



**DARLINGTON**

Borough Council

# Cabinet Agenda

5.00 pm

Tuesday, 6 September 2022

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington,

DL1 5QT

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

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting.
2. Declarations of Interest.
3. To hear relevant representation (from Members and the General Public) on items on this Cabinet agenda.
4. To approve the Minutes of the meeting of this Cabinet held on Tuesday, 5 July 2022.  
(Pages 5 - 16)
5. Matters Referred to Cabinet –  
There are no matters referred back for reconsideration to this meeting
6. Issues Arising from Scrutiny Committee –  
There are no issues referred back from the Scrutiny Committees to this Meeting, other than where they have been specifically consulted on an issue and their comments are included in the contents of the relevant report on this agenda.
7. Key Decisions:-
  - (a) School Term Dates 2024/25 – Report of the Group Director of People.  
(Pages 17 - 26)
  - (b) Bus Services – Report of the Group Director of Services.  
(Pages 27 - 36)

- (c) Consultation on Skerningham Garden Village Design Code Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD) – Report of the Chief Executive.  
(Pages 37 - 188)
- 8. Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Reports 2021/22 –  
Report of the Chief Executive, Group Director of Operations, Group Director of People and Group Director of Services.  
(Pages 189 - 316)
- 9. Complaints Made to Local Government Ombudsman –  
Report of the Chief Executive, Group Director of Operations, Group Director of People and Group Director of Services.  
(Pages 317 - 328)
- 10. Housing Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy –  
Report of the Group Director of Operations.  
(Pages 329 - 352)
- 11. Museum Accreditation Policies – Report of the Group Director of Services.  
(Pages 353 - 458)
- 12. Restoration of Locomotion No 1 Replica - Release of Capital –  
Report of the Group Director of Services.  
(Pages 459 - 462)
- 13. The Treatment of War Pensions in the Calculation of Housing Benefit –  
Report of the Group Director of Operations.  
(Pages 463 - 468)
- 14. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) –  
Report of the Group Director of Operations.  
(Pages 469 - 490)
- 15. Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring 2022/23 - Quarter 1 –  
Report of the Group Director of Operations and the Group Director of Services.  
(Pages 491 - 506)
- 16. Investment Fund Update – Report of the Group Director of Operations.  
(Pages 507 - 512)
- 17. Schedule of Transactions – Report of the Chief Executive.  
(Pages 513 - 516)
- 18. Membership Changes - To consider any Membership Changes to Other Bodies to which Cabinet appoints.
- 19. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting.

20. Questions.

### **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

21. To consider the exclusion of the Public and Press :- –

**RESOLVED** - That, pursuant to Sections 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the ensuing items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in exclusion paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

### **PART III            NOT FOR PUBLICATION**



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

**Friday 26 August 2022**

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

#### **Membership**

Councillors Clarke, Dulston, Durham, Keir, Marshall, K Nicholson, Renton and Tostevin

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

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**DECISIONS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE  
MONDAY 18 JULY 2022**

**CABINET**  
Tuesday, 5 July 2022

**PRESENT** – Councillors Dulston (Chair), Clarke, Durham, Keir, Marshall, K Nicholson, Renton and Tostevin

**INVITEES** – Councillors Curry, Snedker and Wright

**APOLOGIES** – Councillor Harker

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillors Boddy, Mrs Culley and Mrs H Scott

**C149 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

**C150 TO HEAR RELEVANT REPRESENTATION (FROM MEMBERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC) ON  
ITEMS ON THIS CABINET AGENDA.**

In respect of respect of Minute C168 below, representations were made by Members and members of the public in attendance at the meeting.

**C151 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS CABINET HELD ON TUESDAY, 22 JUNE  
2022.**

Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Cabinet held on Wednesday 22 June 2022.

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

**REASON** – They represent an accurate record of the meeting.

**C152 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET**

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

**C153 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no issues arising from Scrutiny considered at this meeting.

**C154 KEY DECISION - ADOPTION OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPD) DESIGN CODE  
- BURTREE GARDEN VILLAGE**

The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio introduced the report of the Chief

Executive (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the finalised Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD) Design Code - Greater Faverdale (Burtree Garden Village) (also previously circulated).

The submitted report stated that the draft Greater Faverdale (Burtree Garden Village) Design Code SPD, produced for the Council by DesignNE, had been approved by Cabinet for wider consultation (Minute C113(1)/Mar/22 refers); the consultation period ran from 6 April to 6 May 22 and returned ten separate responses; and based on those returns, and validity of the comments, the SPD was amended and DesignNE were requested to prepare a final version of the SPD. It was reported that the SPD Greater Faverdale (Burtree Garden Village) Design Code was consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 and the National Model Design Code produced by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) July 2021.

Concern was expressed at the meeting in respect of some of the changes proposed to the draft design code. The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio responded thereon.

**RESOLVED** - (a) That the comments and changes to the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD) Greater Faverdale (Burtree Garden Village) Design Code, based on the consultation period, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That it be recommended to Council that the revised Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD) for Greater Faverdale (Burtree Garden Village) Design Code, as detailed at Appendix 2 to the submitted report, be adopted as Council policy.

**REASON** - The Council has followed the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Inspectors final report to convert the Greater Faverdale (Burtree Garden Village) Design Code into an SPD and council policy within 6 months after adopting of the Darlington Local Plan 2016-36.

## **C155 AGREED SYLLABUS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The Cabinet Member with the Children and Young People Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of People (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Darlington (also previously circulated).

The submitted report stated that the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) reviewed the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (RE) every five years; the revision of the Agreed Syllabus provided a framework for Darlington schools to take RE forward for the next five years; and that the Local Authority was required to produce a Locally Agreed Syllabus for use in its maintained schools and that academies could also choose to adopt the syllabus if they so wished.

**RESOLVED** - That the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, as appended to the submitted report, be approved.

**REASON** - To enable schools to implement the new syllabus within the statutory framework.

## **C156 DOLPHIN CENTRE MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL REPLACEMENT – RELEASE OF CAPITAL**

The Cabinet Member with the Health and Housing Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Services (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the release of capital funding to undertake the final phase of mechanical and electrical maintenance works to update the Dolphin Centre and to undertake general condition repairs to the pool.

The submitted report stated that the Dolphin Centre was the Council's only indoor leisure facility providing a range a health and wellbeing activities, as well as being a key leisure and social venue, in the town centre; its town centre location contributed significantly to the town centre footfall; there were strong links to the Council Plan and all the Council's portfolios, particularly Health and Economy; a phased approach had been taken to replacing the old mechanical and electrical installations and equipment within the Dolphin Centre; and that it was proposed to deliver the third and final phase of the replacement programme over the next 18 months, which would cover the remaining areas within the Dolphin Centre.

Reference was made at the meeting to the timing of the works. The Cabinet Member with the Health and Housing Portfolio responded thereon.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That capital of £2.2M, to carry out phase three of the replacement programme of the mechanical and electrical installations and equipment in the Dolphin Centre, as detailed in the submitted report, be released.

(b) That capital of £325,000, to undertake localised repairs to the pool tank, as detailed in the submitted report, be released.

**REASONS** – (a) To replace ageing and obsolete mechanical and electrical equipment to ensure the operational requirements of the centre.

(b) To undertake general asset condition repairs identified through inspections and surveys.

## **C157    OBJECTIONS TO TRAFFIC REGULATIONS ON DUKE STREET**

The Cabinet Member with the Local Services Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Services (previously circulated) advising Members of the outcome of a Public Inquiry into objections received as a result of proposed changes to traffic restriction orders in Duke Street, and requesting that consideration be given to proceed with the proposal.

The submitted report stated that the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) had developed the Tees Valley Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP) which had identified priority corridors for investment in measures to encourage increased levels of cycling and walking; for Darlington the first priority was the West Park and Faverdale to Darlington Town Centre route; the first phase provided the route nearest to the town centre connecting the Woodland Road/Hollyhurst Road junction to the town centre via Woodland Road, Outram Street and Duke Street; the Woodland Road section was currently under construction; and that objections had been received to the Duke Street section.

It was reported that officers went through an extensive process of consultation and scheme revision to reach the design of the scheme; consultation was initiated by TVCA in December

2020, supplemented by additional local consultation with more than 800 properties and businesses; a total of 150 responses were received to the online questionnaire; overall the results were very positive; the original design was amended to address some of the issues raised in the consultation; and that the revised plans were subject to further consultation in April 2021. The legal orders required to amend the waiting, parking and moving restrictions parts of the scheme were consulted on in May 2021.

The amended Traffic Regulation Order was statutorily advertised; three formal objections were received which necessitated a Public Inquiry; the Public Inquiry took place on 30 March 2022 and was adjudicated by the Planning Inspectorate who considered the three formal objections to the order together with three further written objections that were triggered following the notification of the enquiry being published and one verbal objection at the inquiry; and that the recommendation of the Inspector, was that that the order could be made with some minor additions and amendments and that by inference the objections should be set aside.

Particular reference was made at the meeting to the current markings and signage on Duke Street, particularly around the Larchfield Street junction, which had caused some issues to motorists. The Cabinet Member with the Local Services Portfolio responded thereon.

**RESOLVED** – That the outcome of the Public Inquiry, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted, and the objections to the legal order be set aside and officers be authorised to proceed with the proposed changes to restrictions.

**REASONS** – (a) The scheme complied with Council policy as set out in the current Local Transport Plan.

(b) The Council is committed to providing a safer walking and cycling network to encourage the use of sustainable travel modes.

## **C158 WEST CEMETERY DRAINAGE**

The Cabinet Member with the Local Services Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Services (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the release of funding for additional drainage works within West Cemetery.

The submitted report stated that as part of the Crematorium and Cemetery works, concerns were raised regarding the drainage of the site, through the planning process and that, although a significant drainage system had been installed as part of those works, there still remained concerns about one specific location. It was reported that as part of the new build chapel, underground storage tanks had been installed to manage the flow of surface water from the new development; land drains had also been installed along the boundary of properties on Salutation Road, which would have a positive impact to reduce potential flooding; and that the final area that required investigation, design and implementation of a solution to further minimise any potential flooding, was the pond/habitat area which backed onto properties on Salutation Road.

**RESOLVED** - That capital of £250,000, as detailed in the submitted report, to carry out additional design and drainage works within West Cemetery, be released.

**REASON** - To minimise the risk of flooding from the site to residential properties.

## **C159 CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS**

The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio introduced the report of the Chief Executive (previously circulated) updating Cabinet on the progress made towards the Council's net zero target.

The submitted report stated that following the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration in July 2019, a Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer had been appointed; a Climate Change Strategy and action plan had been produced and adopted; and that a trajectory of 30 per cent reduction in the Council's emission every five years had been agreed at Cabinet (Minute C51(2)/Oct/21 refers).

It was reported that the Council's emissions for 2021/22 were 6,592 tonnes/CO<sub>2</sub>; the emissions reported were made up of the energy use in council buildings, business mileage, fleet emissions and streetlighting and signs; emissions from the Council's supply chain or from waste were not measured; the district heating network feasibility study had, owing to a number of factors, had advised that the risk to the Council from taking either of the two potential options forward was too great to proceed at this time; and that the Council had been asked to take part in a heat network zoning pilot to help test the government's approach to designating heat network zones

Particular reference was made at the meeting to the number of Council officers who had not completed the mandatory climate change training and requested that the option of measuring emissions from the supply chain and waste be kept under review. The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio responded thereon.

**RESOLVED** - That the report be noted.

**REASONS** - (a) As a public organisation the Council has a duty to meet its obligation in reducing its carbon footprint and achieve its net zero target.

(b) With increasing public pressure to act on climate change, the Council is at risk of significant reputation damage if it fails to deliver on its stated commitment to dealing with the Council's contribution to climate change.

## **C160 IMPROVEMENTS TO CONISCLIFFE ROAD**

The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio introduced the report of the Chief Executive (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the allocation of £700,000 from the Tees Valley Indigenous Growth Fund (IGF) for improvements to Coniscliffe Road which will act as a catalyst for economic growth and town centre recovery, creating a vibrant social space, to encourage and retain footfall in the town centre.

The submitted report stated that the proposed strategic interventions would contribute to the development of a café culture, moving away from the declining, traditional retail space; enhance the feeling of safety, wellbeing, and ownership of the space; and that the

improvements would encourage more people to visit and spend their leisure time and money in the area's cafes and shops, which would benefit the local economy. Particular reference was made to the proposal to utilise some of the funding from the Tees Valley Indigenous Growth Fund to invest in the upgrade of Coniscliffe Road, to create a focal point for outdoor dining and hospitality, together with a social space for local people and visitors to the town.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the upgrade and improvement works to Coniscliffe Road, as set out in the submitted report, be supported, to meet a range of aspirations namely; accommodating a pavement café culture, strengthening green infrastructure, promoting active travel – cycling and walking, supporting local businesses and creating a safe, attractive, and working streetscape for the future.

(b) That £700,000 from the Tees Valley Indigenous Growth Fund, be allocated, for upgrading and improvement works in Coniscliffe Road and that it be noted that a further £240,000 would be match funded through Darlington's Town Board Fund.

(c) That the works required, be designated as a non-strategic procurement.

**REASONS** – (a) To contribute to the further economic wellbeing and vitality of the town.

(b) To comply with the Council's Procurement Rules.

#### **C161 INGENIUM PARC – PROPOSAL TO MARKET AND DISPOSE OF LAND FOR DEVELOPMENT**

The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio introduced the report of the Chief Executive (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the marketing of land at Ingenium Parc, as shown cross hatched on the plan (also previously circulated) and to the preferred developers of the land.

The submitted report stated that the land was in the ownership of the Council and was allocated for employment uses; an access road funded through the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) to open up the site had been constructed but developers were now required to bring forward plot(s) for potential occupiers; and that this could be by way of direct sale or Expressions of Interest through the NEPO portal with a view to selecting a Preferred Developer.

It was reported that further infrastructure in the form of additional roads, sewers and utility services might be required to open later phases for development and that if this was the case, and for the Council to remain procurement compliant, it was considered advisable for the Council to market plots on an 'Open Tender' basis in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the disposal of plots on a direct sale and to marketing the land to seek Expressions of Interest if required, as detailed in the submitted report, be agreed.

(b) That Delegated Authority be given to the Chief Executive to negotiate provisional disposal terms, with the final terms being reported to a future meeting of Cabinet.

(c) That the Assistant Director Law and Governance be authorised to enter into any necessary agreements to facilitate the above-mentioned developments.

**REASONS** – (a) To promote new development and Economic Growth.

(b) To facilitate future expansion of Ingenium Parc and ensure the availability of development land for employment related uses.

#### **C162 COLLECTION OF COUNCIL TAX, BUSINESS RATES AND RENT 2021/22**

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) providing Members with an update on the collection of Council Tax, Business Rates and Council rents during 2021/22 and requesting that consideration be given to the writing-off of debts over £500 that are considered to be irrecoverable.

The submitted report stated that the collection of Council Tax, Business Rates and Council rents during 2021/22 had continued to be a significant challenge due to the Covid-19 pandemic; normal recovery and enforcement activities had been restricted with Courts only taking on a limited numbers of cases and the recovery of some debts delayed; despite the challenges, a total of £118.4M had been collected in 2021/22; and that approval was being sought to write-off a total of £859,531 of debts in respect of individual cases exceeding £500 for the financial year 2021/22, where it had become apparent that no further steps could be taken to recover the sums due.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the contents of the report be noted.

(b) That the write-off of £859,531 for debts over £500, subject to further steps for recovery being taken, wherever possible, if and when contact with the debtor is made, be approved.

**REASONS** – (a) The collection of Council Tax, Business Rates and Council rents underpins the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

(b) The write-off of irrecoverable debts enables the Council's accounts to be maintained in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules.

#### **C163 QUARTER 4 - COUNCIL PLAN 2020/23 - DELIVERING SUCCESS FOR DARLINGTON - PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Leader introduced the report of the Chief Officers Executive (previously circulated) presenting an overview of progress made towards achieving the key outcomes of the Council Plan 2020/23 'Delivering Success for Darlington' together with the Performance Management Report April to September 2021 (also previously circulated).

The submitted report outlined the vision of the Council Plan 'Delivering Success for Darlington' which was structured around the key priorities of growing Darlington's economy; maximising the potential of young people; working with communities to maximise their potential; supporting the most vulnerable in the Borough; and a dedicated workforce who were proud to serve the Borough and an accessible, effective and engaged Council.

The performance management report outlined the Council performance up to the end of 2021/22 and provided a high-level update on overall progress, across all portfolios, towards the overarching vision and priorities together with an update on each Cabinet portfolio area, highlighting progress made against key actions and relevant key performance indicators

Particular reference was made at the meeting to the excellent work of the Lifeline Team.

**RESOLVED** – That the progress made against the Council Plan 2020/23 ‘Delivering Success for Darlington’, as set out in the performance management report appended to the submitted report, be noted.

**REASON** - To update Cabinet on the progress in implementing the Council Plan priorities.

#### **C164 XENTRALL SHARED SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT**

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to reviewing the progress and performance of Xentrall Shared Services, the Stockton and Darlington Partnership.

The submitted report stated that Xentrall Shared Services, the Stockton and Darlington Partnership, was established in May 2008 and was now in its fifteenth year; the agreement covered ICT, Transactional HR, Transactional Finance and Design and Print; the initial savings that were identified were £7.4M over the original ten year period of the partnership; those savings had been achieved plus additional efficiencies and benefits and significant additional savings; and that quality and performance of services had improved.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted and the continuing success of Xentrall Shared Services, since it was formed, be acknowledged.

**REASONS** – To allow Members to receive information about the progress of the partnership.

#### **C165 REVENUE OUTTURN 2021/22**

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) presenting the 2020/21 revenue outturn (subject to Audit) and requesting that consideration be given to the results in light of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the Housing Revenue Account outturn.

The submitted report stated that although the impact of COVID-19 had had a significant bearing on the Council’s services and the financial position for 2021/22, the year-end projection showed an overall improvement of £5.235M; outlined the variances from the original budget together with changes since the quarter three position; and stated that there were a number of additional carry-forward requests totalling £1.638M, which would assist with projected slippage and pressures in the coming year.

**RESOLVED** - (a) That the revenue outturn for 2021/22, as detailed in the submitted report,

be noted.

(b) That the carry forward of resources, as referred to in paragraphs 24 to 27 of the submitted report, be noted and approved.

**REASONS** - (a) To continue effective management of resources.

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

#### **C166 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2022/23 - QUARTER ONE**

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) providing an early forecast of the 2022/23 revenue budget outturn as part of the Council's continuous financial management process.

The submitted report stated that it was the first revenue budget management report to Cabinet for 2022/23 and that the latest projections showed an overall improvement of £0.206M on the 2022/26 Medium Term Financial Plan, which was due to £0.216M of additional balances following the 2021/22 outturn; £0.513M of projected departmental overspends in 2022/23; and an increase of £0.503M in corporate reserves.

**RESOLVED** - (a) That the forecast revenue outturn for 2022/23, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

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

**REASONS** - (a) To continue effective management of resources.

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

#### **C167 PROJECT POSITION STATEMENT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - OUTTURN 2021/22**

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations and the Group Director of Services (previously circulated) providing information to Members on the delivery of the Council's Capital Programme; the financial outturn position as at 31st March 2022; proposed financing of the 2021/22 capital expenditure; the current status of all construction projects currently being undertaken by the Council; and requesting that consideration be given to a number of changes to that programme.

The submitted report stated that significant enhancements had been made to the Council's assets in three major programme areas of schools, housing and transport, mostly using external funding; those investment were delivering a wide range of improvements to the Council's assets and services; capital expenditure in 2021/22 totalled £43.388M; there were 48 live projects currently being managed by the Council with an overall value of £188.383M; the majority of those projects were running to time, cost and quality expectations with no foreseeable issues; and that the projects were managed either by the Council's in-house

management team, a Framework Partner or by Consultants sourced via an open/OJEU tender process.

**RESOLVED** - (a) That the delivery and financial outturn of the 2021/22 Capital Programme, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

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

(c) That the adjustments to resources, as detailed in paragraph 26 of the submitted report, be approved.

**REASONS** - (a) To enable Members to note the progress of the 2021/22 Capital Programme and to allow the capital spend to be fully financed.

(b) To inform Cabinet of the current status of construction projects.

(c) To maintain effective management of resources.

#### **C168 LAND AT BLACKWELL - PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND PARKLAND RESTORATION**

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Chief Executive (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the disposal of 5.2 Hectares (13 acres) of land on the former Blackwell golf course, shown hatched on the plan at Appendix 1 (also previously circulated) and allocated as housing development land in the Local Plan; the funding of feasibility work to develop plans for a parkland restoration scheme, shown shaded grey on the plan at Appendix 1 (also previously circulated); and to engaging the services of Esh Homes Limited to develop appropriate plans and designs for a residential planning application for site 403.

The submitted report stated that the Council was planning to restore the historic parkland surrounding the Blackwell Grange Hotel; Council owned land of circa 5.2 hectares (13 acres) had been earmarked for residential development in the recently adopted Local Plan; a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), that had been commissioned to provide an overview and description of the heritage interest within and around the proposed allocated site 403, had supported its development; and that the sale of the land would fund the wider restoration of the parkland. It was also reported that Esh Homes Limited, the Council's joint venture partner, would develop the Council owned land and proposals would be brought to Cabinet in due course; to facilitate this development surveys and feasibility work would be undertaken; and the feasibility works and parkland restoration proposals would be jointly procured by Esh Homes Limited and the Council, in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Reference was made to the advice of the HIA to retain the greenkeeper's building at the southern end of site 403, however, as there was no opportunity for re-use of the building, its limited architectural value and its condition, it was proposed to demolish it in order to provide an acceptable access into the development.

Representations were made by Members and members of the public at the meeting in

respect of the restoration of the parkland. Particular reference was made to the importance of the restoration of the parkland and requested assurances that the Local Plan would be referred to in its restoration due to the fact that it was the last Georgian pleasure park in the Borough, and that consideration be given to the establishment of a cross party Steering Group to guide the restoration, with input from the Community. Reference was also made to the demolition of the greenkeepers building, which was contrary to the HIA, and to where the access point was originally proposed for the site in the Local Plan; the integrity of the Local Plan; and the impact to the Council should it deviate from the Local Plan. The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio responded thereon.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the land shown hatched on the plan at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, marked as 403, be declared surplus to the Council’s requirements and the sale of the land to the Council’s joint venture partner, with terms being reported back to Cabinet for consideration, be authorised.

(b) That the costs identified in Part III of the report, be approved, and the release of funding necessary to appoint Esh Homes Limited and for the Council to undertake the feasibility and landscape work required to submit a planning application, together with demolition of the former greenkeepers building, be authorised, subject to obtaining the necessary consents, the costs to be funded from the Council’s Investment Fund and to be paid back on receipt of a capital receipt from the proceeds of the sale.

(c) That the Assistant Director – Law and Governance be authorised to execute the necessary documents to facilitate future development.

**REASONS** – (a) To provide a site capable of contributing to the delivery of new housing to satisfy the Borough’s housing need and to facilitate the restoration of the parkland area.

(b) To achieve a capital receipt for the Council and increased Council Tax receipts from new homes.

## **C169 SCHEDULE OF TRANSACTIONS**

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Chief Executive (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Schedule of Transactions (also previously circulated).

**RESOLVED** – That the Schedule of Transactions, as detailed in the appendix to the submitted report, be approved, and the transactions be completed on the terms and conditions detailed therein.

**REASONS** – The terms negotiated require approval by Cabinet before binding itself contractually to a transaction.

## **C170 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - TO CONSIDER ANY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO OTHER BODIES TO WHICH CABINET APPOINTS.**

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.

**C171 TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS :-**

**DECISIONS DATED –  
FRIDAY 8 JULY 202**

**CABINET**  
**6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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## **SCHOOL TERM DATES 2024/2025**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member -**  
**Councillor Jon Clarke, Children and Young People Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -**  
**James Stroyan, Group Director of People**

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## **SUMMARY REPORT**

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider and set school term date arrangements for Darlington maintained schools for the academic years 2024-2025 and to publish these by the end of September 2022.

### **Summary**

2. Proposals to set term dates for academic years 2024-25 are presented for Cabinet's approval. This will assist schools, parents and the authority in their planning processes.

### **Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that Members consider and agree to the publication of the proposed school term dates for Darlington maintained schools for academic year 2024-25.

### **Reasons**

4. The recommendation is supported as the draft dates are the ones preferred by the majority of schools and Governing Bodies that responded to the consultation which ended on 1 July 2022.

**James Stroyan,**  
**Group Director of People**

### **Background Papers**

No background papers

Paul Richardson: 0794 724 7224

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues arising directly from this report that relate directly to crime and disorder.
Health and Wellbeing	There are no issues arising directly from this report that relate directly to health and wellbeing.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no carbon impact implications in this report
Diversity	The content of this report impacts equally across all groups.
Wards Affected	All wards equally affected.
Groups Affected	Parents, pupils, schools, neighbouring authorities equally affected.
Budget and Policy Framework	There is no change to the Budget and Policy framework
Key Decision	This is a key decision and has been included in the Forward Plan
Urgent Decision	This not an urgent decision
Council Plan	Contributes to: Children with a best start in life
Efficiency	This report enables all affected to make long term plans.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

5. Following the circulation of the consultation papers (**Appendix**) to schools and governors on this subject on 29 April 2021, and consultation with officers from Local Authorities across the North East and Yorkshire regions, a preferred term date model for academic years 2024-25 was drafted and consulted with schools and Governing Bodies. The detailed 2024-25 term dates are at page 5 of the consultation papers. A summary of the term dates is given below:
  - (a) 2 September 2024 – 25 October 2024
  - (b) 4 November 2024 – 20 December 2024
  - (c) 6 January 2025 – 21 February 2025
  - (d) 3 March 2025 – 11 April 2025
  - (e) 28 April 2025 – 23 May 2025
  - (f) 2 June 2025 – 18 July 2025
6. The tenet of the process has been to take into account:
  - (a) The 190 day academic year envelope for pupils, which allows schools to set their own professional development days for teaching staff when pupils will not attend.
  - (b) Equalisation of term lengths as far as possible and the start and end of term weeks to be Mondays and Fridays as far as possible. Starting and ending terms on days other than Mondays and Fridays has historically had an adverse impact on pupil attendance levels.

7. Local Authorities set the term dates for maintained schools and nurseries. There are only six schools, out of the 42 in Darlington, that are still maintained by the Local Authority. Academy and Free School funding agreements state that the setting of the duration of the school year, term and holiday dates are the responsibility of the Academy Trust. In Foundation and Voluntary Aided (VA) maintained schools, Governing Bodies are required to set term and holiday dates in conjunction with the Local Authority.
8. The majority of Academies and VA schools in Darlington have continued to follow the LA published dates despite having the freedom to set their own dates. The 2022 consultation exercise also requested that Academy schools send in their own arranged dates for 2024-25 for inclusion in any future publication of term dates if they chose not to express a preference for the model calendar presented.
9. Consultation has been undertaken with schools (including Academies and Free Schools), Governing Bodies and neighbouring authorities. Other Local Authorities are still consulting, some have proposed the same dates as those contained in Appendix 1 for 2024-25.
10. Nationally, the Department for Education have recommended (and Darlington Head Teachers have agreed) that the term dates for future years will be set by Governing Bodies with Local Authorities suggesting a calendar, coordinating the consultation exercise and publishing the agreed results. Therefore, details of term dates for the 2024-25 academic year will continue to be published on the Darlington Council website and elsewhere from September 2022.

## **Consultation**

11. Officers have consulted with 42 schools in Darlington as well as with their relevant Governing Bodies. 25 responses from Governing Bodies and Headteachers were received as follows:-
  - (a) All schools/governing bodies that responded expressed their preference for the dates in the model calendar;
  - (b) No alternative proposals were received

## 12. Responses were received as follows:

<b>School Name</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
Beaumont Hill Academy	Yes
Polam Hall School	
Borough Road Nursery School**	Yes
George Dent Nursery School**	Yes
Abbey Infants' School	Yes
Abbey Junior School	Yes
Bishopton Redmarshall CofE Primary School	
Corporation Road Community Primary School	Yes
Firthmoor Primary School	
Gurney Pease Academy	Yes
Harrowgate Hill Primary School**	Yes
Heathfield Primary School	Yes
Heighington Church of England Primary School	
High Coniscliffe CofE Primary School	Yes
Holy Family RC Primary School	
Hurworth Primary School	Yes
Marchbank Free School	Yes
Mount Pleasant Primary School	Yes
Mowden Infants' School	Yes
Mowden Junior School	Yes
Northwood Primary School	Yes
Red Hall Primary School**	Yes
Reid Street Primary School	
Skerne Park Academy	
Springfield Academy	Yes
St Augustine's RC Primary School	
St Bede's RC Primary School	
St John's Church of England Academy	Yes
St Mary's Cockerton CofE Primary School	Yes
St Teresa's RC Primary School	
St. George's Church of England Academy	
The Rydal Academy	Yes
West Park Academy	
Whinfield Primary**	Yes
Carmel College	
Haughton Academy	Yes
Hummersknott Academy	Yes
Hurworth School	
Longfield Academy of Sport	
St Aidan's Church of England Academy	Yes
Wyvern Academy	
Rise Carr College**	

\*\* LA Maintained Schools



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council

**PEOPLE GROUP**  
Town Hall, Darlington DL1 5QT

FAO The Chair of Governors and Headteachers

ALL Schools in Darlington

0794 724 7224

paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk

25 April 2022

Our ref: Our ref  
Your ref: Your ref  
Please ask for: Paul Richardson  
Document Name: School Term Dates  
2024-25

Dear Chair and Headteacher,

### **Proposed School Term Dates for 2024-25**

Please find enclosed the proposed school term dates for Darlington schools for the 2024-2025 Academic Year.

The paper contains the detailed proposals of the consultation, plus an option for those schools that currently have the powers (and wish to) set their own alternative dates. Appendix 1 of the paper contains the detailed calendar of dates proposed and Appendix 2 contains the proforma that Headteachers and/or Chairs should complete to record their preference and return to me by close of business by **Friday 1st July 2022.**

Governing bodies of Voluntary Aided, Free Schools and Academies have the power to set their own term dates, but are encouraged to follow, as far as possible those agreed by the maintained schools. This will provide continuity for parents and carers, other schools and Colleges, Local Authority staff and schools in other Local Authorities and the term dates in the consultation are therefore proposed for your consideration.

In the event that your school wishes to adopt different term dates in 2024-2025 from those detailed in the consultation, please append your preferred dates to the proforma in Appendix 2.

If the majority are in agreement with the proposed dates they will be submitted for approval by Cabinet and once approved the Darlington term dates for 2024-2025 will then be published on the Council's website for use by parents, the public and interested parties alike (<http://www.darlington.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-years/school-holiday-dates/>).

I am aware that not all Governing Bodies will hold a meeting prior to the closure of the consultation period and would therefore request that this matter be considered separately by the Chair and Headteacher and a return then made from each School by the deadline date.

In the event of any queries around this consultation, please contact me by return e-mail at [paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk).

I look forward to hearing from you in due course and in any event by **Friday 1st July 2022**.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Richardson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Paul Richardson  
Head of Skills and Employability



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## SCHOOL TERM DATES PLANNING – CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2024-2025

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### 1. REASON FOR THIS ITEM

To bring to Governors and Headteacher's attention the proposed term dates for the 2024-2025 Academic Year and the possible impact this may have on:

- a) the education of children,
- b) staffing in schools including the 195 day envelope for teachers,
- c) the organisation of school support arrangements,
- d) families with children at more than one school and
- e) the wider region.

### 2. ACTION REQUIRED

Governors and Headteachers of Academy, Voluntary Aided and Free Schools are reminded that they are responsible for setting the term dates for their school and must consult with stakeholders when so doing. Local Authorities are required to consult with maintained schools when setting school terms dates.

Governors and Headteachers are therefore asked to:

- a) Consider the proposed model term dates for 2024-2025 at Appendix 1 to this consultation.
- b) Decide whether they would wish to adopt the model of proposed dates for the 2024-25 academic year. Alternatively, Academies, Voluntary Aided and Free Schools are requested to send in their own arranged dates for 2024-2025 for inclusion in any future publication of term dates for schools in Darlington
- c) Return the attached proforma at Appendix 2 detailing your school's preferred term dates for 2024-2025 (either adopting the model or setting your own dates if an Academy, Voluntary Aided or Free School) to [paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk) by **Friday 1st July 2022**.

### 3. KEY QUESTIONS

Governors and Headteachers may wish to discuss the following in relation to their own school:

- a) What is the likely impact of the school opting for term dates outside the proposed models?
- b) How would the Governing Body consult with stakeholders around any proposed changes to term dates?

#### Contact Officer:

Name: Paul Richardson

Position: Head of Skills and Employability

Tel no: 0794 724 7224

E-mail address: [paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk)

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## SCHOOL TERM DATES PLANNING – CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2024-2025

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### 1. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Officers from Darlington have drafted a preferred term date model for the 2024-2025 academic year and are now consulting with stakeholders, including Schools and Governing Bodies, to ascertain their preferences.

The tenet of the process in drawing up the proposed calendars has been to take into account:

- The 190 / 195 school day envelope
- The equalizing of term lengths as far as possible
- The fact that Easter dates vary year-on-year.
- Minimising the number of part-weeks by ensuring, as far as possible, that schools open for full weeks (Monday to Friday).

Academy and Free School funding agreements state that the duration of the school year, term and holiday dates are the responsibility of the Academy Trust. Governing Bodies are required to set term and holiday dates in Foundation and Voluntary Aided (VA) schools, in conjunction with the Local Authority. The majority of Darlington Academies and VA Schools have continued to follow published dates despite having the freedom to set their own dates.

In the event that a Governing Body of an Academy or Free School wishes to set its own term dates for 2024-2025, it would be free to do so but would have to carry out consultation with likely affected parties beforehand, including the Local Authority. Governors should be aware that Local Authority services provided on a term-time basis (such as school crossing patrols, transport for swimming etc.) may not be available if their school is open during a week when the majority of Darlington schools are closed. Governors should also consider the impact on families with children at more than one school (one or more of which may also be outside Darlington) in terms of coordinating family holidays or transport to school if they choose to set different term dates to the majority of Darlington schools.

If schools, governors or other interested parties wish to make enquiries or representation about this matter, please contact Paul Richardson, Head of Skills and Employability at Darlington Borough Council by e-mail at [paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk) in the first instance.

### 2. **NEXT STEPS**

Headteachers and Governing Bodies are requested to consider the contents of this paper and the model academic year calendar attached to decide their preferred option. Complete the enclosed form and return it to [paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk) by **Friday 1st July 2022**. Alternatively, for those schools that already have the power conferred on them to do so and who do not wish to adopt the model, they should draw up their own calendar of term dates and consult with their stakeholders (including Darlington Borough Council) accordingly.

**DRAFT      DARLINGTON LA School Holiday and Term Dates 2024 - 2025**

	AUGUST 2024	SEPTEMBER 2024	OCTOBER 2024	NOVEMBER 2024	DECEMBER 2024	JANUARY 2025
Monday	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20
Tuesday	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21
Wednesday	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22
Thursday	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23
Friday	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24
Saturday	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25
Sunday	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26

40

35

	FEBRUARY 2025	MARCH 2025	APRIL 2025	MAY 2025	JUNE 2025	JULY 2025
Monday	3 10 17 24	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21
Tuesday	4 11 18 25	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22
Wednesday	5 12 19 26	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23
Thursday	6 13 20 27	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24
Friday	7 14 21 28	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25
Saturday	1 8 15 22	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26
Sunday	2 9 16 23	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27

35

30

19

36

Bank Holiday	
School Holiday	
PD Days	

40  
35  
35  
30  
19  
36  
195

The number of term days shown is 195. Up to five of these will be used as professional development days for teaching staff, pupils will not attend these days. One day is set as 21 July, the remaining four will be determined by the individual schools and schools should inform parents accordingly.

Appendix 2

SCHOOL TERM DATES – CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2024-2025

The Governing Body of ..... School/Academy will adopt the following term date models

2024-2025 Model (local authority proposed option)

☐

School’s own dates (please attach dates to your reply)  
(Applicable to Academies, Voluntary Aided and Free Schools only)

☐

Signed (Headteacher / Chair of Governors): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form and return it to [paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:paul.richardson@darlington.gov.uk) by **Friday 1st July 2022.**

If the majority are in agreement with the proposed dates they will be submitted for approval to Council’s Cabinet as Darlington’s preferred term dates for 2024-2025. Once ratified by Cabinet, these dates will be published on the LA website for parental guidance.

**CABINET**  
**6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**BUS SERVICES**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Andy Keir, Local Services Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Dave Winstanley, Group Director of Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides Members with an update on bus services within Darlington. It outlines issues currently being experienced, the work being undertaken to resolve the issues and seeks approval to release funding to continue supporting the service 16 for a further two years.

**Summary**

2. Covid has been a challenging time for all bus operators with patronage significantly reduced across the Country and operators still requiring financial support from Government to maintain services.
3. It is important to understand that the majority of bus services in Darlington and indeed across the Tees Valley are operated on a commercial basis. This means the Council does not decide where they run or provide funding for them, the routes are developed by the operators based on where the fares generated cover the cost of the service. In some cases profit on certain routes may assist support more marginal services.
4. The Tees Valley Combined Authority became the Local Transport Authority when it was formed, and the powers and responsibilities associated with public transport sit within the Combined Authority. Partnerships have been in place in relation to improving public transport between the Local Authorities and Combined Authority, but in the last 12 months a more formal partnership has been developed with TVCA, the local authorities and the operators. This is known as an Enhanced Bus Partnership and whilst in its infancy the partnership will invest significantly in infrastructure and other measures to improve public transport in the coming years.
5. The recovery of bus patronage in Darlington is not as strong as other parts of the Tees Valley. Recovery of patronage is important as the fares generated support the network and without fares there could be an impact on future sustainability of some parts of the network. It is imperative that we support the recovery, but first we need to address performance issues that are impacting the recovery that Residents and Councillors have reported regarding the level of service provided by Arriva in Darlington.

6. The performance and recovery issues are complicated and not a single issue, but a series of issues associated with covid within the workforce, recruitment and retention and operational matters within the depots, that have all compounded to impact on recovery and performance. This was recognised and actions have been developed in partnership:
  - (a) Ongoing dialogue at senior level both at a political level and officer level with Arriva.
  - (b) The network has been amended to try and tailor it to the resources available to improve reliability and consistency, with a view to gradually re-building services to pre-covid levels.
  - (c) Action plans have been put in place in relation to depot issues, recruitment and retention of drivers and marketing services to encourage recovery.
  - (d) Data is being provided to officers on a regular basis to monitor the improvement measures.
  - (e) Mechanisms have been put in place within the England National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) payments that impact on payments to operators if performance does not meet the required standard.
  - (f) The Enhanced Partnership has been formed and this will develop actions to invest and improve bus services over the coming years.
7. The issues have been raised with Arriva and measures have been implemented to improve reliability of services. This is under continual review and there are signs of improvement, but further work is underway to explore any opportunities to accelerate this improvement. Once a level of confidence has been re-established it will be important that we all support and promote a return to bus to protect the sustainability of the bus network.
8. The service 16 is the single grant funded bus service operating under contract to the Council. It operates from Hummersknott to North Road/Glebe Road via the town centre, providing a direct link to the Memorial Hospital.
9. The contract for the service 16 supported bus service expires on 30 September 2022.
10. If the service 16 contract is not extended it would mean those in the West End of Darlington (Abbey/Milbank Road area) and Hummersknott/Glebe Road, would be without access to a bus service.

## **Recommendations**

11. It is recommended that :-
  - (a) Members note the work being done with and by bus operators to improve reliability of bus services in Darlington.
  - (b) Members approve the use of £56,526 from the ENCTS budget and the ring-fenced grants for bus services from government to extend the Service 16 contract from October 2022 to September 2024.

## Reasons

12. The recommendations are supported to ensure that communities remain connected and able to access opportunities.

**Dave Winstanley**  
**Group Director of Services**

## Background Papers

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

Anthony Hewitt : Extension 5824

S17 Crime and Disorder	The content of this report will not impact on crime and disorder.
Health and Wellbeing	Health and wellbeing implications have been considered in the preparation of this report. A strong and reliable bus network will seek to achieve better health and longer life expectancy for everyone by providing travel options to keep people active and independent. 70% of service 16 users are concessionary pass holders.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	A strong and reliable bus network will encourage the use of mass public transport and facilitate a modal shift away from private car use and therefore reduce the carbon impact from transport in Darlington.
Diversity	No individual is adversely affected as a result of this report.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	No group will be adversely affected as a result of this report.
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a Key Decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent Decision
Council Plan	Bus services contribute to a number of priorities in the Council Plan.
Efficiency	There is no impact on the Council's efficiency agenda as part of this report.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

13. The majority of bus services in Darlington are operated on a commercial basis. This means that the Council does not fund the provision of them, nor does it have influence over how and where they are run. Arriva North East operate a network of services in Darlington, on the basis that they are commercially viable, where the fares generated cover the cost of the service.
14. In addition, a small proportion of subsidised bus service journeys operate in Darlington, either through:
  - (a) Contracts between operators and neighbouring Local Authorities who provide cross boundary services to/from North Yorkshire or County Durham.
  - (b) S106 funding which provides kick start funding in order for DBC to connect a particular site to the town centre (for example the service 2A to Amazon).
  - (c) DBC is also in receipt of a small pot of annual funding through the devolved Bus Service Operator's Grant, which is used to operate service 16 in Mowden and Hummersknott.
15. Covid has been a challenging time for all bus operators with patronage significantly reduced across the Country and operators still requiring financial support from Government to maintain services. The recovery of bus patronage in Darlington is not as strong as other parts of the Tees Valley and the reasons for this are complicated and not a single issue but a series of issues.
16. Residents and Councillors have expressed frustration with the level of service provided by Arriva and following this, ongoing dialogue at senior political and officer level is taking place.
17. Performance issues were hindering recovery of bus patronage and therefore impacting the sustainability of the network. Therefore, it was decided that something needed to be done to stabilise the core issues of performance and reliability, with the aim of building back trust in public transport.
18. Arriva recognised these issues and put forward a plan. The principles of the plan required the frequency of services to be temporarily reduced to create the capacity to run the temporary services more reliably and effectively. Once the situation stabilises, the intention is for Arriva to reinstate the services back to their original frequency.
19. Where these principles have been applied elsewhere it has enabled stability, a gradual re-building, and a recovery of patronage
20. The changes came into effect on Sunday 12 June.

21. As part of the reduction in services, Arriva were asked to provide regular updates to officers so that DBC can ensure the changes are effective and result in a reliable network that our residents can have confidence in. The updates cover controllable lost mileage (scheduled mileage not operated due to driver availability/vehicle breakdowns); patronage on the affected services to monitor the impact, and punctuality data to ensure that services are operating within permitted margins of early and late.
22. Additionally, the Council continues to work in partnership with Arriva to mitigate against the effects of roadworks. This in turn means that Arriva can remain as punctual as possible throughout the summer period, which is when road works are most prevalent and also through major works, during which it is recognised that there will sometimes be a short term unavoidable impact on punctuality.
23. Other initiatives are also being progressed including improvements at depots in terms of maintenance, marketing and driver recruitment initiatives, including an open day at Middlesbrough football stadium to give potential employees the chance to drive a bus and talk with Arriva about job opportunities and also several recruitment events in Darlington, in the Dolphin Centre.
24. Once improvements are seen, Let's Go Tees Valley and Connect Tees Valley will undertake marketing to encourage people to return to the bus. All member support is needed in encouraging a return to bus, as the network is commercial and a strong recovery towards pre-covid levels is essential to ensuring a good quality public transport network.

### **Performance Update**

25. The recovery of bus patronage in Darlington is not as strong as other parts of the Tees Valley. Recovery of patronage is important as the fares generated support the network and without fares there could be an impact on future sustainability of some parts of the network.
26. The aim of the temporary service reductions, which were implemented on Sunday 12 June 2022, is to ensure reliability of services whilst staff recruitment and training took place. Regular updates on controllable lost mileage ensure that TVCA/DBC can monitor the number of miles not operated due to resource and vehicle issues. Mechanisms have been put in place within the England National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) payments that impact on payments to operators if performance does not meet the required standard.
27. Controllable lost mileage within Darlington, which excludes mileage lost due to road works, has improved by 50% between May and July.

### **Driver Recruitment**

28. A key issue in service disruption is driver availability. TVCA has worked with all bus operators to assist in pushing recruitment through various channels including a bus driver recruitment day which took place on Friday 15 July.

29. Despite the reduced service frequencies in place, the Darlington depot is currently short of drivers during peak periods, which means that some journeys are having to be cancelled at late notice, depending on driver availability on any given day.
30. Arriva currently have 23 candidates in the recruitment process, 11 of these are within the Darlington depot and 3 have confirmed start dates. This will help with their ability to further improve performance and is a step in the right direction in planning for the reintroduction of services that have been reduced.

## **Funding**

31. The Tees Valley Combined Authority became the Local Transport Authority when it was formed, and the powers and responsibilities associated with public transport sit within the Combined Authority. Partnerships have been in place in relation to improving public transport between the Local Authorities and Combined Authority, but in the last 12 months a more formal partnership has been developed with TVCA, the local authorities and the operators. This is known as an Enhanced Bus Partnership (EP) and whilst in its infancy the partnership will invest significantly in infrastructure and other measures to improve public transport in the coming years.
32. TVCA were unsuccessful in their bid for Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding but will continue to seek opportunities. Therefore, TVCA are limited in the financial support they can provide to operators. However, the EP work through the original aspirations set out in the BSIP to provide and maintain a frequent, high quality, reliable and integrated public transport network. TVCA has a significant programme of £310m investment over the next 5 years in sustainable transport of which bus will see further investment.
33. As a condition of receiving the final instalment of Bus Recovery Grant funding from government, up to 4 October 2022, TVCA has carried out a Network Sustainability Review across all Tees Valley bus services to ensure that the network is sustainable beyond recovery funding. Due to the conditions in each operators 2022/23 ENCTS agreement letter, the operators aren't able to make any significant service changes, which means that the Tees Valley network is protected in the main until March 2023.
34. Various fares promotions are in place to try and encourage passengers back to bus, in order to aid recovery. This includes the additional enhancements to the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme that allow pre-9:30am travel in Darlington and also various operator organised initiatives, such as the 'Kids Go Free' campaign over the summer holidays.
35. TVCA are also leading on a 'back to bus' campaign which aims to build passenger recovery through raising awareness of ticketing options targeted at certain demographics.

## **Franchising**

36. TVCA is not pursuing franchising and is working with the operators through the Enhanced Partnership to deliver improvements. Nowhere outside London has implemented a franchising scheme and the legal process for doing so is complex and presents risks. Furthermore, under a franchising scheme the public authority is exposed to significant financial risk.

## Service 16

37. The service 16 operates from Hummersknott to North Road/Glebe Road via the town centre, providing a direct link to the Memorial Hospital, as per route shown below, and is the single grant funded bus service operating under contract to DBC.

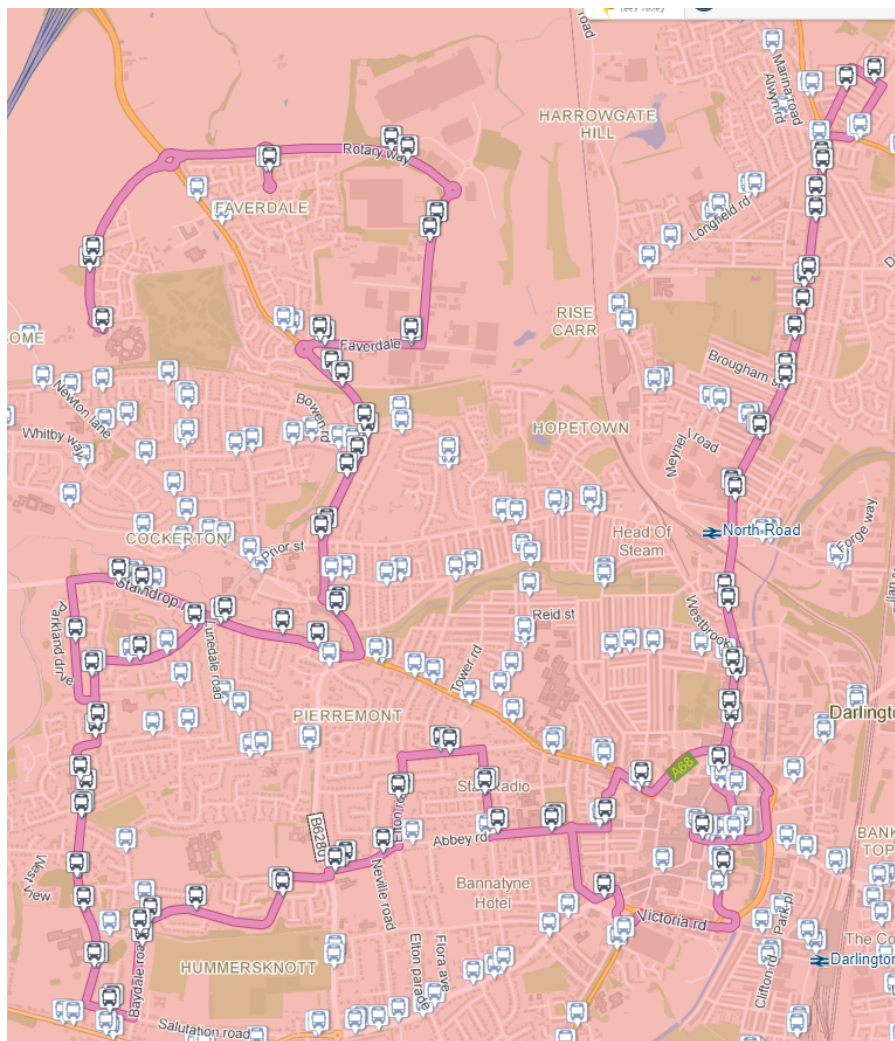


Figure 1 – Service 16 Route

38. Whilst some sections of the service 16 don't provide unique bus coverage (Arriva operate several services along North Road, and the service 3 in parts of Mowden), there are sections in Hummersknott and Mowden that are uniquely served, as shown below. In addition, the service 16 uniquely serves Glebe/Mayfair Road in Harrowgate Hill.



Figure 2 – Overlap between Service 16 and other services

39. The service 16 became a fully subsidised bus service with effect from 5 July 2021, with Scarlet Band, the operator of the service, having de-registered this once commercial service, due to low patronage as a result of Covid. The subsidised bus contract expires on 30 September 2022. Therefore, the service needs to be reviewed and options considered.
40. As a subsidised bus service, DBC sets the service specification, including the timetable. The service operates on an hourly basis, and is timed to provide a combined 30 minute frequency in Mowden, along with the commercially provided service 3, operated by Arriva.
41. Comparing May 2019 to May 2022, patronage on the service 16 is currently 70.7% that of normal pre-Covid usage, as shown below. The service is heavily used by ENCTS pass holders, with concessionary pass usage representing 69.7% of the total annual patronage for 21/22.
42. DBC is in receipt of the annual Bus Service Operator's Grant (BSOG). This is a small ringfenced annual allocation of funding received from Government towards supporting bus services. However, recently, the service 16 contract has been fully funded through bus recovery grant funding provided by Government. This was initially provided through the Bus Recovery Grant from September 2021 to end March 2022, and successor recovery funding through the Local Transport Fund is expected to fund the service in its entirety from April to September 2022. Therefore, the full 21/22 BSOG allocation has been carried over into 22/23, and the 22/23 allocation won't be utilised until beyond the recovery funding period, from October 2022.

43. **OPTION 1 – Issue notice and allow contract to expire on 30 September 2022.** DBC could de-register the service 16 and it would therefore no longer operate. This would mean those in the West End of Darlington (Abbey/Milbank Road area) and Hummersknott/Glebe Road, would be without access to a bus service.
44. **OPTION 2 – Extend contract for 2 years to 30 September 2024.** This option will enable continuity of service for passengers over the longer term, with the aim of building patronage back to pre-Covid levels. A 2 year gross cost contract would require £171,095. There is an available ringfenced budget from Government grants of £114,569 which can only be used for the provision of bus services meaning there is a shortfall of £56,526. It is proposed to use savings in the ENCTS budget to fund the shortfall. During the contract period a review will be undertaken to determine the future of this service.

### **Financial Implications**

45. In the MTFP for 2022/23 an allocation for ENCTS was included. Following negotiation with operators a saving has been made against this allocation and it is proposed to use this saving to fund the provision of service 16.
46. If the service 16 contract is not extended, £114,569 of funding will potentially be returned to Government.

### **Legal Implications**

47. The UK's international subsidy commitments (previously EU State aid rules) have been assessed in relation to the proposed extension of service 16 for a two year period. The UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement principle sets out that subsidises to a single beneficiary below £325k over three years, are out of scope, therefore the service 16 extension is permissible.

### **HR Implications**

48. There are no HR implications with this proposal.

### **Estates & Property Advice**

49. There are no estates or property implications with this proposal.

### **Procurement Advice**

50. Procurement will be in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

### **Consultation**

51. No consultation has been undertaken for this report.

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**CABINET**  
**6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

---

**CONSULTATION ON SKERNINGHAM GARDEN VILLAGE DESIGN CODE  
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPD)**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Alan Marshall,  
Economy Portfolio**

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

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Cabinet on the progress of Skerningham Garden Village Design Code.
2. To gain Cabinet approval to commence public consultation on the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code.

**Summary**

3. A requirement of the adopted Darlington Local Plan 2016 – 2036 (Darlington Local Plan) is for the Council to progress with the creation and adoption of Supplementary Planning Policy Documents (SPD) based on Design Codes for both Garden Communities.
4. The Burtree Garden Village SPD was successfully adopted in 2022 and work has been progressing on the completion of the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code which is attached in **Appendix 1**. It is proposed that this Design Code is now formally consulted upon with the aim of adopting the Design Code as an SPD following the consultation feedback. This process will be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework changes in July 2021 and in particular the National Model Design Code. The consulted document and amendments will be presented to Cabinet and if agreed forwarded to Full Council to be approved as the Council's Supplementary Planning Policy which would be used as material consideration in the planning application process.
5. The development of the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code has been led independently by DesignNE who have carried out extensive public consultation in the completion of the document. The Design Code process of Skerningham Garden Village has been recognised by the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) as a Second Phase Pathfinder and its engagement process is a National Pilot which will set an approach to be adopted by other local authorities in England on the development of design codes across the country.

## Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Members: -

- (a) Note the progress and content of the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code.
- (b) Approve the commencement of a public consultation on the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code.

## Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reason: The Council must follow the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Inspectors report to convert Skerningham Garden Village Design Code into a Supplementary Planning Policy Document SPD as part of the Darlington Local Plan 2016-36.

**Ian Williams**  
**Chief Executive**

## Background Papers

- (i) Skerningham Garden Village Design Code
- (ii) Darlington Local Plan 2016 – 2036

Mark Ladyman: Extension 6306

S17 Crime and Disorder	The Design SPD has a role in reducing crime through the promotion of good design and location of development
Health and Well Being	A key objective of the Design Code for Skerningham GV SPD will be to improve people's health and wellbeing by protecting and improving the economic, social and environmental conditions in the Borough
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	A Sustainability Appraisal has been carried out on the strategic issues and options for this site. Achieving sustainable development will be a fundamental objective of this SPD.
Diversity	An Equalities Impact Assessment has been part of the local plan preparation process
Wards Affected	Harrowgate Hill; Heighington and Coniscliffe; Sadberge and Middleton St George and Whinfield
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	The SPD will be prepared using existing budgets and will ultimately form part of the Council's Planning Policy Framework
Key Decision	Yes
Urgent Decision	No
Council Plan	The SPD Design for Skerningham GV SPD will represent the spatial implications and help achieve the economic growth aspirations of the Council Plan
Efficiency	The consultation stage of the SPD represents the most efficient way to include public opinion on strategic design and will have regard to the legislative and engagement requirements
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

8. The Skerningham Garden Village is a site allocation in the adopted Darlington Local Plan 2016- 2036. The Inspector's report and its modifications detail the policy for the site in H10 and recommends that a Skerningham Design Code should be consulted upon and once agreed established as a Supplementary Planning Document Design Code for Skerningham Garden Village.
9. DesignNE has been commissioned by the Council to prepare the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code in line with policy H10 of the Local Plan with engagement of the local community. The product of this work which commenced in February 2022 presents a blueprint for the draft SPD Design Code Skerningham Garden Village.
10. The draft Skerningham Garden Village Design Code (attached in Appendix 1) has been prepared in line with the NPPF July 2021 and its National Model Design Code. It also follows the remit and guidance of the 2nd Round of the Design Code Pathfinders by the office for Place and the Design Code Team in the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities. The Council received a £122k grant to progress this Design Code in limited time and showcase its approach to other Local Authorities in England.
11. DesignNE have facilitated a series of community engagement events between March to July 2022. In addition, several articles on the Design Code process and its workshops have appeared in the local press, leaflet drops, the DBC website, the DesignNE website and the One Darlington Magazine.
12. Workshops took place and lead independently by DesignNE:
  - (a) 24th March 22 Central Hall, Dolphin Centre
  - (b) 26th April 22 Oban Court Care Home, Whinfield
  - (c) 28th April 22 Harrowgate Hill WMC
  - (d) 19th May 22 Harrowgate Hill WMC
  - (e) 9th June 22 Harrowgate Hill WMC
  - (f) 30th June 22 Harrowgate Hill WMC
13. Over 250 local people took part in these workshops and contributed to the Draft SPD Skerningham Garden Village Design Code.
14. The strategic guidance on design ambitions and place making of the SPD for the Design Code for Skerningham Garden Village includes:
  - (a) Character Area Coding;
  - (b) Settlement Character;
  - (c) Interfaces with blue and green Infrastructure;
  - (d) Gateway Points;
  - (e) Darlington Specific Design requirements;
  - (f) Detailed Design Quality Coding Checklist.

## **The Suggested SPD Consultation Process**

15. Table below:

Cabinet to allow draft SPD to go through public consultation	6th September 2022
Draft SPD Consultation	9th September 2022 – 7th October 2022
Amend SPD based on consultation input	From 7th October 2022
Amended and consulted on SPD to come back to Cabinet and Council for approval	8th November 2022 24th November 2022
Adoption of SPD	End of November 2022

16. Following the completion of the community engagement and consultation period the design code together with proposed modifications will be presented to cabinet and if approved forwarded to Full Council for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.

