate.
21. A Darlington Public Sector Executive Group (PSEG) to be established including senior officers from key public sector bodies with the purpose of co-ordinating efforts to Deliver Success for Darlington. The key aims would be to :-
 - (a) Gain a common understanding of the issues facing Darlington
 - (b) Collective 'horizon scanning'

- (c) Maximise the benefits of the public sector resources
 - (d) Review and plan initiatives to deliver success
 - (e) To advise their own Governance on issues raised at the partnership and seek approval from them where appropriate
 - (f) To work and support the private and voluntary sector to deliver programmes and projects to deliver success for Darlington.
 - (g) To act as the Programme Board for key initiatives.
22. The group would meet regularly and would include the following or their representatives:-
- (a) Chief Executive, DBC
 - (b) Chief Operating Officer CCG
 - (c) Chief Constable
 - (d) Chief Fire Officer
 - (e) Director of Teesside University
 - (f) Chief Executive of Durham & Darlington Health Trust
 - (g) Principal of Darlington College
 - (h) Chief Executive of the Police Victim and Crime Commissioners office.
23. Other relevant officers may well attend as necessary.
24. The Group initially would support/oversee the following delivery projects/organisations with more to follow :-
- (a) Darlington Cares
 - (b) Bread and Butter Thing
 - (c) Northgate Initiative
 - (d) Community Wealth Building
25. The group will be supported by the Director of the Darlington Partnership who will act as programme/project lead for many of the initiatives together with support from the Council's Policy & Performance Manager in respect of evidence and policy matters. Partners would continue to financially support PSEG as they do the Darlington Partnership and lend their support as needed.
26. As outlined in the aims above the group will work with the private sector engaging through existing, issues focused forums such as the Towns Fund Board and Darlington Cares.
27. The Board would also look to work with the voluntary sector to ensure they are aware of emerging challenges and opportunities.
28. It is also recognised that other partnership arrangements will be developed to ensure the Voluntary and Community Sectors are fully engaged.

Legal and Constitutional Implications

29. The SCS was previously adopted by the Council as part of the documents that comprise the Council's policy framework. The legal requirement for Council's to adopt a SCS was repealed by the Deregulation Act 2015 [S.100(2)(c)] and whether council's continue to have an SCS is a matter of local discretion. Agreement to remove a policy framework strategy will require this to be considered by Cabinet and then Council, who will need to approve any change of approach.
30. Should the SCS cease to be used, reference to it as a document forming part of the policy framework will need to be removed from the constitution and consequential amendments made as necessary to reflect this change.

COUNCIL
15 JULY 2021

OVERVIEW OF ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Covid-19 Response

2. We received a verbal update on the ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically in relation to care home settings and care providers. Members were pleased to hear that, from a commissioning perspective, we were now moving into a period of recovery, and it was reassuring to discover that there had been no further outbreaks.
3. We were keen to know more about the recently reported compulsory vaccination for those working in care settings, and understand that further guidance will be forthcoming; however it was encouraging to learn that 94 per cent of care home staff in Darlington had received both Covid vaccinations, which exceeded the national threshold of 90 per cent. Members were keen to learn how we had achieved such a high take up rate, and were informed that we maintained a strong working relationship with care homes, who in turn had adopted a proactive approach, and due to this, vaccine hesitancy had not been experienced in Darlington's care sector.
4. Members enquired about the measures in place to combat new variants of Covid, and were assured that the tried and tested approach (increased communication and working with Care Homes, minimising direct Officer activity, etc.) would work, and that there had been no indication of an increase due to the Delta variant. Members were keen to understand the number of care home residents who had received their vaccinations, and were informed that 100 per cent of residents had received their initial vaccination, and that 91 per cent had received their second vaccination.
5. We were eager to understand the position as regard the return of day services. It was acknowledged that this was a challenging area, that many residents had found alternative forms of support during the pandemic, and that it would be a slow pathway to recovery.

Performance Indicators End of Year 2020-21

6. The Group Director of People provided the Committee with performance data against key performance indicators for 2020/21. The Committee currently monitor twelve indicators however, not all of these indicators were able to be monitored and reported this year due to the covid pandemic; the non - reported indicators were largely those which were survey based or not directly comparable.
7. A discussion ensued around the value of some of the indicators and it was agreed that they may need to be revised and this would be discussed at the October meeting following a future presentation by officers on how they perceived any

proposed new government directives would impact the local scrutiny of Adult services.