## **Financial Considerations**

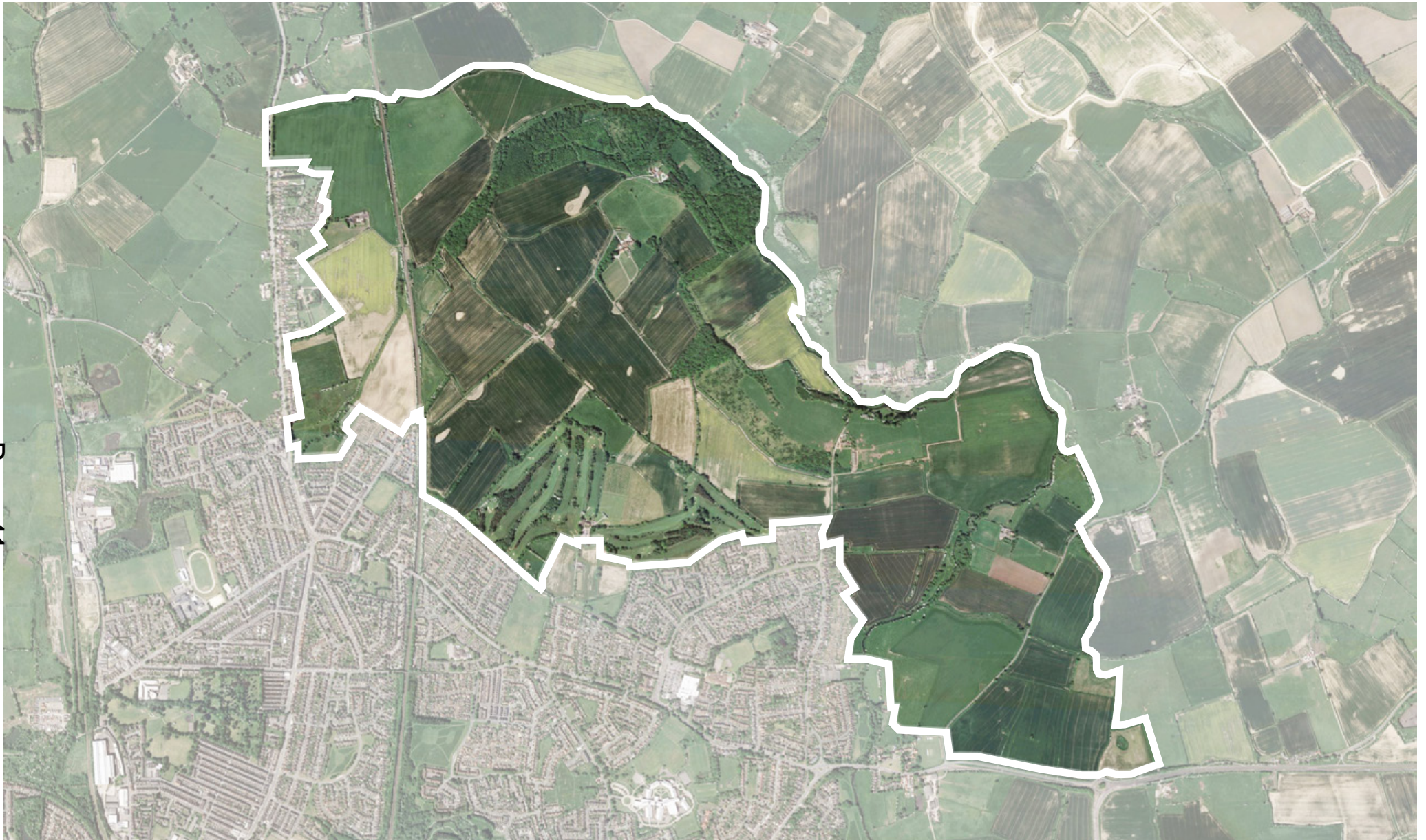
17. The SPD preparation and conversion will be funded by DLUHC Design Code Pathfinder funding.

## **Legal Implications**

18. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **Consultation**

19. This process will be in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.



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# 0.0 | INTRODUCTION

0.1 Purpose of this document

0.2 Role of the Design Code

0.3 Using the Design Code

0.4 Garden village ethos + principles



Fig. 01: View within the site: looking South from the West side of the East Coast Mainline

## Document Background

The document is informed by a range of influences from local, regional and national policy. These include the statutory plans, documents, standards and strategies that form part of the adopted Darlington Local Plan, as well as non-statutory frameworks and guidance produced by the Government.

In November 2016, the Council's Cabinet agreed to engage with the Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS), now part of Homes England, to investigate how this part of the Borough could contribute to meeting the Borough's housing needs in a planned, sustainable way.

Working with the Council, the sites promoters and major landowners started a master planning exercise for the site in 2017. The emerging masterplan is being prepared with a focus on the landscape and biodiversity context of the site, its

heritage assets, and its relationship with existing communities, adopting the Healthy New Town principles to its layout and design (see Policy DC 3).

The master planning process has been informed by a number of studies to identify the opportunities and constraints of the area including landscape, ecology, ground conditions, historic assets, transportation and accessibility as well as establishing the infrastructure and community facilities that will be required to support a sustainable community, integrated with the existing urban area.

A draft masterplan was also the subject of public consultation organised by the sites promoters during the Autumn of 2017. This work, along with the feedback from consultation, has in turn informed the illustrative Masterplan Framework and draft policy

requirements for the strategic allocation.

## About this document

This Design Code (DC) has been commissioned by Darlington Borough Council (DBC) to assist the Council in its statutory planning role to secure and maintain the highest standards of design for the proposed development of Skerningham.

The Skerningham Garden Village Design Code (this document) sets out the strategic design requirements to be provided in the future site development masterplan.

The Design Code is intended to be user-friendly for all readers and therefore easy to understand and apply. This will ensure that all elements within the scheme are designed to work in harmony towards achieving the design vision of a locally distinctive, high-quality place.

## Design Code Pathfinder Programme

Government is committed to supporting and funding local authorities to ensure the planning system delivers more beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has supported 39 organisations (local authorities and four neighbourhood planning groups) as pathfinders to produce exemplar design codes and design coding processes, from which others can learn best practice. This Design Code is part of that programme.

A wider support package includes thematic workshops, one to one support provided by the Office for Place, collective round-tables and the peer-to-peer networks.

All pathfinders have committed to preparing a project plan at the start of the programme, that has been shared with DLUHC.

## 0.1 | PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

It is condition precedent that, before the developers Masterplan is prepared, the Council are required to prepare a Design Code (this document) for the site, in consultation with the community, within a time-scale of approximately six months of the Local Plan being adopted.

The Council will adopt the Design Code as a Supplementary Planning Document and the comprehensive masterplan and planning applications will be required to have regard to it.

The finalised comprehensive masterplan including infrastructure phasing plan is to be prepared by the applicant(s) in consultation with the community and is to be agreed with the Council in advance of any planning application being submitted

for the Skerningham allocation site, either as a whole or in part.

An infrastructure phasing plan is required to set out in further detail the appropriate phases of the development that the infrastructure requirements set out in parts a-i of Policy H10 will be provided. This includes community and social facilities including neighbourhood centre, health hub, schools and other community facilities; green infrastructure and transport network including sustainable transport.

The DC will be considered by the Council and when approved it will thereafter be used to check that the proposals brought forward for the new garden village meet the very high design quality thresholds before granting consent for the

initial strategic masterplan and the subsequent detailed elements within it. As the DC is intended to be used throughout the implementation period for the garden village it will be periodically reviewed and where appropriate updated.

The use of Design Codes is promoted within the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) National Design Guide and further government guidance will be brought forward providing best practice advice on the use and content of such Design Codes.

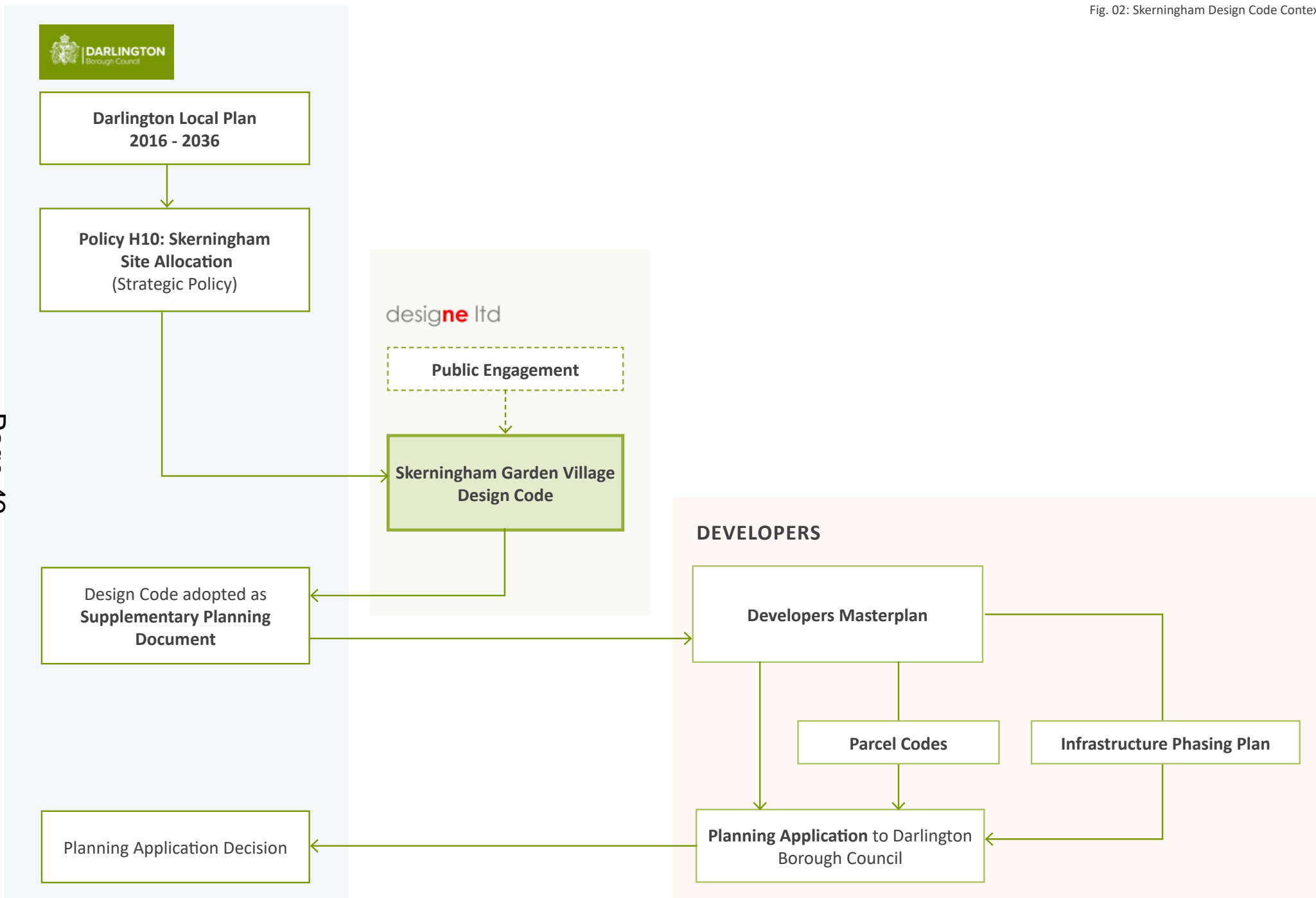
### Parcel Codes

Once individual, discrete development parcels have been defined, a strategic Parcel Code for a block of development can be assembled by the Developer

drawing upon the Design Coding for the overall scheme but highlighting specific building/public realm characteristics. The opportunity here is for the overall development to have a cohesive character but for a distinct identity of the individual hamlets to be defined and designed-in.

This should further avoid the overall scheme becoming a monoculture in terms of architectural style or planting character.

On sites of the scale of Skerningham the term “parcel code” would refer to a sub-set of a Character Area and relate to a hamlet-sized development parcel.



## 0.2 | ROLE OF THE DESIGN CODE



Fig. 03: View within the site towards an existing cluster of buildings near Beaumont Hill

This Design Code should be used as overarching guidance for any future planning applications which come forward for the site.

The intention is to ensure that design quality is maintained throughout the entire development and that the vision for Skerningham is delivered.

### 01. TO GUIDE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

This design code establishes a clear set of rules and standards that will guide development in the future while offering the opportunity for creativity and flexibility for designers and developers.

### 02. TO ENSURE HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

The Design Code will guide the character of development and ensure high-quality proposals that meet the vision and aspirations of the local community.

### 03. TO ENSURE SITE SPECIFIC DESIGN

The Design Code will guide development by using a range of mandatory and advisory coding elements across the site in its entirety as well as within a defined set of character areas.

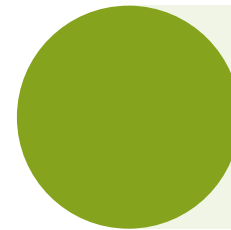
This Design Code (DC) for Skerningham includes a ‘traffic light’ type checklist for assessing the proposals brought forward through the statutory local planning process and in particular for evaluating the respective outline and reserved matter submissions together with any initial phased hybrid applications or separate infrastructure detailed proposals.

A ‘traffic light’ approach to appraising the respective components of what makes a successful place is a simple way to provides a comparative overview of how successfully a scheme meets the requirements of the code and identifies key areas that

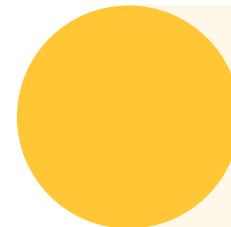
the promoters of the scheme need to focus on to meet the Council’s aspirations for the development.

Additionally, the more assessors that evaluate a scheme using this tool, the better and more robust the averaged assessment will be.

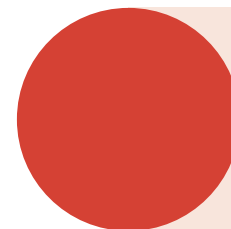
The Assessment Checklist is included at the rear of this document as Section 7.0. The Checklist draws the key strategic criteria from the body of the report and allows the user to apply a RAG (red/amber/green) “traffic light” rating to indicate how successfully the scheme being evaluated meets the strategic requirements of the Design Code.



FULLY MEETS CRITERIA REQUIREMENTS AND CAN BE ACCEPTED.



PARTIALLY MEETS CRITERIA REQUIREMENTS BUT REQUIRES FURTHER WORK BEFORE IT IS ACCEPTABLE.



DOES NOT MEET CRITERIA REQUIREMENTS AND CANNOT BE ACCEPTED.

## 0.4 | GARDEN VILLAGE ETHOS + PRINCIPLES

The promotion of new garden villages across England has been led by the DLUHC reflecting the desire to draw upon the successes of the original early 20th Century settlements in providing **sustainable, enduring and popular places to live and work** whilst enjoying a community lifestyle focussed on **personal well-being** within an **attractive natural environment setting**.

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) has led the promotion of new garden villages believing that a new generation of 21st century garden cities could help to solve a range of problems such as the acute shortage of housing in the UK and the need to respond to climate change. This was set out in their influential 2011 publication *“Re-imagining Garden Cities for the 21st Century: Benefits and Lessons in*

*Bringing forward Comprehensively Planned New Communities”*.

The principal features of a successful garden village as envisaged by the TCPA are to be:

*A holistically planned new settlement which enhances the natural environment and offers high-quality affordable housing and locally accessible work in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities.*

The related Principles for a Garden Village are highlighted in the adjacent diagram. These are intended to provide a framework for implementation and delivery.



Fig. 04: Garden Communities Programme as of October 2020

Fig. 05: Planning Application Visual for  
Oxfordshire Garden Village by Grosvenor



### Clear Identity

A distinctive local identity, including an attractive and functioning centre and public realm at its heart.

### Sustainable scale

Built at a scale which supports the necessary infrastructure to allow the community to function self-sufficiently on a day to day basis, with the capacity for future growth.

### Well-designed places

With vibrant mixed use communities that support a range of local employment types and premises, retail opportunities, recreational and community facilities.

### Strong local vision

Designed with the engagement of the existing local community, and future residents + businesses, including consideration of the existing natural and historic environment of the local area.

### Transport

Integrated, forward looking and accessible transport options. This should include promotion of public transport, walking, and cycling so that settlements are easy to navigate, and facilitate simple and sustainable access to jobs, education, and services.

### Great homes

A wide range of high quality, distinctive homes, including affordable housing and a mix of tenures for all stages of life.

### Healthy places

Designed to provide the choices and chances for all to live a healthy life, through taking a whole systems approach to key local health + well-being priorities and strategies.

### Green space

Generous, accessible, and good quality green and blue infrastructure that promotes health, well-being, activity, and quality of life, and considers opportunities to deliver environmental benefits such as biodiversity net gain, carbon sequestration, and enhancements to natural capital.

### Legacy + Stewardship

Should be in place for the care of community assets, infrastructure and public realm, for the benefit of the whole community.

### Future proofed

Designed to be resilient places that allow for changing demographics, future growth, and the impacts of climate change, with durable landscape and building design planned for generations to come.



## 2.0 | CONTEXT

1.1 Local Context

1.2 Site Context

1.3 Planning Context

## 1.1 | LOCAL CONTEXT

### Darlington

As described in Darlington Borough Council Local Plan 2016-2035 'The Borough is regarded as the 'gateway' to the Tees Valley and the wider North East region.

*Darlington is a historic market town, surrounded by open countryside with many attractive rural villages.*

*An abundance of street trees and open space within the urban area contribute to the town's distinctiveness and biodiversity, particularly the green corridors along the River Skerne, Cocker Beck and Baydale Beck. An attractive, biodiverse and often wooded landscape has evolved along the River Tees corridor, complemented by more recent community woodland planting, especially at the urban fringe.'*

### Darlington Council Plan 2020 – 2023

The Vision - Darlington is a place where people want to live and businesses want to locate, where the economy continues to grow, where people are happy and proud of the

borough and where everyone has the opportunity to maximise their potential.

### Deliver Success For Darlington

The council will create the conditions and opportunities for growth, but it is the private sector from which much of the investment required to deliver growth will come. Our key partner in growing the economy is the Tees Valley Combined Authority, from which much of the funding required to deliver growth will come and be invested in Darlington and the Tees Valley. A thriving Tees Valley economy is important for Darlington's success and so we will continue to work with and support our neighbouring Tees Valley councils.

The borough's biggest asset is its residents, they make the place what it is and the Council hope everyone will get behind our plans to make it an even better place. We should all be proud and emphasise the positive benefits of living and working in a great borough.

### Growing Darlington's economy by delivering:

- More sustainable, well paid jobs
- More businesses
- More homes

### Supporting economic growth by keeping the borough:

- Clean
- Sustainable
- Safe
- Well-planned
- Healthy
- One the move

### Whilst:

- Valuing our heritage and culture

### Supporting the most vulnerable in the borough by:

- Providing care and support when needed.
- Working with people to build their strengths to maximise their potential.
- Working with partners.

### Maximise the potential of our young people by:

- Working with partners to maximise educational achievement.
- Working to remove barriers to young people reaching their potential.
- Working at a Tees Valley Level to match jobs with skills and training.

### Working with communities to maximise their potential by:

- Maximising the benefits of a growing economy for all communities.
- Targeting services where they are most needed.
- Working with partners and communities.



Fig. 06: Darlington Town Centre

## 1.2 | SITE CONTEXT



Fig. 07: View within site towards the River Skerne from the Northern edge of Skunny Woods

### Skerningham Site

The Skerningham area to the North East of Darlington, was identified as having potential for housing development as part of the Darlington Borough Council Local Plan Issues and Scoping consultation held in August 2016.

The site area extends to approximately 487 hectares and is largely comprised by agricultural fields. It also includes Darlington

Golf Club, Skerningham Community Woods; the East Coast Mainline to the west; and the River Skerne lies towards the northern boundary. There are several farmsteads and existing residential properties within the site at Low Beaumont Hill, Skerningham Manor, Low Skerningham, Elm Tree House, Elly Hill House and Burdon Gardens.

Refer to 2.0 Baseline Analysis for further information on existing site.

-  Farmstead/ existing residence
-  East Coast Mainline
-  River Skerne
-  1 Golf Course
-  2 Skerningham Community Woods
-  3 Darlington



Fig. 08: Existing Site - key features

## 1.3 | PLANNING CONTEXT

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021)

Page 60

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. The policies set out in this framework apply to the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and to decisions on planning applications.

Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states: *"at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development.**"*

In terms of housing growth, the NPPF states that: *"To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land*

*can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay."*

When planning for larger scale development, the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should, inter alia: *"consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area's economic potential and the scope for net environmental gains;... [and]...set clear expectations for the quality of the development and how this can be maintained (such as by following Garden City principles), and ensure that a variety of homes to meet the needs of different groups in the community will be provided;"* (paragraph 72)

The NPPF is clear, at paragraph 8, that the planning system should support: *"strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being."*

In Chapter 12, the NPPF places emphasis on achieving well-designed places which can be aided by early engagement with local communities and other stakeholders. The NPPF states that: *"Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and*

*local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community."* (Paragraph 128)

### Darlington Local Plan 2016 - 2036

The Darlington Local Plan is now adopted (February 2022) . The Local Plan identifies Skertingham as a location to facilitate the delivery of a high-quality mixed-use community with education, employment, housing, and open space. This is intended to provide the right economic and environmental conditions to support a sustainable new community to the north east of Darlington.

Fig. 09: (top right) Skerningham Masterplan Framework from Darlington Borough Council Local Plan 2016 -2035

Fig. 10: (bottom right) Skerningham Masterplan Framework (with golf course in situ) from Darlington Borough Council Local Plan 2016 -2035

## Policy H10: Skerningham Site Allocation

Policy H10 of the Darlington Local Plan allocates Skerningham as a strategic site for the delivery of 4,500 dwellings with an expectation that 1,650 dwellings will come forward in the plan period.

The site is also identified to deliver new schools; community and health facilities; commercial / employment; and safeguarded corridors for the Northern Relief Road. Policy H10 outlines a number of principles that are established which any development at Skerningham will be required to accord with.

The key parameters cover phasing, local facilities provision, highways, housing, and green and blue infrastructure.

The preferred approach for the development of the Skerningham site, set out in the Local Plan, is for the golf club to be relocated (see Fig. 09). This issue might require further discussion.

However, should it be demonstrated that this is not possible, the Local Plan suggests an alternative masterplan framework illustrates how the key principles for the development of the Skerningham site (see Fig. 10).

The following diagrams illustrate a summary of the proposed development parameters and deliverables in accordance with the Skerningham Masterplan Framework. Refer to the Local Plan for further and more detailed information.

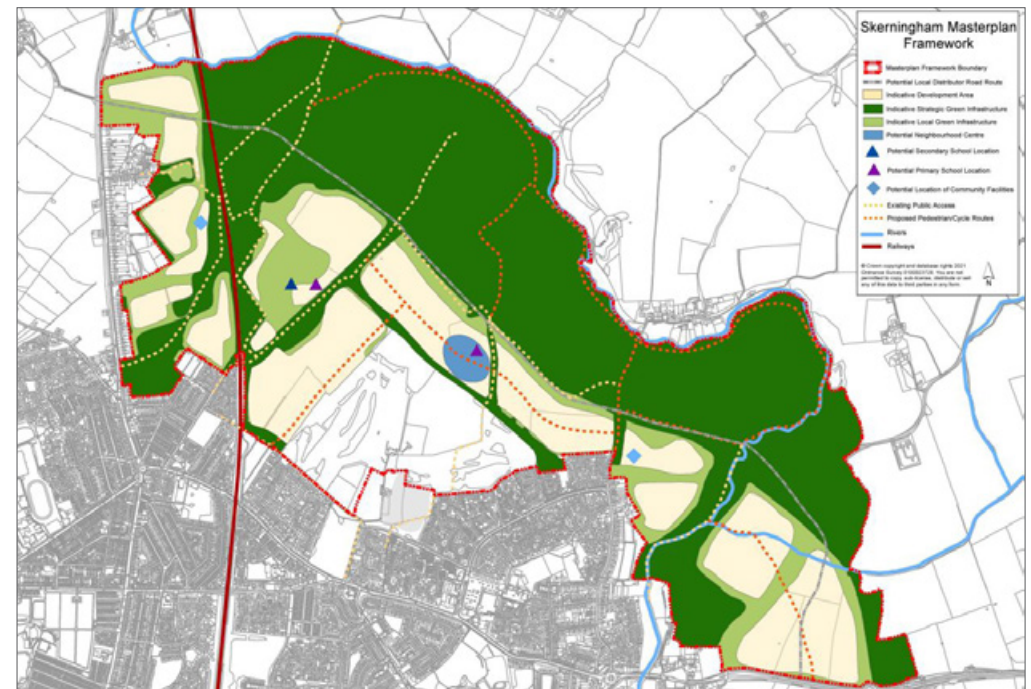
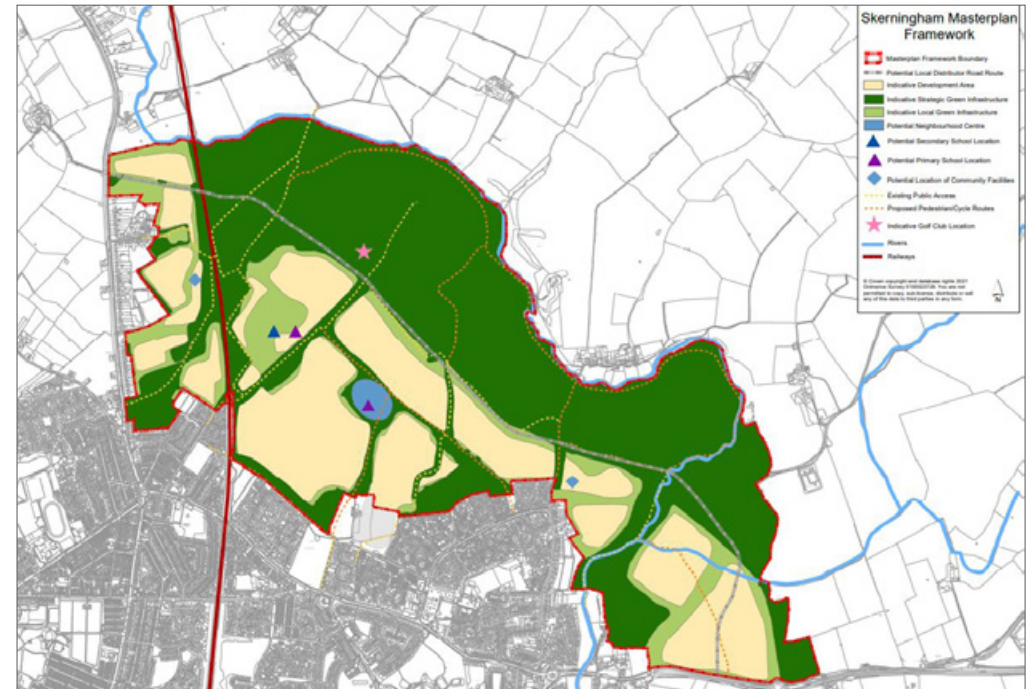
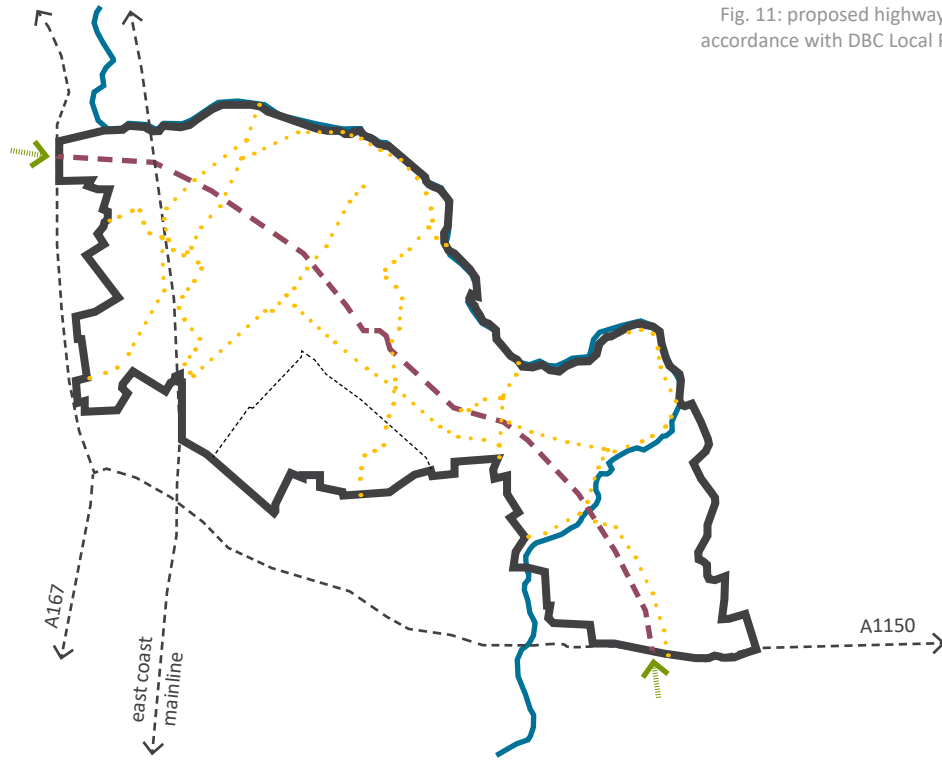


Fig. 11: proposed highways in accordance with DBC Local Plan



### Highways

The Local Plan proposes a new distributor road between the A167 and A1150 with new vehicular access points from existing roads. Policy H10 requires an integrated transport network focused on sustainable transport modes, including public transport, walking and cycling with strong links to adjoining communities, employment locations and Darlington town centre. Refer to Policy H10 for key phasing requirements that coordinate with the initial phases of development.




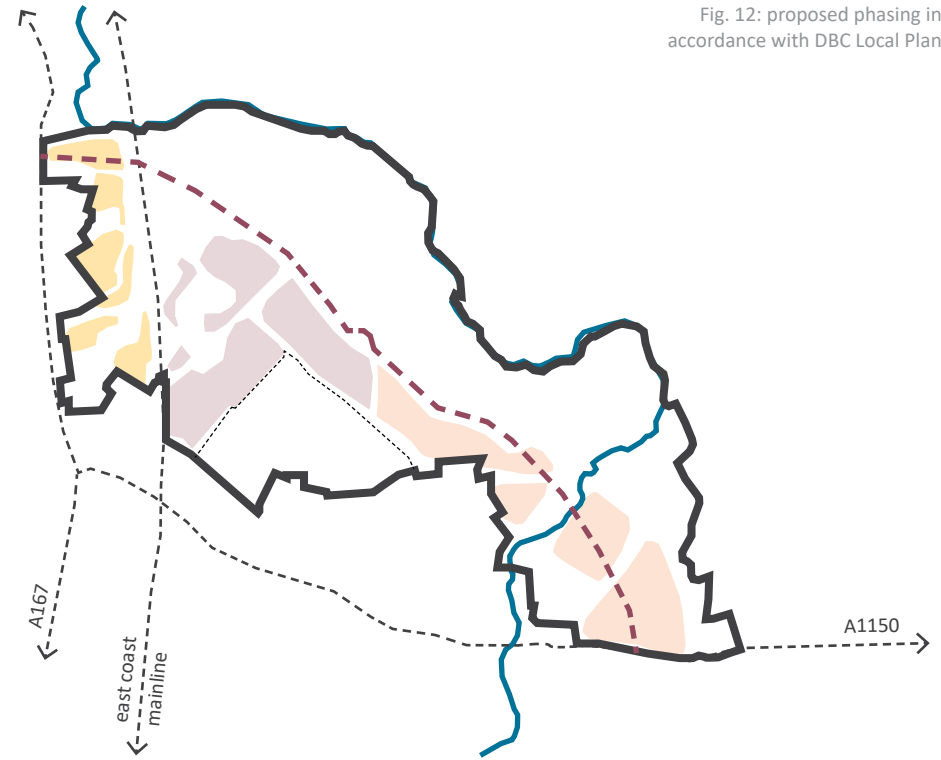
-  Principal vehicular access points
-  Proposed distributor road
-  Existing and proposed public access routes

Fig. 12: proposed phasing in accordance with DBC Local Plan



### Initial Phasing

Policy H10 of the Darlington Local Plan allocates Skerningham as a strategic site for the delivery of 4,500 dwellings to include a mix of housing types, tenures and sizes including self-build/ custom build housing and minimum of 20% affordable housing to be delivered. Approximately 1,650 homes are to be delivered during the plan period [note: this is not capped]. Policy H10 identifies the locations within the site for the initial phases of the development, as follows:




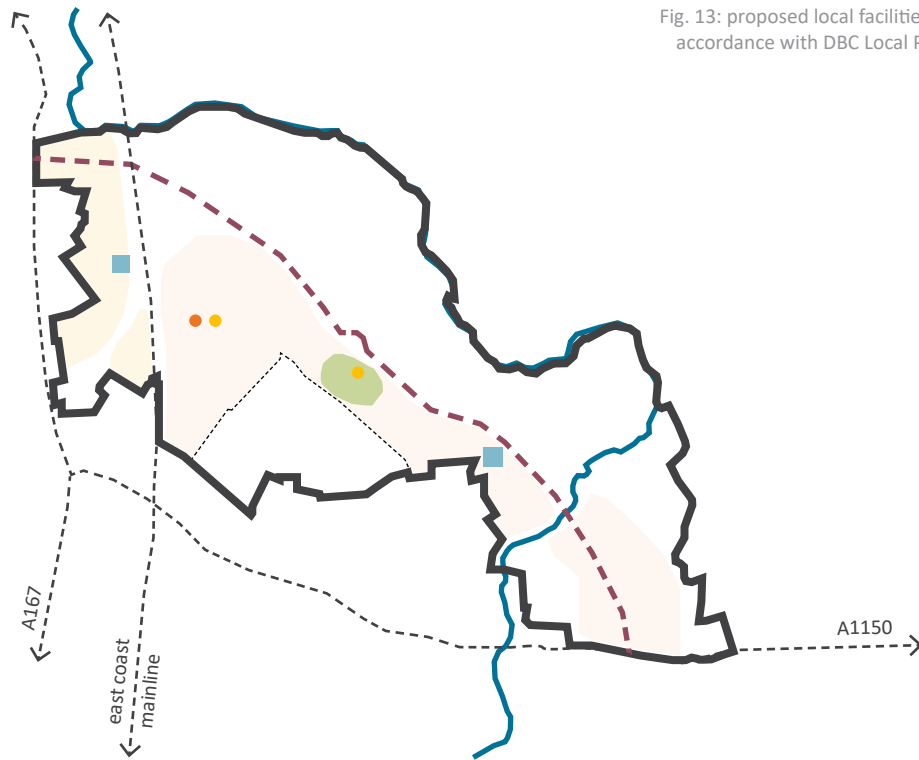
-  600 dwellings
-  1,050 dwellings
-  future development

Fig. 13: proposed local facilities in accordance with DBC Local Plan

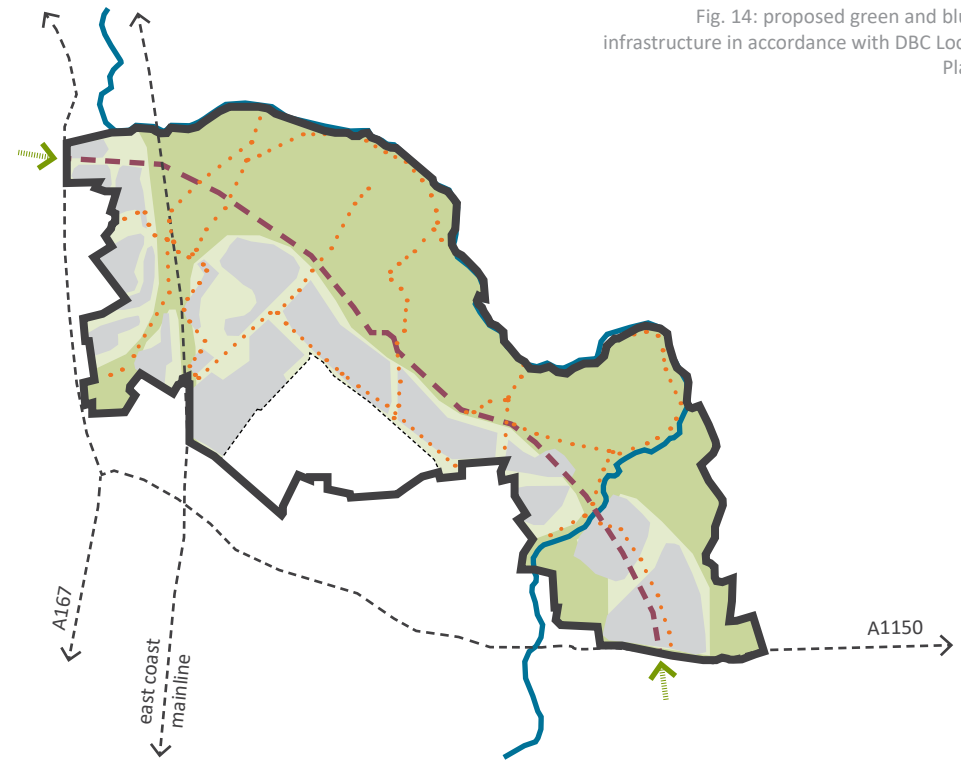


### Local Facilities

Policy H10 requires a centrally located and well-connected neighbourhood centre which is to include a health hub, other community facilities for education, employment, retail, and food and drink. Community facilities should be closely related to public transport links, walking and cycling facilities, and respond to the scale and nature of the surrounding development.

- Potential neighbourhood centre
- Primary school
- Secondary school
- Potential location of community facilities

Fig. 14: proposed green and blue infrastructure in accordance with DBC Local Plan



### Green and Blue Infrastructure

The Local Plan states that “around 45% of the site area is expected to be retained and enhanced as accessible green infrastructure, managed agricultural land and/or the relocated golf club, as part of a wide green corridor on the south side of the River Skerne”. This would increase to around 55% of the site should the golf club remain in situ.

- Safe, attractive and accessible network of public foot and cycle paths
- Well integrated and inter-connected green spaces to provide space for the local community, wildlife, sports and recreation, and allotments.
- Indicative development area.



## 2.0 | BASELINE ANALYSIS

2.1 Topography

2.2 Open space + green infrastructure

2.3 Heritage assets

2.4 Community infrastructure + schools

2.5 Public transport accessibility

2.6 Road/street hierarchy

## 2.0 | BASELINE ANALYSIS

### Introduction

The purpose of this section is to establish and describe “what the site currently is”, highlighting any relevant topographical, natural or man-made characteristics that can be considered as **relevant factors** in any development of the site, and from these to identify **predominant factors** which are most likely to influence the form and location and detail of any proposed development on the site.



Fig. 15: Existing path through the site

Image: Save Skerningham Facebook community page

Fig. 16: Gently sloping fields within the existing site  
Image: Save Skerningham Facebook community page



The varied existing topography of the overall allocated site for the Skerningham Garden Village will be a key influence on the respective character areas reflecting their related landscape context.

Defined by a ridge, the shallow Skerne river valley is a distinct

feature along the northeast boundary. Broadly the site landform falls in this direction with an overall range of some 28m difference in ground levels with notable high points located at Low Beaumont Hill; Skerningham Manor; Hutton Plantation; the restored Barmpton Quarry site; and Elly Hill.

Much of the garden village area is characterised by gentle slopes with the steeper slopes located around Barmpton and Skerningham – the eastern most area near Bishopton Lane is generally flatter with occasional undulations.

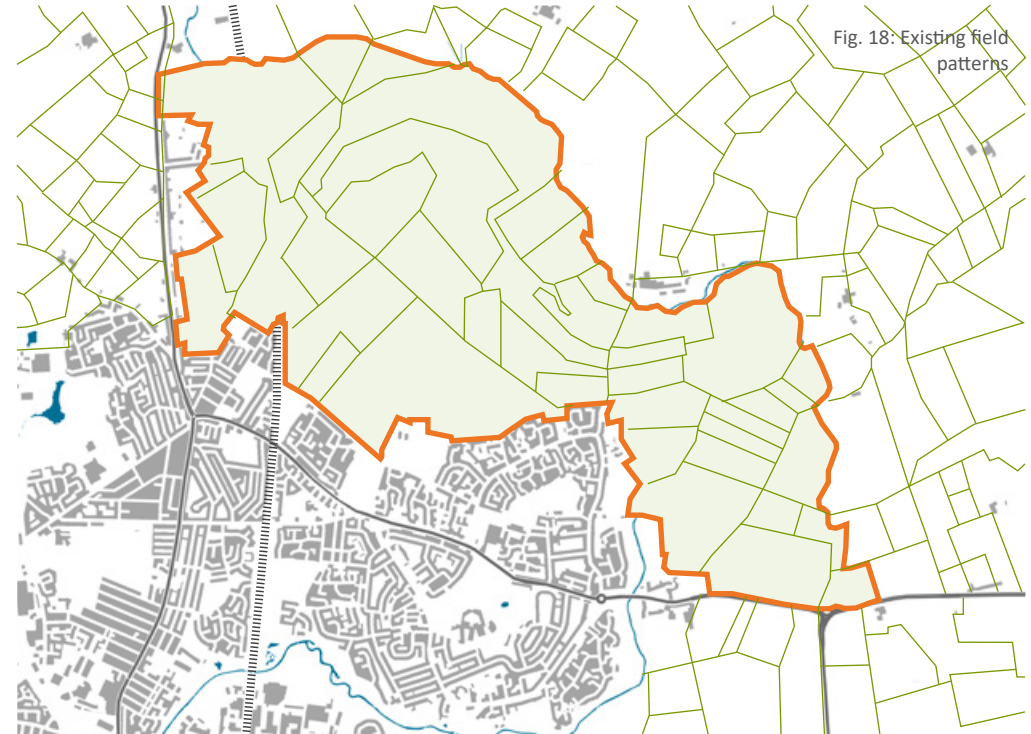
## 2.2 | OPEN SPACE + GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



### Existing Open Green Space + Notable Features

The present site in its undeveloped state is almost entirely 'green' comprising mostly agricultural land. Notable features include Darlington Golf Course, Skerningham Countryside Park (known locally as Skerningham Plantation or Skunny woods), Elly Hill Wood, Hutton Plantation, several farmsteads and residential properties dispersed within the site, the River Skerne and the heavily used network of Public Rights of Way footpaths and bridleways.

- green space
- woodland areas
- east coast mainline
- Skerningham site boundary



### Field Patterns + Existing Biodiversity

Other than Skerningham Countryside Park, much of the tree cover is restricted to field boundaries, identified above, and hedgerows with only occasional trees located within fields. In more recent times much of the land was in use for arable farming with many historic field boundaries removed to create larger fields reflecting modern farming methods. The dominant tree species is Ash with occurrences of Oak, Sycamore and Beech. Many of the ash trees are in poor condition due to over-maturity and/or infection. The hedgerows are well maintained and in reasonable condition.

- field boundary
- east coast mainline
- Skerningham site boundary



Fig. 19: Dense mature woodland along edges of agricultural fields



Fig. 20: Edge of the woodland



Fig. 21: View towards allotments to South of Beaumont Hill



Fig. 22: View of existing path within site lined with hedgerows

## 2.3 | HERITAGE ASSETS

### Heritage assets

The known assets of the Skerningham garden village site area consists of below and above ground heritage initially identified by desk-based assessments which will be confirmed by follow on site investigation as recommended.

### Below Ground Heritage

The below ground heritage identified in the local Historic Environment Record (HER) includes pre-historic crop marks although as yet no known recorded assets from the Roman period. From the medieval period there are some early documentary references to a 7th Century settlement at Skerningham and also of a possible Deserted Medieval Village located near to Skerningham Manor. In addition the present Darlington Golf Course appears to follow the relics of earlier field system boundaries with some surviving areas of ridge and furrow.

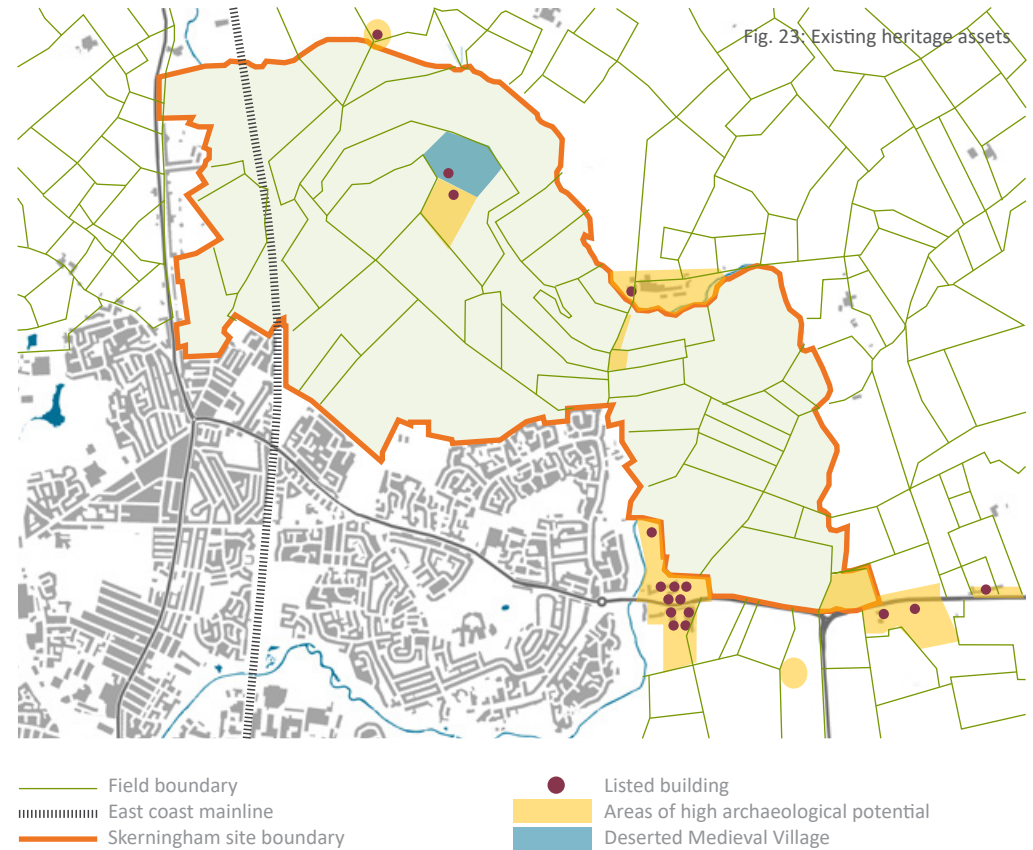
There are also recorded areas of previous quarrying near Barmpton and within the Skerningham Plantation.

### Above Ground Heritage

Other notable assets include the golf course founded in 1908 and originally designed by Dr Alister MacKenzie a renowned golf course architect who went on to design three of the top 10 presently ranked best golf courses in the world at Augusta National and Cypress Point respectively in the USA and Royal Melbourne in Australia.

In addition, there is a surviving WW2 concrete pillbox located close to the East Coast Mainline railway – next to Salters Lane - presumably constructed as part of the strategic defence network for Britain against the threat of invasion in 1940.

There are also two Grade II listed buildings within the site – Skerningham Manor and Low Skerningham – located to the northern part of the overall site. Both are presently set within the wider current arable landscape with related woodland setting which will need to be appropriately respected in the prospective garden village masterplan.



## 2.4 | COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE + SCHOOLS

Fig. 26: Existing community infrastructure

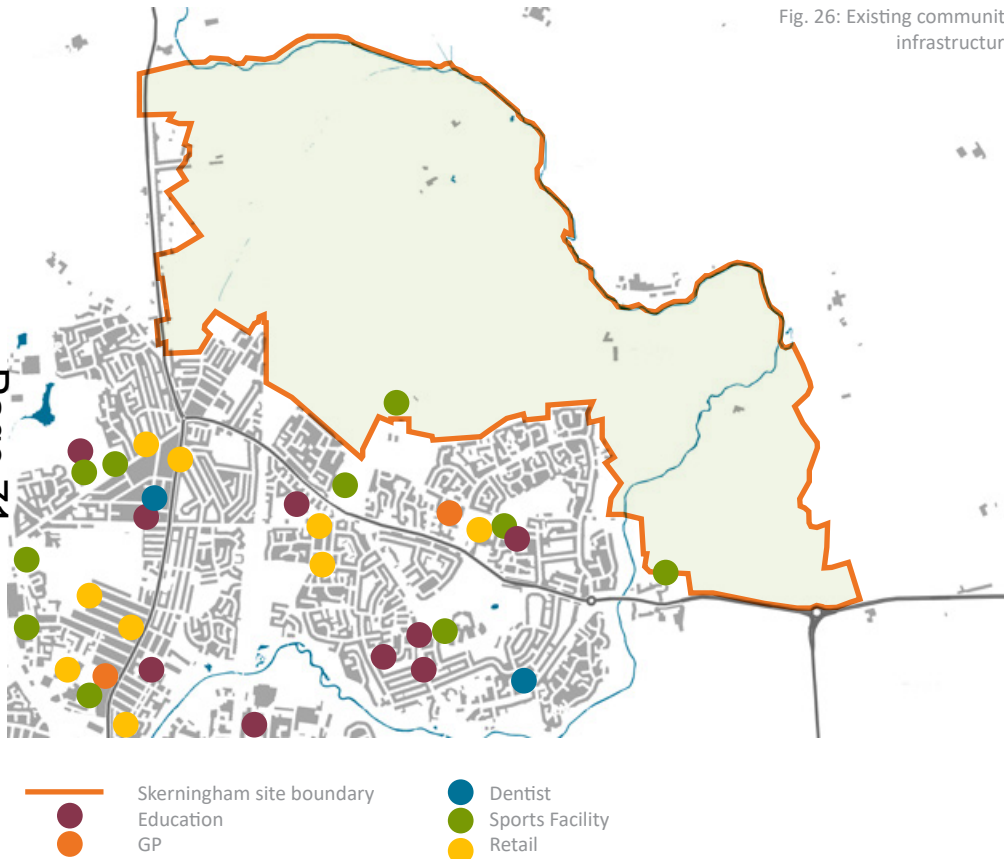
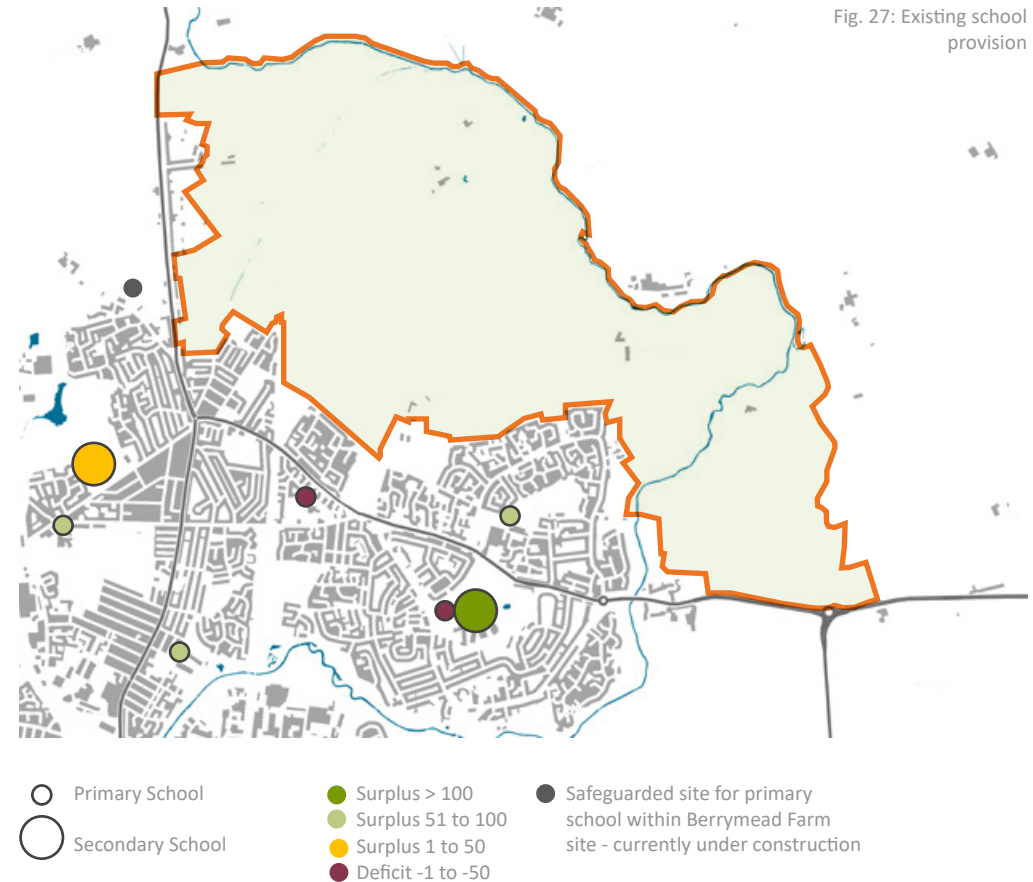


Fig. 27: Existing school provision



### Existing Community Infrastructure

There is a good level of existing community and social infrastructure within 3 miles of the Skerningham site. Existing facilities are predominantly located to the south and south west in the main urban area of Darlington.

### Existing School Provision

There are currently 6 primary schools within 2 miles of the Skerningham site. There are currently 2 secondary schools within 3 miles of the site.

## 2.5 | PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY

### Public Transport

**Buses:** The present public transport provision has buses serving Harrowgate Hill/Beaumont Hill running along the A167 Great North Road and also through Whinfield along the A1150 Whinfield Road together with additional local services running through Whinbush Way/Barmpton Lane as well as separately looping around Glebe Rd/Mayfair Rd. Great Burdon also has bus services running to Darlington town centre and Middlesbrough. The existing bus services allows convenient access to other regional and national destinations.

**Train:** The east coast mainline runs along the west of the site connecting neighbouring Darlington to other major cities, North and South.

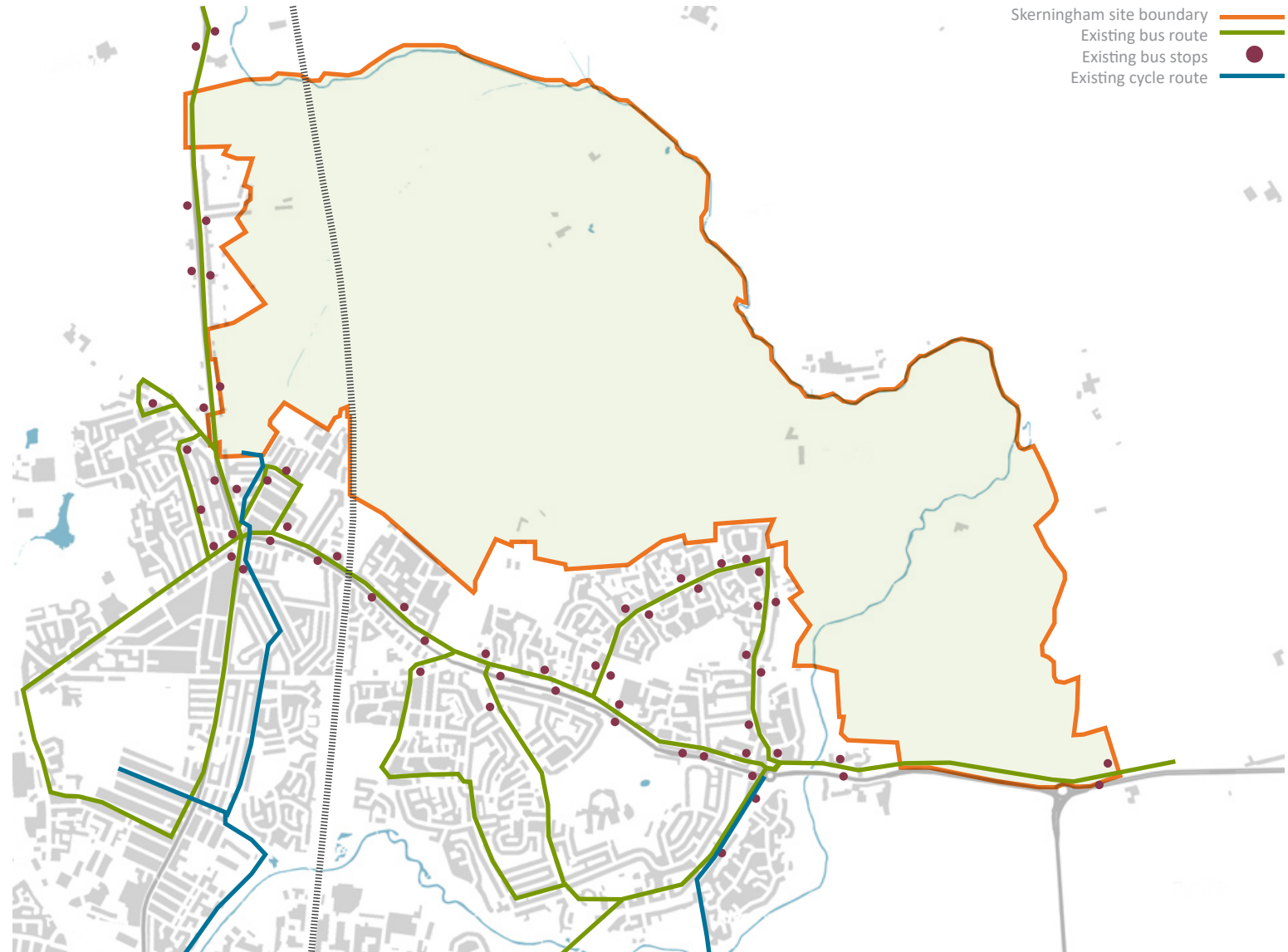
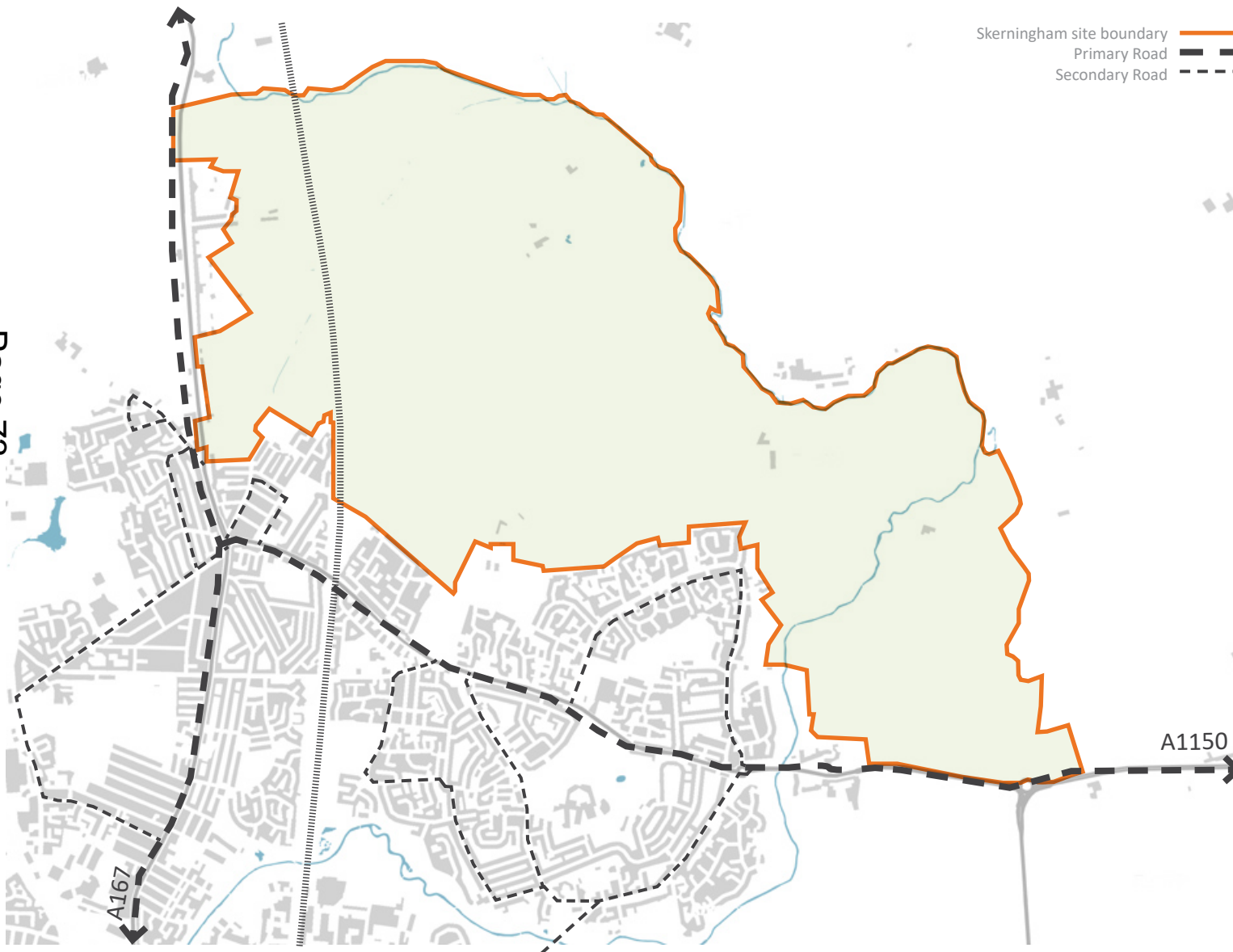


Fig. 28: Existing public transport in and around the immediate context

## 2.6 | ROAD + STREET HIERARCHY



The overall garden village site context is a logical and sustainable extension to Darlington and is accessible to the existing highway network benefiting from being within close proximity to the A1(M) on the western side and to the A66 on the eastern edge.

The existing southern highway network is however already at close to capacity which requires the focus of the street hierarchy to alleviate that without creating problems elsewhere.

Darlington is a relatively compact town with about one fifth of journeys by residents no further than 1km, nearly half less than 3km and three quarters of all journeys begin and end in the town. Darlington is a town of short journeys.

Fig. 29: Existing key roads + streets



## 3.0 | INSPIRATION + VISION

3.1 Thinkpieces

3.2 Public Engagement

3.3 Vision

## 3.1 | THINKPIECES

### Thinkpiece Introduction

designe have commissioned a series of “Thinkpieces” from its Panel of Built Environment experts. The purpose of Thinkpieces is to take a relevant key subject, examine it in detail, and establish what is the most current and up-to-date thinking on that subject irrespective of geographic location. Also, what is the direction of travel for those subjects and what national milestones or rules are being prepared for implementation?

Some of the issues raised in this section of the Design Code are challenging, but necessarily so. The world is changing – mankind is slowly realising the imperative to change too – what seems esoteric and almost far-fetched is rapidly becoming reality and we will need to

make difficult decisions and be much more creative, particularly in our responses to climate change effects and liveability.

It is important to understand that the issues rehearsed in these Thinkpieces are relevant across the country and are not just specific to the Skerningham site. Not every part of a Thinkpiece is relevant to a specific development site. But each Thinkpiece has an influence on other areas of the Design Code.

These Thinkpieces inform the Strategic Toolkit in Section 4.0.

What follows is a summary, by topic, of the “golden threads” within the Thinkpieces which have informed the Design Code and remain evident throughout the document.

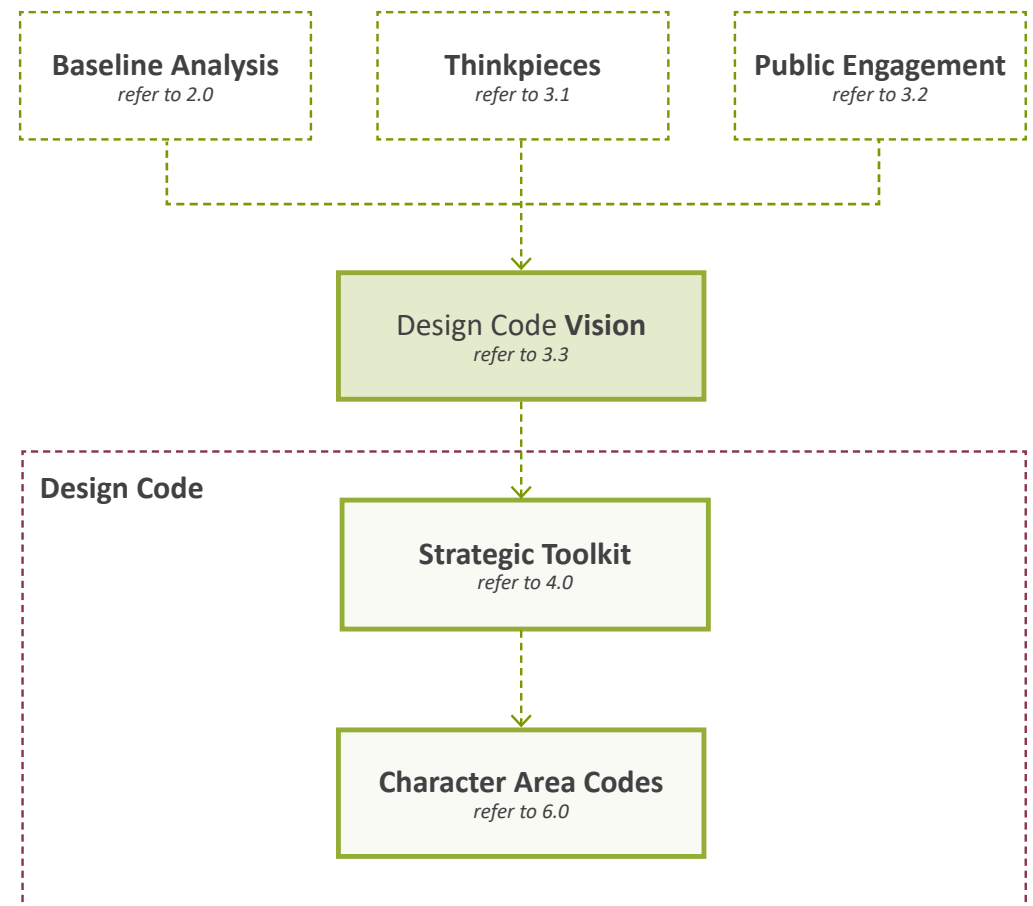


Fig. 30: DC Process and Output

## HEALTHY LIVING

## ENVIRONMENTAL



Fig. 31: Thinkpieces

## 3.1.1 | HEALTH + WELL-BEING

### Key Principle

Putting Health into Place must be a Golden Thread running through the statutory approvals process, development, delivery, subsequent occupation and use of future developments.

### Thinkpiece Summary

This Thinkpiece identifies 5 key factors that should be considered in the design and delivery of any future developments as summarised below:

#### 01. Putting Health into Place

A series of publications produced by NHS England and other partners that capture the findings of the Healthy New Towns Programme. It provides 10 principles that cover the following; planning, assessment and involvement; design, delivery and management; as well as development and provision of Health Care Services.

#### 02. Building for a Healthy Life

The key measure of design quality for developments such as this.

#### 03. 2 Hours of Nature

New research that could confirm

two hours in nature could join five a day of fruit and veg and 150mins of exercise a week as official health advice.

#### 04. 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

An idea that has been gaining momentum for several years with an increased interest following COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. The TCPA are working with a range of partners to help councils and communities introduce 20 minute neighbourhoods. The aim is to create attractive, interesting, safe and walkable environments in which people of all ages and levels of fitness are happy to travel actively on a daily basis.

#### 05. Biophilic Design

Biophilic Design is a design concept that relies on the idea of building and nurturing the relationship between people and nature. The main principles of Biophilic Design relate to provision of vegetation, water features, natural and permeable materials, good ventilation, biomorphic shapes and more outdoor space.



Fig. 32: The Runnyhoney is a running group based in the Healthy New Town of Bordon in Hampshire and two other locations Photo: Mike Ellis/NHS

### 3.1.2 | MOVEMENT



Fig. 33: Active travel.  
Image: Department for Transport, from *"Gear Change - a bold vision for cycling and walking in England"*

#### Key Principle

The overarching vision is to build on this strong foundation by promoting active travel so that walking and cycling are an instinctive choice for all ages from 8 to 80 undertaking everyday short journeys.

#### Thinkpiece Summary

A key policy driver is **'Gear Change'** the government's bold vision for cycling and walking in England.

This requires that the design of any major residential development must ensure that movement networks and routes for those travelling by cycle or on foot will incorporate the five core principles and will be Coherent, Direct, Safe, Comfortable and Attractive catering for the broadest range of people

**Active Travel England** will be a statutory consultee on major planning applications to ensure that the largest new developments properly cater for pedestrians and cyclists.

**The 20 minute neighbourhood** is about designing compact permeable

blocks of development that include non- residential uses and create direct and legible walking and cycling routes between where people live and where they want to go to. It requires a realistic assessment of the walking time/distance between places.

#### Public Transport

There are several things to take into account to take a realistic view of public transport:

- + The first is about accessibility to existing and potential bus services.
- + The streets would ensure all homes could be within 400 metres of a bus stop.
- + When will a (useful) bus service be operated into the development and who will meet the costs until a service is viable.

The risk is that behaviours will established e.g. use of car before services can be justified and the plan must consider the need to relate house completions to the **funding** of bus services.





Fig. 35: Indicative vision for distributor road  
Image: Biodiversity Corridor Project by civiliti, LAND  
Italia, Table Architecture and Biodiversité Conseil

### 3.1.4 | DISTRIBUTOR ROAD

#### Thinkpiece Summary

The Darlington Local Plan requires that a distributor Road between the A167 and the A1150 close to the Little Burdon roundabout is provided in a number of stages.

The role of this distributor road is understood to be:

- + to provide access to the Garden Village development areas in phases from each end and:
- + when complete, in effect, also act as a by-pass to provide some relief to the existing routes A167 and A1150.

The challenge is to achieve a balance between these two roles and to achieve this the following guiding principles should shape this road.

- + It will be designed for low traffic speeds with speed limit of no more than 40mph and potentially lower in the central section. It will look like a road that is part of a garden village and not a high speed bypass and should emphasise a sense of place.

+ A number of compact roundabout junctions on the distributor road will be the only vehicular access points to the development and local street network

+ The way in which the road connects with Barmpton lane will require careful treatment to minimise the attractiveness of this existing road as an alternative vehicular route for development and construction traffic.

+ Properties will face the road accessed from service roads with landscaping and trees giving an Avenue feel.

+ Sensitive crossing of Important green infrastructure corridors as part of the footpath, cycleway and bridleway network will be required.

+ The eastern part built initially as a construction only haul road.

These guiding principles are expanded in section 4.1 Movement.

### 3.1.5 | GARDEN COMMUNITIES

#### Key Principle

Garden communities are environments designed to promote community inclusion and walkable, sociable, vibrant neighbourhoods. Community is at the heart of the garden communities philosophy.

#### Thinkpiece Summary

Designed for the 21st century, garden communities reflect and respond to the opportunities offered to place-making, living and working by technology and data, while addressing both climate change and climate resilience. Self-sustainability is put into practice through active, healthy lifestyles embodied in walking and cycling, locally grown produce and locally based employment and services.

Garden communities are founded on ten key principles:

01. Land value capture for the benefit of the community.

02. Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.

03. Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.

04. Mixed-tenure homes and housing

types that are genuinely affordable.

05. A wide range of local jobs in the garden village within easy commuting distance of homes.

06. Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food.

07. Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and which uses zero-carbon and energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience.

08. Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable neighbourhoods.

09. Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms for local journeys.

10. Provision of comprehensive and future-proof digital connectivity to support the use of smart technology.



Fig. 36: Garden Communities  
Landarth Garden Village by AHR Architects



Fig. 37: Hamlet cluster  
Image: Mountfield Park by Proctor and Matthews Architects

### 3.1.6 | HAMLETS + STRING OF PEARLS

#### Key Principle

Consider developing the area as a Garden Village, comprised of a series of discrete hamlets, all with defined edges, their own character (under an over-arching architectural theme), and individually named.

The opportunity for the hamlets to be linked to form a circuit-linear new village can be explored, treated as a “string of pearls”, linked to each other by Footpaths, Cycleways and Roads.

#### Thinkpiece Summary

The overall development should have a unique sense-of-place, that is distinctive and, through its composition, form, materials, etc whilst also being grounded in the locale.

01. This DOES NOT mean slavishly copying and replicating “historic” building forms.

02. The **core settlement should be clearly identifiable** as the heart of the settlement. Its form and

character need to reassure people that they have arrived at the centre of the village.

03. Ideally, the **village core settlement should be established early** and as soon as possible start offering residents the full range of services required by the new community.

04. The **hamlet edges should be outwards-facing into the green space network** and avoid at all costs presenting rears of buildings and back-gardens to public view.

05. “**Defined edges**” means that a hamlet can be completed without the need to have a “meanwhile” use or edge solution.

06. Hamlets can be **developed as and when demand occurs** and the Design Code could be reviewed and updated, morph to accommodate different thinking over time.

## 3.1.7 | DEVELOPMENT DENSITIES

### Thinkpiece Summary

The density range for different scale housing will be influenced by the adopted Local Plan and existing site context. With the ambition for a high percentage of overall green space, an initial assessment of likely development densities in a 'typical' new garden village suggests the following indicative range excluding open space:

#### Low density - c. 25 - 30/35 dwellings per hectare (DPH)

Promoting an essentially green organic character - more reflective of the natural 'found' context - providing a spacious development form with a higher proportion of semi-detached & detached dwellings

Reminiscent of a traditional hamlet and likely to be confined to a few special locations.

#### Medium density - c. 35 - 45 DPH

This range of development typically offers greater legibility to and from the lower and higher density areas within the wider garden village.

It still maximises opportunities for homes to overlook open spaces and characterful streets; provides a high degree of permeability; and encourages a positive mix of more generous groupings and tighter urban living.

#### High Density - c. 45 - 55/60 DPH

Typically these should reinforce the core of development areas promoting urban living relative to the setting.

There will generally be a tighter urban grain of streets and spaces with greater use of terrace and linked properties.

This is still consistent with the centre of a typical traditional village whilst promoting efficient use of land together with 20 min. walkable neighbourhoods which can still abut generous greenspace.

#### Local and Neighbourhood Centres – typically up to c. 80 DP

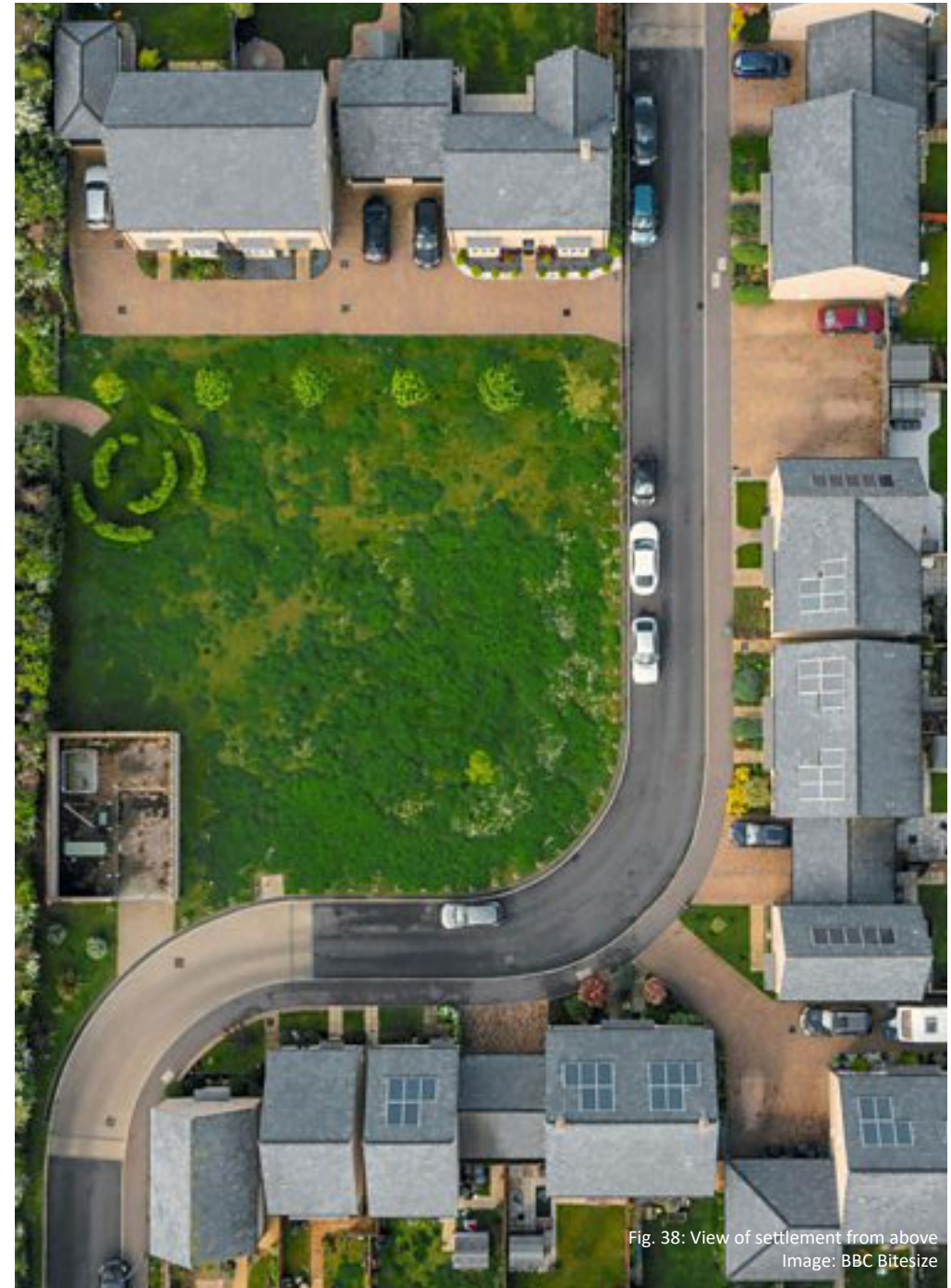


Fig. 38: View of settlement from above  
Image: BBC Bitesize



Fig. 39: Healthy New Town in Barton Park, Oxford  
Image: Barton Oxford LLP (Oxford City Council and Grosvenor developers)

### 3.1.8 | HEALTHY NEW TOWN PRINCIPLES

#### Key Principle

The learning from the healthy New Towns programme in which Darlington was a pilot has been distilled into 10 principles within three key areas of guidance that should inform the Garden Village.

#### Thinkpiece Summary

This think piece suggests how some of the 10 principles should be applied to Skerningham.

The key principles that are particularly relevant to the Skerningham Design Code and should be reflected in it are;

**Principle 4** Creating Compact neighbourhoods-compact spaces and places with services to maximise use and impact with multi-functional green spaces

**Principle 5** Maximise active travel-embedding active travel from the first phases

**Principle 7** Foster health in homes and buildings-provide suitable homes that are healthy and efficient , workplaces that stimulate productivity efficiency and resilience and educational settings that support growth and development and community hubs that support health and connections

**Principle 8** Enable healthy play and leisure-Creat play, leisure, and community activity spaces for all and enable

**Principle 10** Create integrated health and well -being centres – ensure a joined up approach to the provision such services to serve Skerningham and adjacent existing communities.

### 3.1.9 | NATURE BASED CODING

#### More Nature: Thinkpiece Summary

Globally we need to protect and reinstate more land for nature to safeguard natural systems from micro-flora and -flora in soil to birds in the sky, and all between. Previous estimates of 30% of the planet's surface required to recharge nature was recently recommended by Science to exceed 45%.

Page 86 What would somewhere look like where EVERY item contributed to nature ?

- + Bus stops with green roofs
- + Bin stores with bug wall enclosures
- + Swift and sparrow colonies on gable end
- + Bat tiles in roofs
- + All rainwater run off by SUDS
- + Could waste water be treated locally through nature based solutions to recharge aquifers for irrigation?
- + Feasibility of storm water retention by beaver introduction in the Skerne Valley
- + Pesticide free street weeding as with 80 UK councils with wildflower colonisation and management to keep accessible

- + Reinforced grass vehicle surfaces
- + Green walls and roofs
- + Celebrate 'scruffy' undisturbed areas for wildlife to flourish
- + Stop potential nutrient flow from farmland into waterways

The principle of retaining the most valuable ecological resources and connecting them across a site by means of wildlife corridors is critical for genetic diversity and healthy populations of wildlife.

Woodland should be retained from a BNG metric and Carbon perspective, acknowledging food security what is therefore the most and least valuable farmland to be retained?

Work iteratively with project ecologists.

The more appealing the destination is, the closer it is to daily life and the further away from busy roads, the greater the uptake will be. 'Wildlife corridors for people' should be created. The Skerne Valley Park would be a critical aspect of Skerningham's identity.



Fig. 40: Solar Panels  
Image: Yorkshire Energy Systems

Fig. 41: Grandmother and grandchild hiking in a forest  
Image: Juliane Liebermann via unsplash



### Immersing People in Nature: Thinkpiece Summary

We need to balance a healthy ecological place that supports more wildlife with a place to live and spend at least 2 hours a day 'in nature' for the benefit of individual lives, maintaining landscape character and enhancing biodiversity as evidence shows :

- + Psychological effects, make us feel healthier, happier and more fulfilled;
- + Behavioural responses encourage us to make active life choices;
- + Physiological, medicinal relationships from the air we breathe - called 'Forest Bathing' in Japan.

It is vital to establishing places and routes people currently perceive and value as 'nature'. Supported by ecological and landscape design, memory-mapping must be central to masterplanning. The immersion of people in nature can be seen as 3 tiered within green infrastructure :

01. The environment to live, learn, work or receive services;
02. Places to visit for recreation or exercise;
03. Transport routes – pedestrian, cycle and vehicle.

The more appealing the destination is, the closer it is to daily life and the further away from busy roads, the greater the uptake will be. 'Wildlife corridors for people' should be created.

There are many requirements of healthy placemaking and within green infrastructure it is important that ecological planning does not turn its back on the principle of creating lively spaces and streets with active frontages.

A hybrid green urbanity should be created, with urban focuses enjoying green connectivity and rural outlook.

## 3.1.10 | CLIMATE RESILIENT BUILDINGS

### Key Principle

Climate change is happening now. It is one of the biggest challenges of our generation.... As we redouble our efforts to achieve net zero, we must also continue to raise ambitions on adaptation to ensure the UK is resilient to the challenges of a warming world.

### Thinkpiece Summary

The importance of Designing for Climate Resilience is clear and should be at the forefront in design consideration for any development. As one of the Garden Villages Design Principles laid out in The Art of building a Garden City (Henderson, Lock, Ellis) it has particular relevance to Skertingham.

New homes must be built to be low-carbon, energy and water efficient and climate resilient. The costs of building to a specification that achieves these aims are not prohibitive, and getting design right from the outset is vastly cheaper than forcing retrofit later. In accordance with the Future Homes Standard, from 2025 at the latest, no new homes should be connected to the gas grid. They should instead be

heated through low carbon sources, have ultra-high levels of energy efficiency alongside appropriate ventilation and, where possible, be timber-framed.

UK housing: Fit for the Future? Committee on Climate Change 2019

This was published more than 3 years ago and this is still very relevant and sadly only small incremental step have been made since then.

The positioning of buildings on site, orientation, form factor and genuine fabric first approach with integrated renewable or district heating system all contribute to climate resilience. Climate resilient buildings need to go beyond building regulations particularly anything that purports to be exemplar. Meeting building regulations, to some, is a race to the bottom, trying to get as near to the standard so only just being compliant. In other words, it is deemed acceptable that our new housing stock is only just legal. Coupled with the performance gap that the 'Fit for the Future' report describes many could fall below this.

### Small scale housing

#### Operational energy

Implement the following indicative design measures:

Fabric U-values (W/m <sup>2</sup> K)
Walls
Floor
Roof
Exposed ceilings/floors
Windows
Doors

efficiency measures
Air tightness
Thermal bridging
G-value of glass
MVHR

- Maximise renewables so that 100% of annual energy requirement is generated on-site
- Form factor of 1.7 - 2.8

Reduce energy consumption to:

**35 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> yr**

Energy use intensity (EUI) in UK, including renewable energy contribution

Reduce space heating demand to:

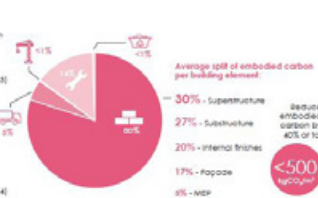
**15 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> yr**



#### Embodied carbon

Focus on reducing embodied carbon for the largest parts:

- Products/materials (A1-A3)
- Transport (A4)
- Construction (A5)
- Maintenance and replacements (B1-B5)
- End of life disposal (C1-C4)



#### Heating and hot water

Implement the following measures:

- Fuel** Ensure heating and hot water generation is fast fuel free
- Heat** The average carbon content of heat supplied (kgCO<sub>2</sub>/kWh) should be reported in-use
- Heating** Maximum 10 W/m<sup>2</sup> peak heat loss (including ventilation)
- Hot water** Maximum dead leg of 1 litre for hot water pipework

Green Star Water Label should be used for hot water outlets (e.g. certified 4 L/min shower head - not using flow restrictors).



#### Data disclosure

Meter and disclose energy consumption as follows:

1. Submeter renewables for energy generation and generation
2. Submeter electric vehicle charging
3. Submeter heating fuel (e.g. heat pump consumption)
4. Continuously monitor with a smart meter
5. Consider monitoring internal temperatures
6. For multiple properties include a data logger alongside the smart meter to make data sharing possible.

#### Demand response

Implement the following measures to smooth energy demand and consumption:

- Peak reduction** Reduce heating and hot water peak energy demand
- Active demand response measures** Install heating set point control and thermal storage
- Electricity generation and storage** Consider battery storage
- Electric vehicle (EV) charging** Electric vehicle turn down
- Behaviour change** Incentives to reduce power consumption and peak grid constraints.

### Medium and large scale housing

#### Operational energy

Implement the following indicative design measures:

Fabric U-values (W/m <sup>2</sup> ·K)	Window areas guide (% of wall area)
Walls	0.15 - 0.18
Floor	0.08 - 0.10
Roof	0.10 - 0.12
Exposed ceilings/floors	0.13 - 0.18
Windows	0.80 (triple glazing)
Doors	1.00

Efficiency measures
Air tightness
Thermal bridging
G-value of glass
MVHR

- Maximise renewables so that 100% of annual energy requirement is generated on-site
- Form factor of 0.8 - 1.5

Reduce energy consumption to:

**35 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> yr**

Energy use intensity (EUI) in UK, including renewable energy contribution

Reduce space heating demand to:

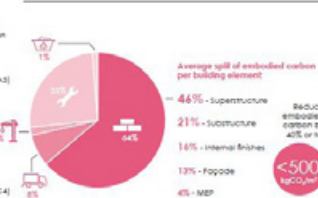
**15 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> yr**



#### Embodied carbon

Focus on reducing embodied carbon for the largest parts:

- Products/materials (A1-A3)
- Transport (A4)
- Construction (A5)
- Maintenance and replacements (B1-B5)
- End of life disposal (C1-C4)



#### Heating and hot water

Implement the following measures:

- Fuel** Ensure heating and hot water generation is fast fuel free
- Heat** The average carbon content of heat supplied (kgCO<sub>2</sub>/kWh) should be reported in-use
- Heating** Maximum 10 W/m<sup>2</sup> peak heat loss (including ventilation)
- Hot water** Maximum dead leg of 1 litre for hot water pipework

Green Star Water Label should be used for hot water outlets (e.g. certified 4 L/min shower head - not using flow restrictors).



#### Data disclosure

Meter and disclose energy consumption as follows:

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5. Consider monitoring internal temperatures
6. For multiple properties include a data logger alongside the smart meter to make data sharing possible.

#### Demand response

Implement the following measures to smooth energy demand and consumption:

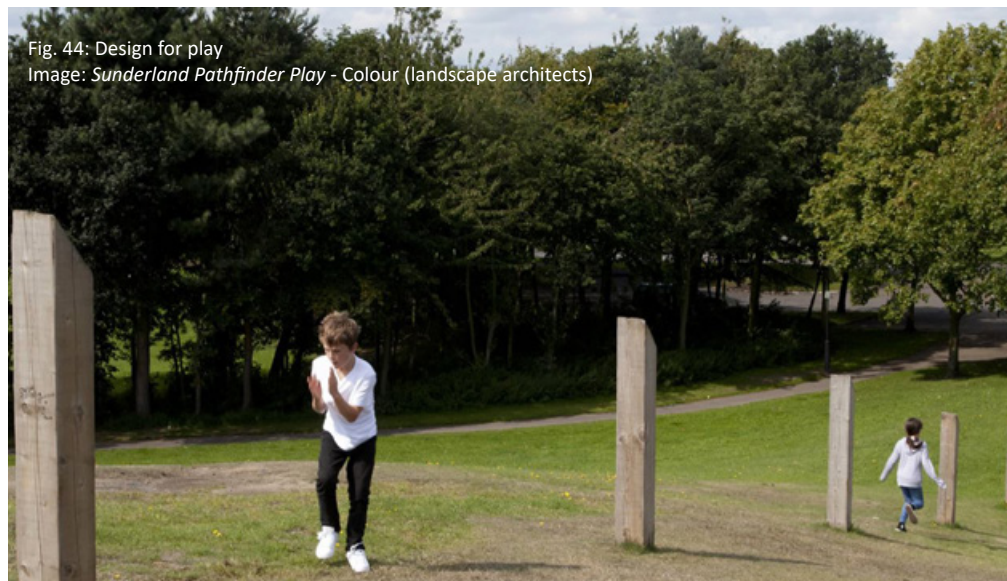
- Peak reduction** Reduce heating and hot water peak energy demand
- Active demand response measures** Install heating set point control and thermal storage
- Electricity generation and storage** Consider battery storage
- Electric vehicle (EV) charging** Electric vehicle turn down
- Behaviour change** Incentives to reduce power consumption and peak grid constraints.

Fig. 42: Design guide diagrams from LETI Clearer diagrams provided in Appendix 9.7

Fig. 43: Design for play  
Image: *Sunderland Pathfinder Play* - Colour (landscape architects)



Fig. 44: Design for play  
Image: *Sunderland Pathfinder Play* - Colour (landscape architects)



### 3.1.11 | PLAY, RECREATION + SPORT

#### Thinkpiece Summary

The greatest impact on community health is through improving behaviour patterns of the least active. Masterplans can invite exploration and enjoyment of nature, encourage active transport, outdoor play and participation in formal and informal play. Through a little extra thought, infrastructure can be designed so as to become a nudge rather than a barrier to activity.

Organisations such as Sport England, UK Active, NHS England, the International Physical Literacy Association and Making Space for Girls provide excellent guidance and case studies in the planning, community consultation, design and management of places that appeal to as broad a range of the population as possible - safe for all ages, genders, cultures, interests and levels of physical ability.

Through being place responsive, environments should be playable,

inviting a sense of adventure and exploration that aids physical development, promotes social interaction, safeguards user safety and safe testing of risk.

In establishing the need for facilities it should be recognised that core sports are not for everyone and no two locations or communities are the same, the traditional planning-led top-down sports dominated offer should be balanced by the needs of the wider population to achieve an active lifestyle. Informal use of public spaces, footpaths, cycleways and the services such as refreshment and toilets should be provided in appropriate locations.

There should be a mechanism within the planning process, spaces within applications and appropriate development funding to test what the community wants and thus avoid under-utilised sports, play and outdoor gym equipment in inappropriate locations.

## 3.2 | PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

### Community Engagement Summary of Process + Outcomes

This Design Code has been shaped by the effective engagement of both the residents of Darlington as a whole and specifically the local communities adjacent to the proposed Garden Village.

*One Darlington* the Borough Councils magazine that is delivered to all residents included feature articles about the proposed Garden Village and how people could get involved with developing a design code and a special section of the Darlington website provided regular updates and useful learning material.

In addition a programme of local face to face workshops were held to involve the local community in the development of the Design Code . The following proposed outcomes for the Public Engagement were shared and agreed at the outset;

+ An exemplary Design Code for Skerningham.

+ Good Quality Engagement so that people feel involved and informed.

+ Tangible ‘Stuff’ in the code that people would recognise as theirs.

The initial workshops were designed to build capacity in the local community to engage with the process of developing a design code. Starting with raising awareness of the ten characteristics of well-designed places, their relevance to Skerningham, and how local preferences would be considered for inclusion in the design code.

The aim has been to encourage a positive discussion about the potential to influence the quality and successful creation of Skerningham Garden Village, illustrate relationship between the public engagement

and the development of the code and show how participants will recognise their input. These initial workshops indicated in particular the local importance of **access to nature** in the adjacent countryside, **good, connected footpath and cycle networks, minimal impact on existing communities** and a **good mix of housing designed for climate change**.

Further workshops have then distilled the many comments and suggestions to enable a further refinement of local preferences and greater clarity of the things that the design code will need to take into account.

Refer to Appendix 9.6 for detailed summary of community engagement process and outcomes.



Fig. 45: Image from public consultation

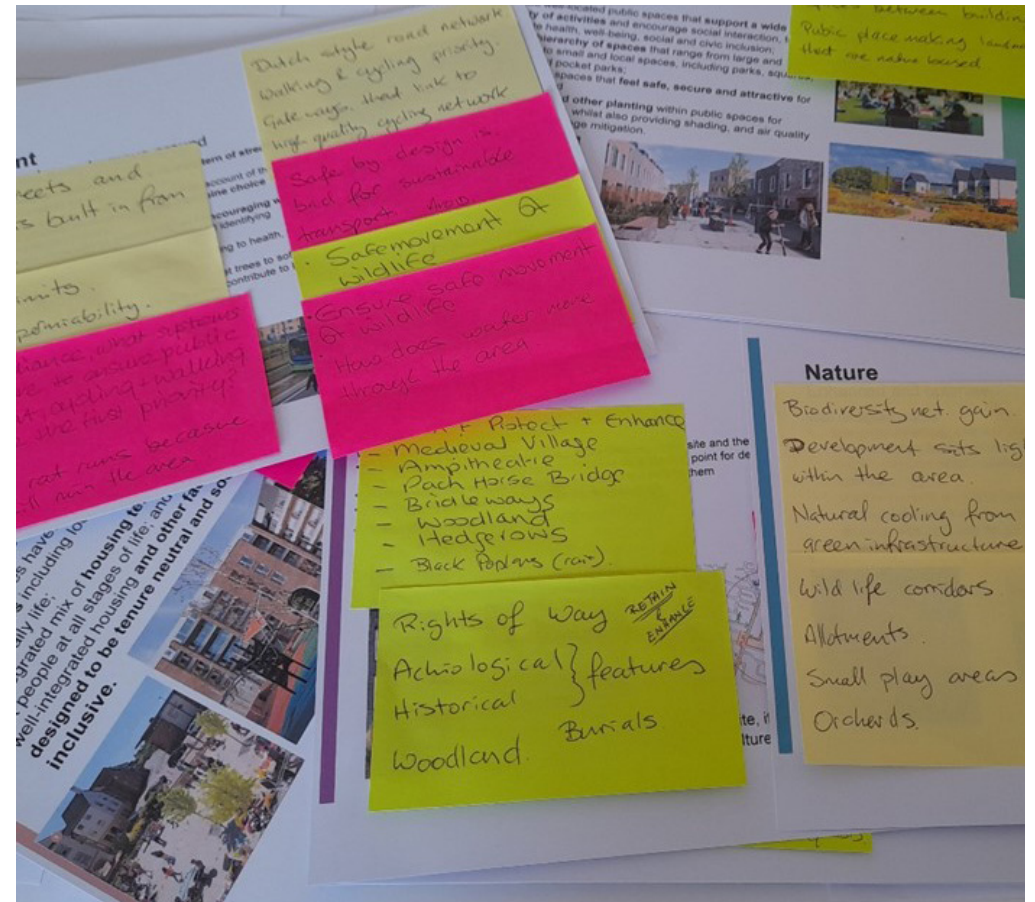


Fig. 46: Outcome snapshot from public consultation

### 3.3 | VISION

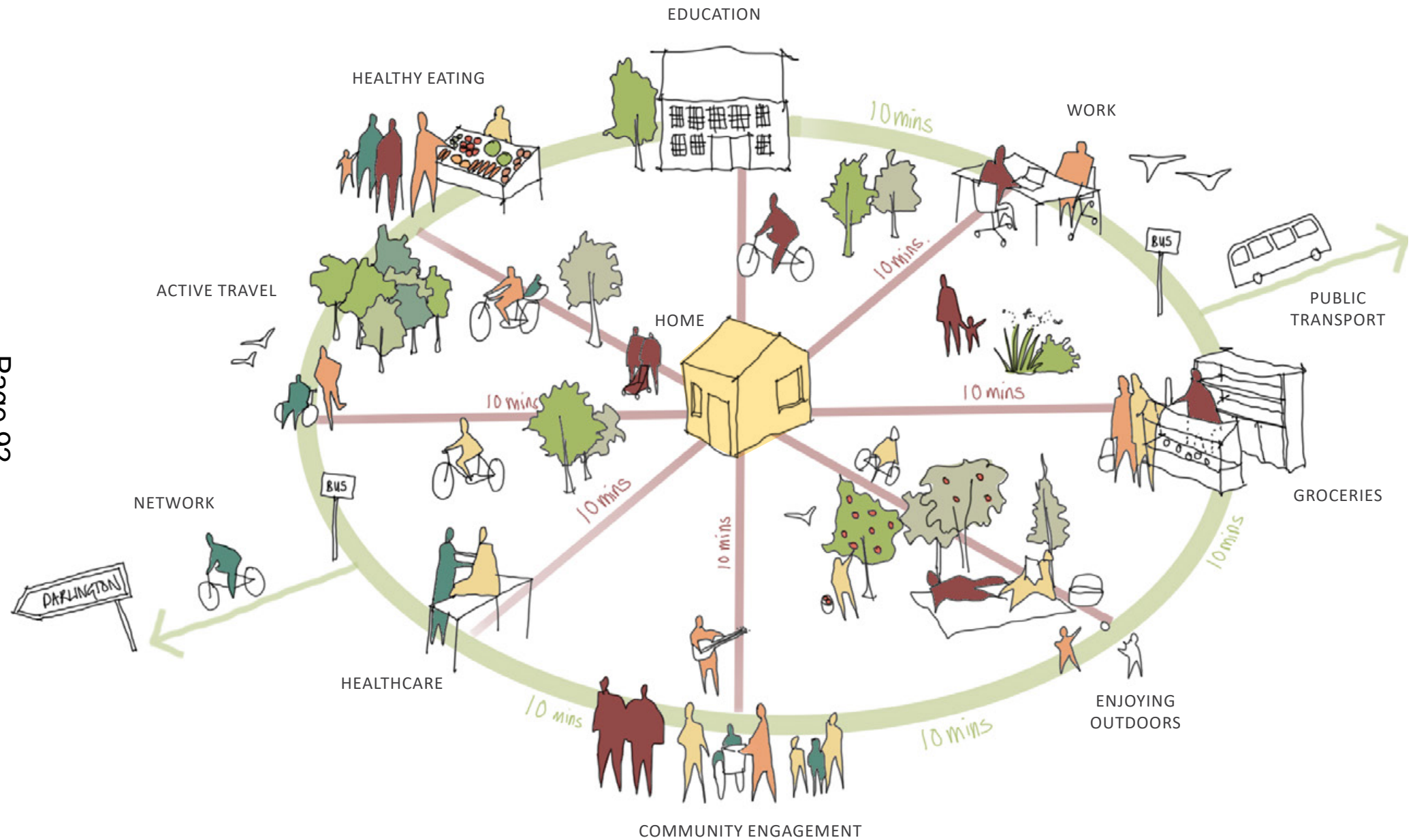


Fig. 47: Vision diagram

### Vision Statement

The ambition for Skerningham Garden Village is to

*create a great place for  
a new community to live,  
work and recreate*

in accordance with national planning standards and best practice including the ‘*National Design Guide*’ (DLUHC), ‘*Building for Healthy Life*’, the new ‘*National Garden Village Principles*’ (DLUHC), and the emerging Design Council ‘*A Public Vision for the Home of 2030*’ which is supported by Government.

As a result of the public engagement and thinkpiece exercises, there are 3 key themes that inform the design code:

## 01. HEALTHY LIVING

In 2016 Darlington was selected to be one of the 10 demonstrator sites for the **Healthy New Towns** (HNT) Pilot across the UK to explore how the development of new places could provide an opportunity to create healthier and connected communities with integrated and high-quality health services.

A publication, ‘*Putting Health into Place*’ (PHiP) collates the learning from this programme and sets out 10 principles for healthy place-making. The proposed Garden Village presents the first large scale opportunity to embed PHiP in the UK and this opportunity must not be wasted.

## 02. INNOVATION

The proposed Garden Village encourages innovative thinking in ALL aspects of the planning, design, delivery and future occupation and use of the Village.

The opportunities for innovative thinking extend beyond not only the expectation of the incorporation of high-speed broadband across the site, but into areas as diverse as: achieving a bio-diversity net gain from the development of the site; incorporating low and high density self-build plots within the overall scheme to address specific urban design requirements; reflecting the learning derived from the Darlington Healthy Living pilot; etc.

## 03. SENSE OF PLACE

The overall development should have a unique sense-of-place, that is distinctive whilst also be grounded in the locale through its composition, form, materials, etc. It should demonstrate the best of current design thinking and reflect the need for long-term low environmental impact and sustainability.

Ultimately the success of a housing development scheme will be in its “Placemaking” ability & long-term success. Design Teams should ask themselves “Will the residents and users enjoy and care for the “place” over time and feel that they are living happy, contented, fruitful, healthy lives as a consequence of the design?”



## 4.0 | STRATEGIC TOOLKIT

4.1 Movement

4.2 Nature

4.3 Built Form

4.4 Identity

4.5 Public Space

4.6 Use

4.7 Homes + Buildings

4.8 Resources + Lifespan

## 4.1 | MOVEMENT

### The Network

The movement network will provide a comprehensive network of routes for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicular traffic to enable people to get from where they live to where they want to get to in the safest, most direct, and healthiest way.

### Guiding Design Principles:

○ To prioritise the movement and safety of pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities through to provision of **Coherent, Direct, Safe, Comfortable** and **Attractive routes**.

○ Residential development and essential community services and schools will be located to ensure that the **20 minute walkable** (10 minutes there and 10 minutes back) neighbourhood is achieved.

○ It will be a **legible and permeable network of streets**

with a clear street hierarchy, including a network of local and tertiary streets of varying character. The aim will be to move from main and secondary streets to local and tertiary streets as quickly as possible.

○ Ensure **pedestrian and cycle connectivity** is made to connect the site with the surrounding area to both enable local communities to also access services within Skerningham and residents of Skerningham to access those beyond the site including the Skerne Valley Park.

○ All homes and services will be within a **10 minute walk from a bus stop** with frequent service.

○ Provide **appropriate level of vehicular and cycle parking** but ensuring it does not dominate the built environment, public realm, or open spaces.

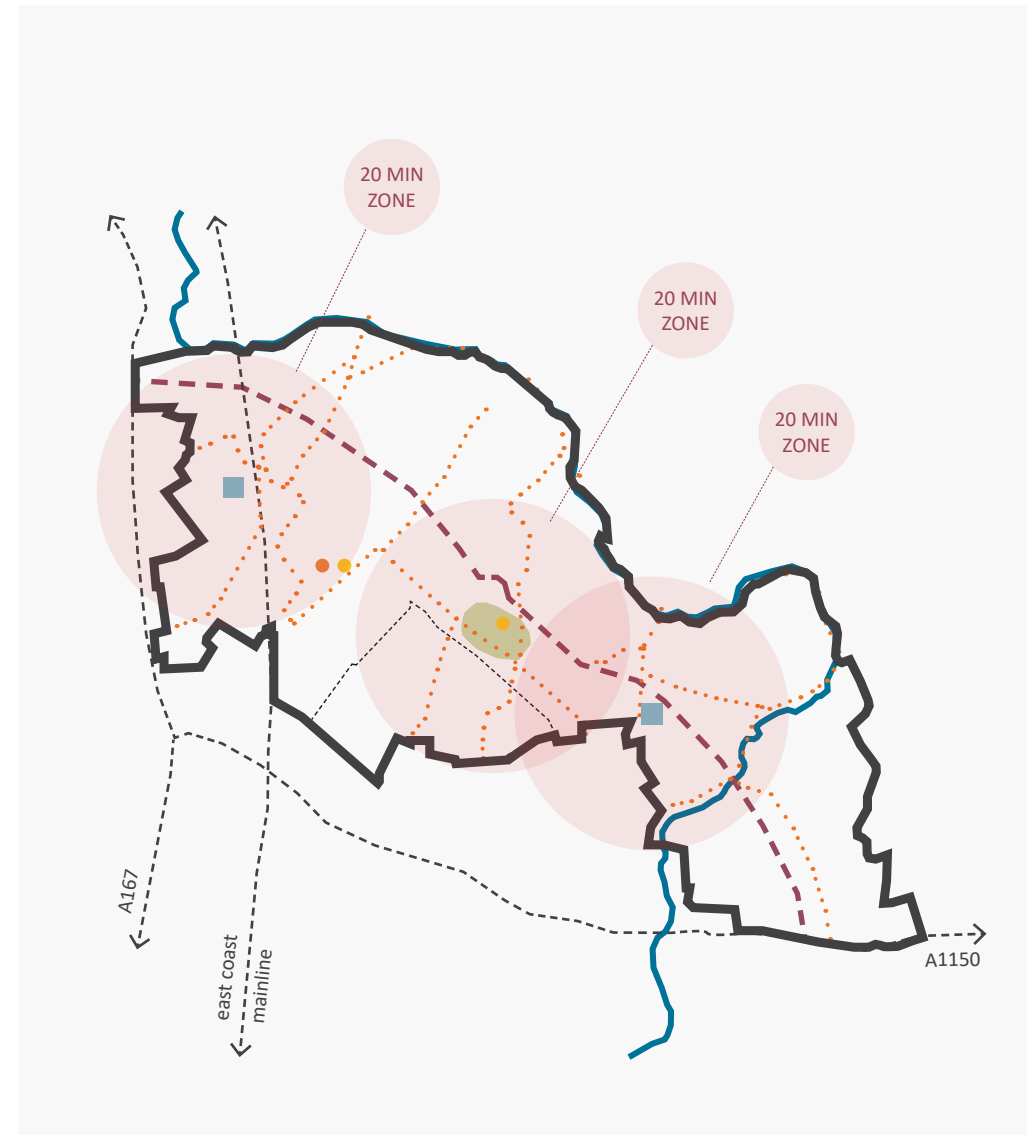


Fig. 48: Indicative 20 min walkable zones based on Skerningham Masterplan Framework

- Potential neighbourhood centre
- Primary school
- Secondary school
- Potential location of community facilities
- Safe, attractive and accessible network of public foot and cycle paths
- Proposed local distributor road to avoid the Skerne River Valley



Fig. 49: Designing for a sense of place

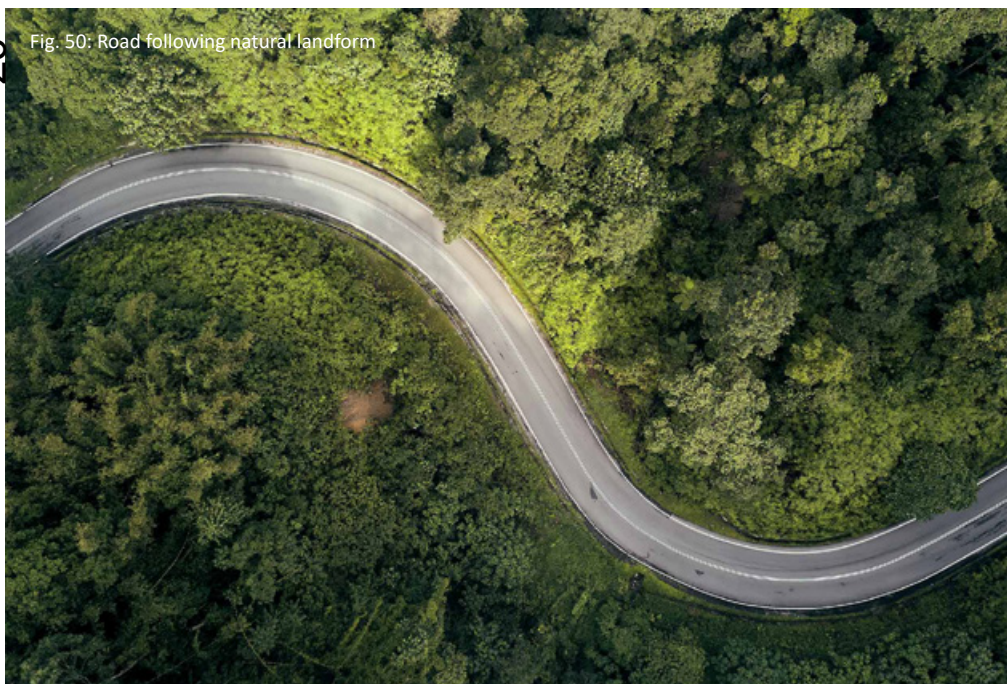


Fig. 50: Road following natural landform

### The Local Distributor Road

The Darlington Local Plan Policy H10 states that a local distributor road between the A167 and A1150 will provide vehicular access to the development. The local Plan sets out the phasing requirements for the distributor road and **also states that the precise details of the road and development access points shall be agreed with the Council as part of the masterplan, infrastructure phasing plan and future planning applications for the site.**

### Guiding Design Principles:

- It will be designed for **low traffic speeds** with speed limit of no more than 40mph and potentially lower in the central section. It will look like a road that is part of a garden village and not a high speed bypass and should emphasise a sense of place.
- The road will be aligned to **avoid the existing Skerningham Plantation** and being visible from the river Skerne.

○ **Additional planting** will both enhance the road corridor and provide screening of sensitive locations as appropriate.

○ Properties will face the road accessed from service roads with trees.

○ **Sections of footway /cycleway** may run alongside the road in certain places, but they will be well separated by distance and landscaping.

○ A number of **compact roundabout junctions** on the distributor road will give access to the development sites and local street network.

○ To maintain the sense of green connectivity there will need to be **careful consideration of the locations and design at the meeting of footpath and or cycle network crossings** of the distributor road. This aspect is covered the sections below and in each of the relevant Character Area sections.

### Street Hierarchy

Skerningham will have a connected network and hierarchy of routes for all modes of transport. The function of each street will depend on location with the development and the areas through which they connect. This will then influence the movement /place role and design criteria.

A replacement for Manual for Streets is currently being developed and when published later in 2022 will establish new design guidelines for all streets. Until then the following guidelines will be followed. (See also 7.1 Design Quality Coding Checklist).

There are four main street types in the movement hierarchy.

#### 01. Main Village Streets

These are the strategic vehicular routes that link the site to wider town and surrounding areas. The Main Streets will have frontage development and vary in character to relate to specific areas such as the Village centre.

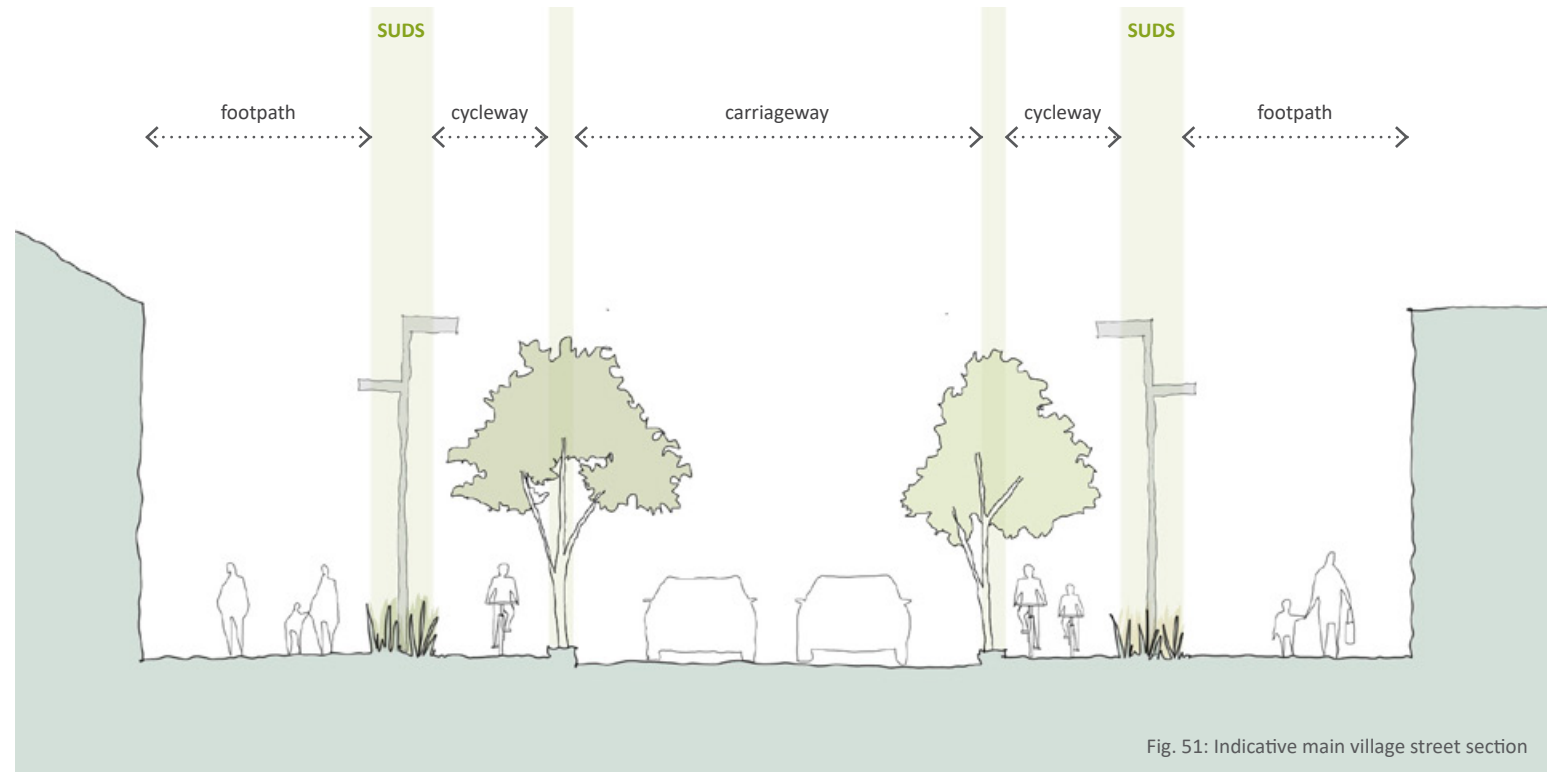


Fig. 51: Indicative main village street section

#### Guiding Design Principles:

- The main village streets will be short to encourage low speeds or broken up with changes in priority/width as part of a permeable network.
- They must create a positive pedestrian/cycle environment
- Street trees and SuDS will be included.
- There will be street lighting.
- Defined parking bays will be included.
- These routes will be a maximum width of 6.7 metres where they are bus and key servicing routes, and consideration should be given to a maximum width generally of 5 metres. Manual for Streets 2 - where HGVs and buses make up only a small proportion of traffic flow 2-2.5m wide lanes would be sufficient for most vehicles and would reduce carriageway width requirements, making it much easier for pedestrians to cross.
- Junctions will have tight radii corners.

## 02. Secondary Village Streets

Secondary Streets are mostly residential streets connecting the Main Streets.

### Guiding Design Principles:

- Clear distinction between vehicular, cycle and pedestrian space and variation in typology according to their specific location .
- Street trees that give the sense of an avenue and SUDs will be included.
- Speed limited to 20mph.
- 5m wide with trees that give the sense of an avenue in a verge strip or carriage way which will enable provision for parking bays.
- Tight junction radii and footpath treatment across junction bell mouths to confirm pedestrian priority.

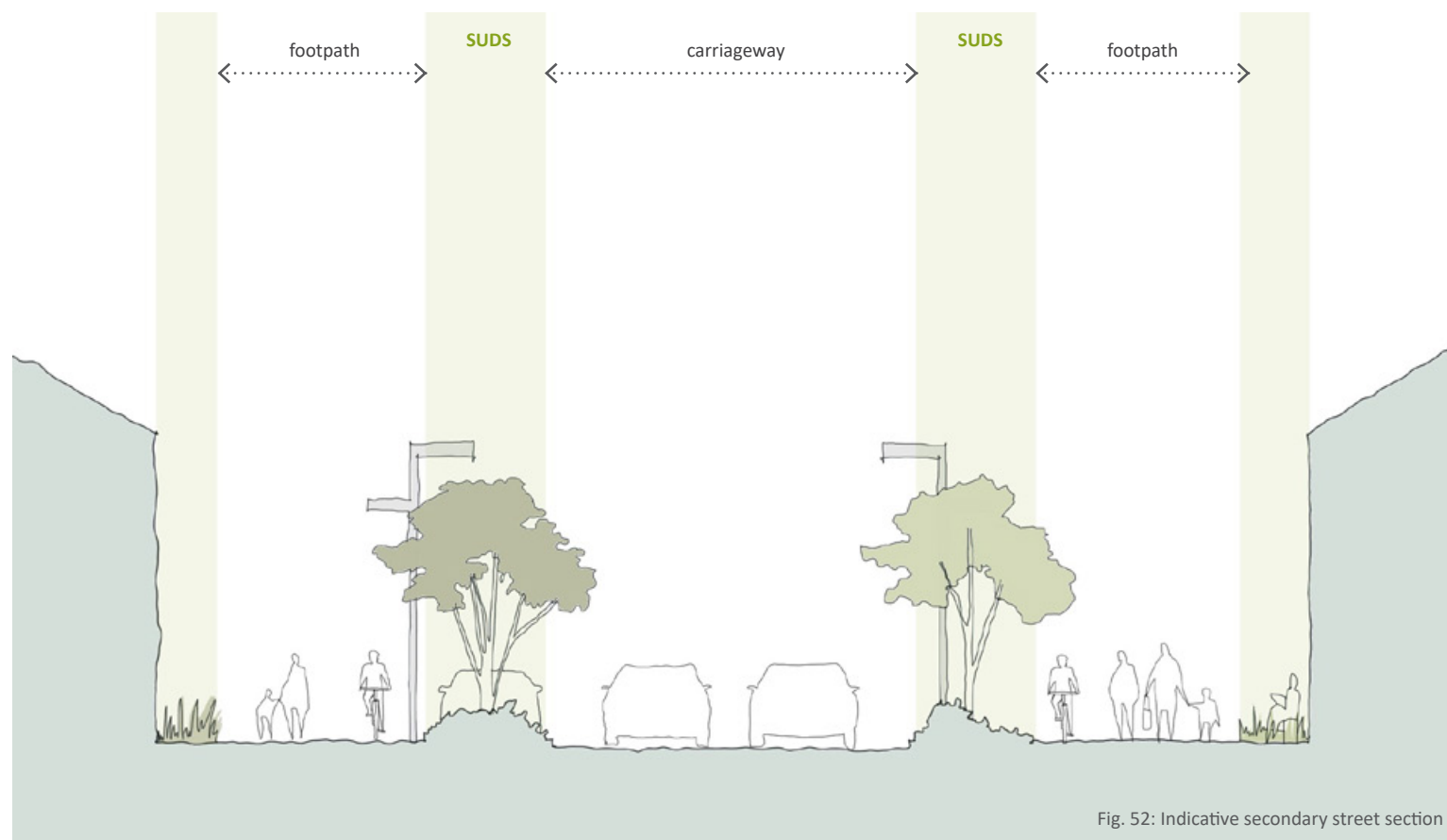


Fig. 52: Indicative secondary street section

### 03. Local Streets

These are residential streets with managed traffic flows to prioritise active travel that provide access to homes and support active travel, social interaction and health and well being.