Work Programme

8. Members gave consideration to the Work Programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/22 and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.
9. Suggestions were offered by Members, including the revision of performance indicators, a review of dementia services, the Disabled Facilities Grant, the funding received via the Tees Valley for Adults Services, a cross scrutiny review of the impact of Covid on the mental health of Adults in terms of isolation, neglect and substance abuse and it was agreed the Work Programme would be updated accordingly.

**Councillor Lorraine Tostevin
Chair of Adults Scrutiny Committee**

**COUNCIL
15 JULY 2021**

OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Performance Indicators 2020/21 – Year End

2. Children's Services year end performance April to March 2021 was presented to the June meeting which highlighted the following areas of good practice:
 - (a) a high number of Initial Child Protection Conferences (94.4 per cent) were held within 15 working days of the Strategy meeting/section 47 being initiated, which remains higher than statistical neighbour, regional and national average benchmarks;
 - (b) we continue to demonstrate positive performance in relation to children ceasing to be subject to a child protection plan who have been on a plan for 2 or more years;
 - (c) timely visits to children who are subject of child protection plan (89.0 per cent) or children who are in the care (93.1 per cent) of the local authority, remain above or just slightly under target of 90 per cent;
 - (d) children are remaining in placements for longer and there is a reduction in the number of placements that children have had over the last two-year period
 - (e) children in Care who are placed 20 or more miles away from Darlington has reduced to (9.4 per cent) which is below the target of 10 per cent;
 - (f) children, newly into care, (90.9 per cent) receive an initial health assessment within 20 working days and have a review health assessment (91.2 per cent) within the year; and
 - (g) (24.6 per cent) of Care Leavers were not in employment, education or training (NEET) which was positively below target of 30 per cent and 98.1 per cent were in suitable accommodation.
3. Areas highlighted for focus were in respect of:
 - (a) improve the rate of referrals into children's social care being screened and completed within 1 day which was below the target of 90 per cent and work toward decreasing the number of re-referrals, which was above the target of 18 per cent;
 - (b) timeliness of assessments are just below the target of 90 per cent;

- (c) work continues to safely reduce the number of children becoming looked after;
and
 - (d) improve the rate of children receiving a dental check assessment given the closures through 2020.
4. We discussed in particular the re-evaluation of certain targets for 2022/23 and the timescales for these indicators being reset; the current position with Early Help and the effect of the lockdown on families; the general effect the pandemic had on services including the increase in families choosing elective home education (EHE).
 5. The information from the Performance Indicators allows our officers to focus on areas deviating from targets and our directors to ensure resources are allocated as necessary and that Scrutiny reviews this management system and requests clarification on matters of concern.

Work Programme

6. Members gave consideration to the Work Programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/22, and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.
7. Suggestions were offered by committee members of subjects to be considered for scrutiny. Routes to access information and engagement required are being investigated. Quads of aims will be developed where necessary and the Work programme updated once timing can be established.

Councillor Paul Crudass
Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

**COUNCIL
15 JULY 2021**

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Partnership Working in Darlington

2. Following the receipt of a call-in from Cabinet on 1 June 2021 in relation to its decision in respect of Partnership Working in Darlington, we held a special meeting on 25 June 2021.
3. Members that had signed the call in documentation outlined their reasons for calling in the decision and questions and clarification were sought in relation to partnership working and how this will function with sectors other than the public sector, how and whether partnership working will function cross sector, to understand what analysis has been completed on the Sustainable Community Strategy outcomes and where DBC outcomes do not overlap, and to explore how gaps will be taken forward within DBC policy.
4. The Cabinet Member, Director, Darlington Partnership and Chief Executive responded to all of the points raised by Members.
5. After carefully considering all of the points raised, the majority view of our Committee was that it was satisfied with the decision Cabinet took on 1 June 2021.

Work Programme 2021/22

6. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/22 and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.
7. We have agreed that All Members briefings be arranged for Water Safety, CCTV and Community Safety and it was suggested that Members receive an update on waste management and six month reviews be provided on the Public Sector Executive Group and Stronger Communities Fund. Reference was made to Eviction Notices with a suggestion for Scrutiny to review this. The Work Programme will be updated accordingly.