### 04. Tertiary Streets

Lower order streets for access to small groups of clusters of homes and servicing. They can be mews courts, lanes alleyways and their final location and type will be determined through detailed design.

#### Guiding Design Principles:

- The use of cul-de-sac should be minimised. Where cul-de-sac are used connectivity for pedestrians and cycles must be ensured.
- Filtered permeability throughout the network will design-out rat-running, create a low traffic environment around homes whilst still allowing pedestrian and cycle movement.
- Creativity should be used to incorporated street trees, ideally in soft landscape into both typologies so as to create a strong green ambience.

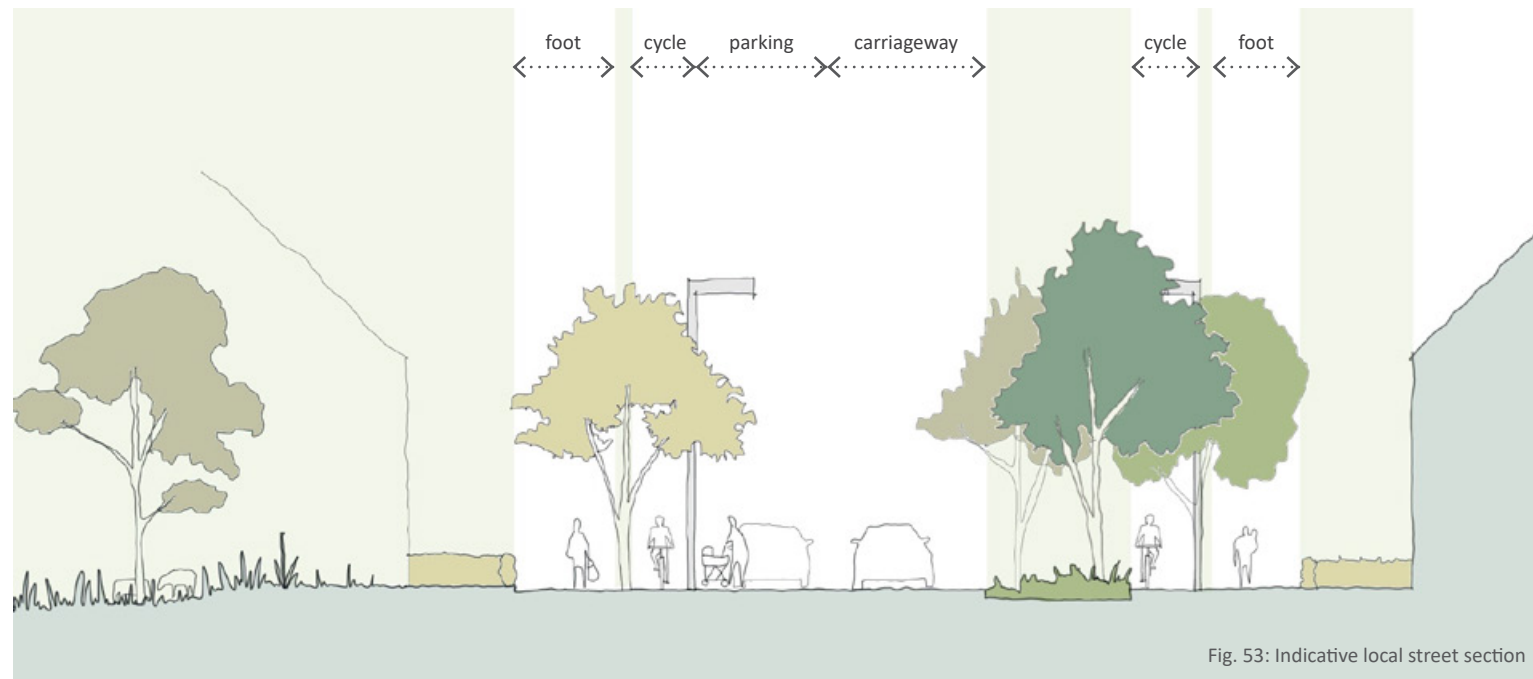


Fig. 53: Indicative local street section



Fig. 54: Indicative village fringe section

## Public Transport

Whilst the vision for Skerningham is that of a compact 20 minute neighbourhood with a range of services that meet most needs access to public transport will be key to providing choice for everyday journeys beyond the immediate neighbourhood to Darlington Town centre, employment centres and schools.

The parts of Skerningham will have good public transport accessibility when homes have a public transport stop within walking distance.

A small proportion of the proposed Skerningham development can be located within walking distance of existing bus routes and stops. This may require improving the permeability of existing pedestrian routes and or providing new routes.

However in the main to achieve good transport accessibility (all houses within 5 minutes walking distance of a bus stop) the development will require that parts of the proposed street network (main Streets) can accommodate bus services.

## Guiding Design Principles:

- In order to ensure adequate potential public transport penetration all households within 10 minutes walking distance ) of a bus stop some or all of the Main Street network must be designed to accommodate local buses, including bus stops.
- Bus shelters should incorporate green or brown roofs.
- Streets should include infrastructure with secondary uses for play and exercise.
- Covered cycle and scooter storage to incorporate green or brown roofs.



Fig. 55: Active travel  
Image: Living Streets

## Inclusive Streets

Our streets should be for everyone - providing safe and attractive places to travel, rest, play and spend time.

They need to work for all of us, whatever our age, ability, gender, race or income.

Creating pedestrian and cycle routes, the layout of public space, parks and green space that are safe, direct, convenient, and accessible for people of all abilities. The needs of those that are less mobile need to be considered.

## Measures to include:

- Tactile paving at junctions and crossing points.
- Street furniture/ trees located so as not to impede movement.
- Footpaths/ dropped kerbs ensure ease of movement for wheelchair users or buggies.
- Adequate widths of shared footpath cycle lanes.
- Features to aid legibility, wayfinding, and ease of movement.



Fig. 56: Active travel

### Active Travel

Active travel refers to non-motorised and sustainable forms of transport, primarily walking and cycling, and horse-riding in this location.

Streets and paths within Skerningham must connect people to places and public transport services in the most direct way, making car-free travel more attractive, safe, and convenient.

The aim is to make walking and cycling feel like an instinctive choice for undertaking short journeys for everyone, of all ages and capabilities.

The active travel network should be informed by 5 core principles (Coherent, Direct, Safe, Comfortable and Attractive).

Existing public paths will be protected and enhanced as appropriate and celebrated as significant historical routes e.g. Salters lane. These aspects are discussed in more detail within the Character Areas.

The routes must feel direct, logical, and understandable by all road users.

### Guiding Design Principles:

- Everyone should be able to cross the road safely, directly, and without delay.
- Safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle crossings must be provided at regular intervals including informal and formal provision.
- Any signalised crossings should allow for appropriate crossing times and uncontrolled crossings main and secondary roads will be pinched to create short crossing widths.
- There will be places to sit, space to chat or play within the street.
- Pavements and cycleways will continue across side streets or there will be tight radii at junctions to ensure the pedestrian desire line is maintained.
- Private drives which frustrate pedestrian and cycle movement will be discouraged.
- Pedestrian and cycle routes must be safe, overlooked, and appropriately lit.
- Cycle routes must connect as directly as possible from the tertiary street network to key destinations both within and beyond the Skerningham Garden Village boundary (e.g. local shopping and services, secondary schools, colleges, the town centre) .
- Cycle routes will complement and, in some cases, extend Darlington's (Tees Valley) strategic cycle network.
- Cycle routes will follow the line of village main and secondary roads where appropriate. In situations where cyclists are sharing the carriageway speed differences will be reduced.
- The design of the Cycle network will adopt the guidance in Local transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Guidance,

DfT July 2020. The network will follow the guidance on Cycling Level of Service (CLoS) and Junction Assessment Tools (JAT) with a mesh density of 250m max and a deviation factor of 1.2.

○ Leisure cycle routes will run through open space and alongside the green/ blue infrastructure network. They are traffic free and provide safe environments for cycling for all ages and abilities.

○ As pedestrian and cycle routes move from the residential areas into the open spaces up to and beyond the distributor road they will take on a more rural appearance; material such as crushed limestone will replace tarmac and there will be no streetlighting.

○ The area of the village centres must be designed to be shared between pedestrians and cyclists.



Fig. 57: Shared surfaces for pedestrians and cyclists in the village centre

### Junctions and Crossings

Where the pedestrian and cycle network meets the distributor Road the crossings will require careful and sensitive design depending on location.

In some cases the cycle or footpath route will have changed in character as it leaves the residential area and heads towards the open space up to and beyond the distributor road.

### Vehicular Parking: Standards and design Requirements

Encouraging active travel is not about preventing people from buying/owning cars and other vehicles. It's about usage and creating the conditions to encourage short journeys to be made on foot or on bike within and beyond the boundary of the garden village.

The design must therefore anticipate realistic levels of car parking demand, guarding against displaced and anti-social parking.

Parking within the new garden village will include private dedicated parking

for residential homes, public parking spaces for visitors and shared parking for residents, employees, and visitors within village centres.

The Darlington Local Plan states: *Local parking standards for new development and changes of use will be set out in the Tees Valley Highway Design Guide (due to be updated 2021/2022), in the meantime nationally defined parking standards will be applied in the Borough.*

### Guiding Design Principles:

○ Tees Valley Standards  
Normal requirements for a dwelling are 2 spaces per household. This includes visitor and residents parking. In a conventional development this provision is expected to consist of a garage and driveway (the driveway must be at least 6m in length from the back of footpath).

○ Communal visitor parking 0.5 per dwelling-is this enough.



Fig. 58: Residential off street parking



Fig. 59: Shared bike storage and recycling

### Cycle Parking: Standards and Design Requirements

To deliver the vision for Skerningham, as a place that encourages active travel, suitable cycle parking infrastructure must be provided to allow residents to own and conveniently use cycles for everyday journeys.

#### Guiding Design Principles:

- Cycle parking must be designed as an essential component of the development and located in both key public spaces, outside destinations, such as schools and within private residences.
- Visitor spaces must be provided separately.
- At least storage for one cycle where it is as easy to access as the car.

- Secure and overlooked cycle parking that is as close to (if not closer) than car parking spaces (or car drop off bays) to the entrances of schools, shops, rail station and other services and facilities.
- Provide scooter and cycle parking at schools. Scooters can encourage younger children to get active on the way to school.



Fig. 60: Well integrated refuse stores must be considered early to avoid this

### Waste, Recycling & Utilities

Services and utilities must be considered at the outset of any future design proposals of Skerningham to ensure quality of space.

#### Guiding Design Principles:

- Well integrated refuse stores, recycling facilities, meter boxes, pipes, flues, and vent must be considered early in the design process and integrated into the overall scheme.
- All homes must have access to High speed (Ultrafast gigabyte) broadband connectivity must be a feature of the development to encourage a 'live/work' balance.

- Electric Vehicle Charging points. Active: 20% charge point provision for residential parking bays Passive: 40% of parking bays Definition of "active" and "passive" provision of charge points: Active - A socket connected to the electrical supply system that vehicle owners can plug their vehicle into. Passive - The network of cables and power supply necessary so that at a future date a socket can be added easily.

## 4.2 | NATURE

Fig. 61: Existing Site



Nature should be retained, enhanced and integrated throughout the landscape, architecture and infrastructure of the Garden Village for the benefit of existing, new residents and visitors so as to maintain a green local identity and help address global environmental issues. Solutions are likely to be interrelated and interdisciplinary so as to create a true holistic solution.

### More Nature

Outcome = ensure a Biodiversity Gain of 20% for every planning application so as to be an exemplar development with more nature than prior to development and above 2022 national planning requirements.

### Guiding Design Principles:

- Identify existing ecological resources and create buffer zones around these for assisted natural regeneration as advised by a qualified ecologist
- Avoid 'greenwash' but incorporate meaningful innovative nature-supporting infrastructure as appropriate such as green roofs,

architectural bird colonies, insect hotels, or reinforced grass vehicle surfaces throughout.

- Create as many ecological niches as possible in line with local Biodiversity Action Plan ambitions.
- Planting to be predominantly native and locally sourced wherever possible.



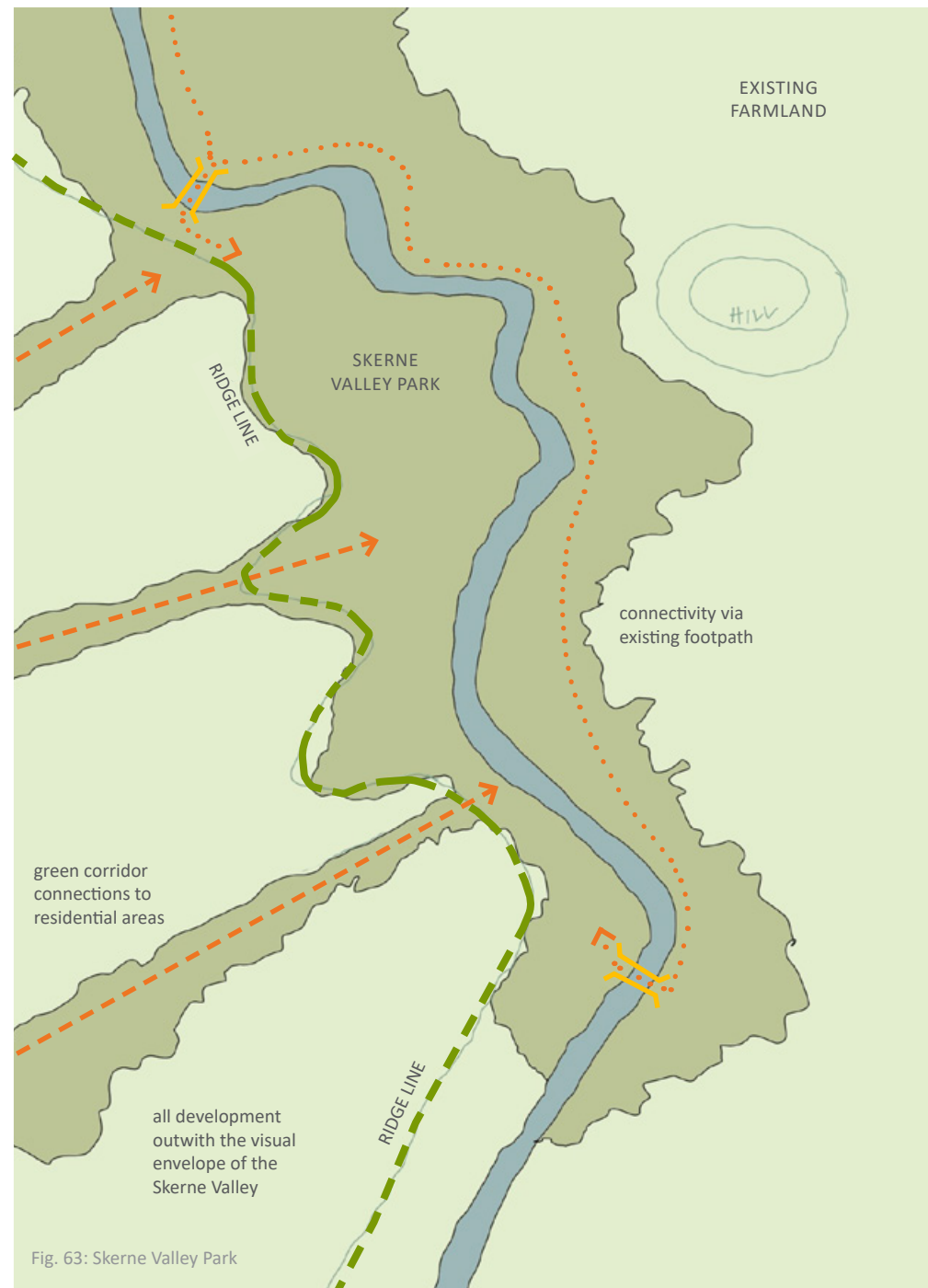
## Better Connected Nature

Outcome = the basis of the masterplan is a network of green infrastructure formed of a mosaic of interconnected habitats that strengthens the existing ecological resource.

### Guiding Design Principles:

- Wildlife corridors must interconnect existing ecological resources such as woodlands, watercourses, hedgerows, fence lines and wet areas so as to create a green network
- There should be two or more primary 'ecological superhighways' that connects that connect the existing urban centre with open countryside;

- These should be identified and designed by professional ecologists iteratively with the master-planner and landscape architect;
- Connecting corridors should be carefully designed to work with the topography, landscape character views and crossing of the distributor road.



### Climate Resilience

Outcome = all solutions should be of benefit to Carbon sequestration, reduced flood risk, passive cooling or heating

#### Guiding Design Principles:

- Landscape strategies should promote sequestration of atmospheric Carbon. For instance felling of mature trees should only be permitted if there is a public safety risk
- Management and maintenance operations should be reviewed in terms of minimising the use of energy and chemicals
- The shading and cooling benefits of vegetation should be exploited on both a micro level to reduce unwanted solar gain and on a macro level to reduce any potential heat island effects
- Sustainable Urban Drainage is mandatory and should be designed so incorporate stepped swales as part of an approach that maximises biodiversity
- Areas prone to flooding should be embraced with landform and wetland habitats created that hold water and help sequester Carbon such as wetlands.



Fig. 64: Utilising wetlands or areas prone to flooding within design

Fig. 65: Existing Garden Community, Chelmsford  
Image: Countryside Zest & Homes England



### Living in Nature

Outcome = people's lives to be within an environment that gives the perception of being immersed in nature.

#### Guiding Design Principles:

- All scales of public open spaces streets of should be designed so as to promote nature, furthermore the masterplan should ensure that natural features are inviting for public access so as to promote health and well-being without compromising biodiversity.
- Existing and proposed footpaths, cycle routes, bridleways and Public Rights of Way should be safeguarded within green corridors that work for wildlife.

- The experience on green routes should be that of being within nature, be it an enclosed country lane, broad sweep of meadow, riverside or woodland experience.
- Green infrastructure such as SUDs and other interventions that perform ecosystem services should be accessible for public use and enjoyment wherever feasible.
- Every street should enjoy views of existing or meaningful proposed Green or Blue

Infrastructure. No places should feel 'landlocked'.

- Ensure that new community facilities such as schools, GP surgeries and shops are connected to nature and users have opportunities for instance to study in the landscape, undertake social prescriptions or just relax under a tree.
- Lawns and amenity grass should be species rich and not require artificial pesticides and herbicides. Reduced mowing regimes and areas of long grass

should be considered wherever possible to both promote biodiversity and reduce energy use.

- External lighting should be cognisant of nature – particularly bats.
- Agricultural stewardship should promote nature, soil health and include features such as nature strips besides hedges and drainage ditches, depressions for ponds and buffer zones to prevent nutrient ingress into waterways.

## 4.3 | BUILT FORM

Fig. 66: Existing Garden Community  
Image: *The Water Garden Village* by  
AR Design Studio

### Built Form

The National Design Guide defines the 'built form' of an area as the *'three-dimensional pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings, and open spaces'* that make up any built-up area or development. It says that a well-designed place has a coherent form of development. For built form this means: a compact form of development and appropriate building types and forms.

### Density Overview

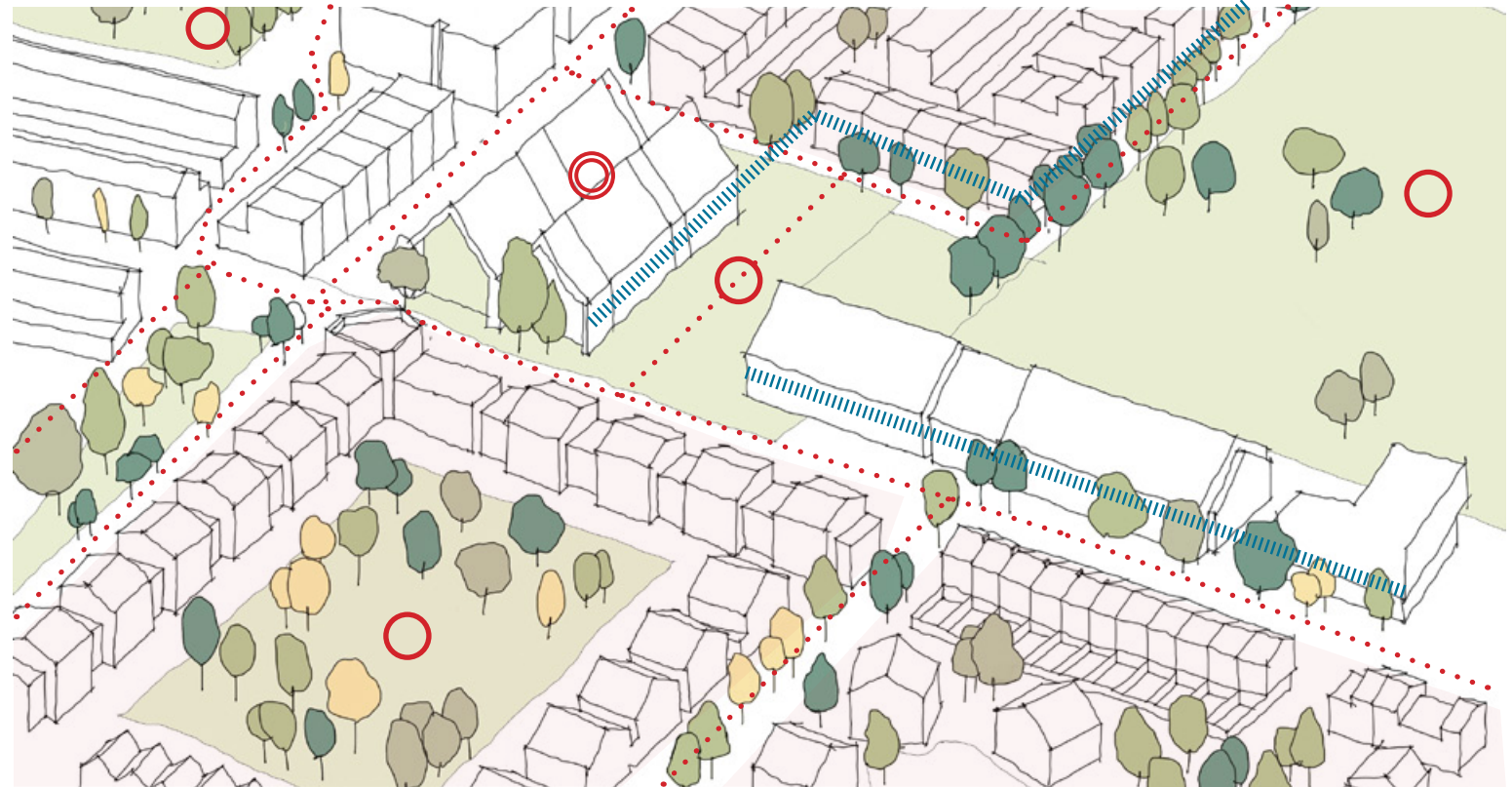
The ambitions for the new Skerningham garden village include achieving a built form that is both **locally distinctive** and **rooted in an**

**enhanced landscape setting** making the most of what is presently there. The 'as found' edge condition for the most part provides only limited opportunities to directly extend existing built form patterns and where appropriate complete development perimeter blocks.

Instead, the new built form will need to focus on structural responses that support the creation of 20min. walkable neighbourhoods which implies relatively dense and tighter development patterns consistent with a typical village configuration as seen in local examples in and around Darlington.



Fig. 67: Illustrative sketch demonstrating Kevin Lynch's 5 principles



## Urban Design Principles

Developers are encouraged to apply the principles of Kevin Lynch (Image of the City) to the overall development: paths, nodes, districts, edges, landmarks, plus additionally gateways. There are important urban design tools that help us create and define these special character areas.

These include the recommended approaches of 'Lynchian Analysis' - pioneered by the influential American urban planner Kevin Lynch notably in his book 'The Image of the City' - with its focus on identifying

..... paths,

○ nodes,

▭ districts,

▤ edges,

⊙ landmarks,

plus additionally gateways. Also, the celebrated British urban designer Gordon Cullen whose book 'Townscape' highlighted the way our local environment is structured in terms of the built form and the external spaces in between.

## Key Design Principles

○ Define a coherent design strategy for the area as a whole.

○ Consider all buildings as important elements and ensure that they work as a whole, in terms of alignment, massing and architectural approach.

○ The clear aspiration of the Council for the choice of building uses, forms and

materials to help create a sense of uniqueness in the final development – indicating that it is located in Darlington and nowhere else – and stands out clearly from other developments in the northeast through a unique mix of architecture, layout including public spaces and choice of materials palette.

○ Development on the Skerningham site should reflect and celebrate local themes in terms of materials, colours, form and style, not in a pastiche manner, but in a modern interpretation of the local vernacular, making development on the site distinctive and unique. This project will have failed if it does not achieve that goal.

## Residential Density

A series of village scale new neighbourhoods with, where appropriate, slightly less dense supporting 'hamlets' or building clusters like a traditional farmstead or 'manor' house with traditional outbuildings could be the basis for the strategic masterplan.

This requires new ideas about creating a great place as an evolution of the 20thC garden villages precedents which are consistent with the local context. It most definitely must not be solely a series of sub-urban scale phased housing estates with little or no sense of the existing context or relationship with each other which all too often

characterises much of the residential development of the past few decades.

The National Design Guide advocates achieving a coherent and recognisable pattern of development using the available land efficiently by building at optimal densities.

The built form should be focussed on bringing people together to support local services and facilities whilst encouraging walking for short journeys and cycling to these local destinations with related street layouts responding to the wider context.

This requires a strategic design

process to determine the development built form for each of the varied character areas that make up the Skerningham garden village.

This should take account for each site, their context, and the respective opportunities they present; the proposed identity and character for the development in the wider place; the lifestyles of occupants and other users; and resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Additionally the evolving built form should be looking to establish an appropriate relationship with the varied pattern, sizes, and proportions of existing streets in the

local area together with the adjacent greenspace that characterises the present north-eastern edges of this part of Darlington.

Within each character area the new built development should be looking to create recognisably successful 'real' streets which are characterised by buildings facing onto the street to provide visual interest, passive overlooking and active frontages at ground level. This requires establishing a clear relationship between building fronts and backs together with turning corners and avoiding excessive lengths of rear garden inactive boundaries abutting streets.



Fig. 68: Low density

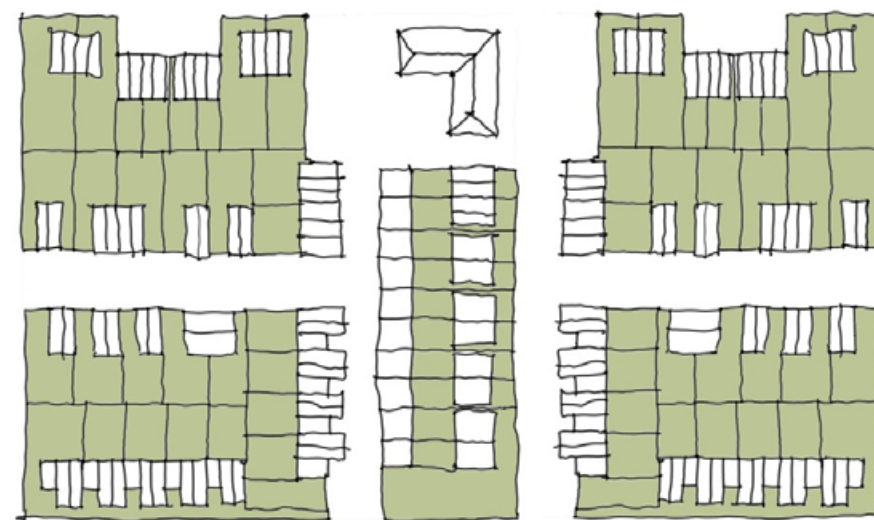


Fig. 69: Medium density

### Density for other uses

The NDG also highlights the key importance of creating destinations as they provide opportunities for people to meet, share experiences and come together as a community. By also where possible bringing existing and new together, these destinations become a place for everyone.

This is particularly relevant for realising the ambition for 20min walkable neighbourhoods in Skerningham garden village since these destinations need to be readily at hand by clustering key uses;

including high quality public spaces; increasing densities so more people live and work around them; and making sure they have active edges. This also means that a range of destinations of varying scale and type should be provided with the aim that each of the character areas should have at least one walkable identified community focused place. That could be a village green or public square with some related communal uses on the perimeter or a street with a 'parade' or group of non-residential uses to provide a distinct destination.

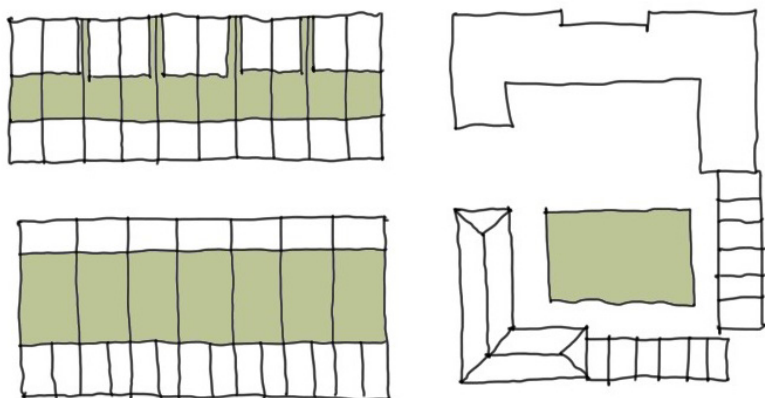


Fig. 70: High density

### Guiding Design Principles:

○ **Composition:** a façade needs to relate to both the external context and the arrangement of internal spaces. Windows need to be composed to reflect the daylight needs and hierarchy of these spaces.

○ **Articulation:** Façades can benefit from depth and articulation. This may be achieved with architectural features such as setbacks, balconies, porches and bays. These set forward or back from the main facade that relates to the building line.

○ **Material + Detail:** The details of design combine to enhance the building. The choice of symmetry or conscious asymmetry, the use of colour, quality materials and detailing – preferably drawn from the surrounding context. A degree of complexity in the design of façades will ensure that buildings are attractive from a

distance and close-up.

○ **Windows:** Elevations work best with a wall to window ratio of 15-35%. The proportion and design of windows can shape the facade based on whether they are horizontal or vertical, and the depth of the reveals. Deep window and door reveals visually suggest a robustness to a façade and should be the norm.

○ **Building Lines:** Spurious changes in building lines on any street should be avoided. Any change in addressing the predominant building line should have a sound reason or purpose.

○ **Building Heights:** Developments should aim for the village/hamlet cores to be identified by an increase in overall building heights (reinforced by tall features if viable).

## 4.4 | IDENTITY

### Identity

The clear aspiration of the Council is for the choice of building uses, forms and materials to help create a sense of uniqueness in the final development – indicating that it is located in Darlington and nowhere else – and stands out clearly from other developments in the northeast through a unique mix of architecture, layout – including public spaces – and palette of materials. The National Design Guide (NDG) highlights that it is a key part of successful places that they are attractive and distinctive because having a positive identity is what attracts people to a place, persuades them to stay and binds them together as a community.

Development on the Skerningham Garden Village site should reflect and celebrate local themes in terms of materials, colours, form and style, not in a pastiche manner, but in a modern interpretation of the local vernacular, making development on

the site distinctive and unique. This project will have failed if it does not achieve that goal.

The architectural solutions developed for this site should show strong links to the local materials and building forms.

This DOES NOT mean slavishly copying and replicating “historic” building forms. This will inevitably look wrong and be in danger of being a grotesque pastiche of the past. Consider a design philosophy approach, such as:

- +Replicating traditional forms but constructed from overtly modern materials, or
- + Using traditional materials/colours but in a non-traditional building form, or
- + A creative and intelligent mix of both of the above.

Fig. 71 Identity responding to context  
Image: MawsonKerr Architects - Riverside Sunderland



### Contextuality

Firstly, any new development should respond to and relate to its surroundings. This is called “context” and historically contextual architecture evolved based upon the locally available materials, micro-climate, and skillsets of the local populace. As the mass production of standardised construction materials developed, along with affordable transportation systems, these new materials infiltrated local development and “standardised” the look of the end product, and in the process diluted the unique local architectural character and identity of developments.

The main driver for successfully achieving a distinct identity for the new development will be in response to the local context which is highlighted in the analysis for each of the 10 distinct character areas that make up the Skerningham garden village area.

The existing landscape and topographical features of the site are to be retained, and the built form should respect this. For example, existing site levels will be adhered to and not flattened to fit standard building types. Hedging and existing boundaries are to be intertwined into the design. Likewise, the existing buildings on

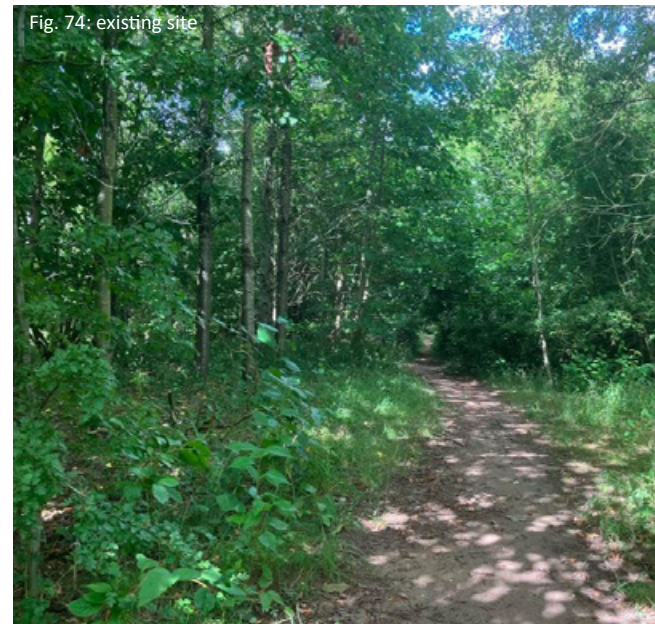
Fig. 72: existing site identity



Fig. 73: existing site



Fig. 74: existing site



the site – notably High Faverdale Farm group - will provide focal points and be integral to the masterplan celebrating the old alongside the new. It is important that one can distinguish what is old and what is new and gives an honesty to the scheme.

The identity of the proposed Skerningham Garden Village will come not just from the form and appearance of the buildings and spaces but also from the way that it is planned to sit within its natural environment and the mix of uses of its buildings. This includes the way that it responds to the character of the local area and the design of its

buildings and public spaces.

This is an edge of town rural site gently rising from the north-eastern edge of Darlington and to an extent is visible from long views. The opportunity here is to concentrate the development on the site into discrete groupings, and leave substantial space between groupings of buildings, hence being referred to as clusters of hamlets.

#### Guiding Design Principles:

- Views of existing or proposed green infrastructure to be enjoyed at every street end and turn.

- Make use of local materials and detailing.

- Incorporate legibility and way-finding strategies.

- Be guided by a strong masterplan.

- Encourage the incorporation of public art in the design of buildings and spaces as well as free-standing pieces.

- Street design: Create a unified pallet of materials and street furniture to be used in different

area types.

- Use of different street tree species to create distinct identities for different streets

- Vista ends: Use taller buildings and architectural expression on buildings that close vistas along a street or square.

- Use colour, materials or specific details to create a distinctive character for different neighbourhoods.

- Do buildings satisfactorily: meet the ground – turn the

## 4.5 | PUBLIC SPACE

### Public Space

Public spaces are streets, squares, and other spaces open to all and the quality of the spaces between buildings is as important as the buildings themselves. Skerningham GV will include well-located public spaces that support a wide variety of activities and encourage social interaction, to promote health, well-being, activity, social and civic inclusion. Spaces should be predominantly green in character.

The streets and roads of the Garden Village will make up a large proportion of all public space and how they are designed will have a significant impact on people's lives.

Section 4.1 Movement defines the street types and their functions to be included in Skerningham. These street types each have to balance the dual function of place and movement. Their design will vary both by their position in the street hierarchy and the neighbourhood they pass through.

### Social Interaction

Streets and other public spaces such as public squares have an important social function to bring people together and to act as a focus for community life. Parks and other green spaces described in the nature section also contribute towards social interaction.

Special consideration needs to be given to safety, multi-functional and generational spaces and reducing the risk of crime.

### Meeting Places

The Skerningham Garden Village neighbourhoods will include public spaces as focal points at the heart of the community. They will include squares, market places and village greens. All of these spaces will provide informal settings for activities such as meeting, resting, playing, holding events and parking.

### Guiding Design Principles:

- Spaces should be playable and incorporate nudges that promote physical activity.

- **Scale:** Public spaces need to be appropriately sized and proportioned. In new development, it is good practice to identify suitable precedents to inform their dimensions.

- **Enclosure:** The size of a square is informed by the scale of surrounding buildings. Typically, the enclosure ratio of the short dimension of a square is at least twice the height of the buildings.

- **Public uses:** Squares may act as a focus for public uses such as educational buildings, churches, pubs, restaurants and cafes. They are also gathering space for uses that draw large numbers of people.

- **Events:** Facilities can be provided for various types of event, ranging from outdoor stages and tiered seating to market stalls, or power supply and lighting.

- **Traffic:** Squares can accommodate some local traffic around their edge, ideally not on all four sides.

- **Frontage:** Buildings can frame a square, take their main access from it and provide a continuous building line around it.

- **Active frontage:** Active frontages need to be provided around a public square, preferably at least two sides of it.

- **Setbacks:** Buildings will normally be positioned at the back of pavement around the square.

- **Servicing:** Deliveries may be from the rear of properties or from the square itself with provision being made for deliveries.

- **On-street parking:** On-street parking may be accommodated either permanently or when not being used for other activities.

- **Green infrastructure:** Trees may be provided within squares. The type of trees and their position will depend on the function of the square, so as not to compromise the flexibility of the space.

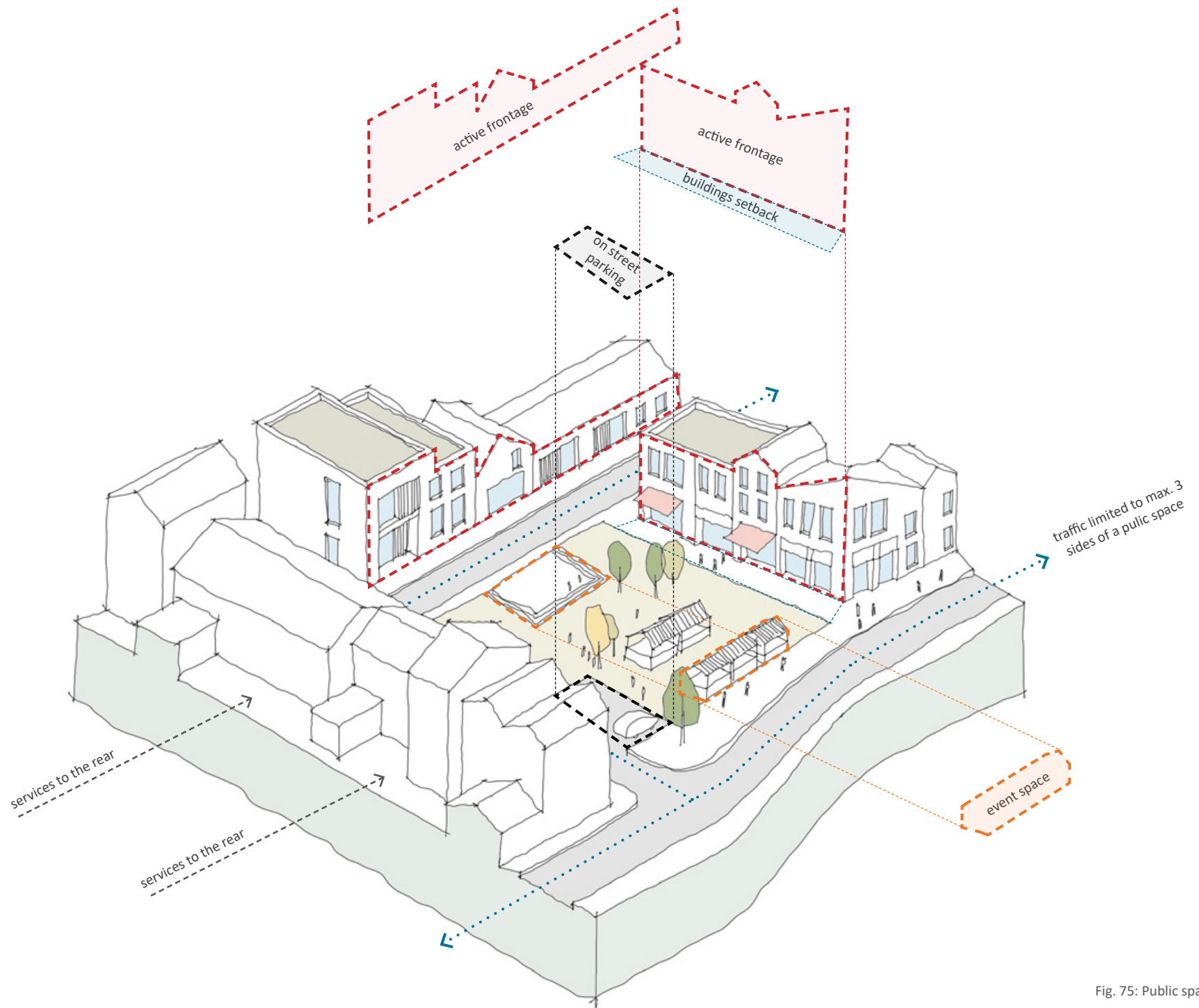


Fig. 75: Public space principles

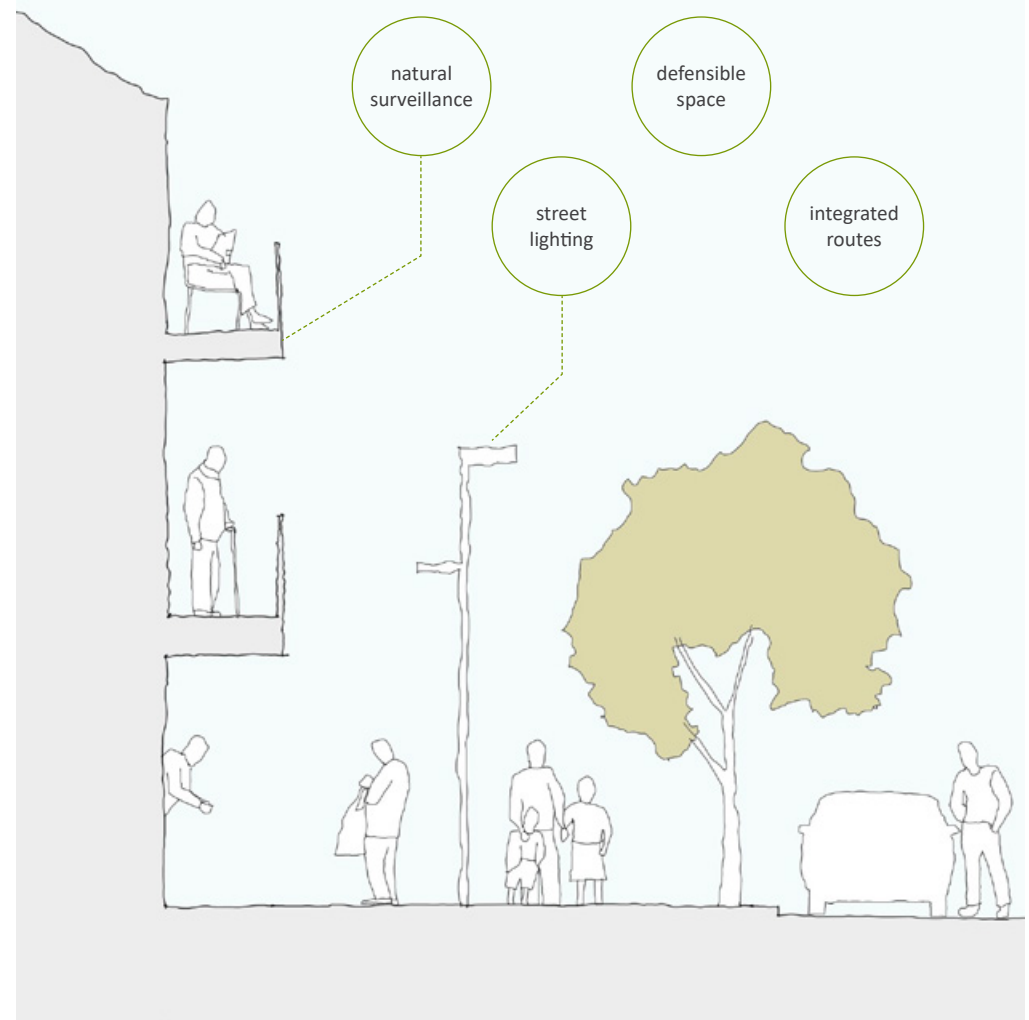
Fig. 76: Home zones



### Home zones

Home zone principles can be applied on local streets. They are defined in guidance as residential streets where 'people and vehicles share the whole of the street space safely and on equal terms, where quality of life takes precedence over ease of traffic movement'. Vehicle speeds are reduced to walking pace. They can form part of the street hierarchy in the new development.

Fig. 77: Safe and secure neighbourhoods



### Security and Public Space

Reducing crime has a significant impact on building strong communities and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Garden Village. The increased threat of terrorism also needs to be considered in the design of the public spaces. Neighbourhoods need to be designed to make all people feel safe and reduce the incidence of crime in accordance with the recommendations of **Secured by Design**.

Fig. 78: Mixed use village centre



## 4.6 | USE

### Sustainable Places

Sustainable places include a mix of uses that support everyday activities including space to live work and play

The principal features of a successful garden village as envisaged by the TCPA are to be:

*A holistically planned new settlement which enhances the natural environment and offers high-quality affordable housing and locally accessible work in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities.*

So, this is not just about housing development. Its about creating the mix of support services that make a community work and to provide employment within the development for those who wish to work locally i.e. a wide range of local jobs in the Garden Village within easy commuting distance of homes. Landscape, nature and open space is a fundamental driver to the design response in order for Skerningham to become a successful Garden Village.

### Intensification

This is about making more efficient use of land. As a design principle the Council are seeking compact higher density residential areas surrounded by generous amounts of Public Open Space.

This concept of creating smaller, more densely developed hamlets, with greater public open space provision was supported by those involved in the Public Engagement process.

### Mix

A mix of uses is a prerequisite of this site with non-residential development proposed for the character areas at the extreme eastern end of the lands.

The correct balance of uses will help increase the amount of activity in an area throughout the day, reduce overall travel, encourage sustainable travel and support shops and services with a critical mass of people. This will contribute to the creation of a sustainable and successful place.

## Housing

Ensure the scheme provides a varied mix of housing tenures and types. Successful neighbourhoods contain a rich mix of people, including families and the elderly, young people and students, people with physical disabilities and those with mental health needs. This, in turn, requires a variety of housing in terms of tenure, type and construction.

## Schools

There are specific requirements stated in the local plan with delivery triggers clearly identified, relating to numbers of dwellings occupied at any given time.

Schools and nurseries comprise an important part of the community facilities serving an area. They can provide a focus for community life and incorporate important facilities beyond educational uses. They can also create activity that supports local shops and other services.

Schools need to be located to be as accessible as possible to the communities which they serve and to provide maximum support to local shops and services. There needs to be sufficient provision to serve local need where appropriate.



Fig. 79: Mix of housing types and tenures  
Image: Proctor and Matthews Architects - Riverside Sunderland

## Community Facilities

Schemes need to exhibit due consideration of:

**Cultural and community facilities:** Village halls, community hubs and other cultural facilities.

**Local shops:** The design code needs to provide guidance for the design of and access to local shopping facilities.

**Pubs/cafés:** Local shops can include cafés and other food and beverage uses where people can meet and, increasingly, work.

**Medical facilities:** All areas need medical facilities, including doctor's surgeries, district nurses, dentists and chemists. GP's mostly work in group practices in health centres,

so only the largest schemes will be required to include them. Health facilities need to be in accessible locations at the heart of a community and planned in co-operation with relevant health and care organisations.

**Places of worship:** New buildings for religious worship are an important community function as places of congregation and community and need to be integrated into new development.

**Home-working hubs:** Home-working employees can support local facilities and there may also be scope to provide facilities to support home workers. Hubs include meeting spaces, shared resources such as printers, and even a delivery address

## Guiding Design Principles:

- sustainable places include a mix of uses that support everyday activities, including to live, work and play.
- a mix of uses including local services and facilities to support daily life.
- an integrated mix of housing tenures and types to suit people at all stages of life.
- well-integrated housing and other facilities that are designed to be tenure neutral and socially inclusive.

- The Design Code seeks to facilitate a mix of uses that reflects local needs and support community life.
- Co-locating higher density housing with shops, services and public transport nodes.
- Provide substantial, accessible, useable green/public spaces rather than multiple small strips and verges.
- Ideally people need to be able to meet most of their day to day needs within a walkable radius of their home.

## 4.7 | HOMES + BUILDINGS

### Building Design Ethos

The design of the buildings must be contextual and take influence from the local vernacular represented in a contemporary way. Building on the past and combining this with current best practice and sustainable architecture will help create a distinctive development.

Many schemes have the ambition of being exemplar from the outside however this ambition can be watered down during the design, procurement and building process and it is important the principles of the scheme as being exemplar is engrained into project and all involved have this collective buy. Objectives and quantifiable exemplar outcomes are to be identify early on and assessed throughout the process in order for the aspirations to become reality.

The built form is to consider the existing features and topology of the site and have design solutions that work with the existing constraints and not use standard house types that require the flattening of the site.

### Housing Quality

Successful residential design can be aided by thoroughly understanding the distinctiveness of the local area. Some of the key considerations are highlighted within the Darlington Local Plan and section 2.0 Baseline Analysis. Using these studies to inform the design will help to develop high quality, contemporary design grounded in the vernacular - giving both a sense of renewal and belonging.

Poorly executed pastiche version of the traditional is to be avoided as is a pick and mix of different architectural styles or periods.

### Form of Buildings

Compact simple forms. Drawing from the vernacular of the area with contemporary interpretation. Form factor to be considered. The form, scale and layout are to contribute to the sense of place and help create a community feel. Ornamental add ons should be avoided and any 'addition' should be integral to the overall design, contributing to the character and distinctness of the place.



Fig. 80: Housing quality: simple forms with traditional materials to reflect local vernacular with contemporary detailing and consideration of sustainability.

## Building orientation – first principles

The orientation and position of the dwelling within their site is crucial for place making but also for the first principles of sustainable design making the maximum of the South facing orientation for passive solar heating whilst also considering overheating.

### Internal layout: Space Standards.

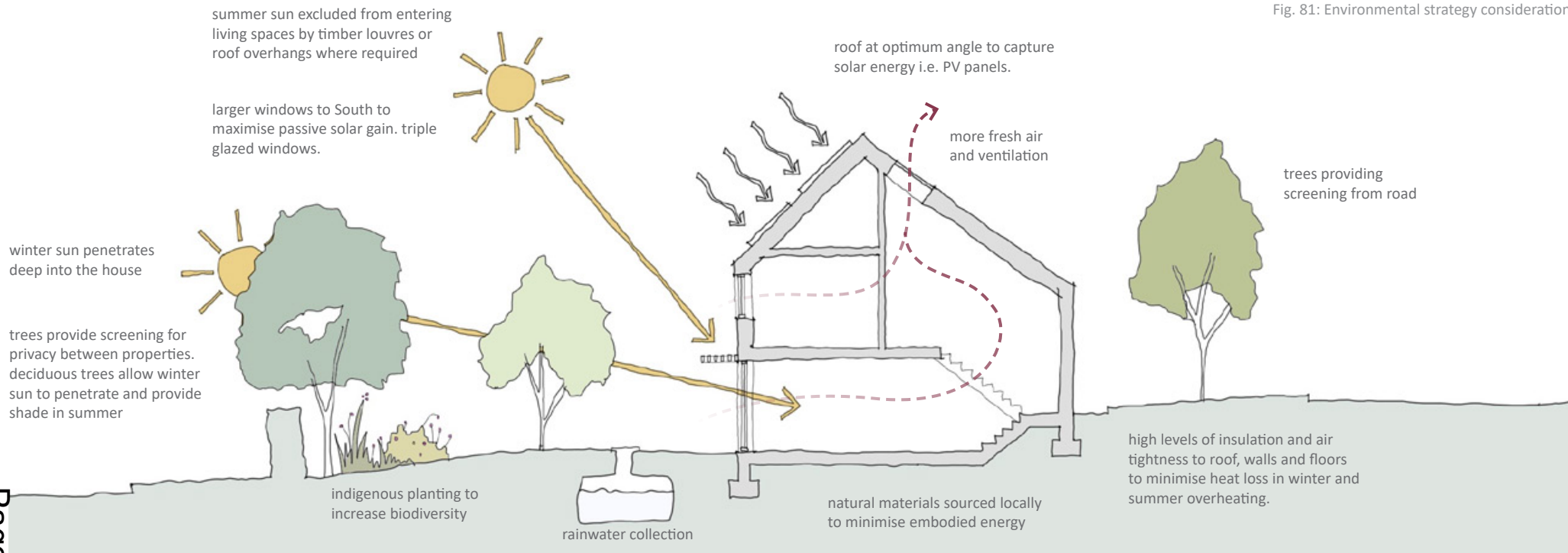
The principles of the Garden Village aimed to provide spacious and well-planned houses. This should be no different in its aims. To provide comfort, enhance standard of

living and well-being all dwellings in the Garden village should have a minimum space standard.

### Guiding Design Principles:

- As a base level these should be in line with the National Minimum Space Standards by the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Internal volume is also important as well as floor area and the floor to ceiling height should be a minimum of 2.5/2.6m on the principal floor.

Fig. 81: Environmental strategy considerations



- The ability to work from home needs to be integral to the layout of all houses to enable flexibility and futureproofing for the occupants and promote a sustainable work/life balance.

### Immediate External Space – bin store, bike store, renewables such as PVs, ASHP

So often forgotten or considered too late in the design process are storage, waste, servicing and utilities.

### Guiding Design Principles:

- These areas are to be integral into the initial design and carefully considered for functionality but also to contribute to the house design and the wider street scene and not detract from it. Clutter is to be avoided on the façade and in the immediate external area of the house. Renewables such as ASHP and PV which have a valuable contribution to the sustainability and energy efficiency of the homes should not appear to be an add on.

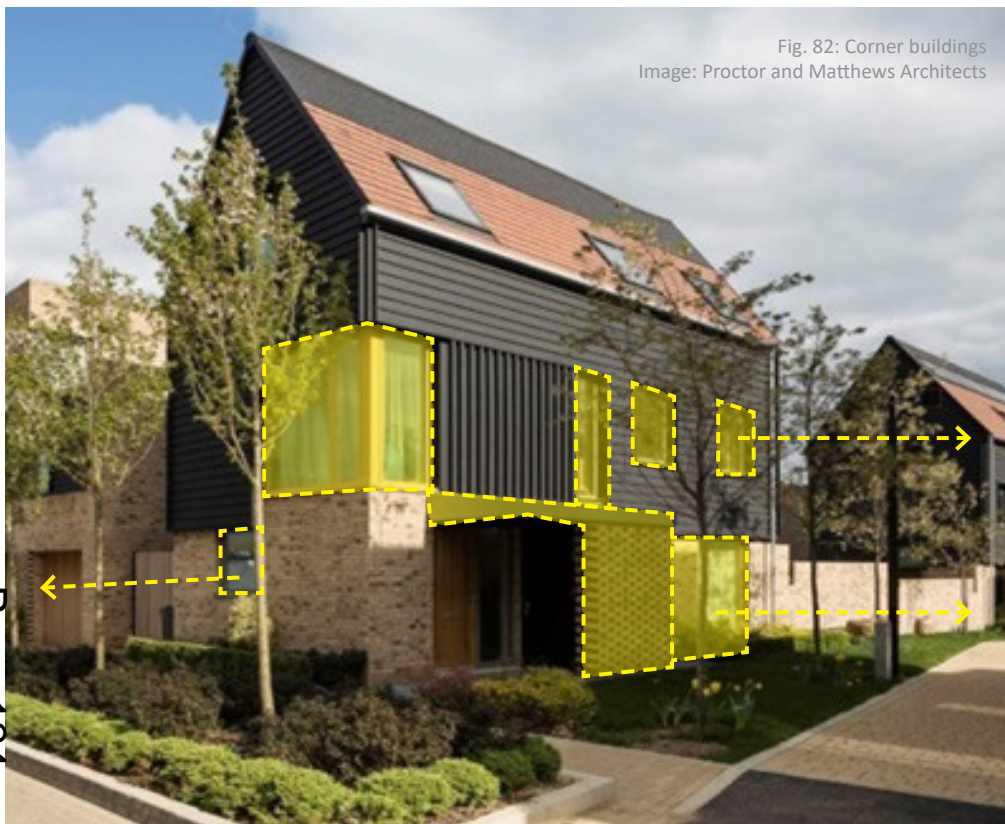


Fig. 82: Corner buildings  
Image: Proctor and Matthews Architects

### Corner buildings

Corner buildings should have elevations that face the 'street' on both sides. These are to be considered primary façades and active frontages are to be used.

The house is to actively turn the corner with the use of entrances, windows and architectural cues to create a welcoming frontage. Contrived or pastiche architectural features are to be avoided. The corner buildings should be tailored

to the context in which they sit making use of views, sight-lines and where appropriate the creation of landmarks.

### Materials and Detailing

Materials are to be carefully considered to work with the building form and the local area. These can be traditional or modern materials but should be a simple high-quality palette of materials that is well crafted. Simple detailing is to be utilised with high quality materials.



Fig. 83: Materials and Detailing  
Image: Pollard Thomas Edwards

Embodied carbon is to be taken into consideration for material choice as well as its durability, appearance, and maintenance strategy overtime. The junctions between materials are to be carefully considered and there should be a simple hierarchy. Simple forms will aid in this rather than a complex shape.

UPVC window should be avoided. Timber cladding can be a great addition to a housing development however detailing, weathering and

ventilation need to be carefully considered.

### Accessibility:

At least 90% of homes are to meet building regulation M4(2), 'accessible and adaptable dwellings', and at least 10% of new housing will meet building regulation M4(3), "wheelchair user dwellings". As a minimum, the new Garden village is to meet this benchmark.

**Daylight + Windows**

To promote good daylighting and thereby improve quality of life and reduce the need for energy to light the home the following should be a minimum.

Average daylight factor of at least 2% for kitchens, average daylight factor of at least 1.5% in living rooms, dining rooms and study. At least 80% of the working plane in these rooms receives natural light.

The daylight factor is a comparison of

the natural light levels within a room and the natural light levels in an unshaded location outside and the working plane is a nominal surface positioned 0.85m above the floor.

Further information on natural lighting can be found in BS 8206-2:2008 Lighting for Buildings – Part 2: Code of practice for daylighting.

**Designing for Climate Resilience**

All dwellings should be substantially better than building regulations. To only aim for building regulations

means that the dwellings are only just legally acceptable. This is not good enough for this aspirational development.

As a minimum the development should adhere to the RIBA Climate Challenge 2030 and should hit the targets corresponding to the years 2020, 2025.

To be truly exemplar as a Garden Village development it should strive to showcase the very best in design and construction. Modern Methods

of Construction (MMC) should be used to aid in quality assurance and consistent performance of the dwellings.

A percentage of the dwellings should be showcasing Certified Passivhaus standards the exemplar in low energy standards with a larger percentage utilising the Low Energy PH standard which is easier to attain and a substantial step up from the building regulations.



Fig. 84: Courtyard housing  
Image: Patel Taylor

## 4.8 | RESOURCES + LIFESPAN

### Resource efficiency

Improving resource efficiency can produce many benefits such as cost savings, reducing environmental impact and support the circular economy.

Doing more with less is the aim by:

- + Using fewer materials
- + Optimising the use of materials
- + Prevent waste
- + Using material that are reclaimed or that have a higher recycled content.
- + Reduction of water usage

### Whole Life-Cycle Carbon

Whole Life-Cycle Carbon (WLC) emissions are the carbon emissions resulting from the materials, construction and the use of a building over its entire life, including its demolition and disposal.

WLC should be considered throughout the development and as part of the use of resources and the lifespan of buildings.

LETI has outlined Whole Life-Cycle Carbon as:

#### Reduce embodied carbon

- + Use Low impact materials
- + Design for disassembly
- + Use less materials
- + Use local materials
- + Use for longer & design for flexibility

#### Operational Carbon

- + Optimise form, massing and fabric
- + Design for orientation
- + Provide solar shading
- + Use natural ventilation
- + Use natural daylighting
- + Use Heat Recovery Ventilation

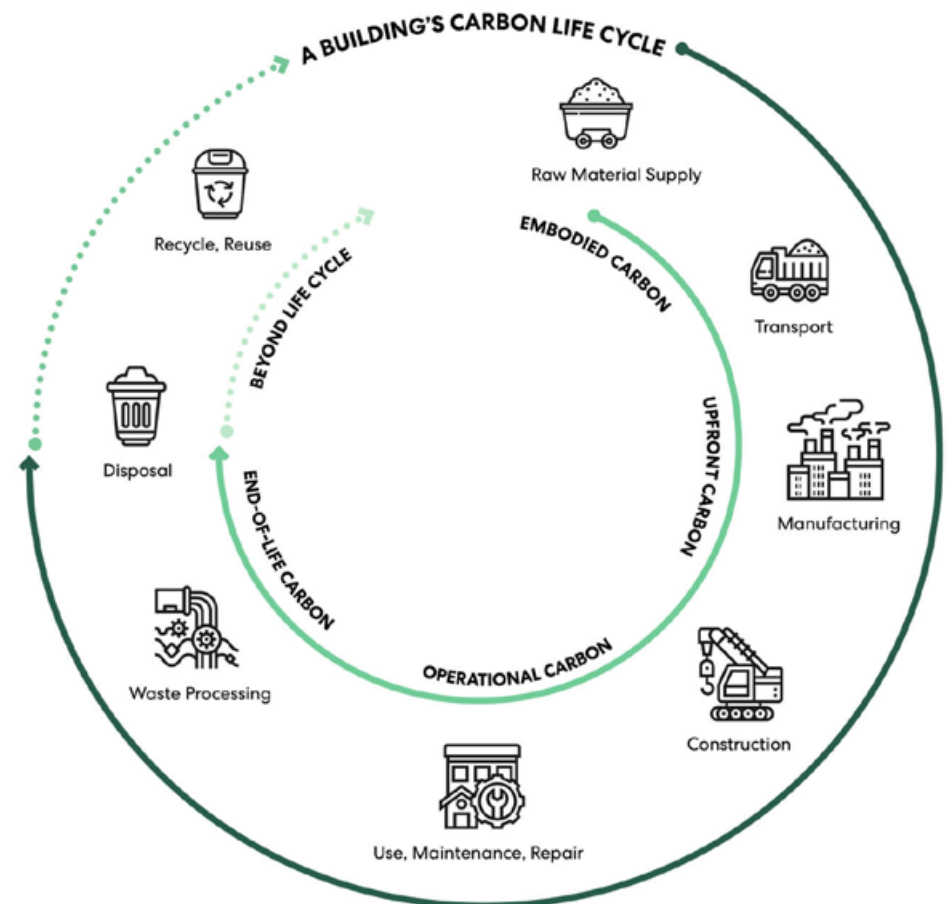


Fig. 85: Carbon Life Cycle

## Well designed places, buildings + spaces

Well-designed places, buildings and spaces are:

- + designed and planned for **long-term stewardship** by landowners, communities and local authorities from the earliest stages;
- + robust, easy to use and look after, and enable their users to establish a **sense of ownership and belonging**, ensuring places and buildings age gracefully; That means thinking about these issues as part of the design process, not as an afterthought.
- + **adaptable** to their users' changing needs and evolving technologies; and
- + **well-managed and maintained** by their users, owners, landlords and public agencies.

## Guiding Design Principles

- No new homes should connect to the gas grid.
- Make all new homes suitable for **low-carbon heating**.
- All new homes should deliver levels of **energy efficiency** as soon as possible and by 2025 at the latest, consistent with a space heat demand of 15-20 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> /yr. Space heat demand of 15-20 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> /yr is moving close to the Passivhaus Standard. In order to have all houses built to this standard by 2025 an incremental percentage should be built to this standard each year to 2025 to increase skills in the workforce, knowledge and best practice.
- **Overheating risk in new-build homes to be considered.** Orientation of buildings and existing solar shading should be a primary solution rather than an over reduction of window sizes

as internal daylight factors need to also be considered.

- Improve focus on **reducing the whole life-cycle carbon impact** of new homes, including embodied and sequestered carbon. RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge standards should be aimed for. Net Zero Carbon using the UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard is to be implemented.
- **Improve water efficiency** performance in homes. RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge standards should be aimed for.
- Alongside continued funding for flood defences, **strengthen flood resilience** measures at property and community level. This needs to be considered from the start of the masterplan.
- The development should enable **sustainable travel**, which should be a primary

consideration from the beginning of the planning process. Increase in cycle and pedestrian connections within the development and to its neighbours. Pedestrian, cycle, vehicle hierarchy.

- **Green infrastructure** needs to be considered from the offset and implemented in the first phase
- **Long term stewardship** should be organised and implemented to create a development that is sustainable in the long term.
- In line with the Garden City Standards for the 21st Century (guide 4) a **net zero energy strategy** needs to be implemented and incorporated in the masterplan. This needs to be a whole system approach and an exemplar for the region.



## 5.0 | CHARACTER AREAS

5.1 Character Area Map

5.2 Beaumont Hill

5.3 Skerningham Woods

5.4 Skerningham Lane West

5.5 Golfcourse (The Fairways)

5.6 Manor House View

5.7 Skerningham Lane East

5.8 Quarry Woods

5.9 Barmpton Forest

5.10 Barmpton Lane

5.11 Bishopton Lane

## 5.1 | CHARACTER AREA MAP



### Introduction

The adjacent map identifies 10 existing character areas within the allocated Skerningham site.

This section of the document provides a brief introduction to each character area prior to section 6.0 which sets out the character area codes.

- 1 Beaumont Hill
- 2 Skerningham Woods
- 3 Skerningham Lane West
- 4 Golf Course (The Fairways)
- 5 Manor House View
- 6 Skerningham Lane East
- 7 Quarry Woods
- 8 Barmpton Forest
- 9 Barmpton Lane
- 10 Bishopton Lane

## 5.2 | BEAUMONT HILL

### Beaumont Hill

Undulating arable farmland with low lying grasslands. Established hedges and tree groups with a footpath crossing the Southern area. Existing farm to the North which, with its access road and building, dissects the land to the North. 2 main access points to the land to the West across the East Coast mainline and at least 3 existing access point from Beaumont Hill.

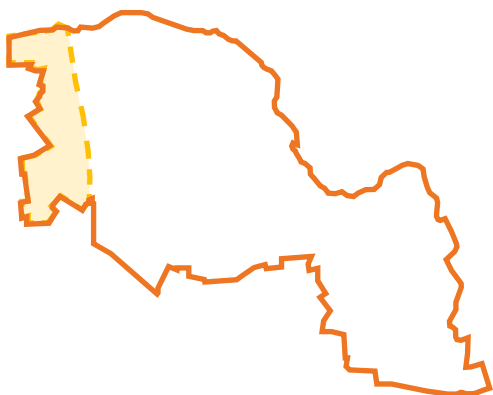


Fig. 87: Beaumont Hill



## 5.3 | SKERNINGHAM WOODS

### Skerningham Woods

Open farmland and the Skerningham Community Woodlands is situated on north facing slopes that fall towards the gently meandering river. With low water levels and scrubby riverside vegetation, it is often difficult to discern the course of the river although a bridge to the west offers views and a gravelly beach with scattered nearby trees is a popular spot for families to play in the water. The East Coast Mainline can be partially seen on a viaduct.



Fig. 88: Skerningham Woods



## 5.4 | SKERNINGHAM LANE WEST

### Skerningham Lane West

Predominately arable land with East Coast Mainline to the West and existing links across the line. A strong tree-line to the South/South East and connected to Skerningham Lane East to the East. Low Skerningham Lane is a strong route towards Skerningham Manor and features the pillbox, a locally recognised landmark. Salters Lane towards 'Skunny Woods' is also a key feature and well used route.



Fig. 89: Skerningham Lane West

## 5.5 | GOLF COURSE (THE FAIRWAYS)

### Golf Course

Located at the existing residential edge on very gently undulating land, including heavily managed fairways with dividing tree planting, plantation, woodland blocks, some wetland and agricultural fields with field trees, hedgerow field boundaries and a group of buildings at Elm Tree Farm. Smaller fields to the south have an enclosed feel with a dense hedgerow network. The golf club house is set within hard-standing for car parking and associated supporting structures.



Fig. 90: Golf Course

## 5.6 | MANOR HOUSE VIEW

### Manor House View

This character area includes the Grade II listed Skerningham Manor and surrounding agricultural land. It sits just to the north of the ridge line and will be to the north of a proposed local distributor road serving the Skerningham development.



Fig. 91: Manor House View

## 5.7 | SKERNINGHAM LANE EAST

### Skerningham Lane East

Predominantly arable land but connects with existing development on Barmpton lane. Mixed plantation woodland and footpath runs along the northern edge and the land falls away south from the ridge line. Amenity grassland runs along the southern boundary and an important footpath north south through the area.

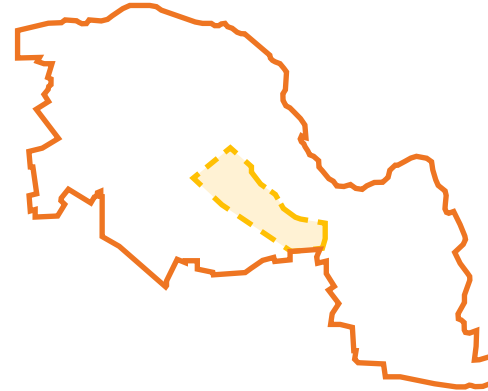


Fig. 92: Skerningham Lane East

## 5.8 | QUARRY WOODS

### Quarry Woods

A section of the shallow northeast facing Skerne river valley containing open rolling arable land with Skerningham Community Woodlands to the north and riparian woodland where the valley narrows to the east close to Barmpton. Slopes all face east and northeast and fall towards the gently meandering river. With low water levels and scrubby riverside vegetation, it is generally difficult to see the actual river. Drainage ditches incise the fields and lead to the river.

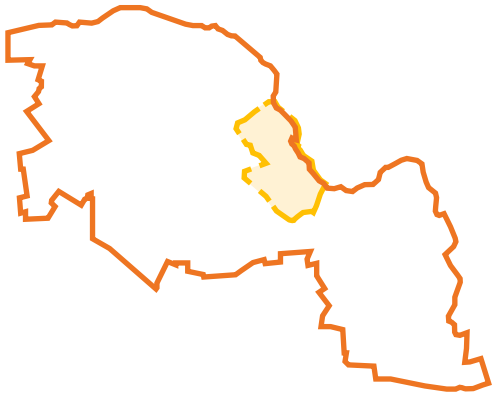


Fig. 93: Quarry Woods

## 5.9 | BARMPTON FOREST

### Barmpton Forest

Open low lying floodplain of agricultural land with a large scale field within a meander of the River Skerne, gently rising to the west and south of the river with a farmstead. There is a noticeable lack of tree cover are a few trees along the river and on field boundaries, few hedge-lined field boundaries and a scrubby edge to the river that screens views of the actual water making it difficult to establish the presence of the Skerne

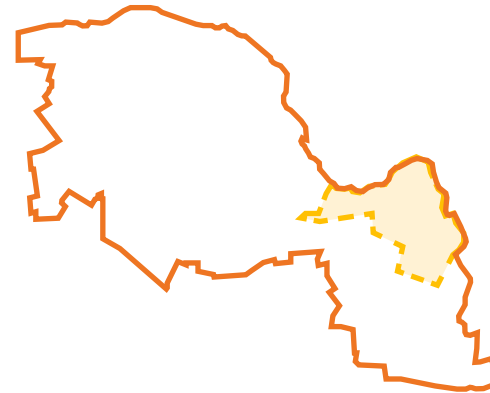
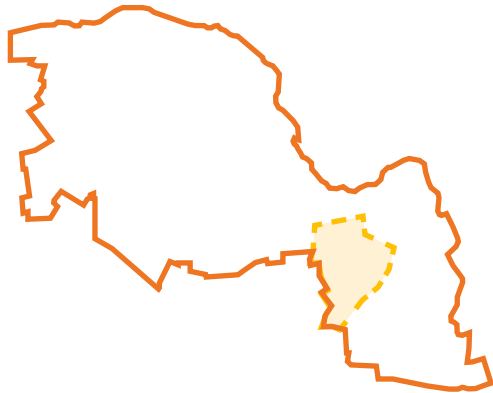


Fig. 94: Barmpton Forest

## 5.10 | BARMPTON LANE

### Barmpton Lane

This area is the land predominately to the east of Barmpton lane and rear gardens of the existing dwellings in the neighbouring Whinfield community. It is effectively bounded to the south-east and east by the River Skerne with its related riverside trees and planting. The land rises towards Elly Hill in the North which falls with the neighbouring Barmpton Forest character area.



## 5.11 | BISHOPTON LANE

### Bishopton Lane

This character area covers the land that lies either side of Bishopton Lane. It is bounded to the south by the A1150 Stockton Road; to the west and northwest by the River Skerne where it abuts the Barmpton Lane character area; to the east and northeast it follows a series of meandering field boundaries; the south eastern part juts out to effectively overlap the adjacent strategic A66 roundabout junction.

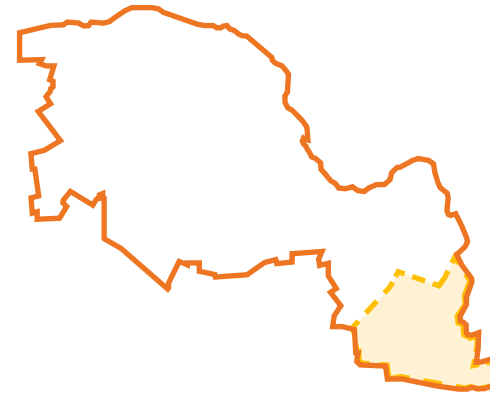


Fig. 95: Barmpton Lane



Fig. 96: Bishopton Lane



## 6.0 | CHARACTER AREA CODES

6.1 Beaumont Hill

6.2 Skerningham Woods

6.3 Skerningham Lane West

6.4 Golfcourse (The Fairways)

6.5 Manor House View

6.6 Skerningham Lane East

6.7 Quarry Woods

6.8 Barmpton Forest

6.9 Barmpton Lane

6.10 Bishopton Lane

## 6.1 | BEAUMONT HILL



Fig. 97: Character Area in context

### Nature

Existing features such as hedges, high grade trees, marshland are to be maintained and enhanced and wildlife corridors clearly identified. The low laying areas are to be used as part of the strategy to enhance biodiversity. SUDS can contribute to this rich natural area which will have no buildings present.

### Movement

Pedestrian and cycle hierarchy over vehicles is imperative. No development should be North of the new access road as it would be detrimental to the development and sense of place and create a barrier to the new community connection with facilities and the rest of the character area.

### Built form

Due to the nature of the topography, flooding issues and the new road to the North, the area of land that can be built on is reduced. Therefore, a layout that enables 600 homes to be built in this character area must have a higher density. This will also help contribute to the sense of place and houses being near to facilities and

amenities. The route of the pylons are to be taken into account but this buffer must appear to be natural rather than a hard edge.

### Identity

It is important for Beaumont Hill and the development to the West of the East Coast Mainline (ECM) to be able to function and be sustainable in its own right. This is important due to the phasing of the housing to the East and the physical restrictions of the ECM. That said it must endeavour to use all available existing routes across the line and improve these to enable ease of pedestrian and cycle flow between the East and West areas. These links should be enhanced as part of phase one in order to link with the green infrastructure.

There should be local amenities such as a shop and café within the Beaumont Hill character area and an easily identifiable 'centre'.

### Public space

Public rights of way are to be maintained and enhanced. Existing and historic hedges and boundary

are to be given consideration in the masterplan as are buffers to the existing houses and the existing farm. Public space shouldn't be a by-product of the housing layout it should be the primary driver for the masterplan. Wildlife corridors along with public spaces for different activities are to be integral for this character area and green infrastructure a driver for design choices.

### Uses

Local amenities are crucial to the success of this character area to allow it to be sustainable, reduce vehicle travel and give it identity. Vehicle travel should be discouraged to these amenities and walking and cycling encouraged. Local community shops and cafés to be encouraged however any out-of-town facilities such as 'Drive Thrus' contradict the essence of place and identity of the garden village and should not be allowed. Allotments should be encouraged and there is a known demand as confirmed by the allotment committee to the South of Beaumont Hill. They currently have demand that could double the

size of their current facility. With 600 additional housing it is clear allotment space should form an important part to the masterplan of this area.

### Homes + buildings

No building on or near flood plain. Climate change and increased heavy rainfall to be considered when identifying housing location. Town houses, terraces and a village centre density is to be encouraged over detached and low density housing.

As this is the in the initial phase it is important that the houses reflect the ethos of the overall scheme and also enables the future larger scale phases to meet the climate challenge. Custom build, self-build and space set aside for Co Housing (typically 20-25 houses) is to form part of this masterplan. Pilot scheme for net zero carbon houses and building is to be implemented in the first phase to learn from and be able to deliver all future phases as zero carbon homes. This upskilling is imperative if we are to meet the climate emergency we are facing.



Fig. 98 'Home for Life'  
Image: Pilgrim Gardens - PRP Group LLP

## 6.2 | SKERNINGHAM WOODS



Fig. 99: Character Area in context

### Nature

The river and all existing habitats should be enhanced. As an opportunity for further Biodiversity Net Gain, the river should be broken out of its channel creating scrapes, wetlands and offset ponds which could have a SUDS role. The semi-natural woods and plantation of Skerningham Community Woodlands should be managed for longevity, tree health, biodiversity and visitor access. Existing hedgerows should be maintained and improved with buffer strips, gaps filled and improved species diversity. Invasive Himalayan Balsam should be eradicated across the area. Effective buffer strips should be instated adjacent to the River Skerne to prevent potential nutrient leaching from agricultural land into the river.

### Movement

All Existing Public Rights of Way should be retained and enhanced

with the extensive network within Skerningham Community Woodlands being clearly signed for access in and out. Public access to and along the River Skerne would aid memory mapping of the area with the bridge crossing being a key landmark for what would become part of the **Skerne Valley Park**. Wildlife corridors incorporating pedestrian and cycle access should connecting to other character areas and existing urban development.

### Built form

Due to the attractive quality of the landscape, the topography and flooding issues, there should be no new houses within the valley which are beyond the ridge line of the Skerne Valley. A visitor centre with interpretation, toilets, refreshment and car parking could be incorporated if not developed beforehand in another of the riverside character areas.

### Identity

The existing quiet rural character should be maintained although land use could transfer from intensive agriculture to meadows managed for biodiversity or grasslands for public access. The presence of the river Skerne should be elevated within the area for public enjoyment and the benefit of wildlife. Wetlands could further contribute to this character.

### Public space

There is reasonable public access at present, but the Skerne Valley Park would transform this into a country park. Public access should be dovetailed with ecological enhancement and spaces created that are formed of ecological building blocks of low maintenance species rich grassland, woodland, wetland and scrub with riverside access. Wildlife corridors incorporating pedestrian and cycle access should connect to other character areas.

### Uses

The predominant use of the character area should be a country park that incorporates the existing Skerningham Woods and a possible new visitor centre. Land use would be in combination with agriculture. The low-lying floodplain could offer the potential for more strategic SUDS wetland infrastructure.

### Homes + buildings

If outwith the visual envelope of the valley and integrated sensitively with woodland, low density executive housing could be incorporated. Possible visitor centre and bird hides within the Skerningham Valley Park.

Fig. 100 Visitor Centre/ Cafe  
Image: Mount Grace Priory Cafe - MawsonKerr Architects



## 6.3 | SKERNINGHAM LANE WEST



Fig. 101: Character Area in context

### Nature

There are several strong natural features within the character area which should be a starting point for any masterplan. Hedges, paths, high grade tree groups are to be maintained and enhanced and wildlife corridors clearly identified.

### Movement

Pedestrian and cycle hierarchy over vehicles is imperative. The masterplan for this area and connected areas need to clearly demonstrate more sustainable travel and the ability to achieve a 20min neighbourhood. There needs to be clear vision of how pedestrians and cyclist will have priority when crossing the new road to the North to access Skerningham Woods and other green infrastructure.

### Built Form

No build form to the East of Salters Lane should undertaken and a buffer to the pylon route is to be considered. Historical hedge, field boundaries and footpath to be used as a design driver for the build form.

There is an indication of a possible Deserted Medieval Village located close to Skerningham Manor which be an opportunity to locate and celebrate in some way.

### Identity

The future 'centre' of Skerningham is to be established within this character area and Low Skerningham West which give further emphasis in the need of a sense of place and identity.

### Public Space

Public squares and green space to have priority within this character. These spaces, such as public squares to have adequate building density surrounding it in order to help create a sense of place. Like other character areas public spaces are to be a primary driver for the masterplan. Good links to public spaces via footpath and cycleways to connect all public spaces throughout the overall masterplan. This network is to be implemented in the first phase.

### Uses

This area is to ultimately be the centre of the overall masterplan and as such local amenities and services, education, employment and leisure are to be considered carefully and designed in from the outset. Consideration must be given for phasing and that this area will not be in the first phase so adequate local amenities need to be provided in other first phase areas that complement this character area when completed. Uses are to be positioned to encourage walking and cycling and discourage driving. Central areas for amenities and services should be pedestrianised.

### Homes and Buildings

A good density of housing and buildings is important in order to avoid urban sprawl and create identity. This area is in the later phases of the development and therefore should reflect the step change in net zero carbon methods piloted in the first phase.



Fig. 102: Village Centre  
Image: Riverside Sunderland - Proctor and Matthews Architects

## 6.4 | GOLFCOURSE (THE FAIRWAYS)



Fig. 103: Character Area in context

### Nature

The landscape structure with existing habitats of hedgerows, hedgerow trees, field trees, woodland, plantation and wetland all should be retained, buffer strips incorporated, further connected to created wildlife corridors in and outwith the character area and enhanced for biodiversity. Species composition and tree structure of the plantation should be managed towards more native species and greater openness for public access. Wetlands could have a SUDS role from the wider area. Management of the golf course, if retained in this location should be adjusted so that it is of greater benefit to biodiversity.

### Movement

A well-used pedestrian and cycle route runs along the southwest boundary of the site, it does however feel quite enclosed. This route should be opened up without detriment to nature, make wider connections from existing residential areas towards the Skerne River and be set within wildlife corridors that provide the experience of being 'in nature'. If the golf club is retained,

safe and manageable access should be created through the course; but if it is relocated greater opportunities exist for the public enjoyment of the parkland landscape.

### Built Form

Scenarios differ depending on whether the golf club moves or not. Low density, possibly executive housing could be incorporated into the landscape compartments and if removed, potentially a linear residential typology could maintain the mature trees that structure the fairways. In either scenario, the green infrastructure should become a more visible and usable public amenity.

### Identity

The landscape character currently could be seen as urban fringe with many positive aspects such as green infrastructure and no-vehicle movement routes. These should be emphasised and developed with increased public access as key components of public perception of place in development proposals. The role that the golf course currently plays as a green resource should be

retained in both scenarios.

### Public Space

An improved movement strategy that connects town with the River Skerne through wildlife corridors should open out at junctions and in places of good passive surveillance to create usable public green space and a network of linear parks. Opportunities should be found to open up the semi-private open space of the golf course site to greater public use.

### Uses

A combination of two or three of public open spaces, leisure or small scale agriculture should be provided here, with the key being improved public access and green infrastructure that facilitates SUDS.

### Homes and Buildings

Low density housing or linear typologies such as garden mews that work around the existing green infrastructure should be provided in this location. The golf club if retained should be developed as a greater community asset for events, services and social support.



Fig. 104: Existing Golf Course

## 6.5 | MANOR HOUSE VIEW



Fig. 105: Character Area in context

### Nature

Existing features such as hedges, woodland and tree belts are to be maintained and, where appropriate, enhanced including the green infrastructure corridors.

### Movement

Existing pedestrian and vehicular access to the communities at Skerningham Manor and Low Skerningham from both Barmpton Lane and Salters Lane will need to be retained.

The local distributor road will run to the south of this area below the ridge line and sensitive treatment of the Salters Lane green infrastructure corridor crossing will be critical to retain the character of this route.

### Built Form and Identity

Skerningham Manor is a focal point with land to the south sitting lower on the landscape. In addition to the Grade II Listed Skerningham Manor there is a group of grade II listed buildings at the edge of the community woodland to the north.

Both groups of listed buildings are currently within a largely arable landscape (question what the long term role of existing agricultural land within the garden village area is?-see below.)

There is an indication of a possible Deserted Medieval Village located close to Skerningham Manor which be an opportunity to locate and celebrate in some way.

### Public Space

This largely arable landscape at present -what is the right long term role for this area of non-developed open land -should it be retained for some productive agricultural use -community

### Uses

Potential open space

### Homes and Buildings

Apart from any remaining conversion of existing buildings It is not envisaged that there will be additional development in this area.



Fig. 106: Existing farmhouse

## 6.6 | SKERNINGHAM LANE EAST



Fig. 107: Character Area in context

### Nature

The mixed plantation woodland ( Hutton Plantation and former Quarry) runs along the northern edge with a public footpath along its length -the ridge line follows the line of the plantation. There is also an existing public footpath which runs from Whinfield north to the footpath both of these should be retained and enhanced as appropriately as green infrastructure corridors

### Movement

Parts of this area will be the amongst the first phases of the Garden Village and will need to clearly demonstrate a commitment to the 20 minute neighbourhood vision. Pedestrian and cycle permeability within the area and into and through existing development to services beyond the development area needs to be established from the start.

As development progresses one of the streets running through this area will be a bus route to ensure that all

homes are within 5 minutes' walk from a service.

The local distributor road from A167 to A1150 will run through the entire length of this area. There will be at least one roundabout junction on the distributor road to provide access to the development areas.

The local plan states `Development of the initial phases of development at the eastern part of the allocation will be accessed via Barmpton Lane and /or Bishopton Lane.` In order to minimise the impact of the development and its construction vehicular access via Bishopton lane only should be pursued at the outset. Barmpton Lane /Whinfield Way would provide the link to a bus network through the development.

### Built form

There will be no development to the north of the road. There will be a green barrier between existing and new development.

### Identity

Parts of this area will be amongst the first phases of the Garden Village and will need to clearly demonstrate a commitment to quality of place and local identity.

Views from this area to the open space to the north important and the distributor road must not dominate views to the north.

### Public Space

In addition to informal and formal open space that will be provided within this area access to the open space to the north beyond the distributor road and the amenity grassland along southern edge will need to be ensured.

The footpath/ cycle crossing of distributor road will require sensitive treatment as routes move from an urban paved and lit form to a more rural character as part of the green infrastructure corridors.

### Uses

Achieving a good mix of residential and non-residential uses to support the 20 minute neighbourhood will mean some community services will be located in or adjacent to this area.

### Homes and Buildings

The topography of this area would suggest that medium and higher density development should be at southern end closest to services and public transport with lower density creating a more rural character and softer edge to the north.

A small part of the eastern end of this area (and the western side of area 10) could be accessible to the existing public transport.



Fig. 108: Accordia  
Image: Fielden Clegg Bradely Studios

## 6.7 | QUARRY WOODS



Fig. 109: Character Area in context

### Nature

The river and all existing habitats should be enhanced. As an opportunity for further Biodiversity Net Gain, the river should be broken out of its channel creating scrapes, wetlands and offset ponds which could have a SUDS role. Woodlands should be managed for longevity, tree health, biodiversity and visitor access. Existing hedgerows should be maintained and improved with buffer strips, gaps filled and improved species diversity. Invasive Himalayan Balsam should be eradicated across the area. Effective buffer strips should be instated adjacent to drainage ditches and the River Skerne to prevent potential nutrient leaching from agricultural land into the river.

### Movement

Public access is currently limited and a pedestrian riverside route should be created that would connect Skerningham Community Woodlands to the northwest with Barmpton in the southeast. In addition, an upper route along the ridge line would offer users the opportunity

of panoramic views of the River Skerne and the highly attractive rural landscape on the north side of the valley. A continuous public footpath runs along the north side of the river outside of the Skerningham site boundary. Wildlife corridors incorporating pedestrian and cycle access should connecting to other character areas and existing urban development. A new timber bridge of memorable design that is suitable for both pedestrians and cyclist should cross the river Skerne so as to enable a figure of 8 loop around both sides of the river and thus provide greater choice for users.

### Built form

Due to the attractive quality of the landscape, the topography and flooding issues, there should be no new houses within the valley which are beyond the ridge line of the Skerne Valley. A visitor centre with interpretation, toilets, refreshment, community facilities and car parking could be incorporated if not developed beforehand in another of the riverside character areas.

### Identity

The existing quiet rural character should be maintained although land use could transfer from intensive agriculture to meadows managed for biodiversity or grasslands for public access. The River Skerne should become visible and elevated within the area for public enjoyment and the benefit of wildlife. Open views of the site are enjoyed from the public footpath along the north side of the river outside of the Skerningham site boundary. The form of the bridge must positively contribute to the identity of Skerningham and the Skerningham Valley Park.

### Public Space

There is minimal public access at present, but the Skerne Valley Park would transform this into a country park. Public access should be dovetailed with ecological enhancement and spaces created that are formed of ecological building blocks of low maintenance species rich grassland, woodland, wetland and scrub with riverside access.

Wildlife corridors incorporating pedestrian and cycle access should connect to other character areas.

### Uses

The predominant use of the character area remain agricultural or become country park that incorporates the existing Skerningham Woods to the north and a possible new visitor centre if the first section of country park to proceed. The low-lying floodplain could offer the potential for more strategic SUDS wetland infrastructure.

### Homes and Buildings

If outwith the visual envelope of the valley and integrated sensitively with green infrastructure such as woodland, low density executive housing could be incorporated. Possible visitor centre within the Skerningham Valley Park.



Fig. 110: Loch Leven National Nature Reserve  
Image: Raeburn Farquhar Bowen, Landscape Architecture

## 6.8 | BARMPTON FOREST



Fig. 111: Character Area in context

### Nature

Existing trees and hedges should be maintained, riparian woodland developed along the river and the river's role as a wildlife corridor accentuated and linked to the hinterland with appropriate planting and dimensions. The river banks could be opened up, scapes and wetlands created. These could play a role in SUDS for the wider Skermerham. Wide buffer strips should be incorporated to reduce the risk of agricultural chemicals and nutrients leaching into the river.

### Movement

The nature of the flood plain and open attractive landscape presents an ideal opportunity for pedestrian and cycle recreational access for the enjoyment of nature and the landscape. Footpath loops should be created which form part of a wider Skermer Valley Park with new

footpaths and bridleways linking into existing routes in Barmpton and wildlife corridors incorporating pedestrian and cycle access connecting to other character areas.

### Built form

Due to the nature of the topography and flooding issues, there should be no new houses within the valley. A visitor centre with interpretation, toilets, refreshment and car parking could be incorporated if not developed in another of the riverside character areas beforehand. Referencing the existing farmstead typology to the southeast, small scale housing could be incorporated outwith the valley within woodland and not breaking the skyline from within the valley.

### Identity

The existing quiet rural character should be maintained although land

use could transfer from intensive agriculture to meadows managed for biodiversity or grasslands for public access. The presence of the river Skerne should be elevated within the area for public enjoyment and the benefit of wildlife. Wetlands could further contribute to this character.

### Public Space

There is little public access at present, but the Skerne Valley Park would transform this to a country park. This should include opportunities to encourage play. Nudges that promote physical activity and interpretation that accessibly tells the story of the place. Public access should be dovetailed with ecological enhancement and spaces created that are formed of ecological building blocks of grassland, woodland, wetland and scrub with riverside access. Wildlife corridors incorporating pedestrian

and cycle access should connect to other character areas.

### Uses

Public park with possible visitor centre.

### Homes and Buildings

Possible small scale housing outwith the valley within woodland, visitor centre and bird hides.



Fig. 112: Bird Hide  
Image: Ecology of Colour by Studio Weave

## 6.9 | BARMPTON LANE



Fig. 113: Character Area in context

### Nature

This is presently an area of predominantly agricultural land characterised by field trees and hedge lined field boundaries which should be a strong influence in shaping subsequent built development.

There are opportunities for buffer planting to the west as well as reinforcing the present River Skerne planting to provide an overlapping edge with the neighbouring Bishopton Lane area

### Movement

The existing local facilities can be accessed off Barmpton Lane using the existing footpath skirting the informal amenity space and Whinfield primary school playing fields.

The main street connection will be via Barmpton Lane to the north and will need to link through to the likely southern development parcel

It is not anticipated that there will be any direct access to the northern link highway.

### Built form

Existing properties are relatively low density with long narrow garden plots with a large area of communal allotments abutting the south west edge.

The opportunities for new development within the character area should establish a tighter and higher density built form given its favourable walkable/cycling proximity to the existing facilities in Whinbush Way.

### Identity

This is an opportunity for a distinct relatively small new neighbourhood in an enhanced natural setting whilst benefiting from the existing facilities to the west in Whinfield.

This may be arranged as a standalone village and related hamlet scale of

development to respect the present field boundary pattern.

At its heart will be a village like cluster around a focal space to assist with legibility.

### Public Space

This will be informal natural amenity space acting as a buffer to the Barmpton Lane properties rear gardens; an enhanced setting for the River Skerne bankside; and to the north an extension to Barmpton Forest with new pedestrian/cycle connections.

### Uses

Primarily residential and passive recreational uses with the possibility of supporting community facilities including space for local food growing as well as formal allotments. There could additionally be some local 'cornershop' type retail or related facilities near the Barmpton Lane entrance to the character area to supplement the existing main

Whinfield neighbourhood centre.

### Homes and Buildings

Opportunities for a bespoke group of homes and related community facilities to reinforce creating a strong sense of place in this eastern area of the garden village.

This is anticipated to be a relatively dense place comprising predominately contemporary terraced; link terrace; and semi-detached homes to achieve this. Only a limited number of homes will be detached to be used in key locations to reinforce the village cluster concepts and seeking to avoid previous suburban house types and layouts.



Fig. 114: Affordable housing, all set within a series of green spaces and children's play areas, creating a new community  
Image: Cocoa Works West by JTP Architects and OPEN Landscape Architects

## 6.10 | BISHOPTON LANE



Fig. 115: Character Area in context

### Nature

The present arable fields are considered more open in landscape assessment terms with far less of the surviving historic field pattern relative to other character areas.

This will require investment in advance planting and related landscape design features to ensure a suitably enhanced bio-diversity as well as visual amenity for future public use.

### Movement

The future movement network will initially remain focussed on Bishopton Lane as the principal access route within the character area.

The pedestrian and cycle network will need to create a number of off road links towards the west in order to connect with the existing Whinfield neighbourhood to meet

the overall garden village concept of providing 20 minute walkable neighbourhoods.

### Built form

Similar to Barmpton Lane character area this will have a separate neighbourhood form and street pattern from the rest of the garden village.

### Identity

At present are open fields and sparse surviving hedges which should beneficially remain around the edges of the future new development.

Employment uses would of necessity involve larger buildings and bigger plots that will need to be set within a much-enhanced landscape setting to mitigate the visual impact.

Particular attention will be required in order to achieve a positive identity for relatively 'big box' type business

uses whilst striving for human scale in the external spaces such as active public frontages with service yards and all but essential parking located to the rear.

### Public Space

This will both provide a perimeter buffer between the respective development zones either side of Bishopton Lane to respect the present landscape setting at the edges of the character area as well as human scale amenity spaces to provide features within the business clusters of development.

### Uses

These have been pre-determined within the Local Plan allocation for business use subject to employment land needs and take up during the plan period.

Some supporting local facilities could be provided in support of either

employment or residential uses given the relative distance from the existing Whinfield neighbourhood and depending what might be provided in the adjacent Barmpton Lane character area.

### Homes and Buildings

Business use developments require a different form and scale of buildings compared with housing. Strategic design principles should be followed to achieve a coherent group of buildings in terms of elevational treatment including fenestration and materials; main street frontages and entrances; building lines; screening of parking and service yards.

Should homes be subsequently introduced then they should broadly follow the principles set out in the neighbouring Barmpton Lane character area.

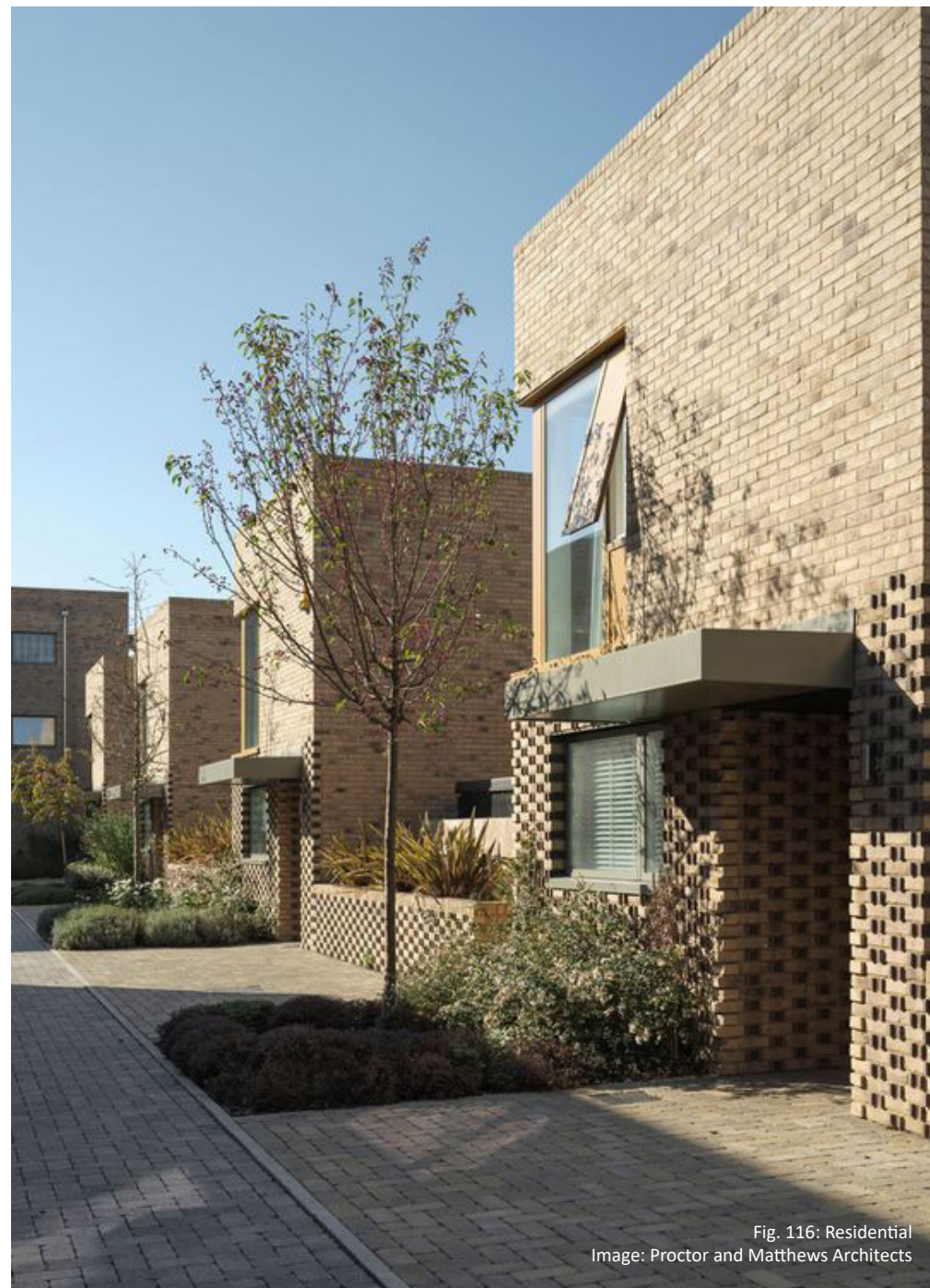


Fig. 116: Residential  
Image: Proctor and Matthews Architects



# 7.0 | ASSESSMENT TOOLS

7.1 Building for a Healthy Life

7.2 Design Quality Coding Checklist

## 7.1 | BUILDING FOR A HEALTHY LIFE

**Building for a Healthy Life** is England's most widely known and most widely used design tool for creating places that are better for people and nature. It is endorsed in national planning policy (NPPF 2021, Chapter 12, paragraph 133) as an assessment framework to support the delivery of well-designed places.

Building for a Healthy Life, integrates the learning from the Healthy New Towns Programme-Putting Health into Place in which Darlington was a Pilot and is the key measure of design quality for this development.

The 12 considerations in Building for a Healthy Life should form basis for discussion and design exploration at the very start of the design process, recognising that good design requires more time, analysis and thought.

Neighbourhoods including a range of homes that meet local needs will be well integrated into the site and their wider natural and built surroundings creating and connected places that are easy places to move through and around. The norm will be that short trips to key services are made on foot or bicycle within and beyond the site on the right infrastructure helping to improve health and air quality. Places will be distinctive and memorable and based on a legible network of streets and spaces that are well enclosed by buildings and structural landscaping with front doors and main façades of buildings facing streets and public spaces. The Tertiary streets are where there must be a balance between the need to accommodate the movement of motor vehicle alongside the need for people of all ages

The 12 Considerations are:

### **Integrated Neighbourhoods**

- 01. Natural connections
- 02. Walking, cycling and public transport
- 03. Facilities and Services
- 04. Homes for everyone

### **Distinctive Places**

- 05. Making the most of what's there
- 06. A memorable character
- 07. Well defined streets and spaces
- 08. Easy to find you way around

### **Streets For All**

- 09. Healthy streets
- 10. Cycle and car parking
- 11. Green and blue infrastructure
- 12. Back of pavement front of home

In addition **Streets for a Healthy Life** - a companion Guide to Building For a Healthy Life (BHL) and Manual for Streets (MFS) has been prepared to illustrate and explain what good residential streets look like, and how they function. A revised Manual for Streets is now in the course of preparation (August 2022), which Streets for Healthy Life will help to inform and, in the interim, will be used to assess the quality of streets in the Skertingham development.

The 12 considerations must inform the design process and each phase of the garden Village from the early Masterplanning to detailed design stages.

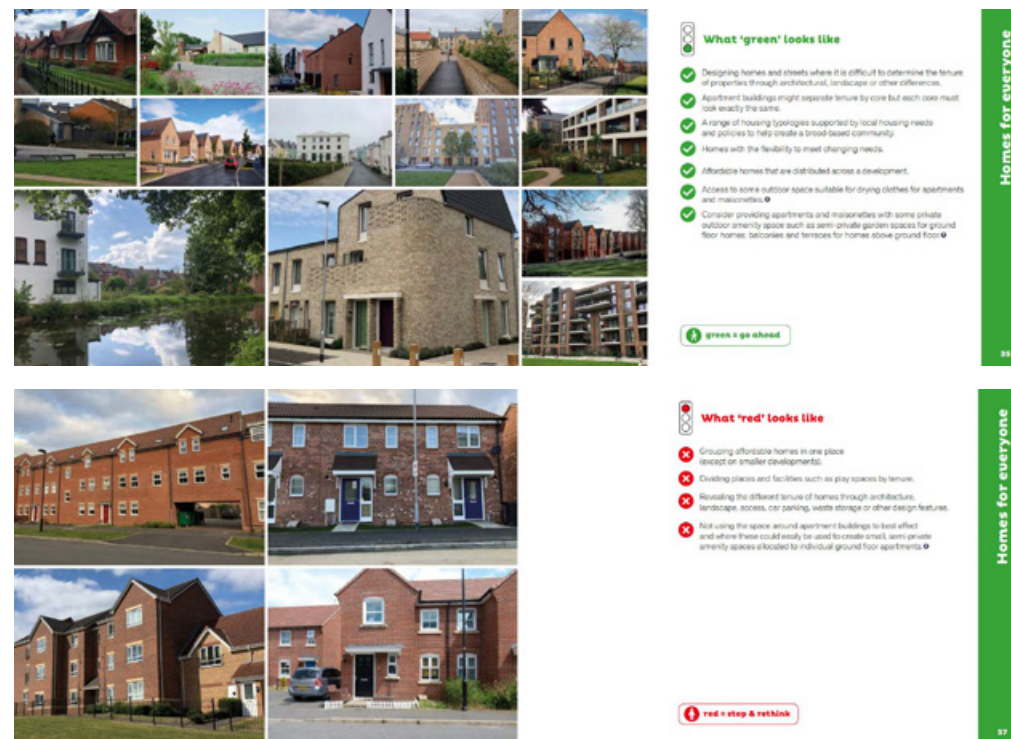
It will be a requirement that individual BHL assessments of development parcels will be undertaken prior to seeking detailed

planning approval and must achieve a minimum of 9 green lights (and no red lights - indicating aspects that need to be reconsidered).

If a parcel scores one or more REDs, then the scheme has failed, and no further assessment should take place until the scheme is redesigned and under reassessment achieves an absolute minimum of 9 GREENS and 3 AMBERS under the BHL test criteria.

The BHL assessment criteria are therefore the first to be assessed, before moving on to assessing the scheme against the remaining criteria in this Code.

The full BHL guide can be accessed at [www.designforhomes.org](http://www.designforhomes.org)



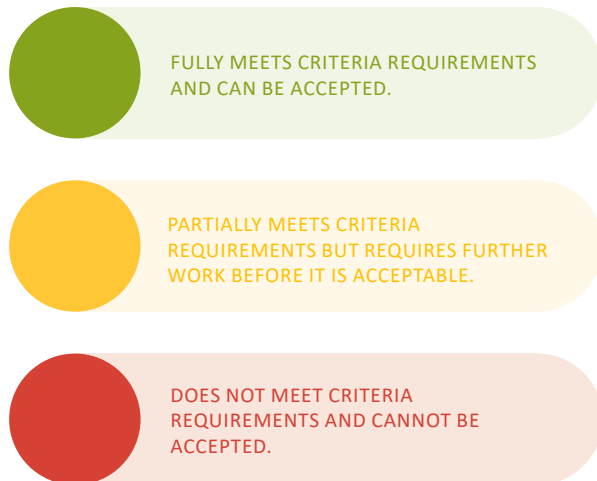
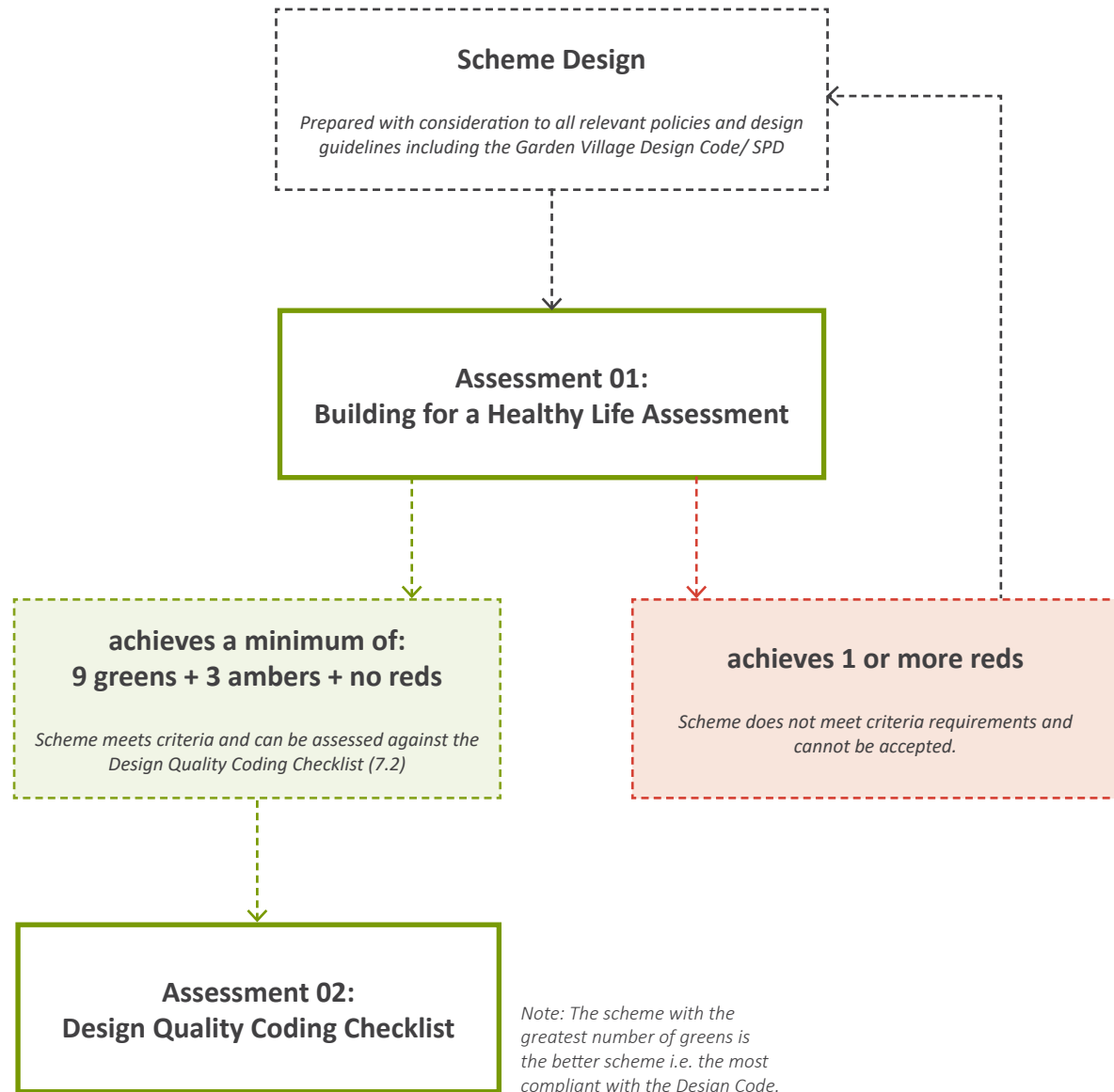


designe Ltd is the accredited provider of BHL assessments in the northeast.

When ready to assess a development parcel designe Ltd can guide you through the process and assist with the provision of assessment proformas, etc.

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The assessment process is as outlined in the adjacent diagram.



## 7.2 | DESIGN QUALITY CODING CHECKLIST

Does the proposed development comply with the following design guidelines?	Yes	Partially	No
<b>4.1 Movement</b>			
<b>Movement around the development must:</b>			
prioritise the movement and safety of pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities through to provision of Coherent, Direct, Safe, Comfortable and Attractive routes?			
locate residential development and essential community services and schools to ensure that the 20 minute walkable (10 minutes there and 10 minutes back) neighbourhood is achieved.			
ensure pedestrian and cycle connectivity is made to connect the site with the surrounding area to both enable local communities to also access services within Skerningham and residents of Skerningham to access those beyond the site.			
locate all homes and services will be within a 5 minute walk from a bus stop with frequent service.			
provide appropriate level of vehicular and cycle parking but ensuring it does not dominate the built environment , public realm, or open spaces.			
<b>The design of the Local Distributor Road must:</b>			
be for low traffic speed on the distributor road with speed limit of no more than 40mph and potentially lower in the central section.			
look like a road that is part of a garden village and not a high speed bypass and should emphasise a sense of place.			
be aligned to avoid the existing Skerningham Plantation.			
include additional planting will both enhance the road corridor and provide screening of sensitive locations as appropriate.			

consider properties will face the road accessed from service roads with trees.			
include sections of footway /cycleway may run alongside the road in certain places, but they will be well separated by distance and landscaping.			
include a number of compact roundabout junctions on the distributor road will give access to the development sites and local street network.			
demonstrate careful consideration of the locations and design at the meeting of footpath and or cycle networks with the distributor road.			
<b>Main Village Streets must:</b>			
be short to encourage low speeds or broken up with changes in priority/width as part of a permeable network.			
create a positive pedestrian/cycle environment			
include street trees and SuDS.			
include street lighting.			
include defined parking bays.			
be a maximum width of 6.7 metres where they are bus and key servicing routes, and consideration should be given to a maximum width generally of 5 metres. Manual for Streets 2 - where HGVs and buses make up only a small proportion of traffic flow 2-2.5m wide lanes would be sufficient for most vehicles and would reduce carriageway width requirements, making it much easier for pedestrians to cross.			
include junctions with tight radii corners.			
<b>Secondary Village Streets must:</b>			
have a clear distinction between vehicular, cycle and pedestrian space and variation in typology according to their specific location .			

have speed limits to 20mph.			
be 5m wide with trees in a verge strip which will enable provision for parking bays.			
include tight junction radii and footpath treatment across junction bell mouths to confirm pedestrian priority.			
<b>4.2 Nature</b>			
Identify existing ecological resources and create buffer zones around these for assisted natural regeneration as advised by a qualified ecologist			
Avoid 'greenwash' but incorporate meaningful innovative nature-supporting infrastructure as appropriate such as green roofs, architectural bird colonies, insect hotels, or reinforced grass vehicle surfaces throughout.			
Create as many ecological niches as possible in line with local Biodiversity Action Plan ambitions.			
New planting to be predominantly of native species, wildflower seeds of local provenance and species that support wildlife such as pollinators in particular.			
Management of the landscape to promote biodiversity, minimise the application of chemicals and the use of fossil fuels.			
<b>Wildlife Corridors must:</b>			
Interconnect existing ecological resources such as woodlands, watercourses, hedgerows, fence lines and wet areas so as to create a green network			
Are there two or more primary 'ecological superhighways' that connect that connect the existing urban centre with open countryside;			
Do connecting corridors work with the topography, landscape character views and crossing of the distributor road.			
<b>Climate Resilience:</b>			
Do landscape strategies promote sequestration of atmospheric Carbon?			

Do management and maintenance operations minimise the use of energy and chemicals?			
Has shading and cooling benefits of vegetation been exploited to reduce unwanted solar gain and on a macro level to reduce any potential heat island effects?			
Is Sustainable Urban Drainage designed to incorporate stepped swales as part of an approach that maximises biodiversity?			
Do areas prone to flooding have landform and wetland habitats created that hold water and help sequester Carbon?			
<b>Climate Resilience:</b>			
Does the masterplan ensure that natural features are inviting for public access so as to promote health and wellbeing without compromising biodiversity?			
Are existing and proposed footpaths, cycle routes, bridleways and Public Rights of Way should be safeguarded within green corridors that work for wildlife?			
Is green infrastructure such as SUDs and other interventions that perform ecosystem services accessible for public use and enjoyment wherever feasible?			
Does every street enjoy views of existing or meaningful proposed Green or Blue Infrastructure.			
Do new community facilities such as schools, GP surgeries and shops connect to nature?			
Has reduced mowing regimes and areas of long grass been considered wherever possible to both promote biodiversity and reduce energy use?			
Is external lighting designed to be cognisant of nature – particularly bats?			
Do agricultural stewardship proposals promote nature, soil health and include features such as nature strips besides hedges and drainage ditches, depressions for ponds and buffer zones to prevent nutrient ingress into waterways?			

4.3 Built Form			
Urban Design Principles:			
Define a coherent urban design strategy for the area as a whole.			
Consider all buildings as important elements and ensure that they work as a whole, in terms of alignment, massing and architectural approach.			
Demonstrate the clear aspiration of the Council for the choice of building uses, forms and materials to help create a sense of uniqueness in the final development.			
Do the proposals reflect and celebrate local themes in terms of materials, colours, form and style, , not in a pastiche manner, but in a modern interpretation of the local vernacular, making development on the site distinctive and unique?			
Articulation: Do façades benefit from depth and articulation?			
Material + Detail: Do the details of design combine to enhance the building? The choice of symmetry or conscious asymmetry, the use of colour, quality materials and detailing.			
Elevations work best with a wall to window ratio of 15-35%. Do the proposals meet this criteria?			
Have spurious changes in building lines o been avoided?			
Have the village/hamlet cores to be identified by an increase in overall building heights?			
4.4 Identity			
Contextuality:			
Do the proposals make use of local materials and detailing?			