**Councillor Steven Tait
Chair of Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee**

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COUNCIL
15 JULY 2021

OVERVIEW OF ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

'Call-In' - Corporate Rebranding

2. A report was submitted to a Special Meeting of the Committee on 22 June 2021, following the receipt of a 'call-in' in relation to Cabinet's decision in respect of the Corporate Rebranding on 1 June (Minute C10(2)/Jun/21). Members submitting the 'call-in' sought clarification of the full costs of the rebranding, both in terms of preparatory work and implementation of Stage 1 and 2 of the rebrand, confirmation of the likely duration and costs in terms of Stage 3 and to receive more details of the intended colour palette.
3. A robust discussion with the Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities took place in relation to the projected costs, the rationale and evidence-base for change, the work impact, the return on investment and the financial consequences, particularly in relation to larger costs, such as the rebranding of prominent assets.
4. Having heard and considered all the information presented to the meeting, as a Scrutiny Committee, we were satisfied with the decision of Cabinet, and no further action in relation to the 'call-in' was requested.

COVID 19 – Business Grants

5. Scrutiny received a further update on the Governments various funding schemes to support local businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic. The total value of Covid - 19 financial support grants awarded to Darlington Businesses on behalf of the Government since the start of the pandemic in March 2020 is £44,101,740.
6. The Council has administered a number of support schemes on behalf of the Government throughout the pandemic and we gave our thanks to the Officers involved for the work undertaken.
7. As part of the delivery of the funding, there have been several fraudulent attempts to claim grants and it is pleasing to note that the majority of these were identified as part of the process. There have been three cases in Darlington where funding has been granted due to fraudulent claims and these have been reported to the Government's National Anti- Fraud Networks for investigation.
8. The vast majority of the business support grants from Government have now stopped. The discretionary Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) is still available but the majority of this grant has been allocated. A further allocation of ARG will be available from Government in the forthcoming weeks but we Officers are unable to confirm the amount at this stage.

9. We discussed the potential implications of the pandemic on the local economy and local businesses and the need to closely monitor this so that interventions could be looked at where possible. We will be particularly interested to see information highlighting how the sectors have changed and adapted during and post pandemic and the reasons why some businesses, which were declined funding as they did not meet the agreed criteria of the various schemes.

Revenue Outturn 2020/21

10. We received the 2020/21 revenue outturn report, together with the Collection Fund and the Housing Revenue Account outturn.
11. We heard it had been a challenging year with the financial landscape changing on a week by week basis and the team had done a great job keeping on top of the plethora of government grants distributed and the continuous cycle of paying, reporting, auditing and claiming against the grants. Overall the government grants received have covered the Covid-19 pressure for 2020/21.
12. The Council's revenue reserves at the end of 2020/21 are £24.623 million, of which there is a risk reserve balance of £5.350 million and a commitment to use £13.218 million to support the current plan four year plan, this leaves a general fund reserve balance of £6.055 million. The balance assumes no further pressures are identified and there is no impact of Covid 19 in future years, however, we were advised that this was unlikely and would need to be closely monitored throughout the coming year.

Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring Outturn 2020/21

13. We received information on the delivery of the Council's Capital Programme, the financial outturn position as at 31 March 2021 and the proposed financing of the 2020/21 capital expenditure, together with an update on the current status of all construction projects which were currently being undertaken by the Council.
14. The Council currently has 38 live projects being managed with an overall projected outturn value of £126.196 million.
15. We were advised that the only project which was outside the tolerance set was Ingenium Park which was due to a time delay and the need to undertake drainage works at a certain point of the year for ecological reasons and that work continues to review the project position and the work needed to complete the current phase.
16. It is pleasing to note that the new electronic capital project reporting system is currently being rolled out and we will be having a presentation to demonstrate how it works and the benefits it will give in terms of improved reporting. It will take time to migrate project management across the new system.

Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/22 – Quarter 1

17. We received the quarter 1 revenue budget outturn report prior to its consideration by Cabinet. This is the first revenue budget management report for 2021/22.
18. The Council's projected revenue reserves at the end of 2021-22 are £28.562 million, £3.636 million higher than the initial 2021-25 MTFP position and includes a

brought forward amount of £2.317 million from 2020-21, £0.022 million of projected departmental underspend, the rebasing exercise of £0.993 million and the use of £0.304 million of Covid 19 reserves.