Do the proposals incorporate legibility and wayfinding strategies?			
Are the proposals guided by a strong masterplan.?			
Is public art incorporated in the design of buildings and spaces as well as free-standing pieces?			
Are the street designs created from a unified pallet of materials and street furniture?			
Are different street tree species used to create distinct identities for different streets?			
Are taller buildings and architectural expression on buildings used to close vistas along a street or square?			
Are colour, materials or specific details used to create a distinctive character for different neighbourhoods?			
Do buildings satisfactorily: meet the ground – turn the corner – touch the sky?			
<b>4.5 Public Space</b>			
<b>Design Principles:</b>			
Are public spaces appropriately sized and proportioned?			
Does the enclosure offered by public spaces meet the guidelines?			
Have facilities been provided for various types of event, ranging from outdoor stages and tiered seating to market stalls, or power supply and lighting?			
Do buildings adequately frame squares, providing a continuous building line around the square?			
Do the squares incorporate active frontages?			
Is public space green, inviting, playable and encouraging people to be active?			

4.6 Use			
Design Principles:			
Do the proposals offer a mix of uses that support everyday activities, including to live, work and play?			
Do the proposals offer an integrated mix of housing tenures and types to suit people at all stages of life, and that are tenure neutral and socially inclusive?			
Is higher density housing co-located with shops, services and public transport nodes?			
Does the scheme provide substantial, accessible, useable green/public spaces rather than multiple small strips and verges?			
Can people's daily needs be met within a walkable radius of their home?			
4.7 Homes + Buildings			
Design Principles:			
Are the proposals based upon Compact simple forms, drawing from the vernacular of the area with contemporary interpretation?			
Is the orientation and position of the dwelling within their site making the maximum of the South facing orientation for passive solar heating?			
Do dwellings meet the National Minimum Space Standards by the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) and as Internal volume is also important as well as floor area, have a floor to ceiling height of 2.5/2.6m on the principal floor, as a minimum?			
Do at least 90% of homes meet building regulation M4(2), 'accessible and adaptable dwellings', and at least 10% of new housing meet building regulation M4(3), 'wheelchair user dwellings'?			
Are storage, waste, servicing and utilities "built-in" to the design solutions?			

Do corner buildings should have elevations that face the 'street' on both sides?			
Do proposals adhere to the RIBA Climate Challenge 2030 and aim to meet the targets corresponding to the years 2020, 2025?			
Is embodied carbon taken into consideration for material choices, as well as it's durability, appearance, and maintenance strategy overtime?			
Is good daylighting designed into dwellings to improve quality of life and reduce the need for energy to light the home?			
Are Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) used in the construction of the dwellings?			
Do a percentage of the dwellings showcase Certified Passivhaus standards, twith a larger percentage utilising the Low Energy PH standard?			
<b>4.8 Resources + Lifespan</b>			
<b>Design Principles:</b>			
All new homes should deliver levels of energy efficiency as soon as possible and by 2025 at the latest.			
No new homes should connect to the gas grid.			
All new homes suitable for low-carbon heating.			
Is the overheating risk in new build homes considered in the proposals?			
Net Zero Carbon using the U K Net Zero Carbon Building Standard should be implemented.			
Are flood defences, strengthened flood resilience measures at property and community level considered from the start in the masterplan?			
Does the scheme support sustainable travel?			
In line with the Garden City Standards for the 21st Century (guide 4) a net zero energy strategy needs to be implemented and incorporated in the masterplan.			

## 8.0 | ABOUT US

## 8.0 | ABOUT US

### Design Code Project Team

**John Devlin**

Chair of designe ltd

Project Lead

**Tony Wyatt**

Vice Chair designe ltd

**Alan Wann**

Vice Chair designe ltd

**Chris Gill**

Vice Chair designe ltd

**Emily Scullion**

Senior Panel Member

**Dan Kerr**

Senior Panel Member

**Lowri Bond**

Senior Panel Member

**Peter Owens**

Senior Panel Member

designe ltd is the design review and project enabling service for the north-east of England, and offers independent, impartial, objective advice to clients on issues relating to the built environment. designe ltd is a profit-for-purpose company which attempts to raise the bar on design quality and sustainability of proposed developments. In terms of sustainability, we mean financial, physical, social and economic sustainability – a balanced, broad-spectrum approach which acknowledges the realities of developing in the north-east of

England arising from its underlying economy. designe ltd deploys a range of tools to deliver services to clients, including Design Reviews, Project Enabling, Training, and acting as “critical friend” in supporting clients think-through and review strategic and tactical matters relating to their built environment and project viability issues. Gateway Reviews are also offered for projects, to confirm readiness to commit to the next stage of investment. designe ltd maintain a Panel of 30+ Built Environment Experts – from seasoned professionals to up-and-

coming professionals at the leading edge of their disciplines - and across the spectrum of built environment professions.

designe ltd services include expertise on project & programme management, project funding and assistance in partnership negotiations. Our aim is to assist our clients successfully launch schemes and initiatives which are the best that they possibly can be and are capable of long-term sustainability. You can find out more about our services at [www.designeltd.com](http://www.designeltd.com).

# 9.0 | APPENDICES

9.1 Definitions + terminology

9.2 Local contextual character influences

9.3 Reference material

9.4 RIBA 2030 Challenge Target metrics

9.5 Building for a healthy life planning context

9.6 Public engagement

9.7 LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide

## 9.1 | DEFINITIONS + TERMINOLOGY

<b>ASHP</b>	Air-sourced heat pump. Works like a refrigerator; efficiently transfers heat from outside to inside a building.
<b>Biodiversity</b>	The number and types of plants and animals that exist in a particular area or in the world generally.
<b>Biodiversity Net Gain</b>	(BNG) is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before (The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management).
<b>BHL</b>	Building for Healthy Living (formerly Building for Life 12 – BfL12)
<b>Context</b>	The physical surroundings, natural or man-made, within which a building or space might be created.
<b>DBC</b>	Darlington Borough Council
<b>DC</b>	Design Code – this document.
<b>Design Code</b>	A document that sets rules for the design of a new development, generally more detailed than other policy documents.
<b>Design Review</b>	A “peer review” system to maximise the design quality and sustainability of proposed schemes. Best undertaken at RIBA Stage 2.
<b>DPH</b>	Dwellings per hectare
<b>DLUHC</b>	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (Formerly Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government - MHCLG)
<b>EA</b>	Environment Agency
<b>GV</b>	Garden Village

<b>HE</b>	Homes England
<b>LETI</b>	A network of over 1000 built environment professionals that are working together to put the UK on the path to a zero carbon future.
<b>MMC</b>	Modern Methods of Construction (low energy, sustainable, generally part factory manufactured buildings)
<b>PV</b>	Photo-voltaic panels - convert solar energy into electricity, which can then be stored/used on site or exported to the grid.
<b>RAG rating</b>	Using Red Amber Green “traffic light” system to identify compliance with assessment criteria
<b>RIBA</b>	The Royal Institute of British Architects
<b>RIBA Stage 2</b>	The 2nd Stage - Concept Design - of the RIBA Plan of Work which separates the design & development process into 7 stages.
<b>ROW</b>	Public Right of Way
<b>SPD</b>	Supplementary Planning Document - built upon and providing more detailed advice or guidance on policies in the adopted local plan
<b>SuDS</b>	Sustainable Urban Drainage
<b>TCPA</b>	Town and Country Planning Association
<b>Thermal mass</b>	The measure of a building material to maintain its heat capacity. Generally, high thermal mass stabilises internal temperatures.
<b>Urban Design</b>	The design of the spaces and places created by groups of buildings (What the public most readily think of as “planning”).
<b>Whole Life-Cycle Carbon (WLC)</b>	Whole Life-Cycle Carbon (WLC) emissions are the carbon emissions resulting from the materials, construction and the use of a building over its entire life, including its demolition and disposal.

## 9.2 | LOCAL CONTEXTUAL CHARACTER INFLUENCES



Historical precedents from local villages around Darlington can help inform the urban design of the new garden village when developing key public realm spaces and related building typologies for the emerging character areas.

These include Bishopton; Brafferton; Great Burdon; and Hurworth on Tees. Also formerly distinct villages like Cockerton and Haughton le Skerne now enveloped by Darlington's urban expansion.

Possible urban design learning opportunities include:

- benefits of locally distinctive shaped community green spaces as

focus of development

- subtly varied built form frontages of predominately terraced or link dwellings onto feature spaces like a village green which could be more linear and not necessarily with parallel street sides

- set piece frontage plot alignments can be 'backed up' by denser development blocks like an 'absorbed' local village

- advance planted green spaces anticipating future phases to achieve a 'mature' setting with established trees

- simple 'toolkit' for the materials

palette; fenestration and elevational detailing to create distinctive & varied places

- the stronger the spatial typology the less likelihood of car parking provision dominating

- combination of various degrees of enclosure at key entrances with an open aspect for beneficial longer views as well as strengthening the built edges as they transition into the wider landscape

- similarly 'vista closers' by built structures within set piece community spaces potentially offering supporting uses consistent with a 20 min walkable

neighbourhood

- larger scale buildings like a village hall or church were not always placed centrally but to one side (near the entrance) or even behind the main linear development

- focal residential uses like traditional manor houses can either be on the main village green or space

- or set behind within a parkland contributing to the wider setting Cockerton notably still retains the strong village green structure and much of the original sense of enclosure

## 9.3 | SELECTED REFERENCE MATERIAL

Building For A Healthy Life [BFL]. Design for Homes, 2020

TCPA Publications (various), search by topic at [tcpa.org.uk/resources](http://tcpa.org.uk/resources)

RIBA 2030 Challenge Target, version 2, 2021

The Art of Building a Home, Parker & Unwin, 1901

Upton Design Code, Northampton Borough Council, Version 2, 2005

Arbury Design Code, SPD, Nuneaton & Bedworth Council, January 2022

Northstowe Phase 2 Design Code, Tibbalds, 2017

DESIGN COUNCIL A Public Vision for the Home of 2030

Garden Communities Prospectus MCHLG, 2018

Architecture & Design Scotland, Typologies Series, search by topic

Homes England Garden Communities Toolkit (September 2019)

10 Characteristics of Places where People want to Live, RIBA, 2018

Streets for a Healthy Life: A companion guide to Building for a Healthy Life (Issue 01, Homes England)

Preparing Design Codes, CABE/DCHLG, RIBA 2006

Design Code Pathfinder Programme Support Grant Prospectus Rev A, DLUHC, 8 July 2022

The National Design Guide, MHCLG, 2021

National Model Design Code, MHCLG, 2021

Guidance Notes for Design Codes, MHCLG, 2021

Urban Design Compendium, Third Edition - HCA with studio real (2013)

Safer Places: The planning system and crime prevention ODPM, (2004)

The National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF], MHCLG, 2021

By Design - Urban design in the planning system: towards better practice - Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), (2000)

The Cool Sea (The summary report and toolkit of the Waterfront Communities Project Interreg3b) ISBN 0 901273 40 6 (2007)

Manual for Streets - Department for Transport, and Community and Local Government, (2007)




Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space – Jan Gehl (2006)

Responsive Environments: a manual for designers, Routledge, London. (1985)


Sport England Active Design checklist - October 2015

Sport England Handbook Designing for physical activity - December 2021

### RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge target metrics for domestic buildings

RIBA Sustainable Outcome Metrics	Current Benchmarks	2020 Targets	2025 Targets	2030 Targets	Notes
<b>Operational Energy</b> kWh/m <sup>2</sup> /y 	146 kWh/m <sup>2</sup> /y (Ofgem benchmark)	< 105 kWh/m <sup>2</sup> /y	< 70 kWh/m <sup>2</sup> /y	< 0 to 35 kWh/m <sup>2</sup> /y	UKGBC Net Zero Framework 1. Fabric First 2. Efficient services, and low-carbon heat 3. Maximise onsite renewables 4. Minimum offsetting using UK schemes (CCC)
<b>Embodied Carbon</b> kgCO <sub>2</sub> e/m <sup>2</sup> 	1000 kgCO <sub>2</sub> e/m <sup>2</sup> (M4i benchmark)	< 600 kgCO <sub>2</sub> e/m <sup>2</sup>	< 450 kgCO <sub>2</sub> e/m <sup>2</sup>	< 300 kgCO <sub>2</sub> e/m <sup>2</sup>	RICS Whole Life Carbon (A-C) 1. Whole Life Carbon Analysis 2. Using circular economy Strategies 3. Minimum offsetting using UK schemes (CCC)
<b>Potable Water Use</b> Litres/person/day 	125 l/p/day (Building Regulations England and Wales)	< 110 l/p/day	< 95 l/p/day	< 75 l/p/day	CIBSE Guide G

## RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge target metrics for all buildings

Best Practice Health Metrics 		References
Overheating	25-28 °C maximum for 1% of occupied hours	CIBSE TM52, CIBSE TM59
Daylighting	> 2% av. daylight factor, 0.4 uniformity	CIBSE LG10
CO <sub>2</sub> levels	< 900 ppm	CIBSE TM40
Total VOCs	< 0.3 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	Approved Document F
Formaldehyde	< 0.1 mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	BREEAM

## RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge target metrics for non-domestic buildings

RIBA Sustainable Outcome Metrics	Current Benchmarks	2020 Targets	2025 Targets	2030 Targets	Notes
<b>Operational Energy</b> kWh/m <sup>2</sup> /y 	225 kWh/m <sup>2</sup> /y DEC D rated (CIBSE TM46 benchmark)	< 170 kWh/m <sup>2</sup> /y DEC C rating	< 110 kWh/m <sup>2</sup> /y DEC B rating	< 0 to 55 kWh/m <sup>2</sup> /y DEC A rating	UKGBC Net Zero Framework 1. Fabric First 2. Efficient services, and low-carbon heat 3. Maximise onsite renewables 4. Minimum offsetting using UK schemes (CCC)
<b>Embodied Carbon</b> kgCO <sub>2</sub> e/m <sup>2</sup> 	1100 kgCO <sub>2</sub> e/m <sup>2</sup> (M4i benchmark)	< 800 kgCO <sub>2</sub> e/m <sup>2</sup>	< 650 kgCO <sub>2</sub> e/m <sup>2</sup>	< 500 kgCO <sub>2</sub> e/m <sup>2</sup>	RICS Whole Life Carbon (A-C) 1. Whole Life Carbon Analysis 2. Using circular economy Strategies 3. Minimum offsetting using UK schemes (CCC)
<b>Potable Water Use</b> Litres/person/day 	>16 l/p/day (CIRA W11 benchmark)	< 16 l/p/day	< 13 l/p/day	< 10 l/p/day	CIBSE Guide G

## 9.5 | BUILDING FOR A HEALTHY LIFE PLANNING CONTEXT

Integrated Neighbourhoods	National Planning Policy Framework	National Design Guide
Natural connections	91a; 102c and e; 104d; 127b; 127f	B3; M1; M2; N1; R3
Walking, cycling and public transport	20c; 91a; 91c; 127e	B1; B3; M1; R3
Facilities and services	102; 103	B1; B3; N1; P3; U1; U3
Homes for everyone	60-62	B1; B2; U2; U3
Distinctive Places		
Making the most of what's there	122d; 127c; 127d; 153b; 184	C1; C2; I1; B2; R3
A memorable character	122d; 127c; 127d	C2; I1; I2; I3; B3
Well defined streets and spaces	91a	B2; M2; N2; N3; P1; P2; H2; L3
Easy to find your way around	91b; 127b	I1; M1; M2; U1
Streets for All		
Healthy streets	91b; 102c and e; 110a-d	M1; M2; N3; P1; P2; P3; H1; H2
Cycle and car parking	101e; 127f; 105d	B2; M1; M3
Green and blue infrastructure	20d; 91b; 91c; 127f; 155; 170d; 174	C1; B3; M1; N1; N2, N3; P1; P3; H1; R3; L1
Back of pavement, front of home	127a-b; d; f	M3; H3; L3
Generally	7; 8; 124; 125; 126; 127; 130	15; 16; 17; 20-29; 31-32
Using the tool as a discussion tool	39; 40-42; 125; 128; 129	

**The relationship between Building for a Healthy Life, the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Design Guide.**

## 9.6 | PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

### Public Engagement

Section 3.2 of the main document sets out a short summary of how the Community Engagement approach has helped to shape the Design Code through seeking to involve both the residents of Darlington as a whole and the local communities adjacent to the proposed Garden Village.

This appendix provides more detail about the community engagement and what we, **designe** Ltd, have learned.

### Initial Public Meeting

The community engagement was launched at an initial public meeting in the Dolphin Centre, Darlington March 24 2022.

The purpose of this first session, which was attended by about 50 people, was to set the scene by explaining the process, outlining the engagement programme, timescale and opportunities for input as follows:

### What has happened?

- + Local plan for Darlington agreed.
- + Garden Village at Skerningham agreed.
- + Design Code (DC) for Garden Village to be produced before any planning applications.
- + Darlington Council adopts Local Plan.
- + Darlington Council appoints **designe** Ltd to develop DC.
- + Skerningham DC to act as a national pilot.

### What happens next?

- + **designe** Ltd to engage with locals over the next few months to develop DC.
- + Good quality engagement where people feel involved and informed.
- + DC to include tangible 'stuff' that people can see is theirs.
- + Exemplary DC for Skerningham.
- + Code adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD).

### What is going to happen?

- + **designe** Ltd to facilitate and guide

community engagement in the process.

- + **designe** Ltd to help understanding of DCs.
- + **designe** Ltd to hold face-to-face workshops in the area.
- + **designe** Ltd to provide material to facilitate engagement, including opportunities to engage and comment online.

### What is a Design Code?

- + Visual tool to inform development proposals.
- + Look and feel of a development
- + Maximum clarity about design expectations.
- + Reflects local character and preferences.
- + Framework to ensure high quality.
- + Encourages best of modern design and build techniques.

### Call to Action - Your opportunity to influence

### What can you influence?

- + The future quality of this area.

- + The mix of development and green space.
- + The priority given to nature and biodiversity.
- + Priority given to active travel.
- + What the streets will look like.

### How we will engage with you

- + Inclusive, clear, and transparent.
- + Empower you to inform the proposals.
- + Actively listen.
- + Build trust.
- + Creative, bold, ambitious.

### What we mean by 'you'

- + People who live or work in Darlington.
- + People of all ages.
- + People who live near Skerningham.
- + People in recent developments.
- + Employers in Darlington.

### Introducing some of the material / documents we will draw on

- + The guiding Principles of Garden Villages.
- + The National Design Guide.
- + Building for a Healthy Life.

### Workshop 01 (26+28 April 2022)

The first face-to-face workshops were held on 26 April at Oban Court and on 28 April at Harrowgate Club and Institute in the residential areas close to Skerningham.

The initial workshops were designed to build capacity in the local community to engage with the process of developing a DC. Starting with raising awareness of the ten characteristics of well-designed places from the National Design Guide, their relevance to Skerningham, and how to identify things that are important or concerns about the area that should be considered for inclusion in the DC.

The aim was to encourage a positive discussion about the potential to influence the quality and successful creation of Skerningham Garden Village and to illustrate the relationship between the public engagement and the development of the DC.

The following proposed outcomes for the Public Engagement were shared and agreed at the outset:

- + An exemplary DC for Skerningham.
- + Good quality engagement so that people feel involved and informed.
- + Tangible 'stuff' in the code that people would recognise as theirs.

Participants were encouraged to bring any material, such as photos, that would inform the workshop. The format was informal with a mixture of presentation and group working with participants around tables in mixed groups. Following table discussions about the 10 characteristics and relevance to Skerningham, the groups were then invited to select 3 of them to consider and agree for each an opportunity and a concern for at least 3 of the characteristics that a design code for Skerningham Garden Village should take account of.

It was acknowledged that some

participants may have felt uncomfortable about speaking out in the groups and may have preferred to provide their own input at the workshop or via the dedicated email address for the Skerningham project.

It was explained that the presentations and the unedited responses would be circulated and posted onto the website followed by an invitation for those unable/ or who did not wish to attend these first face to face workshops to study the presentation and make an initial input on- line on opportunities and concerns. The **designe ltd** team undertook some basic analysis to present at the next meeting.

The follow up workshops were scheduled at a slightly later time to allow people to come after work and would then focus on key local preferences and things to include or take account of in the development of a design code for Skerningham.

### Workshop 02 (19 May 2022)

The first part of the second workshop included a short presentation of the material from the earlier workshops, for the benefit of those who were unable to attend the initial workshops and as a reminder to those who did attend.

It was confirmed that the extensive and broad ranging thoughts on opportunities and areas of concern identified by the group discussions at both sessions had been sent to the participants and were available on the website.

A basic analysis of the findings; the 'what you told us'; the outcome of table discussions; and what we have done with it, was presented and this indicated in particular the local importance of access to nature in the adjacent countryside, good, connected footpath and cycle networks, minimal impact on existing

communities and a good mix of housing designed for climate change.

Having identified the main areas of concern or opportunity this enabled the groups, with the benefit of the combined material, to focus more clearly on the key local preferences and things to include or take account of in the next stage of developing of a DC for Skerningham.

It became evident during this session that some participants felt either that they did not have enough information or enough time to consider the issues adequately.

As a result it was agreed to hold a further workshop to continue the discussion and prioritisation of key local preferences and also to clarify what the Local Plan says about Skerningham. In other words the 'Fixes'.

## The informal workshops will be held in two places, with the same content at each:

### TUESDAY 26 APRIL

Oban Court Care Home,  
Whinfield, DL1 3PT from  
6-8pm.

### THURSDAY 28 APRIL

Harrowgate Club and  
Institute, Salters Lane North,  
DL1 3DT from 6-8pm.

There are also plans for follow on workshops in the week of May 16.

The first workshop will explain about the characteristics of well-designed places and how to identify things that are important or concerns about the area to be developed as Skerningham Garden Village.

The follow up workshops will then focus on local preferences and things to include or take account of in the development of a design code for Skerningham.

The findings of these workshops would then be fed into the development of the design code.



Picture:  
Design for  
Homes

## Do I need to bring anything to the workshops?

You are welcome to bring any material, such as photos, that would inform the workshop.

## How can I book a place?

Booking will be on a first come, first served basis. If you are part of a wider interest group it may be helpful to consider designating a few to represent your group at the workshops.

Please email [skerninghamdesign@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:skerninghamdesign@darlington.gov.uk) with your details and indicate which venue you prefer.

If you do not have access to email please call **01325 406724**.



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council



### Workshop 03 (09 June 2022)

Participants were encouraged to form the same groupings as the last time and new participants will join those groups or form new groups depending on numbers. With a facilitator at each table to help answer questions /clarify points the workshop was based around three main parts.

01. The first part clarified what the adopted local plan says about Skerningham. In other words what are the 'fixes'? These were shown on a large plan of the area. The relationship between the adopted Local Plan, the preparation of the Skerningham Garden Village DC, Subsequent Supplementary Planning Document, and a Masterplan for Skerningham was also explained.

02. The second part focused on further refining what is felt to be important locally. The previous workshops had made great progress in identifying and prioritising local preferences in relation to the 10

characteristics of well- designed places that will form the framework for the DC. The groups were requested to further refine local preferences into red (no-go issues), amber, or green categories. At the last workshop one of the groups put helpful comments on a number of the photos that were available on the tables. Large scale plans of the area were on the tables and groups were encouraged to draw on these to show anything they think would be useful such as walking routes and permeability with existing key development, special sites etc.

03. The third part was to illustrate what a DC would look like, explain next steps in the preparation of the code and the purpose of the next workshop on 30 June.

The red, amber, green responses are illustrated by the photo of the work of one of the groups and the photo illustrated likes and dislikes of some of the images circulated.

## Workshop 04 (30 June 2022)

The fourth phase of public engagement meetings and workshops was held on 30 June. Participants were thanked for great progress made over the course of the last few weeks at the previous workshops in identifying and prioritising local preferences in relation to the 10 Characteristics of Well- Designed Places that will form the framework for the Design Code.

At workshop on 9 June in discussion groups at the tables groups further refined what is felt to be important locally and indicated in a traffic light system the relative importance of those preferences.

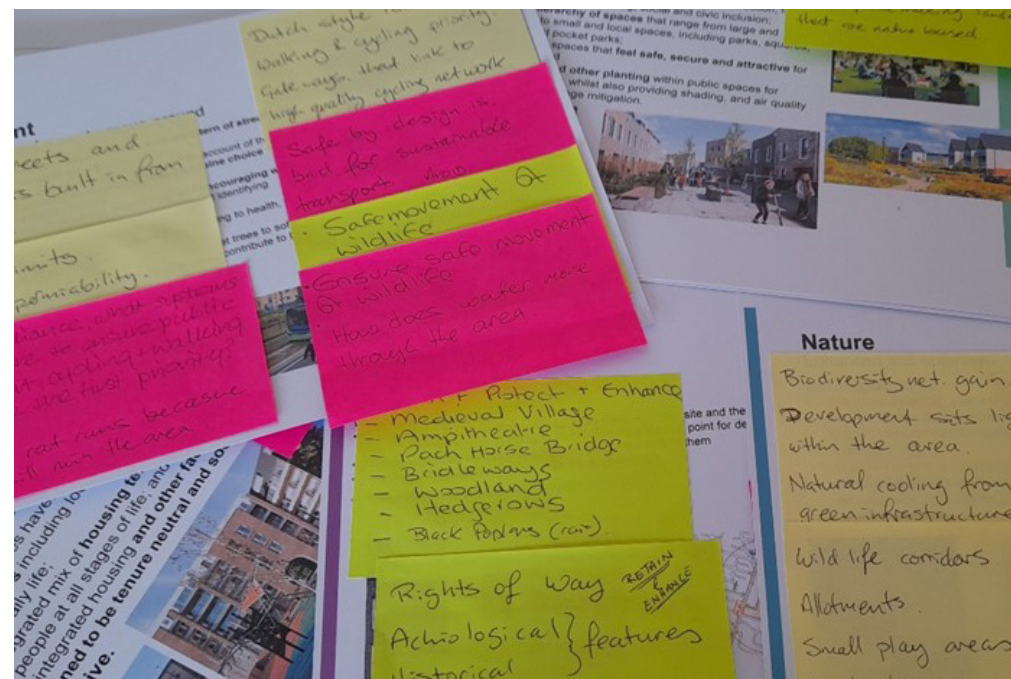
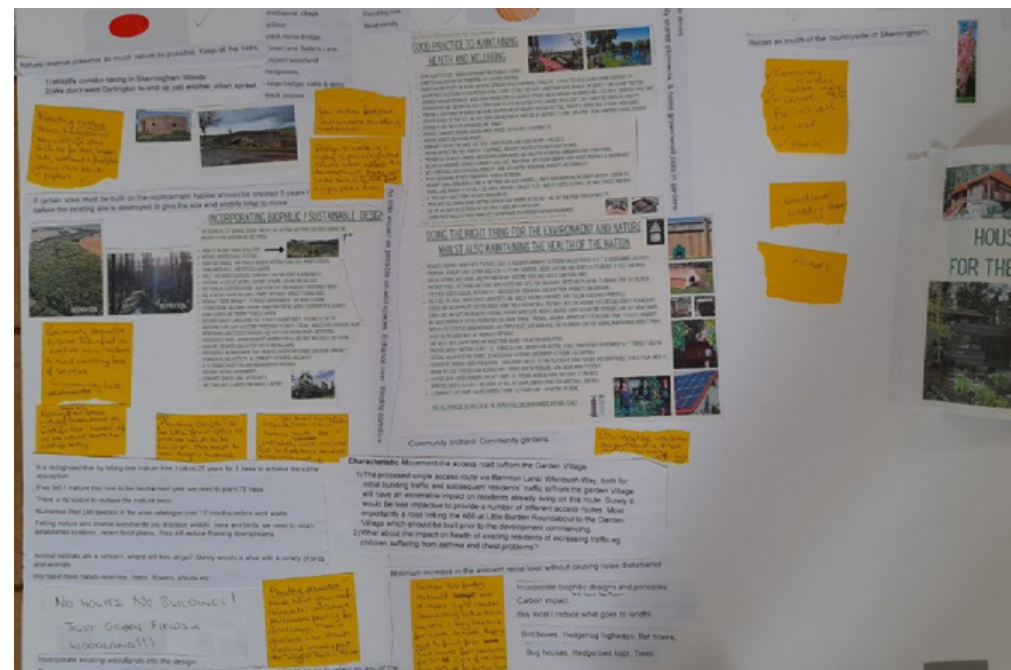
It was explained that all that information has been collated and this meeting was to give feedback on as many of those points as possible and indicate whether we **designe** Ltd think it would be appropriate to be include them in the code and how. That feedback has subsequently

informed the design code and participants will be able to see how their input has been taken into account and shaped the DC for Skerningham.

There was a discussion about how the Skerningham site could be broken down into a number of what might be called character areas, which acknowledged the different contexts across the Skerningham site could influence the style and shape of development.

Pictures of different streets and places were circulated around the tables at the workshops and participants encouraged to post comments on them.

Participants were also invited to submit which they think capture the character of Darlington and could inform the DC, some of which are in this draft.



### Communication + Information

Good Communication and information were critical parts of the community engagement programme. It was our intention, confirmed with feedback at the first public meeting, that communication routes to both the residents of Darlington as a whole and the local residents of the communities adjacent to Skerningham needed to be a mixture of means which recognised the variety of ways that people receive and provide comments.

The communication routes included the following:

#### One Darlington Magazine

One Darlington the Borough Councils magazine delivered to all residents included feature articles about the proposed Garden Village and how people could get involved with developing a DC and a special section

of the Darlington website provided regular updates and useful learning material.

#### A Skerningham Page on Darlington Borough Council website

A dedicated area on the Darlington Borough Council website was established to provide a continual flow of information and feedback during the engagement programme.

#### A Skerningham email address

skerninghamdesign@darlington.gov.uk was established to enable anyone to send ideas, comments, concerns etc. This was actively used.

#### designe ltd website

The **designe ltd** website also included a dedicated area for Skerningham.

#### Direct to Core Group

At the first public meeting attendees

were invited to give their email contact details so that a core communication group could be established to enable information to be provided and received. This core group grew as participants at workshops also provided contact details.

#### Leaflet drops to households

In advance of each informal workshop information leaflets were delivered to over a thousand houses considered to be the local community affected by Skerningham.

#### Social Media

Darlington Borough Council communication team gave great support to the whole communication process and used the Council's social media platform to also widely publicise the engagement programme and workshops.

## Small scale housing

### Operational energy

Implement the following indicative design measures:

#### Fabric U-values (W/m<sup>2</sup>.K)

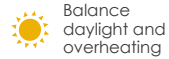
Walls	0.13 - 0.15
Floor	0.08 - 0.10
Roof	0.10 - 0.12
Exposed ceilings/floors	0.13 - 0.18
Windows	0.80 (triple glazing)
Doors	1.00

#### Efficiency measures

Air tightness	<1 (m <sup>3</sup> /h. m <sup>2</sup> @50Pa)
Thermal bridging	0.04 (y-value)
G-value of glass	0.6 - 0.5
MVHR	90% (efficiency) ≤2m (duct length from unit to external wall)

#### Window areas guide (% of wall area)

North	10-15%
East	10-15%
South	20-25%
West	10-15%



- Balance daylight and overheating
- Include external shading
- Include openable windows and cross ventilation

Reduce energy consumption to:



Reduce space heating demand to:



Maximise renewables so that 100% of annual energy requirement is generated on-site

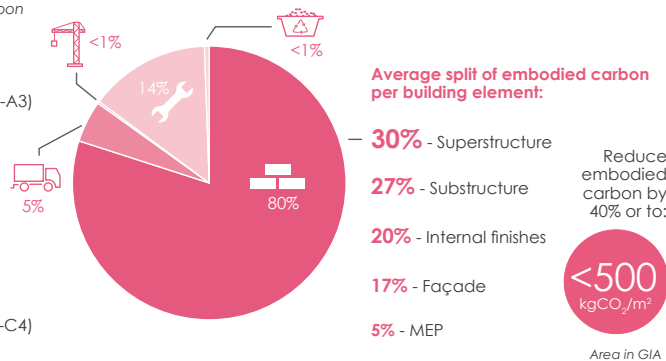
Form factor of 1.7 - 2.5



### Embodied carbon

Focus on reducing embodied carbon for the largest uses:

- Products/materials (A1-A3)
- Transport (A4)
- Construction (A5)
- Maintenance and replacements (B1-B5)
- End of life disposal (C1-C4)



### Heating and hot water

Implement the following measures:



#### Fuel

Ensure heating and hot water generation is fossil fuel free



#### Heating

Maximum 10 W/m<sup>2</sup> peak heat loss (including ventilation)



#### Hot water

Maximum dead leg of 1 litre for hot water pipework

'Green' Euro Water Label should be used for hot water outlets (e.g.: certified 6 L/min shower head – not using flow restrictors).

### Demand response

Implement the following measures to smooth energy demand and consumption:



#### Peak reduction

Reduce heating and hot water peak energy demand



#### Active demand response measures

Install heating set point control and thermal storage



#### Electricity generation and storage

Consider battery storage



#### Electric vehicle (EV) charging

Electric vehicle turn down



#### Behaviour change

Incentives to reduce power consumption and peak grid constraints.

### Data disclosure

Meter and disclose energy consumption as follows:



#### Metering

1. Submeter renewables for energy generation
2. Submeter electric vehicle charging
3. Submeter heating fuel (e.g. heat pump consumption)
4. Continuously monitor with a smart meter
5. Consider monitoring internal temperatures
6. For multiple properties include a data logger alongside the smart meter to make data sharing possible.

#### 123

#### Disclosure

1. Collect annual building energy consumption and generation
2. Aggregate average operational reporting e.g. by post code for anonymity or upstream meters
3. Collect water consumption meter readings
4. Upload five years of data to GLA and/or CarbonBuzz online platform
5. Consider uploading to Low Energy Building Database.

# Medium and large scale housing

## Operational energy

Implement the following indicative design measures:

### Fabric U-values (W/m<sup>2</sup>.K)

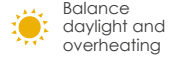
Walls	0.13 - 0.15
Floor	0.08 - 0.10
Roof	0.10 - 0.12
Exposed ceilings/floors	0.13 - 0.18
Windows	1.0 (triple glazing)
Doors	1.00

### Efficiency measures

Air tightness	<1 (m <sup>3</sup> /h.m <sup>2</sup> @50Pa)
Thermal bridging	0.04 (y-value)
G-value of glass	0.6 - 0.5
MVHR	90% (efficiency) ≤2m (duct length from unit to external wall)

### Window areas guide (% of wall area)

North	10-20%
East	10-15%
South	20-25%
West	10-15%

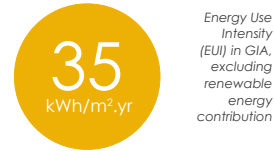


Balance daylight and overheating

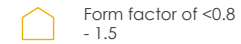
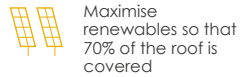
Include external shading

Include operable windows and cross ventilation

Reduce energy consumption to:



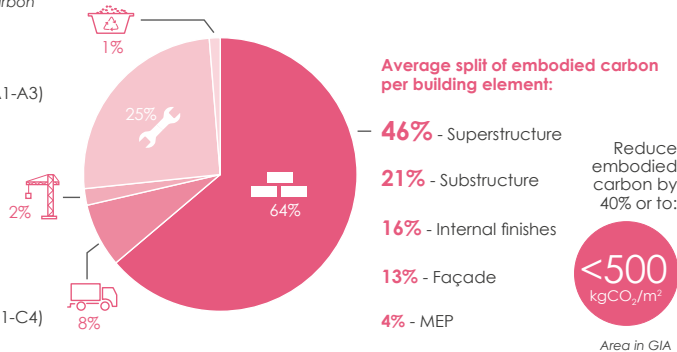
Reduce space heating demand to:



## Embodied carbon

Focus on reducing embodied carbon for the largest uses:

- Products/materials (A1-A3)
- Transport (A4)
- Construction (A5)
- Maintenance and replacements (B1-B5)
- End of life disposal (C1-C4)



## Heating and hot water

Implement the following measures:



### Fuel

Ensure heating and hot water generation is fossil fuel free



### Heat

The average carbon content of heat supplied (gCO<sub>2</sub>/kWh.yr) should be reported in-use



### Heating

Maximum 10 W/m<sup>2</sup> peak heat loss (including ventilation)



### Hot water

Maximum dead leg of 1 litre for hot water pipework

'Green' Euro Water Label should be used for hot water outlets (e.g.: certified 6 L/min shower head – not using flow restrictors).

## Demand response

Implement the following measures to smooth energy demand and consumption:



### Peak reduction

Reduce heating and hot water peak energy demand



### Active demand response measures

Install heating set point control and thermal storage



### Electricity generation and storage

Consider battery storage



### Electric vehicle (EV) charging

Electric vehicle turn down



### Behaviour change

Incentives to reduce power consumption and peak grid constraints.

## Data disclosure

Meter and disclose energy consumption as follows:



### Metering

1. Submeter renewables for energy generation
2. Submeter electric vehicle charging
3. Submeter heating fuel (e.g. heat pump consumption)
4. Continuously monitor with a smart meter
5. Consider monitoring internal temperatures
6. For multiple properties include a data logger alongside the smart meter to make data sharing possible.

123

### Disclosure

1. Collect annual building energy consumption and generation
2. Aggregate average operational reporting e.g. by post code for anonymity or upstream meters from part or whole of apartment block
3. Collect water consumption meter readings
4. Upload five years of data to GLA and/or CarbonBuzz online platform
5. Consider uploading to Low Energy Building Database.



**CABINET  
6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMMENTS ANNUAL REPORTS 2021/22**

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**Responsible Cabinet Members**

**Councillor Jonathan Dulston, Leader  
Councillor Andy Keir – Local Services  
Councillor Scott Durham, Resources Portfolio  
Councillor Lorraine Tostevin - Adults  
Councillor Jon Clarke - Children and Young People  
Councilor Kevin Nicholson - Health and Housing  
Councillors Mike Renton – Stronger Communities  
Councillor Alan Marshall – Economy**

**Responsible Directors**

**Ian Williams, Chief Executive  
Elizabeth Davison, Group Director of Operations  
James Stroyan, Group Director of People  
Dave Winstanley, Group Director of Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Cabinet with the 2021/22 Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Reports for:
  - (a) Adult Social Care (**Appendix 2**);
  - (b) Children's Social Care (**Appendix 3**);
  - (c) Corporate (**Appendix 4**);
  - (d) Housing (**Appendix 5**); and
  - (e) Public Health (**Appendix 6**).

**Summary**

2. It is important that the Council's complaints, compliments and comments procedures are accessible so people can tell us what they think about the services we provide. The Council constantly strives to ensure an organisational culture in which complaints are accepted, owned and resolved as quickly as possible and one in which learning from complaints is used to improve services.

3. The Council received a total of 739 complaints during 2021/22, an increase from 628 in 2020/21, although complaint numbers remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the Council receiving 838 complaints in 2019/20 and 825 in 2018/19.
4. The Council received a total of 217 compliments during 2021/22, a decrease from 309 compliments in 2020/21, 292 in 2019/20 and 280 in 2018/19.
5. The Council received a total of 127 comments during 2021/22, a decrease from 178 in 2020/21, 168 in 2019/20 and 240 in 2018/19.
6. A summary table is provided at **Appendix 1**.
7. The production of an annual report in respect of representations received under the Adult Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure is a requirement of the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.
8. The production of an annual report in respect of representations received under the Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure is a requirement of the Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.
9. The production of an annual report in respect of representations received under the Public Health Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure is a requirement of the NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012.

### **Recommendations**

10. It is recommended that:-
  - (a) That Cabinet notes the content of the attached reports.
  - (b) That Cabinet endorses the further recommendations made in the Corporate, Children's and Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Reports.

### **Reasons**

11. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:-
  - (a) To make Cabinet aware of the number and nature of the complaints, compliments and comments received by the Council and the organisational learning that has taken place as a result.
  - (b) To ensure the Council is complying with the Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006, its complaints, compliments and comments procedures and to improve satisfaction with complaints handling.

**Elizabeth Davison**  
**Group Director of Operations**

**Background Papers**

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

Lee Downey : Extension 5451

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no specific impact on Crime and Disorder.
Health and Wellbeing	The purpose of the Adult Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report is to improve the service we provide to service users and their carers.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no specific recommendations contained within the attached reports concerning Carbon Reduction.
Diversity	Complaint investigations have led to service improvements for people with protected characteristics.
Wards Affected	All.
Groups Affected	All.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not have a direct impact on the Budget and Policy Framework.
Key Decision	This report does not constitute a Key Decision.
Urgent Decision	This report does not require an Urgent Decision.
Council Plan	Learning from complaints contributes towards the delivery of the priorities in the Plan.
Efficiency	The revised procedures aim to improve the efficiency with which complaints are handled. The recommendations contained within the appended reports aim to reduce risk and improve efficiency in the way we interact with our customers.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The purpose of the Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report is, in part, to improve the service we provide to Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

12. Our aim is to put people first and provide them with the best possible service. To make this aim a reality it is important people have the opportunity to tell us what they think about the services we provide. The Council's Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedures are one way they can do this. They can tell us when we get things wrong so we can put them right. They can also tell us when we get things right, make comments about the things we do and suggest new ways of doing things.
13. We understand that sometimes it is difficult to complain and work hard to ensure an organisational culture in which complaints are seen as a positive means of engagement and an opportunity for the Council to learn and improve services. If people do need to complain we always take their concerns seriously, treat them fairly and with respect and assure them they will not receive a poorer service as a result.
14. There was a slight decrease in the overall number of representations made under the Adult Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure during 2021/22. While there was a slight increase in the number of complaints received, complaint numbers remained significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels. There was a decrease in the number of compliments received and a small increase in the number of comments received. Full details are attached at Appendix 2.
15. There was an increase in the overall number of representations made under the Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure during 2021/22. There was a significant increase in the number of complaints received at Stage 1 of the procedure, although Stage 1 complaints remained lower than pre-pandemic levels. There was an increase in the number of complaints received at Stage 2 and a small decrease in the number of complaints received at Stage 3. There was a decrease in the number of compliments received, while there was a small increase in the number of comments received. Full details are attached at Appendix 3.
16. There was a decrease in the overall number of representations made under the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure during 2021/22. While there was a significant increase in the number of Stage 1 complaints received, Stage 1 complaint numbers remained significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels. There was also a significant increase in the number of complaints received at Stage 2 of the procedure. There was a significant decrease in the number of compliments and comments received, both of which remained lower than pre-pandemic levels. Full details are attached at Appendix 4.
17. There was a slight increase in the number of representations made under the Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure during 2021/22. There was a significant increase in the number of Stage 1 complaints received. The number of Stage 1 complaints received was higher than pre-pandemic levels. There was also an increase in the number of Stage 2 complaints received, which were higher than before the pandemic. There was a decrease in the number of compliments received, which remained below pre-pandemic levels. There was also a decrease in the number of comments received. Full details are attached at Appendix 5.

18. There was a decrease in the number of representations made under the Public Health Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure during 2021/22. There was a small decrease in the number of complaints received, a small increase in the number of compliments received and a slight decrease in the number of comments received. Full details are attached at Appendix 6.
19. Some examples of organisational learning resulting from complaints have been extracted from the appended reports and are provided below.
20. *Adult Social Care Complaints:*
  - (a) Following a complaint regarding a care home, it was recommended the home's visiting policy was regularly reviewed during the pandemic to ensure it was consistent with Government guidance.
  - (b) Following a Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) decision, the Council agreed to carry out a review of how it supports, monitors and audits recipients of direct payments. This is to ensure all current and future recipients of direct payments are adequately monitored and audited in line with statutory guidance.
  - (c) Following a complaint for Life Stages 26+, it was recommended that a Direct Payment Procedure be developed to inform Adult Social Care staff of the use and processes involved in service users having a Direct Payment, including what Direct Payments can and cannot be used for.
  - (d) Following a LGSCO decision, staff were reminded to ensure they adhere to the Council's safeguarding policy, in particular to retain complete and accurate records to demonstrate how decisions are made regarding safeguarding enquiries. Furthermore the Council decided to update existing/provide new training for staff in order to ensure social workers retain complete and accurate records to demonstrate how decisions are made, not only in relation to safeguarding enquiries but in other areas of social work practice.
  - (e) Following a complaint for Ongoing Assessment & Intervention Team (OAIT), social workers were reminded of the importance of holding Best Interests meetings to inform planning in adult social care and that this should always include an invitation to family members were identified as appropriate and with consent where possible of the cared for person.
21. *Children's Social Care Complaints:*
  - (a) Following a complaint for Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) at the front door, the importance of verifying information contained within assessments and verifying this with parents prior to finalisation was reinforced with social workers. The importance of including birth fathers within assessments and ensuring that all information recorded is current and accurate as per Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 was also reinforced with social workers.

- (b) Following a complaint for Independent Reviewing Officers, it was recommended that consideration is given to either establishing a clear signposting in procedures so that all Foster to Adopt placements are managed in line with embedded adoption processes.
- (c) Following a complaint for Looked After Through (LATC) Team, it was agreed Children's Services should ensure that attendance records for Looked After Reviews (LAR) clearly evidence attendees of the LAR meeting. It was also agreed that LAR minutes should contain information shared by a young person's advocate to ensure there is a transparent record of a young person's views, wishes and feelings captured at that point in time.
- (d) Following a complaint for Team C, it was agreed that as per the Placement and Review Regulations 2015, social workers would ensure parents/carers are consulted prior to any significant social worker actions or changes to agreed care plan actions.
- (e) Following a further complaint for Team C, it was agreed that an existing function within Liquid Logic (the Council's social care system) should be used to modify the content of CLA documentation that relates to Foster to Adopt (and Adoption Placements) to prevent the automatic insertion of information into documentation that is distributed to birth family members.

## 22. *Corporate Complaints:*

- (a) Following a complaint for Highway Network Management, the Council improved its knowledge of its enforcement powers set out in Section 25 of the Land Drainage Act 1991.
- (b) Following a further complaint for Income Management, it was agreed consideration would be given to developing a Customer Standards Charter which clearly gives timescales for responses to urgent and non-urgent communication from customers.
- (c) Following a complaint for People and Families Information Service, it was agreed the Council would review entitlement for children and young people who reside in Darlington but attend a school setting out of area.
- (d) Following a complaint for Strengthening Families, it was agreed the assessment for Direct Payments as part of an Early Help Assessment for children under the age of five would be reviewed to ensure the service is appropriate for those who need it.
- (e) Following a complaint for Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops, it was agreed refresher training would be provided to Civic Enforcement Officers (CEOs) in relation to their jurisdiction.

23. *Housing Complaints:*

- (a) Following a complaint for Housing Management, further staff training was provided in relation to the process of void inspections and void standards and all major work voids are now jointly inspected by both Asset Management and the Housing Management Officer prior to a person taking on that tenancy, with any failed post-inspections immediately addressed with Building Services.
  - (b) As a result a complaint for Housing Management, the Council agreed to look at the processes around voids and glazing to ensure we reduce the chances of delays happening in future.
  - (c) Following a complaint for Housing Management, it was agreed that Housing Management would provide tenants with a copy of repair notices and information on how the right to repair scheme works.
  - (d) Following a complaint for Housing Management, Building Services were reminded of the need to confirm the time and date of appointments before arriving to undertake works and it was agreed a detailed operational manual would be provided to prospective tenants.
  - (e) Following a complaint for Tenancy Enforcement it was recommended that the clauses in the Tenancy Agreement regarding succession of properties be reviewed and that all relevant staff receive refresher training in relation to this.
24. The further recommendations set out in the Corporate, Children's and Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Reports are.
- (a) The Complaints & Information Governance Team should work to improve performance against the Corporate Stage 2 complaint response target.
  - (b) The Complaints & Information Governance Team should work to improve performance against the Housing Stage 2 response target.
  - (c) Children's Services should work to improve performance against the Stage 2 timescale for Children's Social Care complaints.

**Consultation**

25. No consultation was required in preparing this report.

## Appendix 1

## Total Representations by Year

Type of representation	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
<b>Complaints</b>				
<b>Corporate</b>				
Stage 1 complaints	532	457	632	623
Direct to Stage 2 complaints	17	24	15	1
Direct to Ombudsman	0	1	0	0
<i>Total complaints</i>	<i>549</i>	<i>483</i>	<i>647</i>	<i>624</i>
Stage 1 escalated to Stage 2	53	26	44	70
<i>Total Stage 2 complaints</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>59</i>	<i>71</i>
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	48	46	67	64
<b>Children's Social Care</b>				
Stage 1 complaints	49	37	57	67
Direct to Stage 2 complaints	4	0	0	0
<i>Total complaints</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>67</i>
Stage 1 escalated to Stage 2	8	7	10	16
<i>Total Stage 2 complaints</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>16</i>
Stage 3 complaints	1	2	3	4
<b>Housing</b>				
Stage 1 complaints	88	60	65	69
Direct to Stage 2 complaints	0	1	1	1
<i>Total complaints</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>70</i>
Stage 1 escalated to Stage 2	16	12	6	9
<i>Total Stage 2 complaints</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>10</i>
Stage 3 complaints	0	0	0	0
<b>Public Health</b>	1	2	1	0
<b>Compliments</b>				
Corporate	154	209	170	199
Adult Social Care	33	38	62	33
Children's Social Care	8	15	7	19
Housing	21	47	49	28
Public Health	1	0	4	1
<i>Total compliments</i>	<i>217</i>	<i>309</i>	<i>292</i>	<i>280</i>
<b>Comments</b>				
Corporate	123	171	166	236
Adult Social Care	2	1	0	2
Children's Social Care	1	0	0	0
Housing	1	4	2	2
Public Health	0	2	0	0
<i>Total comments</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>178</i>	<i>168</i>	<i>240</i>



# **DARLINGTON**

## Borough Council

### Adult Social Care

### Complaints, Compliments and Comment

### Annual Report

### 2021/22

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## Introduction

1. The purpose of this annual report is to inform service users, carers, the public, Council Members and staff of the effectiveness of the Adult Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure (the procedure).
2. On the 1 April 2009 the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 (the regulations) came into force following the consultation 'Making Experiences Count' by the Department of Health. The consultation found that the complaints processes for people receiving both health and social care services were overly complex and inflexible.
3. As a result the legislation introduced altered the way in which complaints are handled introducing a single joint complaints process for both social care and health services, with one stage as opposed to the previous three stage process used in relation to adult social care services. The regulations also introduced a duty for health and social care services to cooperate.
4. The Council implemented a new procedure on the 1 April 2010 providing a local framework to ensure complaints are handled effectively and in line with the regulations.
5. The procedure aims to:
  - (a) Make it as easy and accessible as possible for service users and their carers to raise complaints;
  - (b) Foster an organisational culture in which complaints are accepted, owned and resolved as efficiently as possible;
  - (c) Ensure high levels of customer satisfaction with complaints handling;
  - (d) Resolve individual issues when they arise and reduce the number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman; and
  - (e) Enable the Council to identify topics and trends in relation to adult social care complaints and improve services as a result.
6. The Assistant Director Adult Services is the responsible person for ensuring that the Council complies with the arrangements made under the regulations. They act as the 'Adjudicating Officer', which means they make decisions on complaints and decide what action should be taken in light of the outcome of a complaint.
7. The Complaints and Information Governance Manager (Complaints Manager) is the responsible person for managing the procedure for handling and considering complaints in accordance with the agreements made under the regulations.

### **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (Health Services Ombudsman)**

8. Although complainants can refer their complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) from the outset, the LGSCO will not normally investigate until the Council has conducted its own investigation and provided a response. Where it has not been possible for the complaint to be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant they may refer the matter to the LGSCO (or Health Services Ombudsman for some joint complaints).

### **Information and Accessibility**

9. We are committed to making sure that everyone has equal access to all our services, including the complaints procedure. To help make sure the Council's complaints procedures are easily accessible we have produced two leaflets (one for children and young people and one for adults) covering all Council services to reflect the single point of access for complainants within the Council. The leaflets are available in all Council buildings. They have been written in line with the Plain English Campaign standards. The title is written in the most commonly used community languages and it contains details on how to access the information in other formats, for example, large print, audio and Braille.
10. Information is available on the Council's website. There is also an electronic form which people can use to make a complaint, pay someone a compliment or pass comment on Council services. People may make a complaint in any format they wish. This can be in writing, by email, via the web, over the phone, in person or by any other reasonable means.
11. The Complaints Manager can arrange advocates and interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters) where appropriate.

### **Advocacy**

12. During 2021/22 the Council commissioned an advocacy service which provides RPRs (Relevant Persons Representatives), IMCAs (Independent Mental Capacity Advocates), IMHAs (Independent Mental Health Act Advocates), Court of Protection Advocacy, and Care Act Advocates. This is provided by Darlington association on Disability (DAD).
13. The Council also commissioned Specialist Advocacy / Welfare Rights services for adults with a sensory impairment, and NHS Complaints Advocacy on behalf of the NHS.

## Summary

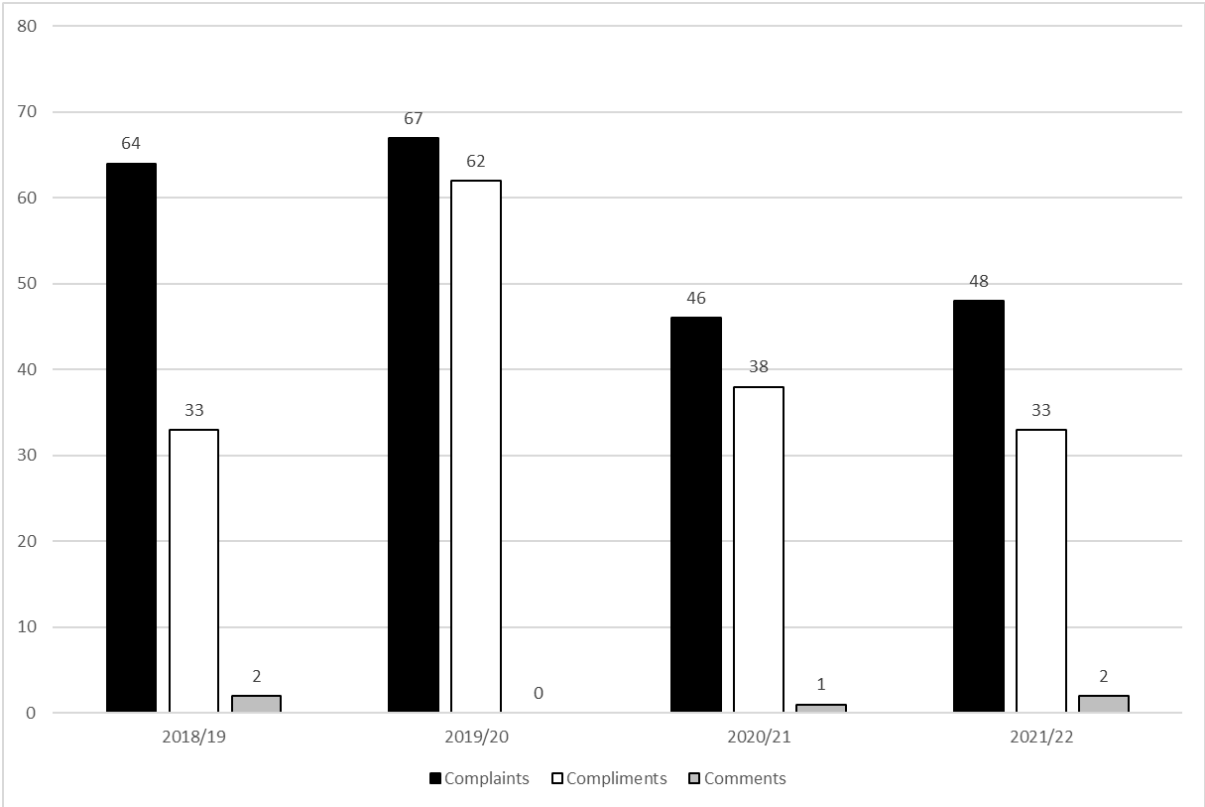
14. There has been a slight decrease in overall feedback, 83 representations in 2021/22 compared to 85 in 2020/21, 134 representations in 2019/20 and 99 in 2018/19.
15. The trend of relatively low numbers of complaints compared to pre-pandemic levels continued during 2021/22, with the Council investigating 48 complaints. Although this was an increase from 46 in 2020/21, it was still significantly lower than 67 in 2019/20 and 64 in 2018/19.
16. The Council received 33 compliments under the procedure during 2021/22, a decrease from 38 in 2020/21 and 62 in 2019/20 and the same number as in 2018/19.
17. The Council received two comments under the procedure during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, zero in 2019/20 and the same number as in 2018/19.
18. The Council did not receive any complaints which did not qualify for investigation under the procedure during 2021/22, a decrease from 6 in 2020/21 and five in 2019/20 and the same number as in 2018/19.
19. Three adult social care complaints were progressed to the LGSCO during 2021/22, a decrease from six in 2020/21.
20. The LGSCO reached a decision on four complaints during 2021/22, the same number as in 2020/21.

Review of the Year

Breakdown of all Representations

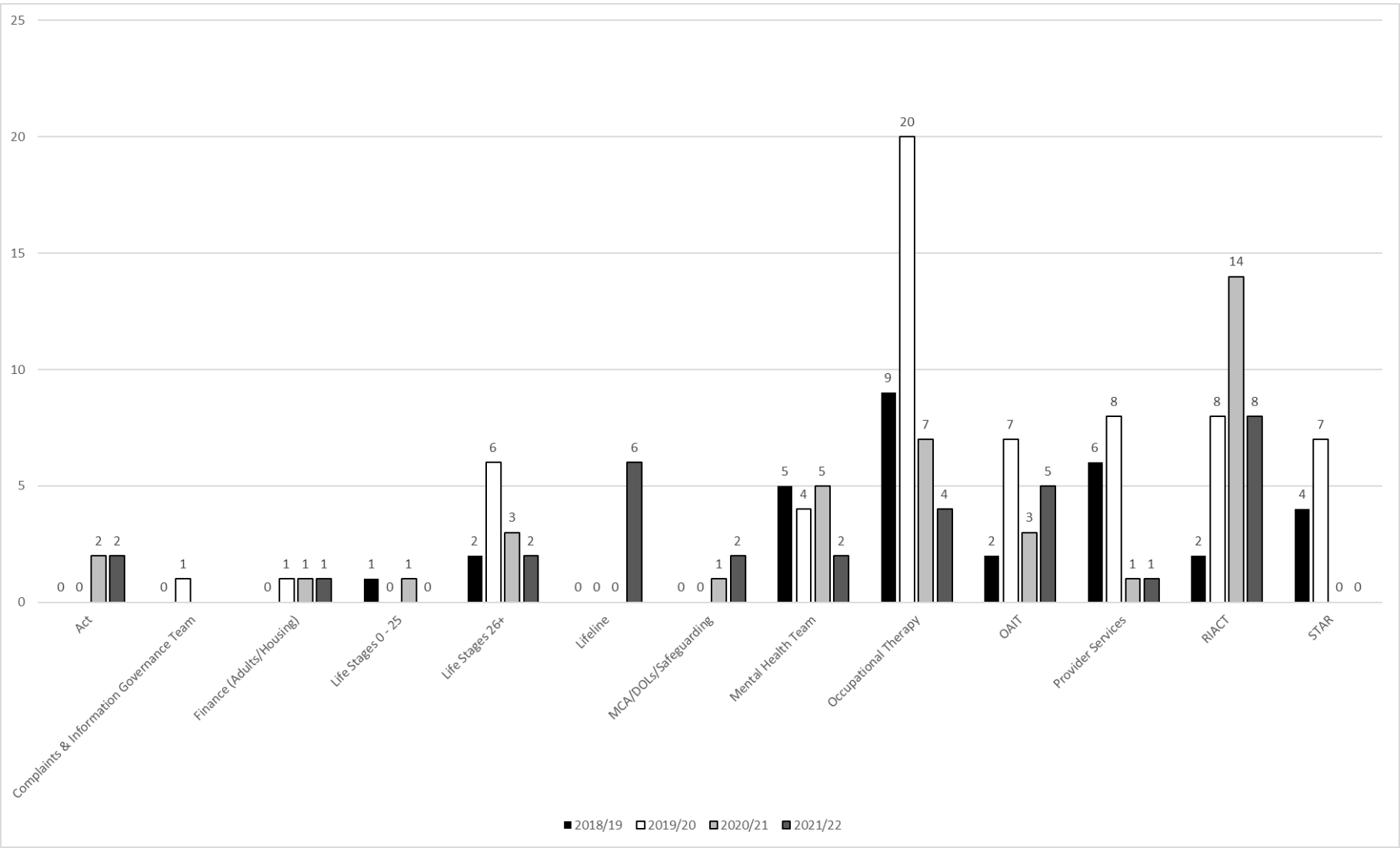
21. A total of 83 representations were handled under the procedure during 2021/22. This does not include those representations responded to directly by social care providers i.e. care homes and home (domiciliary) care providers.

Total Complaints, Compliments and Comments Received 2021/22



22. There was an increase in the number of complaints we investigated, 48 compared to 46 in 2020/21, however, complaints remain significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels.
23. There was a decrease in the number of compliments we received, 33 compared to 38 in 2020/21. Again compliments remain significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels.
24. There was an increase in the number of comments we received, two compared to one in 2020/21. The number of comments received has always been low and was seemingly not affected by the pandemic in the same way as compliments and complaints.

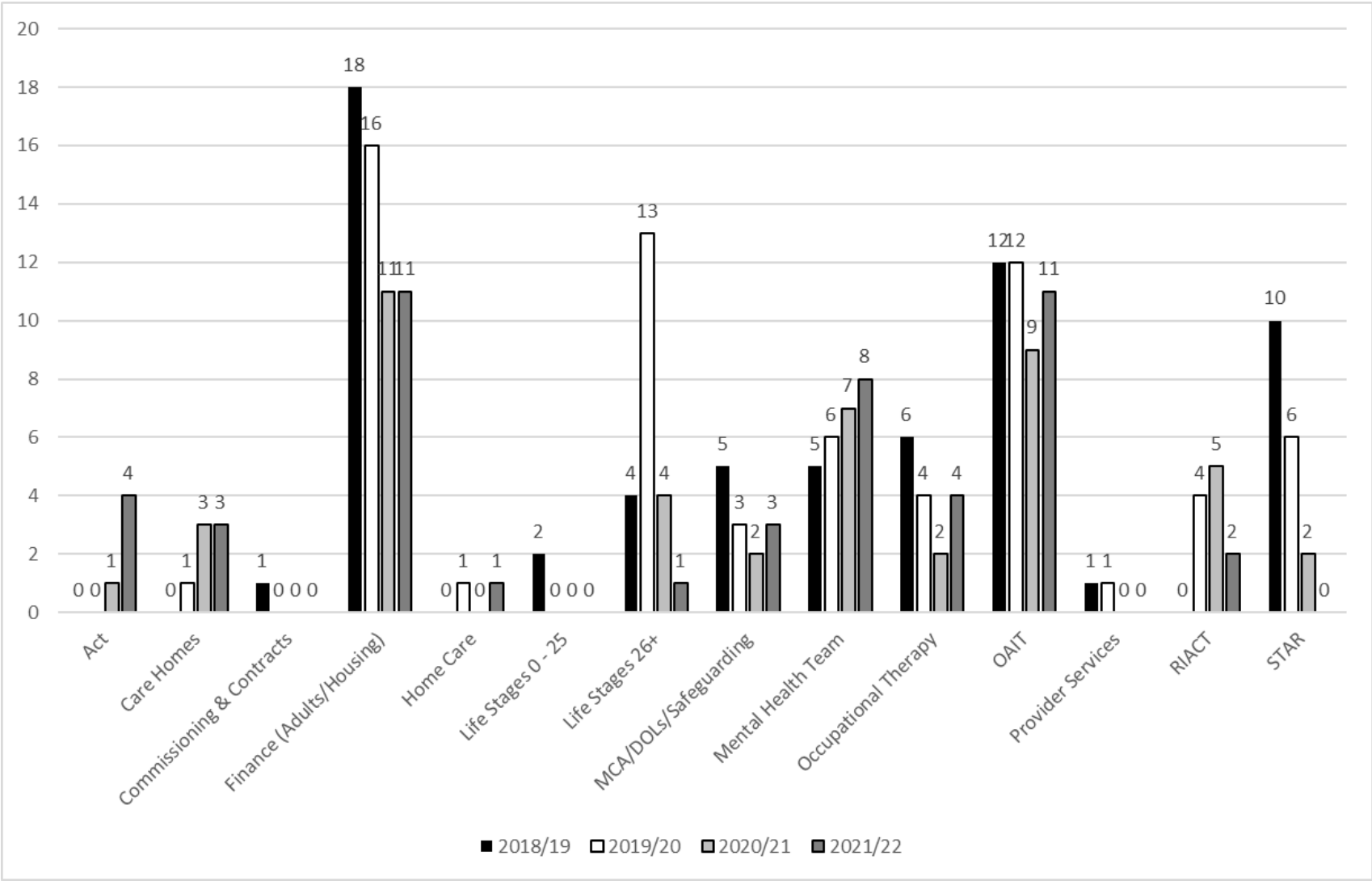
Breakdown of Compliments Received by Team



\*ACT = Adult Contact Team, MCA/DOLS = Mental Capacity Act/Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, OAIT = Ongoing Assessment and Intervention Team, RIACT = Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team, STAR = Short Term Assessment and Review

*N.B. Those teams that do not appear in the graph did not receive any compliments*

Breakdown of Complaints Received by Service Area/Team



\*ACT = Adult Contact Team, MCA/DOLS = Mental Capacity Act/Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, OAIT = Ongoing Assessment and Intervention Team, RIACT = Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team, STAR = Short Term Assessment and Review

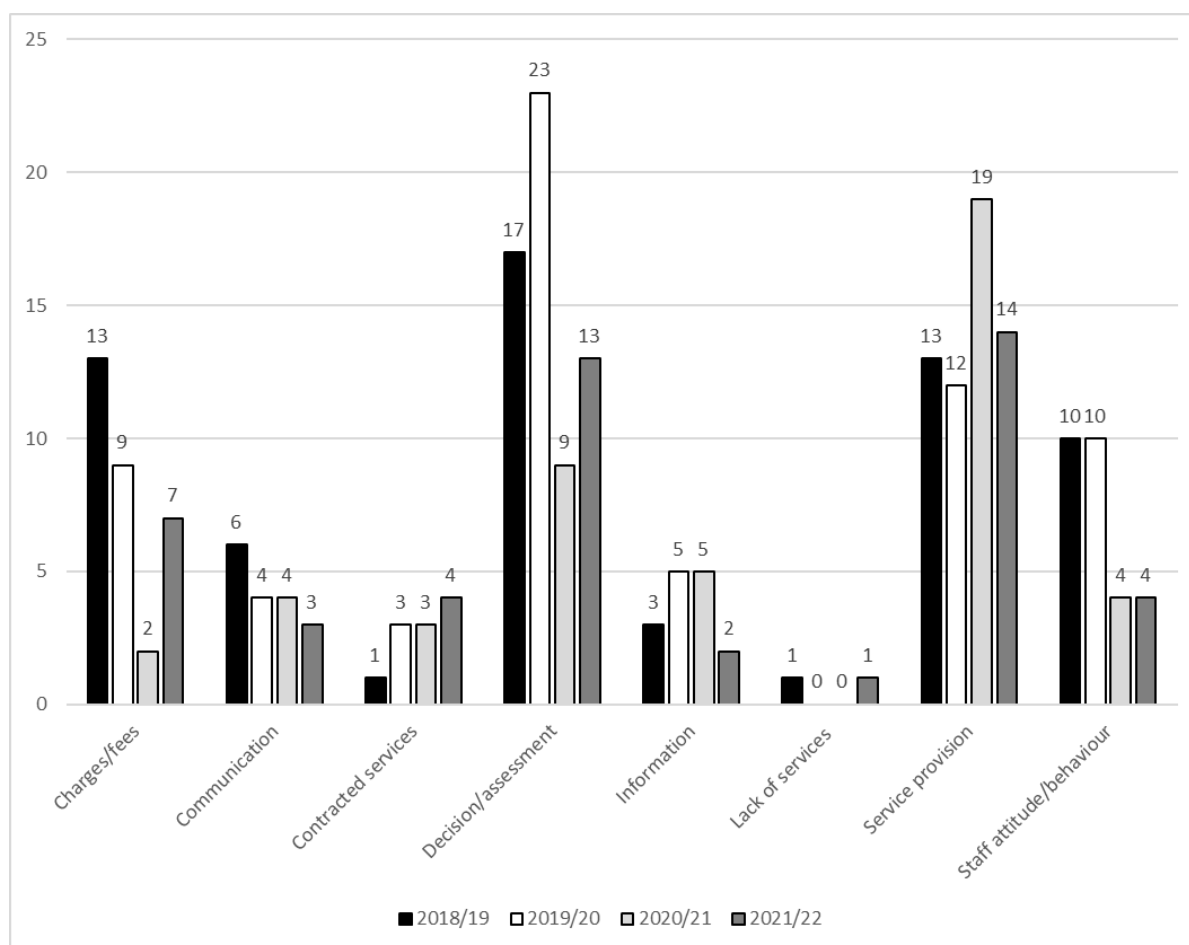
*N.B. Those teams that are not listed did not receive any complaints.*

25. The Council investigated four complaints about Act, an increase from one in 2020/21.
26. The Council investigated three complaints about care homes (contracted service), the same number as in 2020/21.
27. The Council investigated 11 complaints about Finance (Adults/Housing), the same number as in 2020/21. Complaints concerned delays, poor communication, inaccurate information and dissatisfaction with decisions.
28. The Council investigated one complaint about a home (domiciliary) care provider (contracted service), an increase from zero in 2020/21.
29. The Council investigated one complaint about Life Stages 26+, compared to four in 2020/21.
30. The Council investigated three complaints for MCA/DOLS (Mental Capacity Act/Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards), compared to two in 2020/21.
31. The Mental Health Team received eight complaints, compared to seven 2020/21. Dissatisfaction with the service provided by the social worker was the most common cause of complaint.
32. Occupational Therapy received four complaints, compared to two 2020/21.
33. Ongoing Assessment & Intervention Team (OAIT) received 11 complaints, compared to nine in 2020/21. Dissatisfaction with the service provided by the social worker was the most common cause of complaint.
34. Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team (RIACT) received two complaints, compared to five in 2020/21.
35. Short Term Assessment & Review Team (STAR) received zero complaints, compared to two in 2020/21.

#### **Breakdown of Comments Received by Service Area/Team**

36. The Council received two comments, compared to one in 2020/21. One related to Occupational Therapy as did the one the previous year and one related to Life Stages 26+.

### Breakdown of Complaints Received by Issue



37. The most common cause of complaint remained service provision. The Council received 14 complaints about service provision, a decrease from 19 in 2020/21, although complaints about this issue remained higher than pre-pandemic levels when the Council received 12 complaints in 2019/20 and 13 complaints in 2018/19.
38. The second most common cause of complaint remained dissatisfaction with a decision/assessment. The Council received 13 complaints about this issue, an increase from nine in 2020/21, although complaints about this issue remained lower than pre-pandemic levels when the Council received 23 complaints in 2019/20 and 17 complaints in 2018/19.
39. The third most common cause of complaint was charges/fees. The Council received seven complaints about this issue, an increase from two in 2020/21, although complaints about this issue remained lower than pre-pandemic levels when the Council received nine complaints in 2019/20 and 13 complaints in 2018/19.
40. Contracted services and staff attitude/behaviour were the fourth most complained about issues during 2021/22. The Council received four complaints about contracted services, an increase from three in both 2020/21 and 2019/20 and one in 2018/19. The Council received four complaints about staff attitude/behaviour, the same number as in 2020/21. Complaints about this issue remained lower than pre-pandemic levels when the Council received 10 complaints in both 2019/20 and 2018/19.

41. Communication was the fifth most complained about issues. The Council received three complaints about this issue in 2021/22, a decrease from four in both 2020/21 and 2019/20 and six in 2018/19.
42. Information was the sixth most complained about issue. The Council received two complaints about this issue during 2021/22, a decrease from five in both 2020/21 and 2019/20 and three in 2018/19.
43. Lack of services was the least complained about issue. The Council received one complaint about this issue in 2021/22, an increase from zero in both 2020/21 and 2019/20 and the same number as was received in 2018/19.

### Complaint Outcomes

44. 44 complaint investigations were concluded during 2021/22. The outcomes of these complaints are detailed in the chart below.

Service Area/Team	Upheld	Partly Upheld	Not Upheld	Inconclusive	Withdrawn	Total
Adult Contact Team (ACT)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Care Homes (contracted service)	1	2	0	0	1	4
Finance	3	3	5	0	0	11
Life Stage 26+	2	2	2	0	0	6
MCA/DOLS/Safeguarding	0	0	3	0	0	3
Mental Health	0	0	3	0	2	5
Occupational Therapy	2	0	0	0	3	5
Ongoing Assessment & Intervention Team (OAIT)	1	1	1	0	3	6
Responsive Integrated Assessment Care Team (RIACT)	1	1	1	0	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>44</b>

### Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Complaints Received 2021/22

45. Three adult social care complaints were progressed to the LGSCO during 2021/22, compared to five in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and 13 in 2018/19.

## **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Complaint Outcomes 2021/22**

46. Four adult social care complaints were determined by the LGSCO during 2021/22, compared to four in 202/21, five in 2019/20 and 14 in 2018/19.
47. Full details of those complaints determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are included in the Cabinet reports of 7 December 2021 and 6 September 2022 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).

### **Organisational Learning**

48. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, a number of service improvements were made following complaint investigations during 2021/22, some of which are detailed below.

### **Care Homes**

49. Following a complaint regarding a care home, it was recommended the home's visiting policy was regularly reviewed during the pandemic to ensure it was consistent with Government guidance.

### **Finance**

50. Following a LGSCO decision, the Council agreed to carry out a review of how it supports, monitors and audits recipients of direct payments. This is to ensure all current and future recipients of direct payments are adequately monitored and audited in line with statutory guidance.

### **Life Stage 26+**

51. Following a complaint, it was recommended that a Direct Payment Procedure be developed to inform Adult Social Care staff of the use and processes involved in service users having a Direct Payment, including what Direct Payments can and cannot be used for.

### **MCA/DOLS/Safeguarding**

52. Following a LGSCO decision, staff were reminded to ensure they adhere to the Council's safeguarding policy, in particular to retain complete and accurate records to demonstrate how decisions are made regarding safeguarding enquiries. Furthermore the Council decided to update existing/provide new training for staff in order to ensure social workers retain complete and accurate records to demonstrate how decisions are made, not only in relation to safeguarding enquiries but in other areas of social work practice.

### **Occupational Therapy**

53. Following a complaint, it was agreed OT's would ensure that when they determine that a piece of equipment is not safe for use an alternative is provided. OT's also improved their knowledge of the financial assessment process.

### **Ongoing Assessment & Intervention Team (OAIT)**

54. Following a complaint, social workers were reminded of the importance of holding Best Interests meetings to inform planning in adult social care and that this should always include an invitation to family members were identified as appropriate and with consent where possible of the cared for person. Social workers were also reminded of the importance of recording all communication with family members with regards to the care of an individual.

### **Performance against the Procedure**

55. The target for acknowledging receipt of complaints under the procedure is 3 working days.
56. 91.67% of complaints received during 2021/22 were acknowledged within the 3 working day timescale, an increase from 86.96% in 2020/21.
57. There are no longer any statutory timescales for complaint responses, except that complainants should receive a response within six months. The procedure sets out a timescale for dealing with complaints solely about the Council's services i.e. 30 working days, although there are circumstances in which the investigator may agree an extension with the complainant. It also states that for joint health and social care complaints the complaints managers from the different organisations will work together to decide a reasonable timescale and agree this with the complainant. This is to ensure investigations are completed in a timely manner and within the maximum time allowed.
58. 15.56% of complaints were responded to within 30 working days, a decrease from 27.8% in 2020/21.
59. 45.5% of complaints exceeded the maximum six month time limit, an increase from 22.2% in 2020/21.

### **Performance Indicator for 2021/22**

60. In relation to Adult Social Care complaints the Council's key performance indicator is the number of maladministration decisions received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Council received four maladministration decisions during 2021/22, compared to one 2020/21, five in 2019/20 and nine in 2018/19.
61. Full details of those complaints determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are included in the Cabinet reports of 7 December 2021 and 6 September 2022 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).

### **Further recommendations**

62. As a result of COVID-19 the Assistant Director Law and Governance made a [Delegated Decision](#) on 23 March 2020 that gave approval for timescales not to be adhered as a result of services diverting resources to the areas of greatest need. This resulted in a backlog of complaints and in the 2020/21 annual report it was recommended that Adult Services work to clear the backlog, which they successfully did during 2021/22.
63. While performance against the procedure was significantly lower than in 2020/21, this was as a result of the significant backlog that arose during the pandemic. There are no further recommendations arising from the 2021/22 annual report.



# **DARLINGTON**

## Borough Council

### **Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report 2021/22**

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## **Introduction**

1. Darlington Children's Social Care welcomes complaints, compliments and comments as a way of improving service delivery to children, young people and their families. The purpose of this report is to inform the service users, carers, the public, Council Members and Children's Social Care staff of the effectiveness of the Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure (the Procedure). The report identifies topics and trends in relation to complaints information, makes suggestions for service improvements, where appropriate and identifies areas of organisational learning that have taken place in relation to people, policy and process.

## **The Law**

2. The Council is required by law to have management arrangements in place for considering children's social care representations, including complaints, under the Children Act 1989. National legislative procedures for social care were amended in September 2006 with the introduction of the Children Act 1989 Representation Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 (the Regulations). It is a requirement of the Regulations that the Council publishes an annual report. In addition to the Regulations the Department for Education and Skills produced some comprehensive guidance for local authorities on managing complaints, called 'Getting the Best from Complaints'.
3. Key features of the Regulations include:
  - (a) A requirement for local authorities to appoint a Complaints Manager;
  - (b) A requirement for review panels to be retained by local authorities but with more robust arrangements for constituting and running them; and
  - (c) A 12 month time limit to make complaints.

## **Complaints and Information Governance Team**

4. The Complaints and Information Governance Manager is appointed as the 'Complaints Manager' in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations. The Complaints and Information Governance (CIG) Team is independent of Children's Social Care operational line management. This ensures a high level of independence in the way children's social care complaints are managed within the Council.

## **Public Information**

5. We are committed to making sure that everyone has equal access to all our services, including the Procedure. To help make the Procedure easily accessible we have produced two leaflets (one for children and young people and one for adults) covering all Council services to reflect the single point of access for complainants within the Council. The leaflets are available in all Council buildings. They have been written in line with the Plain English Campaign standards. The title is written in the most commonly used community languages and it contains details on how to access the information in other formats, for example, large print, audio and Braille.

6. Information is available on the Council's website. There is also an electronic form which people can use to make a complaint, pay someone a compliment or pass comment on Council services. People may make a complaint in any format they wish.
7. This can be in writing, by email, via the web, over the phone, in person or by any other reasonable means.
8. The Complaints Manager can arrange advocates and interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters) where appropriate.

## **Children's Services Social Care Complaints Process**

### **Stage 1 – Local Resolution**

9. This initial stage allows children's social care managers the opportunity to try and resolve complaints locally, usually within the team being complained about.

### **Stage 2 – Investigation**

10. Stage 2 involves a full and formal investigation. An 'Independent Person' must also be appointed to oversee the investigation and report independently to Children's Social Care Services. Both the Investigating Officer and Independent Person produce reports, which are submitted to a senior manager who writes the final response to the complainant.

### **Stage 3 – Review Panel**

11. A review panel is convened when the complainant is dissatisfied with the Stage 2 response. The panel consists of an independent chairperson and two individuals who are independent of the Council.

### **The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

12. Although complainants can refer complaints at any stage to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) they will not normally investigate until the Council has conducted its own investigation and provided a response.

### **External Support to the Complaints Process**

#### **Advocacy**

13. The Council commissions an advocacy service for children and young people who make a complaint. This is an independent service provided by NYAS.

#### **Investigating Officers**

14. While the Regulations do not require Investigating Officer's to be independent of the Council, we have signed up to a contract for the provision of Independent Investigating Officers.

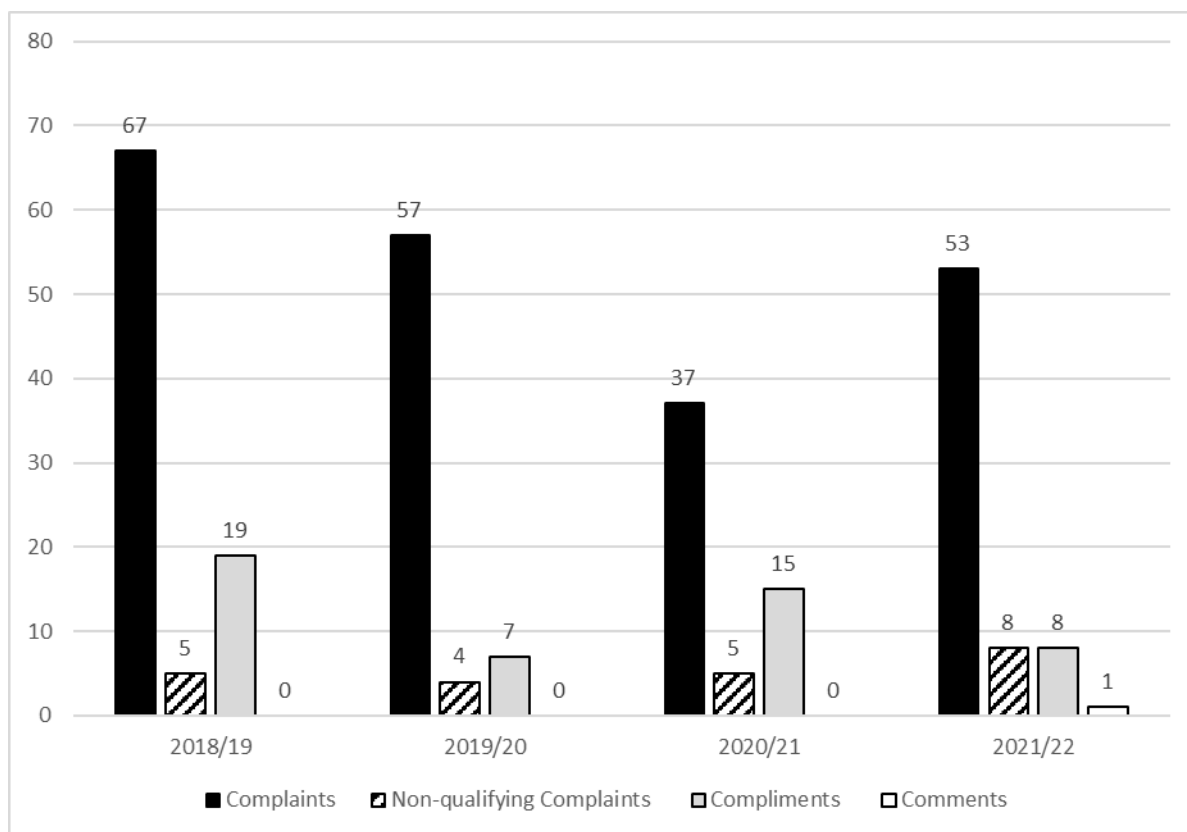
#### **Independent Persons**

15. The Council has signed up to a contract for the provision of Independent Persons.

#### **Review Panels**

16. The Council has also signed up to a contract for the provision of an Independent Chair and Independent Panellist service.

### Total Complaints, Compliments and Comments received

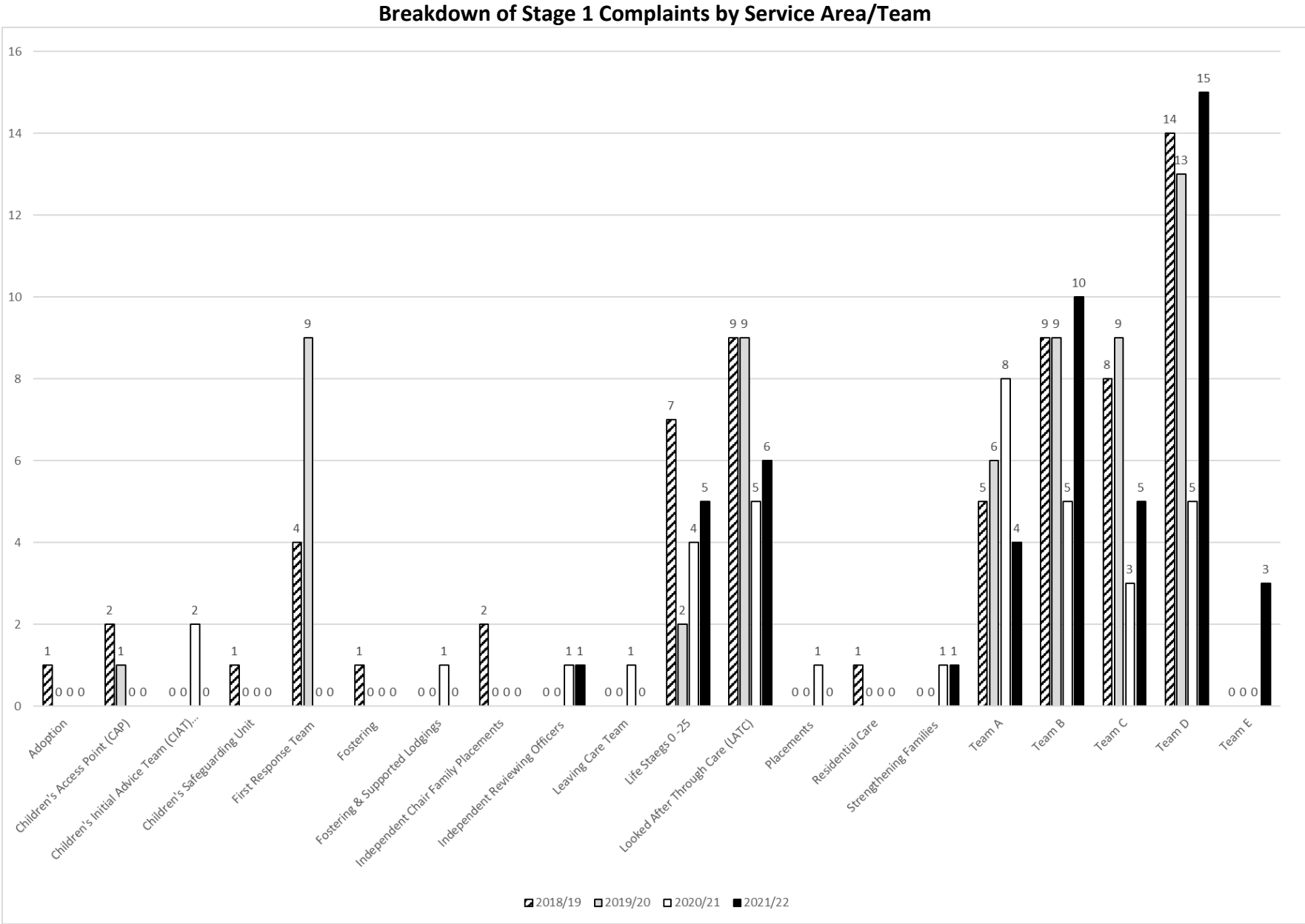


17. The Council investigated 53 complaints, an increase from 37 in 2020/21, however, overall the number of complaints investigated remained lower than pre-pandemic levels. 49 complaints were investigated at Stage 1 of the procedure, while four were escalated directly to Stage 2.

18. The Council also received eight non-qualifying complaints, an increase from five in 2020/21, four in 2019/20 and five in 2018/19. While fewer complaints were investigated, the overall number of complaints considered by the Council under the procedure was 61, the same number as in 2019/20.

19. The Council received 8 compliments, a reduction from 15 in 2020/21, an increase from seven in 2019/20 and a decrease from 19 in 2018/19.

20. The Council received one comment, compared to zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.

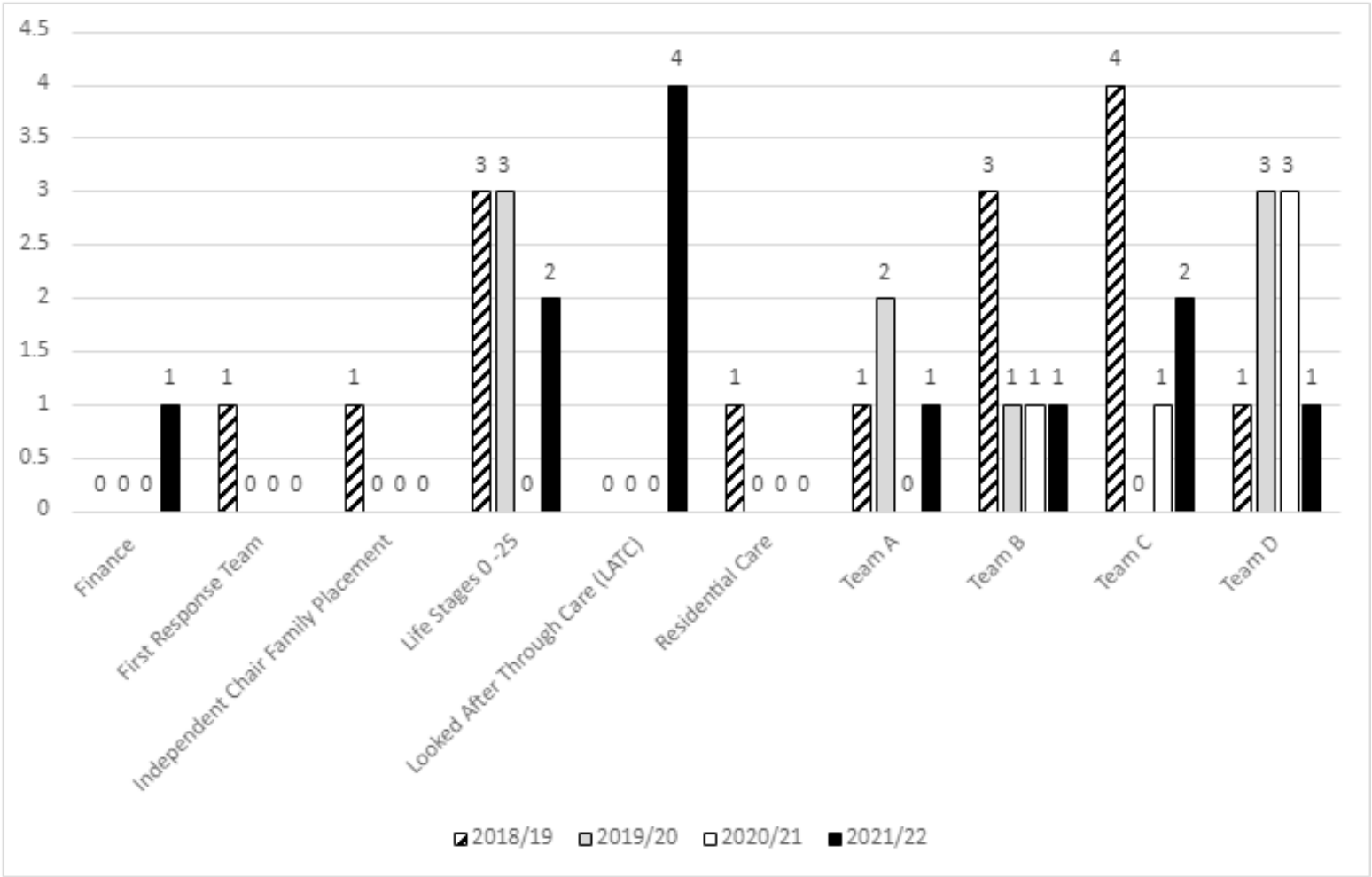


*N.B. Those teams that are not listed did not receive any complaints during 2021/22.  
Comparison data is not available for all teams due to changes in the Council's organisational structure.*

21. Independent Reviewing Officers received one complaint during 2021/22, the same number as in 2020/21, an increase from zero in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
22. Life Stages 0 – 25 received five complaints during 2021/22, an increase from four in 2020/21, two in 2019/20 and a decrease from seven in 2018/19. Two complaints, in part, concerned communication and two concerned direct payments.
23. Looked After Through Care (LATC) Team received six complaints during 2021/22, an increase from 5 in 2020/21, although a decrease from nine in 2019/20 and 2018/19. There were no identifiable themes.
24. Strengthening Families received one complaint during 2021/22, the same number as in 2020/21, an increase from zero in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
25. Team A received four complaints during 2021/22, a decrease from eight in 2020/21, six in 2019/20 and five in 2018/19. There were no identifiable themes.
26. Team B received 10 complaints during 2021/22, a significant increase from five in 2020/21, and higher than the nine received in 2019/20 and 2018/19. Team B received more complaints than in the years preceding the pandemic. The most common cause of complaint was people's dissatisfaction with the behaviour of, treatment by and their relationship with the social worker.
27. Team C received five complaints during 2021/22, an increase from three in 2020/21, although less than the nine received in 2019/20 and the eight received in 2018/19. The attitude and behaviour of the social worker was the most common theme running thorough the complaints received by Team C.
28. Team D received 15 complaints during 2021/22, a significant increase from five in 2020/21, and higher than the thirteen received in 2019/20 and fourteen received in 2018/19. Team D also received more complaints than it did in the years preceding the pandemic. Again the most commonly identifiable theme was people's dissatisfaction with the attitude and behaviour of and their treatment by the social worker.
29. Team E received three complaints during 2021/22, compared to zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19. Again Team E received more complaints than it did in the years preceding the pandemic, although there were no identifiable themes.

Breakdown of Stage 2 Complaints by Service Area/Team

30. Twelve complaints were investigated at Stage 2, an increase from seven in 2020/21, 10 in 2019/20, although a decrease from 16 in 2018/19.

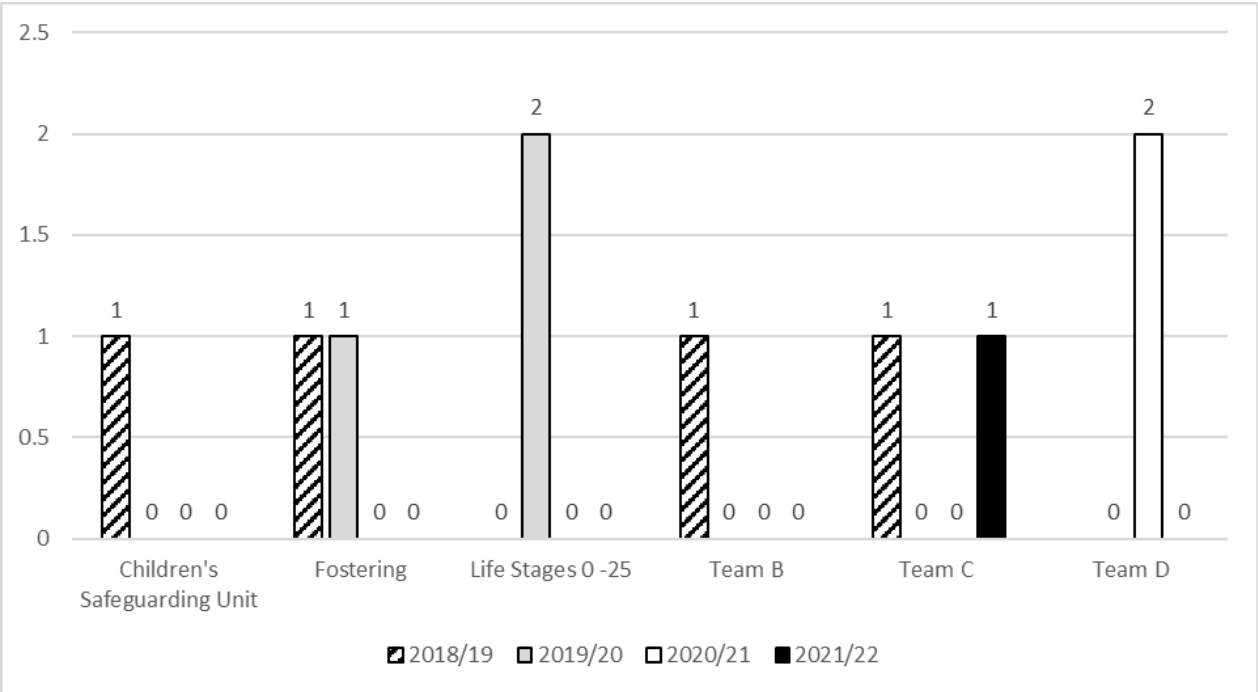


N.B. Those teams that are not listed did not receive any complaints during 2021/22.  
Comparison data is not available for all teams due to changes in the Council’s organisational structure.

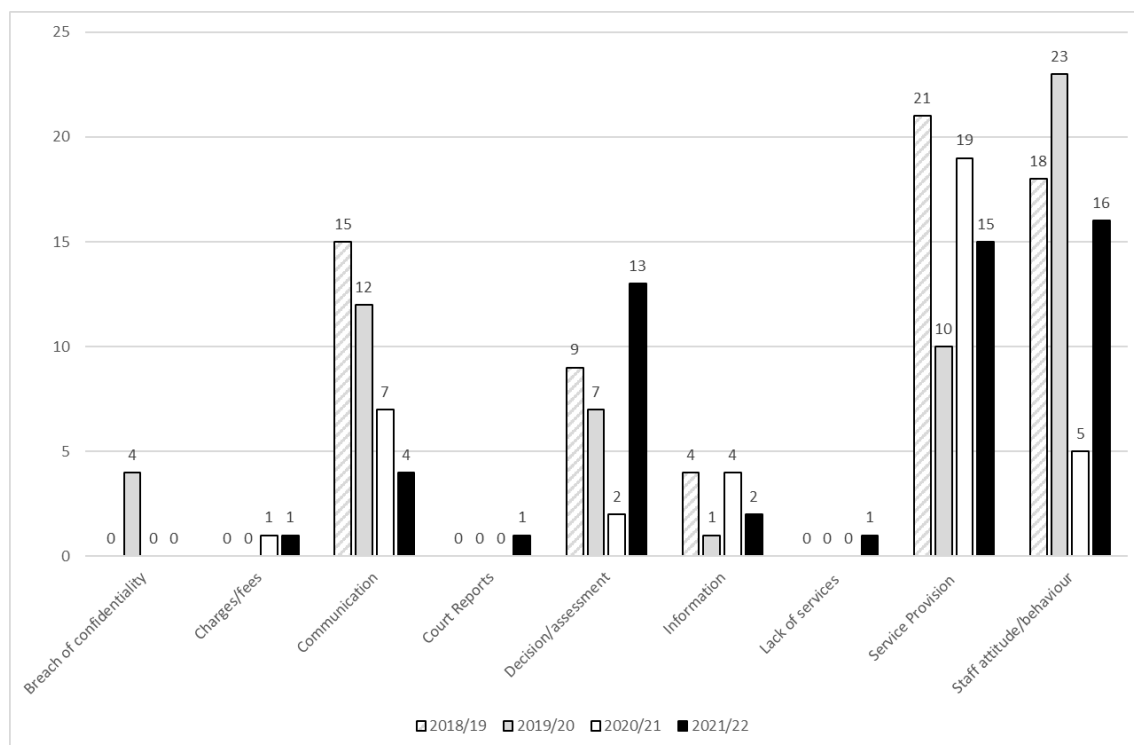
31. Finance received one complaint during 2021/22, compared zero in previous years.
32. Life Stages 0 – 25 Team received two complaints during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, although less than the three received in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
33. Looked After Through Care (LATC) Team receive 4 complaints during 2021/22, a significant increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
34. Team A received one complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, a decrease from two in 2019/20 and the same number as in 2018/19.
35. Team B received one complaint during 2021/22, the same number as in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and a decrease from three received in 2018/19.
36. Team C received two complaints during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, zero in 2019/20 and a decrease from four in 2018/19.
37. Team D received one complaint during 2021/22, a decrease from three in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and the same number as in 2018/19.

Breakdown of Stage 3 complaints by Service Area/Team

38. One complaint was escalated to Stage 3 during 2021/22, a decrease from two during 2020/21, three in 2019/20 and four in 2018/19.



### Breakdown of complaints by Issue



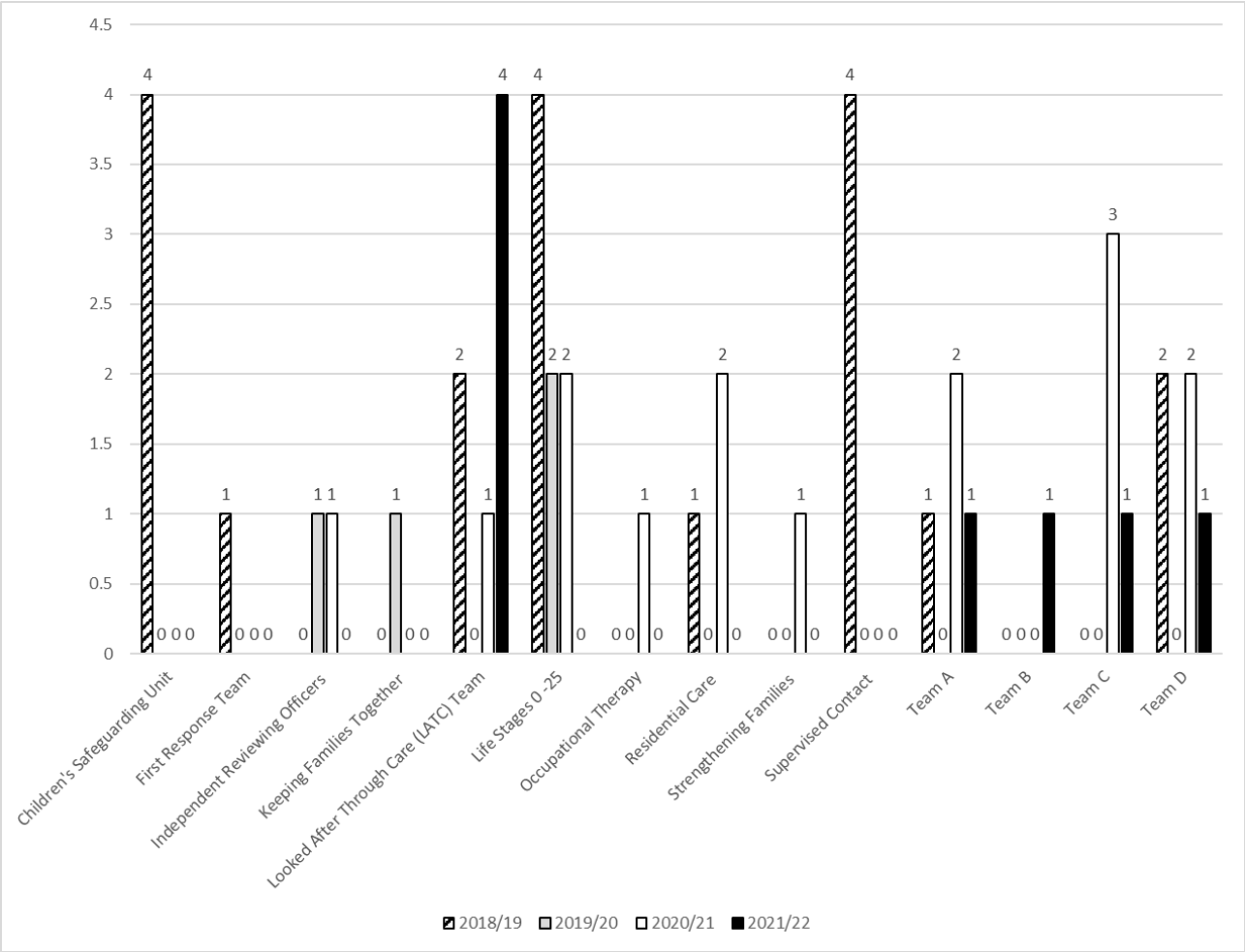
39. Staff attitude/behaviour was the most commonly complained about issue during 2021/22. The Council received 16 complaints about this issue, a significant increase from five in 2020/21, although complaints about this issue remained lower than pre-pandemic levels when the Council received 23 complaints in 2019/20 and 18 complaints in 2018/19.
40. Service/provision was the second most commonly complained about issue in 2021/22. The Council received 15 complaints about this issue, a decrease from 19 in 2020/21, an increase from 10 in 2019/20 and a decrease from 21 in 2018/19.
41. Decision/assessment was the third most complained about issues in 2021/22. The Council saw a significant increase in complaints about decision/assessment, compared to two in 2020/21. Complaints about this issue were higher than they were before the pandemic, when the Council received seven complaints about this issue in 2019/20 and nine complaints in 2018/19.
42. Communication was the fourth most complaint about issue in 2021/22. The Council received four complaints about this issue, a decrease from seven in 2020/21. Complaints about this issue remained lower than pre-pandemic levels when the Council received 12 complaints in 2019/20 and 15 complaints in 2018/19.
43. The fifth most complaint about issue was information. The Council received two complaints about this issue during 2021/22, a decrease from four in 2020/21, an increase from one in 2019/20 and a decrease from four in 2018/19.
44. Charges/fees, court reports and lack of services were the least complained about issues during 2021/22. The Council received one complaint in relation to each. The Council

received one complaint about charges/fees in 2020/21, but did not receive any other complaints about any of these issues back to 2018/19.

Breakdown of Comments by Service Area/Team

45. The Council received one comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero during 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19. The comment was for Looked After Through Care (LATC) Team.

Breakdown of Compliments by Service Area/Team



46. The Council saw a decrease in compliments, eight compared to 15 in 2020/21. This remained higher than the seven received in 2019/20, although it was a decrease from the 19 received in 2018/19.

### Complaint Outcomes

**Stage 1** - The below table shows the decisions reached on Stage 1 complaints during 2021/22.

Service Area/Team	Escalated to Stage 2 (No S1 Response)	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Independent Reviewing Officers	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Life Stages 0 - 25	0	0	1	2	1	0	4
Looked After Through Care (LATC) Team	1	0	2	2	0	0	5
Strengthening Families	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Team A	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
Team B	0	0	6	2	1	0	9
Team C	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Team D	0	0	4	0	1	5	10
Team E	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>40</b>

**Stage 2** - The below table shows the decisions reached on Stage 2 complaints during 2021/22.

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) at the Front Door	0	0	0	1	0	1
Finance (Childrens/Resources)	0	0	1	0	0	1
Looked After Through Care (LATC ) Team	0	0	2	1	0	3
Team A	0	1	0	0	0	1
Team B	0	0	0	0	1	1
Team C	0	0	2	0	0	2
Team D	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>

**Stage 3** - The below table shows the decisions reached on Stage 3 complaints during 2021/22.

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Team C	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

### **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Complaints**

47. One complaint was referred to the LGSCO during 2020/21, a decrease from two in 2020/21 and the same number as in 2019/20 and 2018/19.

48. One complaint was determined by the LGSCO during 2021/22, compared to two in 2020/21 and one in 2019/20 and 2018/19.

### **Organisational Learning**

49. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints several service improvements were made following complaint investigations during 2021/22. Some examples of these are detailed below.

### **Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) at the front door**

50. Following a complaint for CIAT, the importance of verifying information contained within assessments and verifying this with parents prior to finalisation was reinforced with social workers. The importance of including birth fathers within assessments and ensuring that all information recorded is current and accurate as per Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 was also reinforced with social workers.

### **Independent Reviewing Officers**

51. Following a complaint for Independent Reviewing Officers, it was agreed that when a Fostering Social Worker is not available the carer should be provided with a named contact in the Fostering Team and be provided with support visits from the duty worker. It was also recommended that consideration is given to either establishing a clear signposting in procedures so that all Foster to Adopt placements are managed in line with embedded adoption processes.

### **Life Stages 0 -25**

52. Following a complaint for Life Stages 0 -25, it was agreed an information leaflet would be produced outlining the financial/review process, various options, timescales and outcomes.

### **Looked After Through Care (LATC) Team**

53. Following a complaint for LATC, it was agreed Children's Services should ensure that attendance records for Looked After Reviews (LAR) clearly evidence attendees of the LAR meeting. It was also agreed that Children's Services would ensure that details of the records of advocates work with a child are referenced within case records and relevant LAR records to ensure a transparent record of involvement from external agencies. It was also agreed that LAR minutes should contain information shared by a young person's advocate to ensure there is a transparent record of a young person's views, wishes and feelings captured at that point in time.

54. Following a further complaint for LATC, it was agreed Children's Services would ensure written contact plans are in place for looked after children and make this a matter of priority for those who have recently moved placement and are in a more unsettled state.

### **Team C**

55. Following a complaint for Team C, it was agreed that as per the Placement and Review Regulations 2015, social workers would ensure parents/carers are consulted prior to any significant social worker actions or changes to agreed care plan actions.
56. Following a further complaint for Team C, social workers were reminded of the use of, and need, to involve independent advocates and/or other representatives for young children involved in similar situations to that subject of the complaint. Social workers were also reminded that case recording and other record keeping must provide accurate information of processes followed. It was also agreed and that lessons learned in relation to capturing and incorporating the financial impact of being a carer in the assessment and care plan process would be shared with the workforce to inform future practice. It was also agreed that for Foster to Adopt placements, when a review meeting is being scheduled a process should be established that includes communication between the child's social worker, fostering social worker, independent reviewing officer and admin officer so that a clear decision can be made regarding who should attend and who will/will not receive documentation. Furthermore, it was agreed that an existing function within Liquid Logic should be used to modify the content of CLA documentation that relates to Foster to Adopt (and Adoption Placements) to prevent the automatic insertion of information into documentation that is distributed to birth family members, and that instruction on how to do this would be provided to the Children's Safeguarding Unit Admin Team. It was also agreed mandatory training would be established for social workers, social work team managers, advanced practitioners and independent reviewing officers on Foster to Adopt Placements.

## **Performance against the Children's Social Care Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure**

57. The below performance measures are in relation to those complaints responded to during 2021/22.

### **Timescales**

#### **Stage 1**

58. The target for responding to a complaint at Stage 1 is 10 working days, with a possible extension of up to 20 working days if the complaint is complex.

- (a) 36.84% of Stage 1 complaint responses were sent within 10 working days. This was an decrease in performance from 53.66% in 2020/21.
- (b) A further 44.74% of Stage 1 complaint responses were sent within 20 working days.
- (c) In total 81.58% of Stage 1 complaint responses were sent within the maximum 20 working day timescale, an increase in performance from 70.73% in 2020/21.

#### **Stage 2**

59. The target for responding to a complaint at Stage 2 is 25 working days, extendable up to a maximum of 65 working days.

- (a) 0% of Stage 2 complaint responses were sent within 25 working days during 2021/22, as was the case in 2020/21.
- (b) 11.11% of Stage 2 complaint responses were sent within the maximum timescale allowed (65 working days), an decrease in performance from 37.5% in 2020/21.
- (c) 88.89% of Stage 2 complaint responses were sent after 65 working days, an decrease in performance from 62.5% in 2020/21.

#### **Stage 3**

60. At Stage 3 the Review Panel should be held within 30 working days of the request. 100% of Review Panels were held within 30 working days.

61. The Review Panel should write to the Director within 5 working days of the panel. They did so in 100% of cases.

62. The Director should write to the complainant within 15 working days of receiving the Panel's response. The Director wrote to the complainants within 15 working days in 100% of cases, an increase in performance from 66.66% of cases in 2019/20.

### **Performance against key performance indicators**

63. In relation to children's social care complaints the Council's key performance indicator is the number of maladministration decisions received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). Children's Services did not received any maladministration decisions during 2021/22, a decrease from one in 2020/21, the same number as in 2019/20 and a decrease from one in 2018/19.

Full details of those complaints determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are included in the Cabinet reports of 7 December 2021 and 6 September 2022 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).

### **Further recommendations**

64. Children's Services should work to improve performance against the Stage 2 timescale for Children's Social Care complaints.

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# **DARLINGTON**

## Borough Council

### **Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report 2021/22**

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## **Introduction**

1. This report provides an analysis of the complaints, compliments and comments received by the Council during 2021/22 under the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure (the corporate procedure). The purpose of the report is to identify topics and trends in relation to complaints; identify areas of organisational learning that have taken place over the past year as a result of the complaints received and make further recommendations based on trend data to improve services. The report also highlights those areas of good practice within the Council and seeks to identify topics and trends in relation to comments made by members of the public so the Council can also take action where appropriate to improve services.
2. In addition to the statistical information presented in this report it is important to recognise the work of the Complaints and Information Governance (CIG) Team that underpins this in terms of promoting an organisational culture in which complaints are recognised, accepted, owned and resolved as efficiently and as close to the point of service delivery as possible.

## **Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure**

3. The corporate procedure sets out how the Council will deal with all complaints, compliments and comments received with the exception of those received in relation to adult and children's social care services, social housing, public health and Members which will be dealt with under separate procedures.
4. The corporate procedure has two stages. Stage 1 is a local resolution stage where we try to resolve those complaints that cannot be resolved immediately as part of our day to day business. Stage 1 complaints are dealt with locally, that is within the service being complained about. We aim to resolve the majority of complaints at Stage 1 of the corporate procedure.
5. Stage 2 is a formal investigation stage where complaints will usually be investigated by the Council's Complaints Investigator, the Complaints and Information Governance Manager or another officer independent of the service being complained about.
6. If the complainant remains dissatisfied following a Stage 2 investigation they may refer the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

## **Public Information and Accessibility**

7. We are committed to making sure that everyone has equal access to all our services. To help make sure the Council's complaints procedures are easily accessible we have produced two leaflets (one for children and young people and one for adults) covering all Council services to reflect the single point of access for complainants within the Council. The leaflets are available in all Council buildings. They have been written in line with the Plain English Campaign standards. The title is written in the most commonly used community languages and it contains details on how to access the information in other formats, for example, large print, audio and Braille.

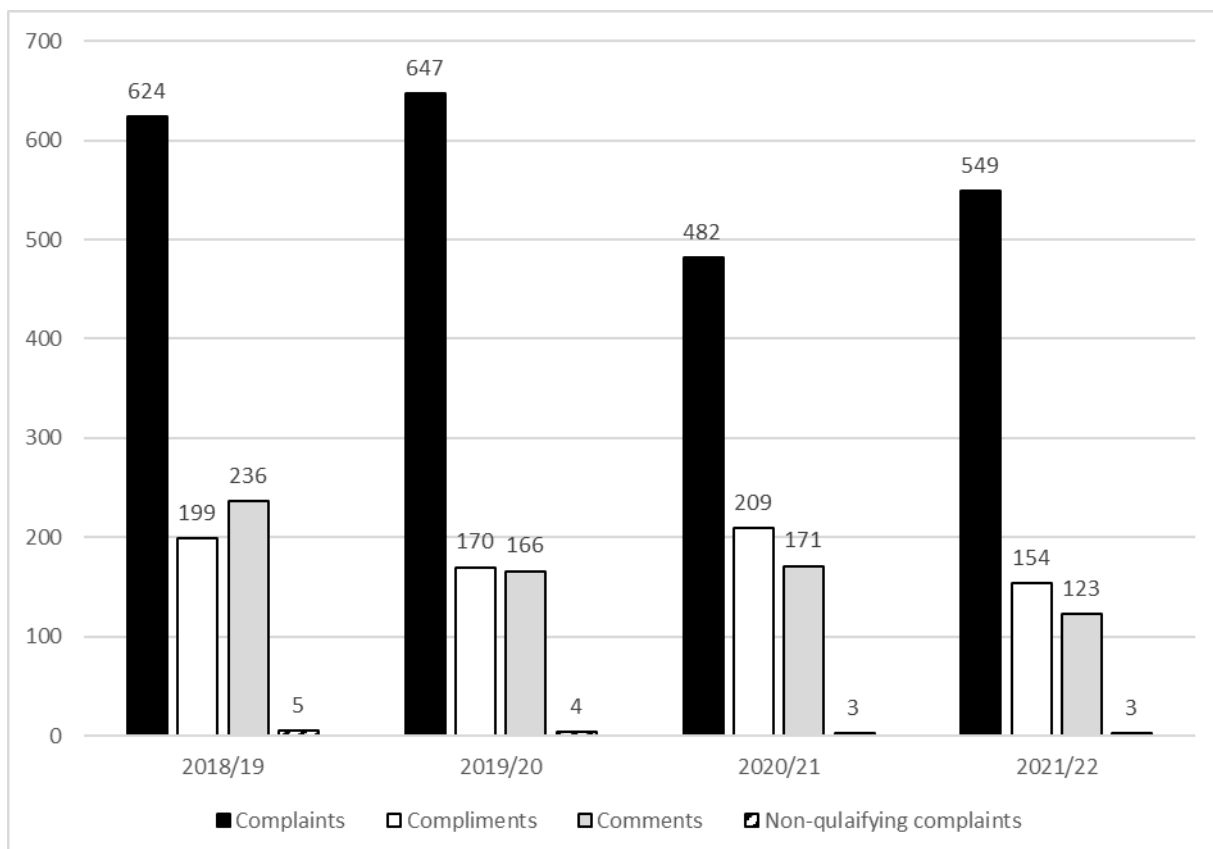
8. Information is available on the Council's website which contains an electronic form people can use to make a complaint, pay someone a compliment or pass comment on Council services. People may make a complaint in any format they wish. This can be in writing, email, via the web, over the phone, in person or by any other reasonable means.
9. The Complaints and Information Governance Manager can arrange advocates and interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters) where appropriate.