19. Of the £28.562 million projected reserves, there is a risk reserve balance of £5.350 million and a commitment to use £15.838 million to support years two to four of the current MTFP, leaving a surplus of £7.374 of unallocated reserves.
20. There remains a significant amount of uncertainty regarding the recovery from Covid 19 which does have the potential to impact on the budget position during the remainder of this financial year and this is something we will continue to monitor.
21. The Government has supported local authorities with funding to assist with the impacts of Covid 19, there is £2.958 million of grant and £0.616 million of income from the Sales Fees and Charges scheme, built into the 2021/22 budget. If any further grants are received, it will offset any additional expenditure not currently identified in the budget or will be transferred into the earmarked Covid 19 reserve to fund any on-going pressures in future years.
22. We discussed the processes surrounding budget management within the authority and we were assured that regular and robust budget monitoring does take place with budget holders and there is regular reporting through the democratic process.

Work Programme

23. We have considered and agreed our work programme for the next Municipal Year taking into account the views of Officers and the Committee itself.
24. The work programme is a rolling programme and will be updated during the year as and when issues arise which we may wish to add to our agreed programme.

Councillor Mike Renton
Chair Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

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COUNCIL
15 JULY 2021

OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

COVID-19 Recovery

2. Members received a PowerPoint presentation from the Public Health Principal updating us on the COVID-19 situation in Darlington (please see [link](#) to presentation).
3. We were provided with updated information for the four tests that must be met for England to progress through the stages of the Governments road map out of lockdown. We noted that whilst daily cases were rising due to the Delta variant, the hospital admissions were not rising exponentially, as seen during wave 1 and this is a clear indication that vaccines are effective in reducing hospitalisations.

Covid-19 Vaccination Programme – Update and Synopsis

4. We received a presentation from the Director of Commissioning, Strategy and Delivery (Primary and Community Care, NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group), updating Members on the Covid-19 vaccination programme, with details provided of the key milestones of the vaccination programme.
5. Of particular note was the excellent partnership working which included the establishment of twice weekly stakeholder meetings, the support from the Local Authority and volunteers in the delivery of the vaccination programme and the work undertaken to provide vaccinations to residents in the community.
6. Particular discussion ensued on the work being undertaken to encourage vaccination uptake, with Members being reminded that vaccination was not mandatory. We were advised that by encouraging the majority to receive the vaccine, that herd immunity could be achieved to protect those that aren't able to or choose not to have the vaccine.
7. We have requested figures for vaccination uptake in each ward in Darlington.

NHS Tees Valley CCG Financial Challenges and Impacts on Services

8. We also received a presentation from the Chief Finance Officer, NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group on the CCG Financial challenges and impacts on services.
9. Members were advised of the Tees Valley CCG allocations for the six months to 30 September 2021 and the proposed budgets for the same period.

10. Members noted that the CCG plan showed a £4.297m deficit for the 6 months to end of September and that expected QIPP efficiencies were included within the plan for the first half of the year of £2.306m (0.37 per cent of CCG allocations).
11. We were advised of the overall Tees Valley Integrated Care Partnership position and delivery of a £0.4m surplus required to support the wider Integrated Care System.

STRIDE and Access Team

12. Scrutiny received a report updating Members on the mobilisation of the new STRIDE (Support, Treatment, Recovery in Darlington through Empowerment) and Access (Assertive Community Connection and Engagement Support Service) Teams.
13. STRIDE, the new substance misuse service provided by We Are With You, became operational on 17 August 2020. This service provides a range of flexible treatment options, creates aspiration for recovery and reinforces opportunities to identify with and be part of a recovery community at the end of the structured treatment.
14. The ACCESS team, which has been established since mid-July, delivers an intensive programme to improve the experience and outcomes for offenders in Darlington and has been grant funded for a period of 12 months from additional PHE monies.
15. Members questioned the appropriateness of the location of the service in the town centre and acknowledged that by operating from the town centre, the service was visible and accessible to residents requiring help and support and would enable residents to get well in their own community. We noted that the service would operate from various settings within the community and would not be confined to the two sites in the town centre.
16. Members have requested a site visit and look forward to receiving further updates on both the STRIDE and Access Team at a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.

Work Programme 2021/22

17. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/22 and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.
18. We have agreed that an update on West Park Hospital be brought to the next meeting of this Scrutiny Committee and it was also suggested that an item be included on the impact of COVID on mental health. The Work Programme will be updated accordingly.

Quality Accounts 2020/21

19. Scrutiny considered the draft Quality Accounts 2020/21 of County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust and Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust and have provided commentary for inclusion in the final Quality Accounts.

Councillor Ian Bell
Chair of the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee

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