## Complaints Information and Organisational Learning

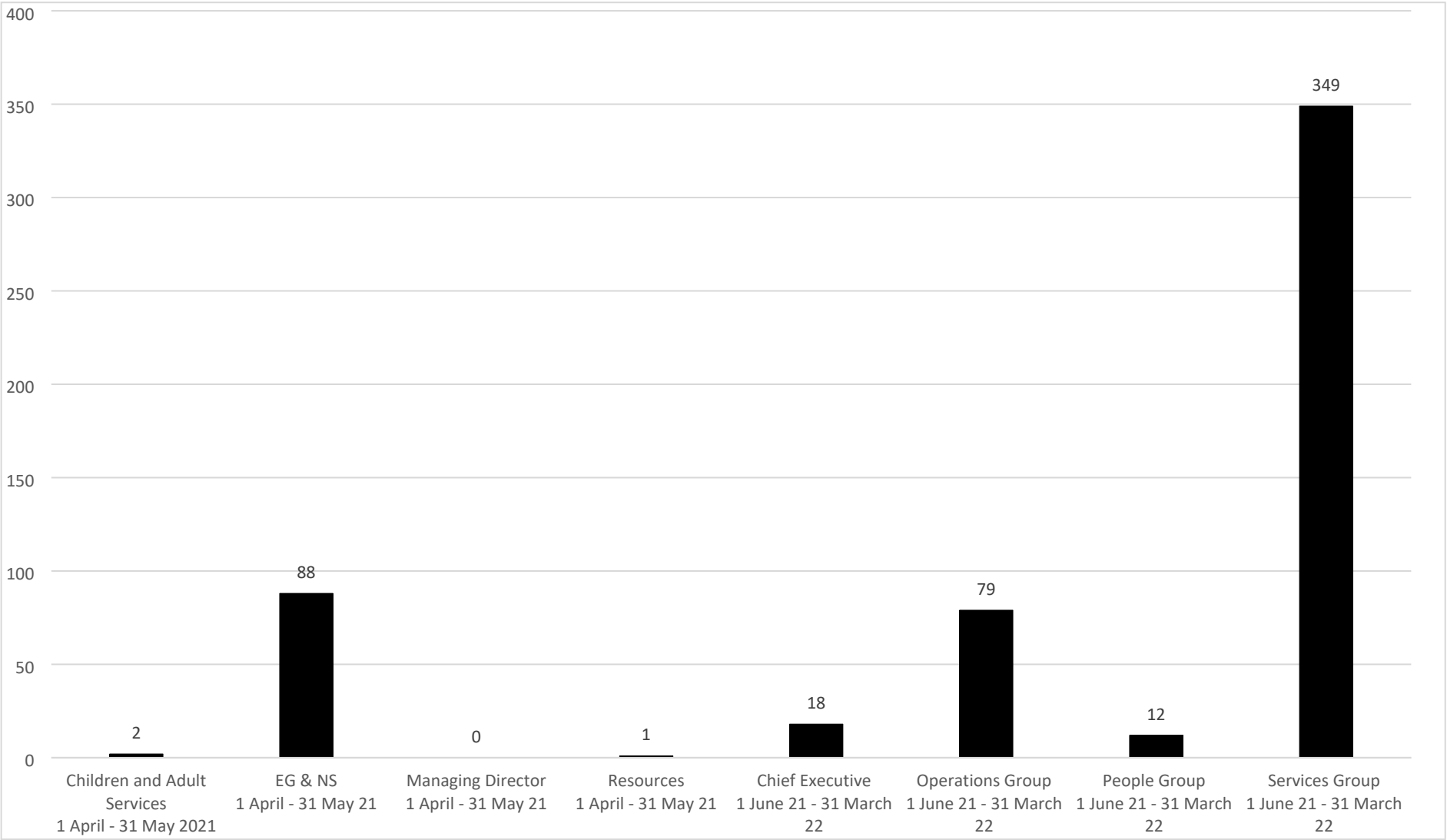
### Overview of Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments

10. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 the Council received a total of 830 representations under the corporate procedure, a decrease from 865 in 2020/21, 987 in 2019/20 and 1064 in 2018/19.
11. The Council received 549 corporate complaints, which was an increase from 482 in 2020/21. Although complaint numbers remained lower than pre-pandemic levels, with the Council receiving 647 corporate complaints in 2019/20 and 624 in 2018/19. 532 complaints were initially dealt with at Stage 1 of the corporate procedure, whilst 17 were escalated directly to Stage 2. 53 Stage 1 complaints were escalated to Stage 2 following a Stage 1 investigation. In total 70 complaints were investigated at Stage 2, a significant increase from 50 in 2020/21 and 59 in 2019/20, although one less than the 71 that were investigated in 2018/19.
12. The Council received 154 corporate compliments, a decrease from 209 in 2020/21, 170 in 2019/20 and 199 in 2018/19.
13. The Council received 123 corporate comments, a decrease from 171 in 2020/21, 166 in 2019/20 and 236 in 2018/19.
14. The Council also received three non-qualifying corporate complaints, the same as in 2020/21, a decrease from four in 2019/20 and five in 2018/19.

### Total Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments

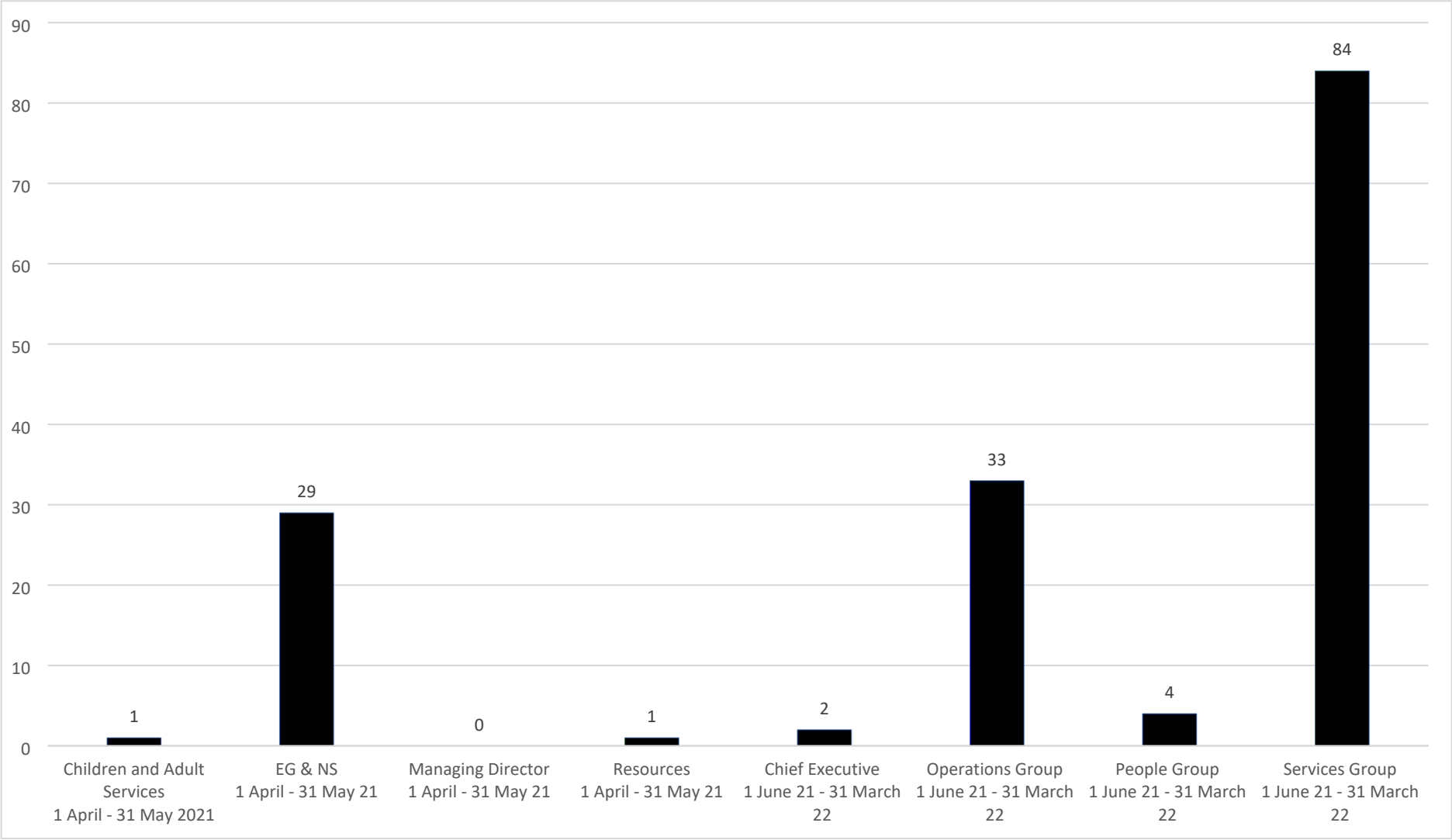


Corporate Complaints by Department



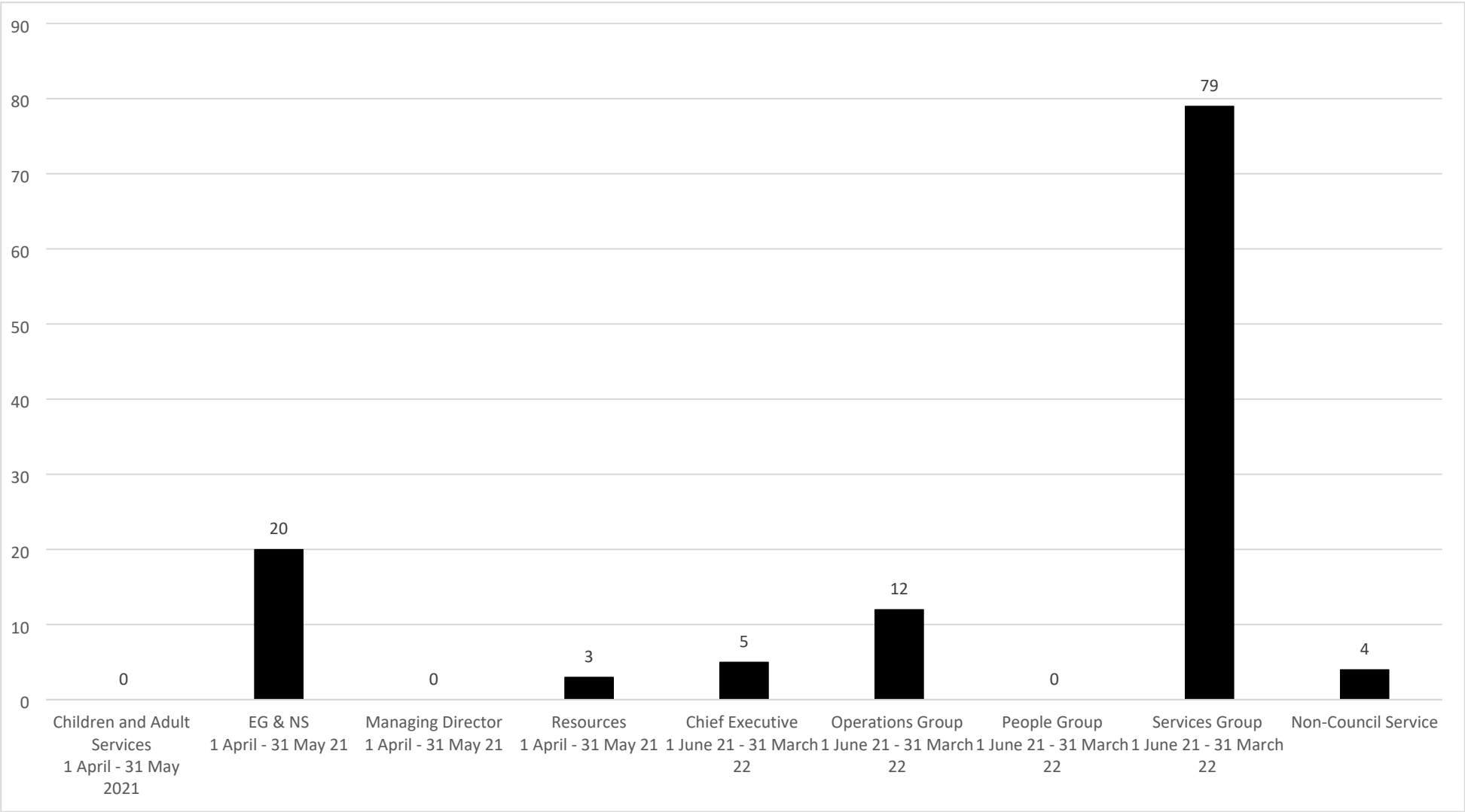
N.B. Direct comparison data is not available due to the change in the Council’s organisational structure.

Corporate Compliments by Department



N.B. Direct comparison data is not available due to the change in the Council's organisational structure.

Corporate Comments by Department



*N.B. Direct comparison data is not available due to the change in the Council’s organisational structure.*

**Complaints, Compliments and Comments by Department****Children and Adult Services****Complaints by Service Area/Team**

15. Children and Adults Services received two corporate complaints during 2021/22, one for Children's Services, Team E and one for Children's Services, Youth Offending Service (YOS).

**Complaints by Stage**

16. Both complaints were investigated a Stage1 of the corporate procedure.

**Compliments by Service Area/Team**

17. Children and Adult Services received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, for Education, SEND.

**Comments by Service Area/Team**

18. Children and Adults Services did not receive any corporate comments during 2021/22.

**Complaints by Outcome**

19. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2021/22.

**Stage 1 Outcomes**

<b>Service Area/Team</b>	<b>Inconclusive</b>	<b>Not Upheld</b>	<b>Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Upheld</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Total</b>
Team E	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
YOS	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

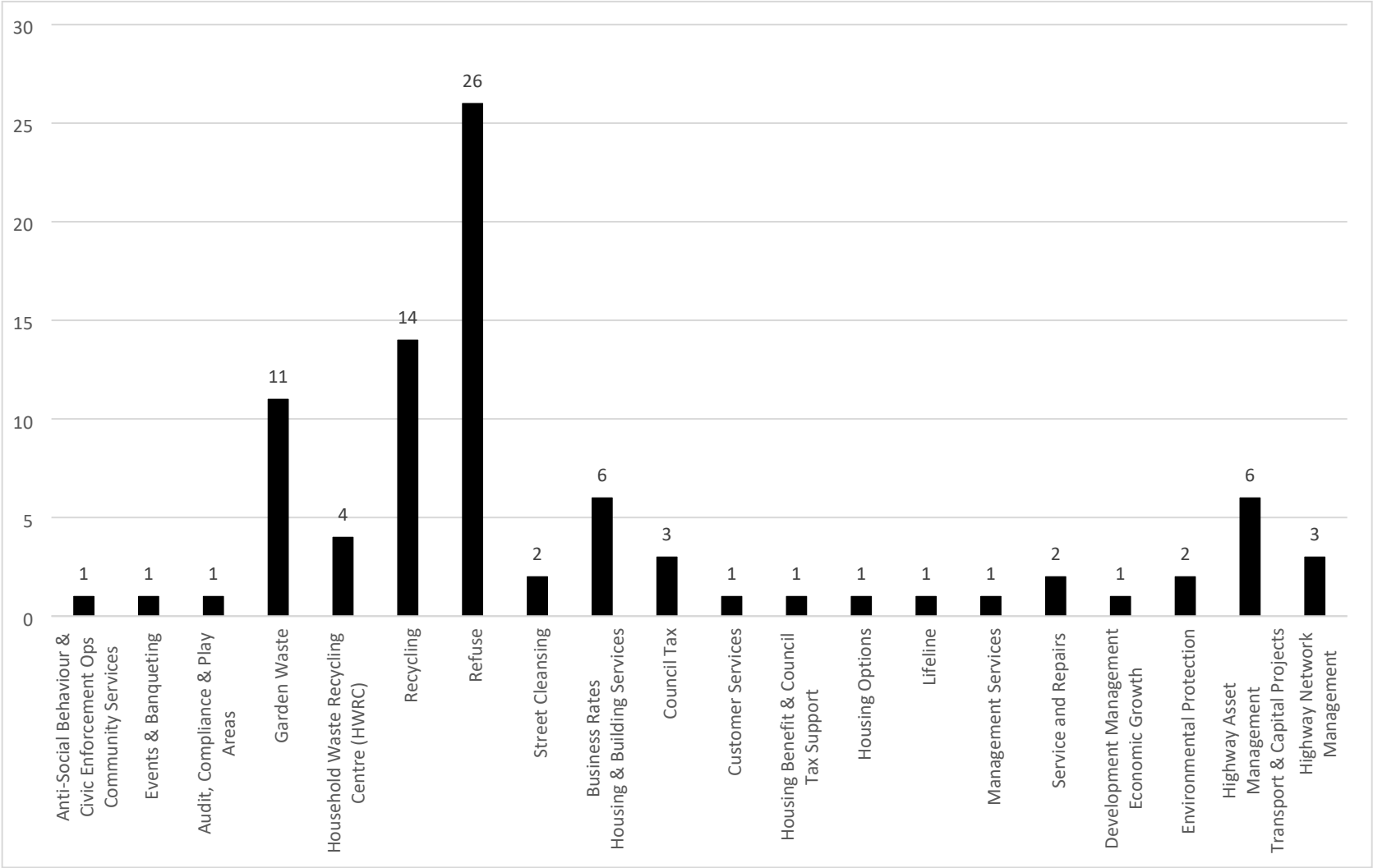
**Organisational Learning**

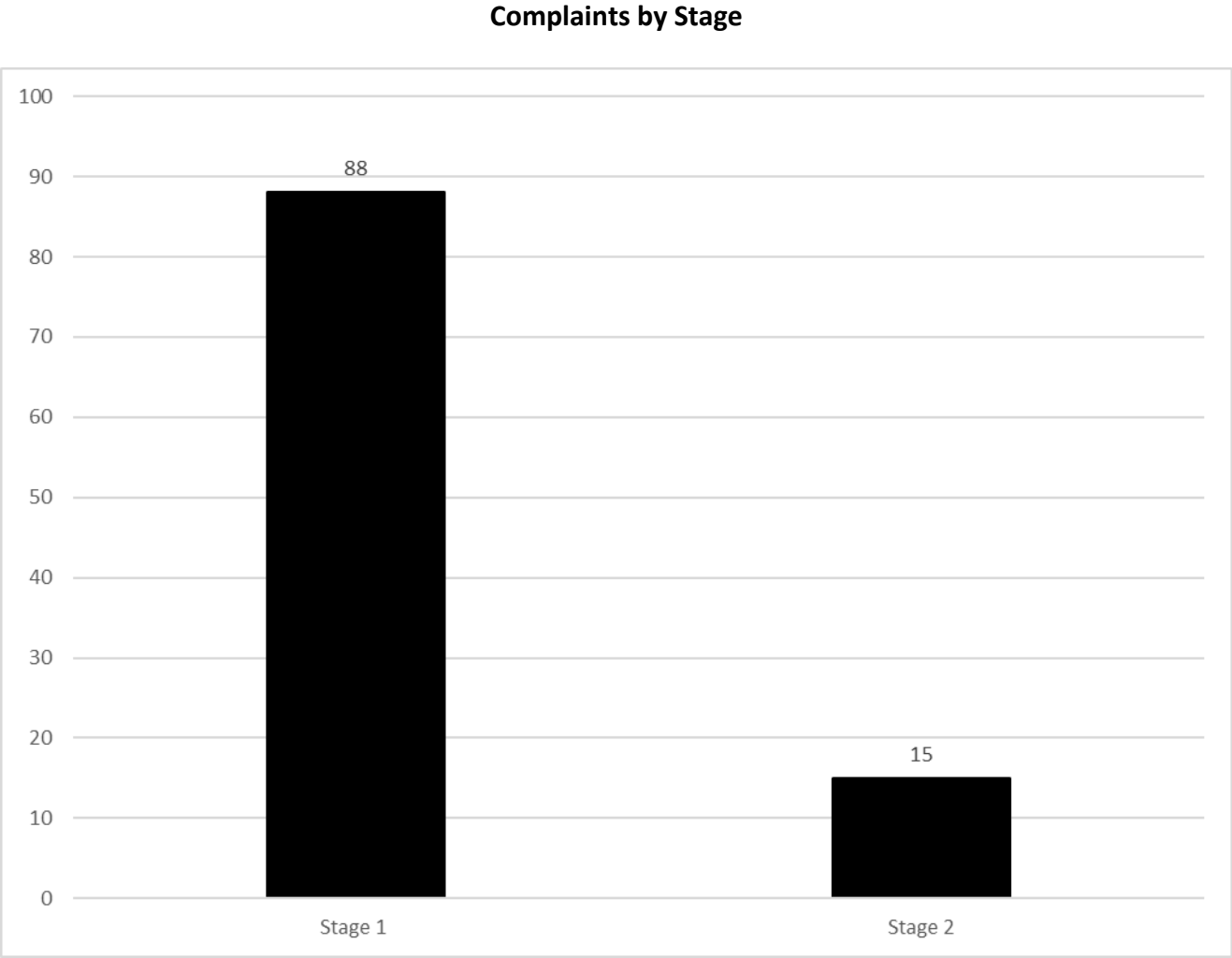
20. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of corporate complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. There was no organisational learning resulting from the complaint investigations concluded during 2021/22.

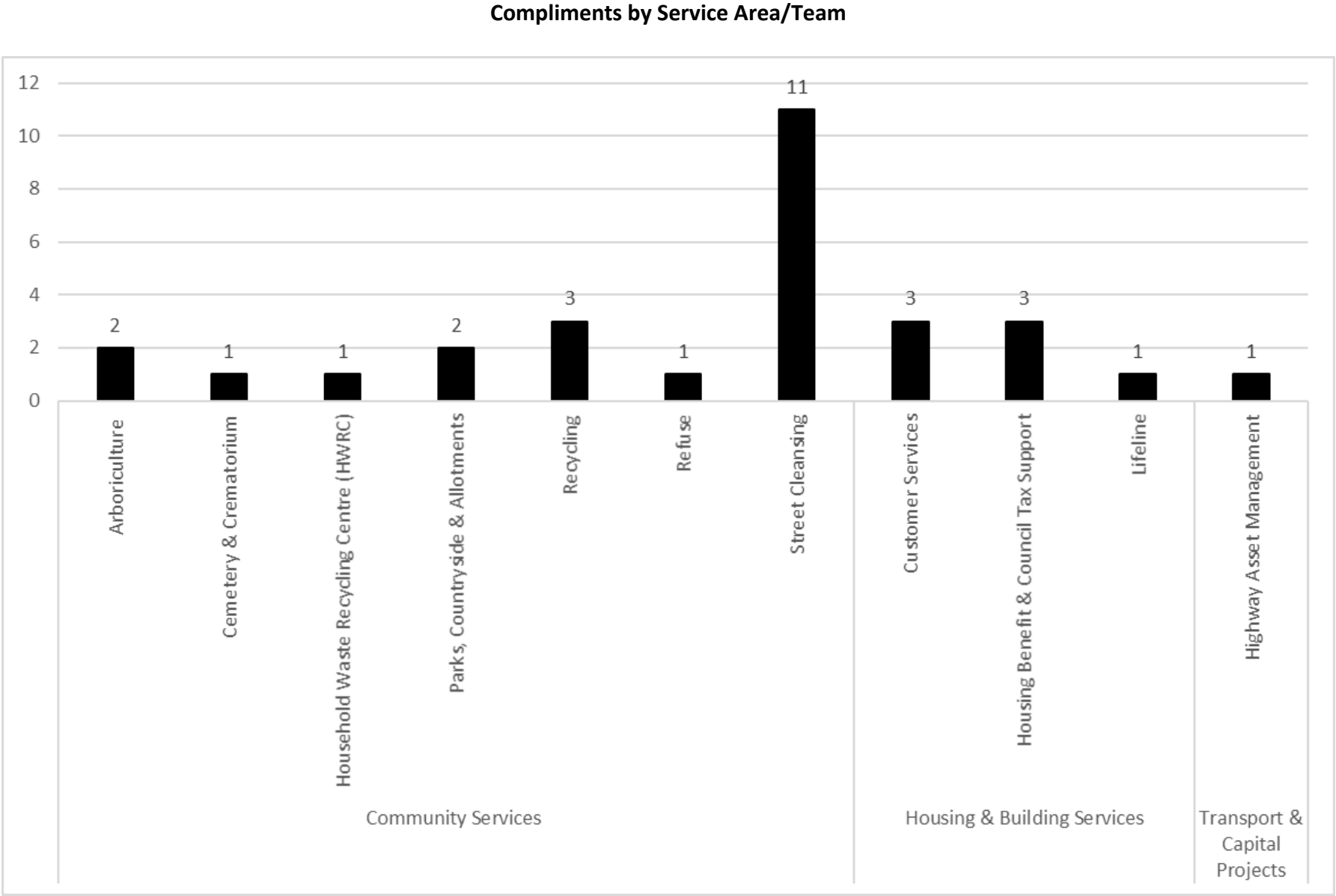
*N.B. For comparison data see current organisational structure page 18 onwards.*

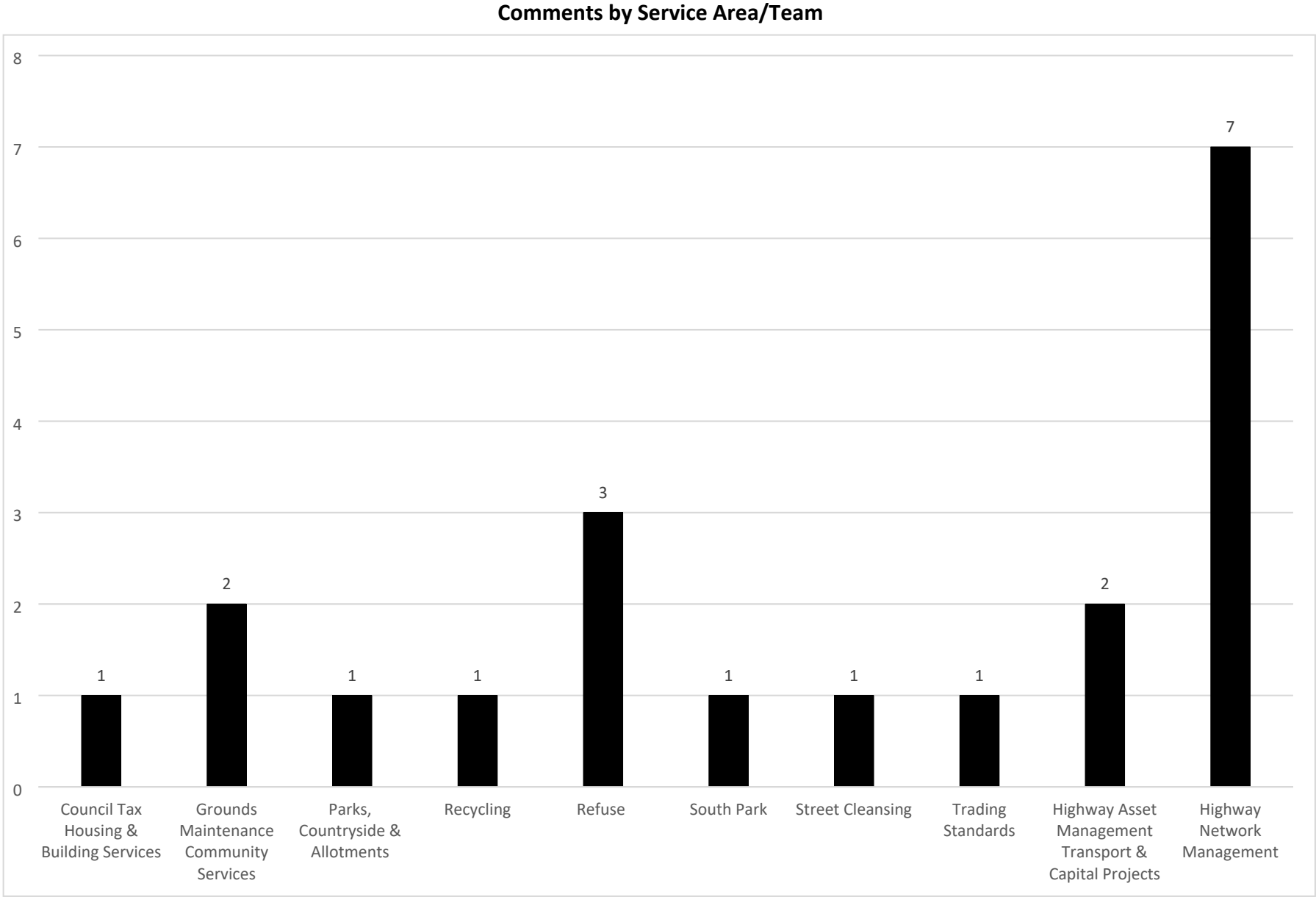
Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Complaints by Service Area/Team









### Complaints by Outcome

21. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2021/22.

#### Stage 1 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Closed With No Response	Escalated to Stage 2 (No S1 Response)	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Highway Asset Management	0	0	0	15	1	9	1	26
Highway Network Management	0	0	0	5	3	2	0	10
Community Safety	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
ASB & Civic Enforcement	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
CCTV	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Processing & Appeals	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
COVID Community Testing	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Arboriculture	0	0	0	6	2	1	0	9
Cemetery & Crematorium	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	8
Parks, Countryside & Allotments	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
South Park	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Grounds Maintenance	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	4
Street Cleansing	0	0	0	12	1	13	1	27
Garden Waste	0	0	0	5	0	8	0	13
Recycling	0	0	5	28	6	45	1	85
Refuse	1	0	17	50	6	69	5	148
HWRC	0	0	1	5	0	7	0	13
Dolphin Centre	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Service & Repairs	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Customer Services	0	0	0	1	1	3	4	9
Income Management	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Management Services	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	4

Housing Options	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Lifeline	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Business Rates	0	0	0	8	0	0	2	10
Council Tax	0	0	1	7	0	3	3	14
Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Development Management	0	1	0	2	0	2	1	6
Environmental Health	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Commercial	0	0	0	3	0	1	2	6
Environmental Protection	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	6
Monitoring & Compliance	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Building Control	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Estates	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Business Growth & Investment	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Planning Policy	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>433</b>

## Stage 2 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Highway Asset Management	0	6	0	0	0	6
Highway Network Management	0	0	0	1	0	1
ASB & Civic Enforcement	0	0	0	1	0	1
Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops	0	0	0	1	0	1
COVID Community Testing	1	0	0	0	0	1
Arboriculture	0	1	0	0	0	1
Parks, Countryside & Allotments	0	1	0	0	0	1
Street Cleansing	0	0	0	0	1	1
Recycling	0	2	1	0	0	3
Refuse	0	1	0	0	0	1
HWRC	0	2	0	0	1	3
Service & Repairs	0	0	1	0	0	1
Customer Services	0	1	0	0	0	1
Business Rates	0	1	1	0	0	2
Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support	0	1	0	0	0	1

Development Management	0	1	2	0	0	<b>3</b>
Environmental Protection	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Building Control	0	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
Business Growth & Investment	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Planning Policy	0	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>32</b>

## Organisational Learning

22. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, the following organisational learning resulted from the complaint investigations concluded during 2021/22.
23. As a result of a complaint for Development Management, it was agreed the Council would ensure any future planning reports relating to heritage assets take into account the High Court decision in the case of (R (Wyeth-Price) v Guildford Borough Council (2020)).
24. Following a complaint for Highway Network Management, the Council improved its knowledge of its enforcement powers set out in Section 25 of the Land Drainage Act 1991.
25. Following another complaint for Highway Network Management, the Council's permit scheme, which regulates works on the highway was updated.

*N.B. For comparison data see current organisational structure page 18 onwards.*

**Resources****Complaints by Service Area/Team**

26. Resources received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, for Elections.

**Complaints by Stage**

27. The complaint was initially investigated at Stage 1, following which it was investigated at Stage 2 of the corporate procedure.

**Compliments by Service Area/Team**

28. Resources received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, for the Superintendent Registrar.

**Comments by Service Area/Team**

29. Resources received three corporate comments during 2021/22. Two for Communications and one for Xentrall Services.

**Complaints by Outcome**

30. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2021/22.

**Stage 1 Outcomes**

<b>Service Area/Team</b>	<b>Inconclusive</b>	<b>Not Upheld</b>	<b>Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Upheld</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Total</b>
Elections	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

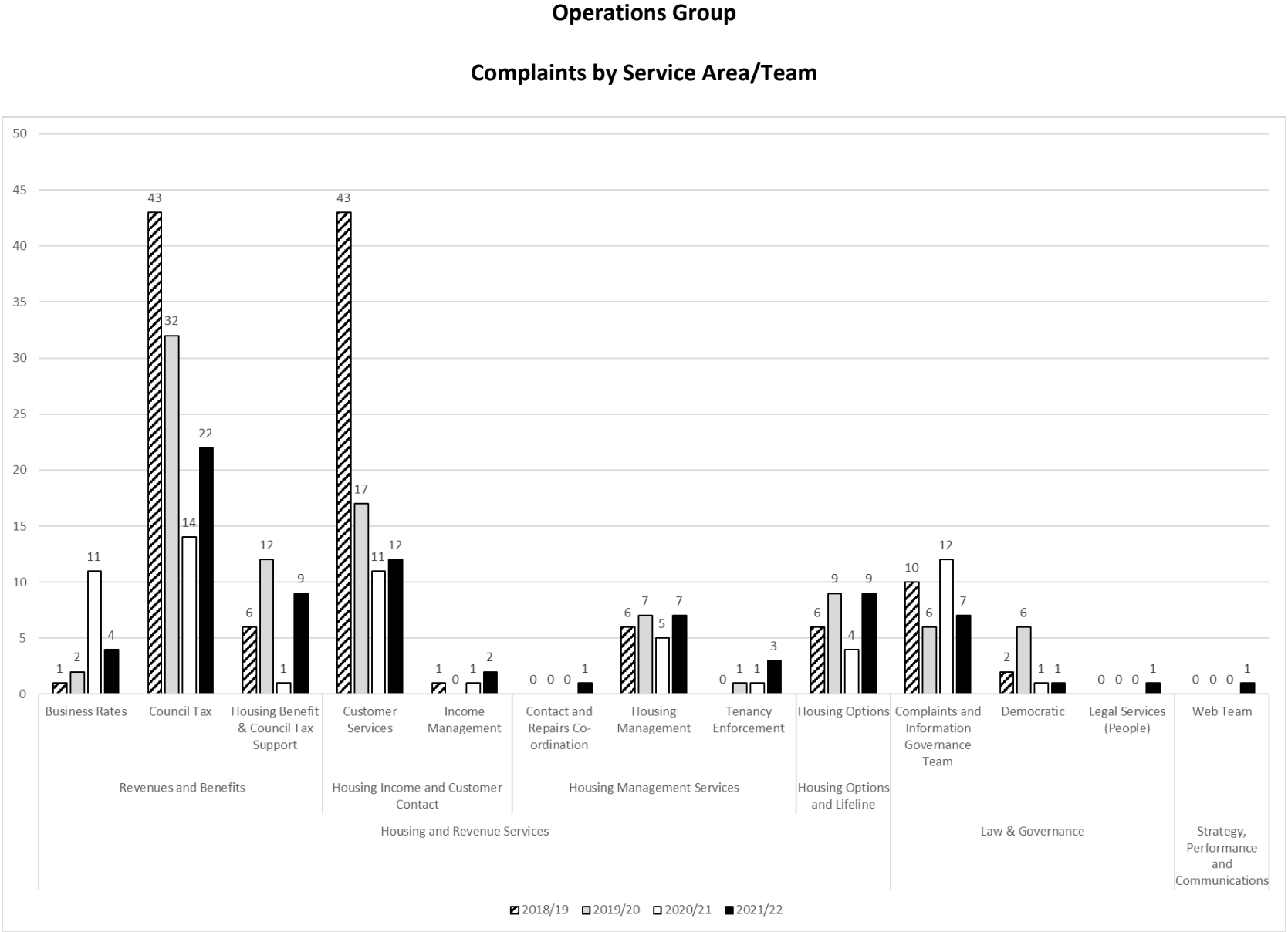
**Stage 2 Outcomes**

<b>Service Area/Team</b>	<b>Inconclusive</b>	<b>Not Upheld</b>	<b>Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Upheld</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Total</b>
Elections	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

**Organisational learning**

31. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. There was no organisational learning resulting from the complaint investigations concluded during 2021/22.

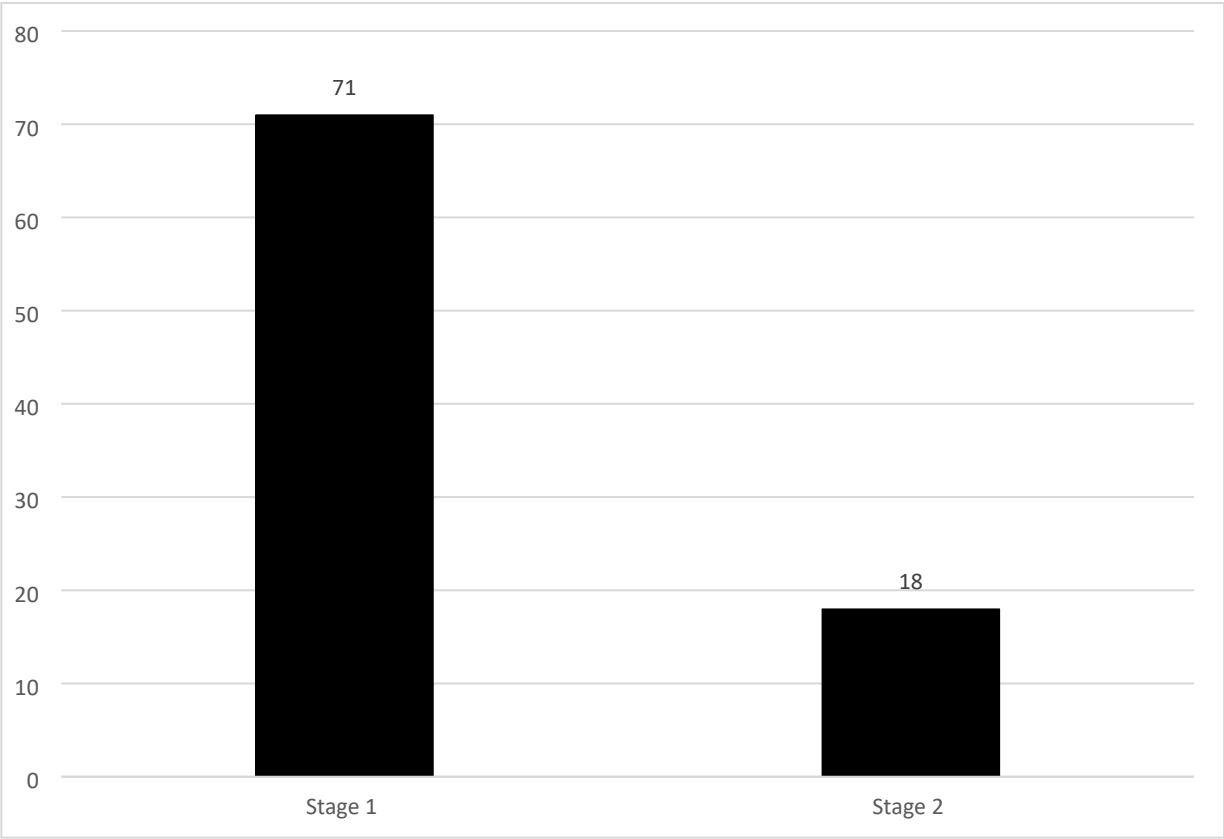
*N.B. For comparison data see current organisational structure page 18 onwards.*



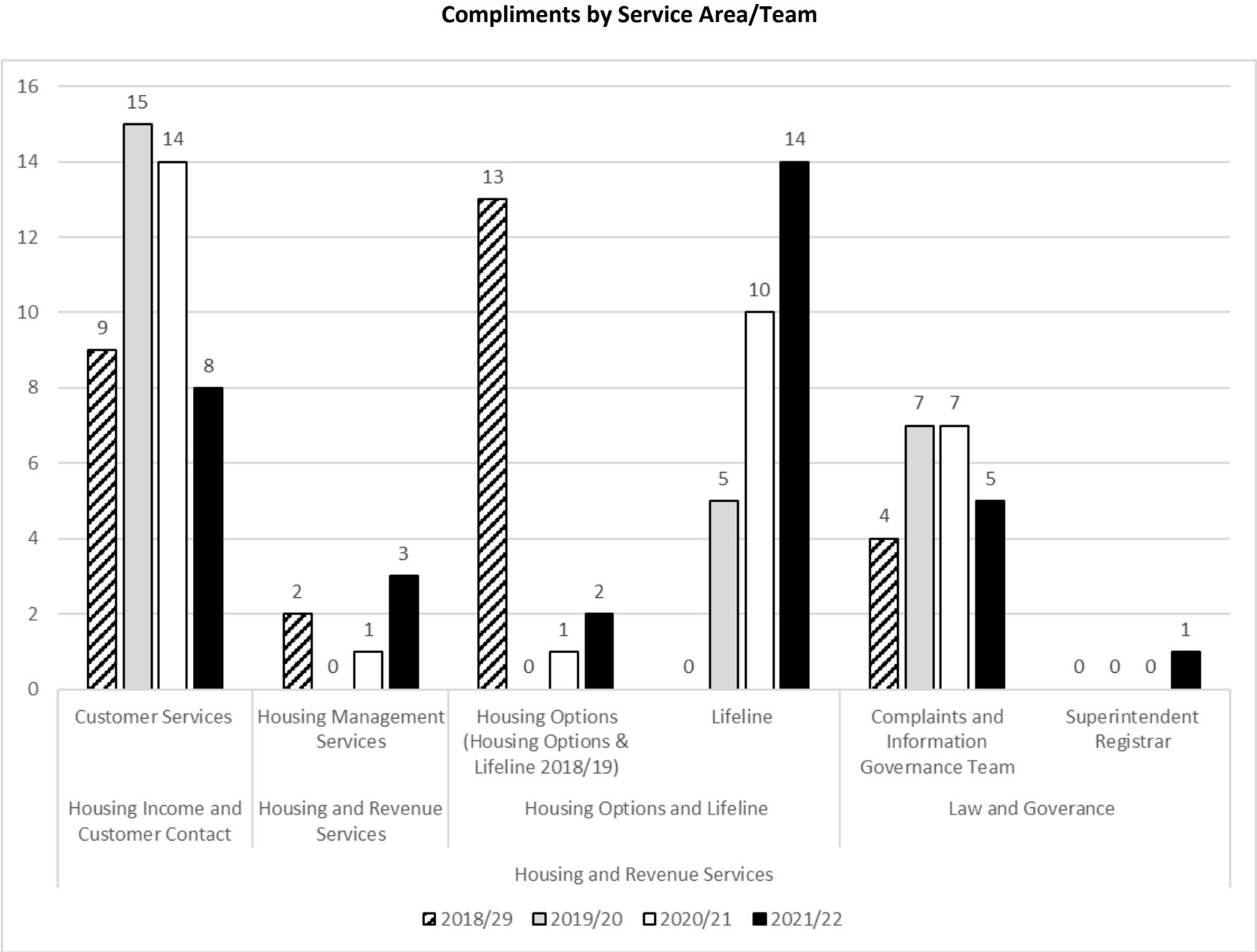
32. Business Rates received a total of 10 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. six pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 11 in 2020/21. Although this as an increase from pre-pandemic levels when the team received two corporate complaints in 2019/20 and one in 2018/19. The most common cause of complaint was dissatisfaction with decisions in relation to COVID-19 grants.
33. Council Tax received 25 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. three pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 14 in 2020/21. Although complaints about Council Tax remained lower than pre-pandemic levels, when the team received 32 complaints in 2019/20 and 43 in 2018/19. The most common themes were dissatisfaction with the support provided in resolving Council Tax issues and the attitude of advisors.
34. Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support received 10 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from one in 2020/21. Although this remains lower than the 12 received in 2019/20, it is an increase on the six received in 2018/19. The most common cause of complaint was people's dissatisfaction with not being awarded the Covid-19 test and trace payment.
35. Customer Services received 13 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 11 in 2020/21. Although complaints about Customer Services remain lower than pre-pandemic levels, when the team received 17 complaints in 2019/20 and 43 in 2018/19.
36. Income Management receive two corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, zero in 2019/20 and one in 2018/19.
37. Contact and Repairs Co-ordination received one corporate complaint in 2021/22, compared to zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
38. Housing Management received eight corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from five in 2020/21, seven in 2019/20 and six in 2018/19. There were no common themes.
39. Tenancy Enforcement received three corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and zero in 2018/19.
40. Housing Options received 10 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from four in 2020/21, nine in 2019/20 and six in 2018/19. The most common cause of complaint was level of support provided in progressing housing applications/finding suitable accommodation.
41. The Complaints & Information Governance Team received seven corporate complaints during 2021/22, a decrease from 12 in 2020/21, an increase from six in 2019/20 and a decrease from 10 in 2018/19. The most common cause of complaint was the delay in responding to Subject Access Requests (SARs).
42. Democratic received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, the same number as the team received in 2020/21. Although complaints about Democratic remain lower than pre-pandemic levels, when the team received six complaints in 2019/20 and two in 2018/19.

- 43. Legal Services (People) received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, compared to zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
- 44. The Web Team received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, compared to zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.

Complaints by Stage

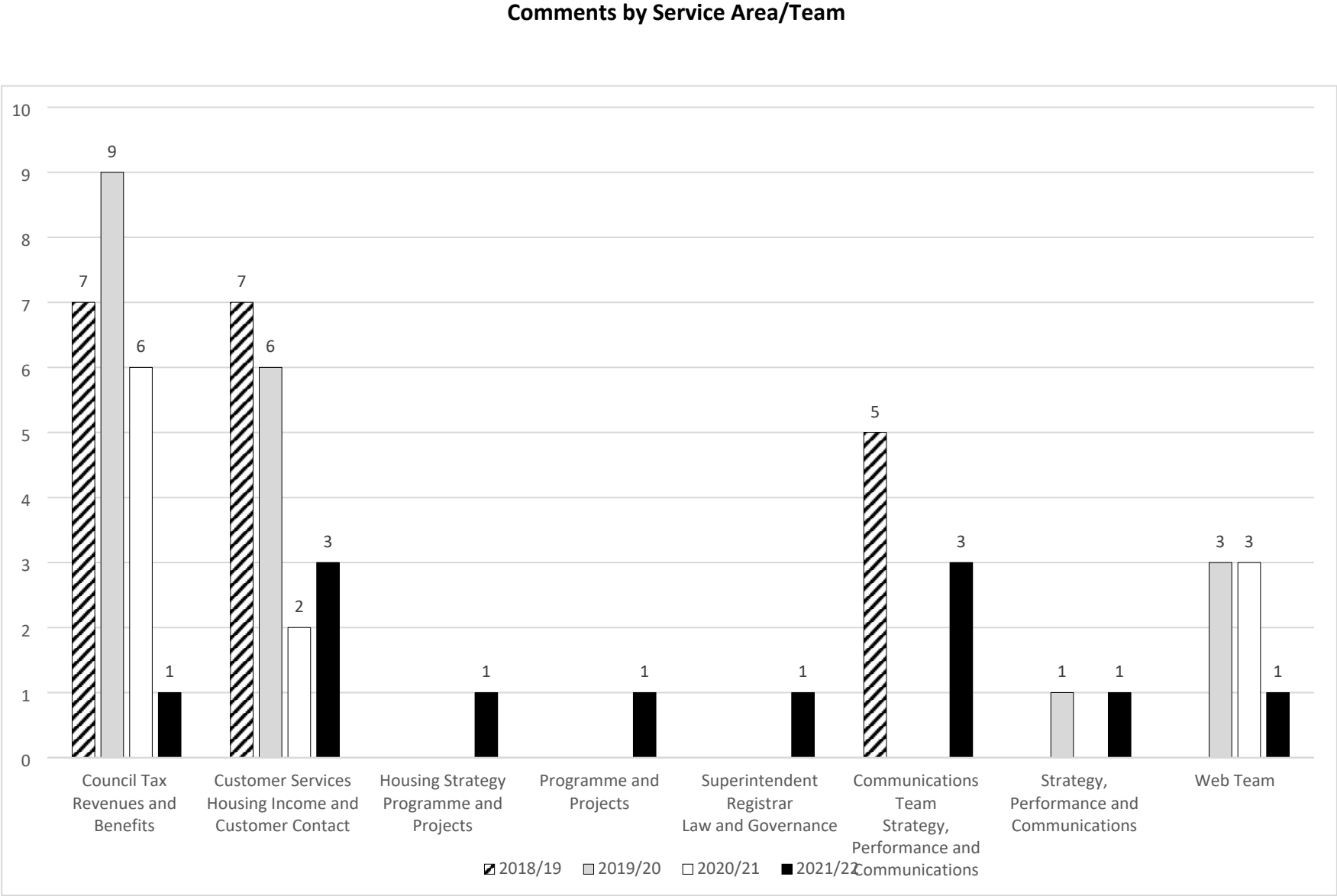


*N.B. Eight complaints were escalated directly to Stage 2.*



## Appendix 4

45. Customer Services received 11 corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. three pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 14 in 2020/21, 15 in 2019/20 and an increase from nine in 2018/19.
46. Housing Management Services received three corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, zero in 2019/20 and two in 2018/19.
47. Housing Options received two corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21 and zero in 2018/19. The figure for 2018/19 included compliments for Lifeline.
48. Lifeline received 15 corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 10 in 2020/21 and five in 2019/20. The compliments received for Lifeline in 2018/19 are included in the 13 received for Housing Options and Lifeline.
49. Complaints and Information Governance Team received five corporate compliments during 2021/22, a decrease from seven in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and an increase from four in 2018/19.
50. Superintendent Registrar received two corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.



51. Council Tax received two corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from six in 2020/21, nine in 2019/20 and seven in 2018/19.
52. Customer Services received three corporate comments during 2021/22, an increase from two in 2020/21, although a decrease from six in 2019/20 and seven in 2018/19.
53. Housing Strategy received one corporate comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
54. Programme and Projects received one corporate comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
55. Superintendent Registrar received one corporate comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
56. Communications Team received five corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. two pre 31 May 2021), an increase from zero in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and the same number the team received in 2018/19.
57. Strategy, Performance and Communications received one corporate comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, the same number as the team received in 2019/20 and an increase from zero 2018/19.
58. Web Team received one corporate comment during 2021/22, a decrease from three in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and an increase from zero in 2018/19.

**Complaints by Outcome**

59. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2021/22.

**Stage 1 Outcomes**

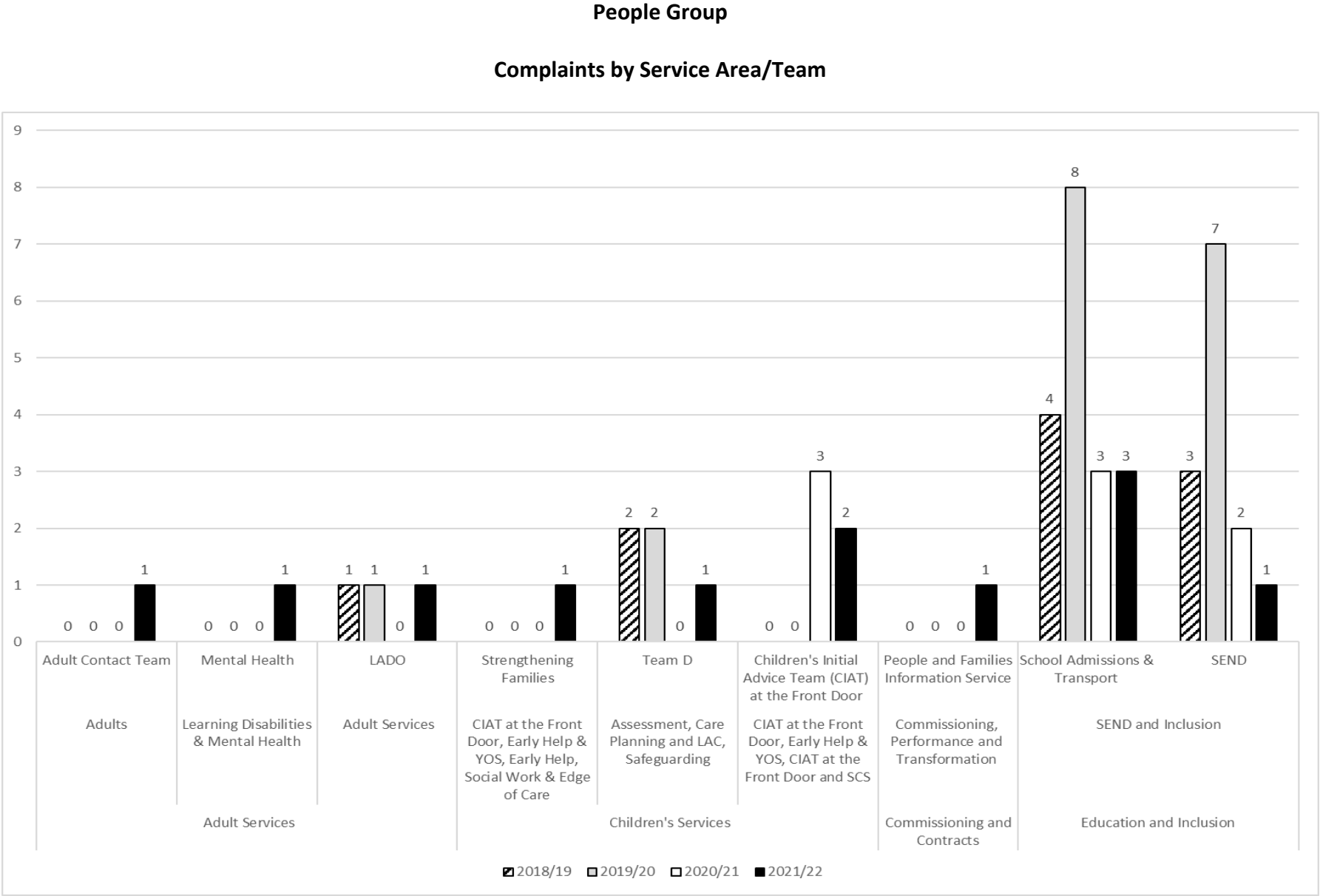
<b>Service Area/Team</b>	<b>Inconclusive</b>	<b>Not Upheld</b>	<b>Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Upheld</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Total</b>
Web Team	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Customer Services	0	6	2	3	1	<b>12</b>
Income Management	0	0	2	0	0	<b>2</b>
Housing Management	0	2	1	0	1	<b>4</b>
Tenancy Enforcement	0	3	0	0	0	<b>3</b>
Contact and Repairs Co-ordination	0	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
Housing Options	0	3	0	2	4	<b>9</b>
Business Rates	0	2	0	1	0	<b>3</b>
Council Tax	0	16	0	0	4	<b>20</b>
Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support	0	7	1	0	0	<b>8</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>63</b>

**Stage 2 Outcomes**

<b>Service Area/Team</b>	<b>Inconclusive</b>	<b>Not Upheld</b>	<b>Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Upheld</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Total</b>
Complaints and Information Governance Team	0	0	2	0	1	<b>3</b>
Customer Services	0	0	0	2	0	<b>2</b>
Housing Management	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Business Rates	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Council Tax	0	4	0	0	0	<b>4</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>

## **Organisational learning**

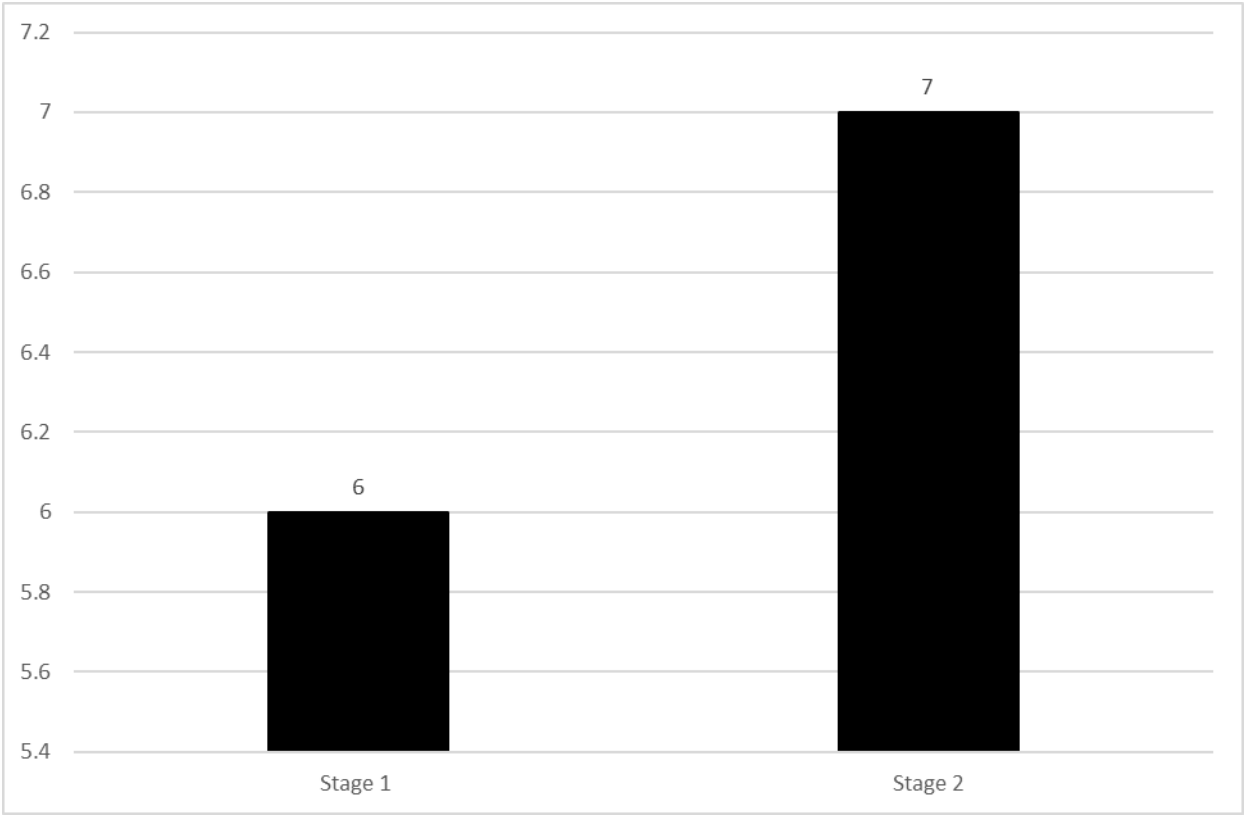
60. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, the following organisational learning resulted from the complaint investigations concluded during 2021/22.
61. Following a complaint for Customer Services, training was provided to ensure consideration is taken when dealing with older or vulnerable customers.
62. As a result of a further complaint for Customer Services, the Council amended its telephony options to include bus pass enquiries.
63. Following a complaint for Income Management, the team agreed to ensure tenancy end reasons are considered and systems updated before producing correspondence.
64. Following a further complaint for Income Management, it was agreed consideration would be given to developing a Customer Standards Charter which clearly gives timescales for responses to urgent and non-urgent communication from customers.
65. Following a complaint for Housing Management, it was agreed the Council would ensure its revised lettings policy is consistent with current data protection legislation. It was also agreed the Council would ensure officers are clear about the scope of its Tenancy Fraud Policy.
66. Following a complaint for the Complaints and Information Governance Team, officers were reminded of an individual's right of access to their personal data under UK GDPR/The Data Protection Act 2018. They were also asked that in future they undertake robust searches to identify all personal data held, so the Council can make an informed decision on disclosure, including whether or not an exemption may apply.



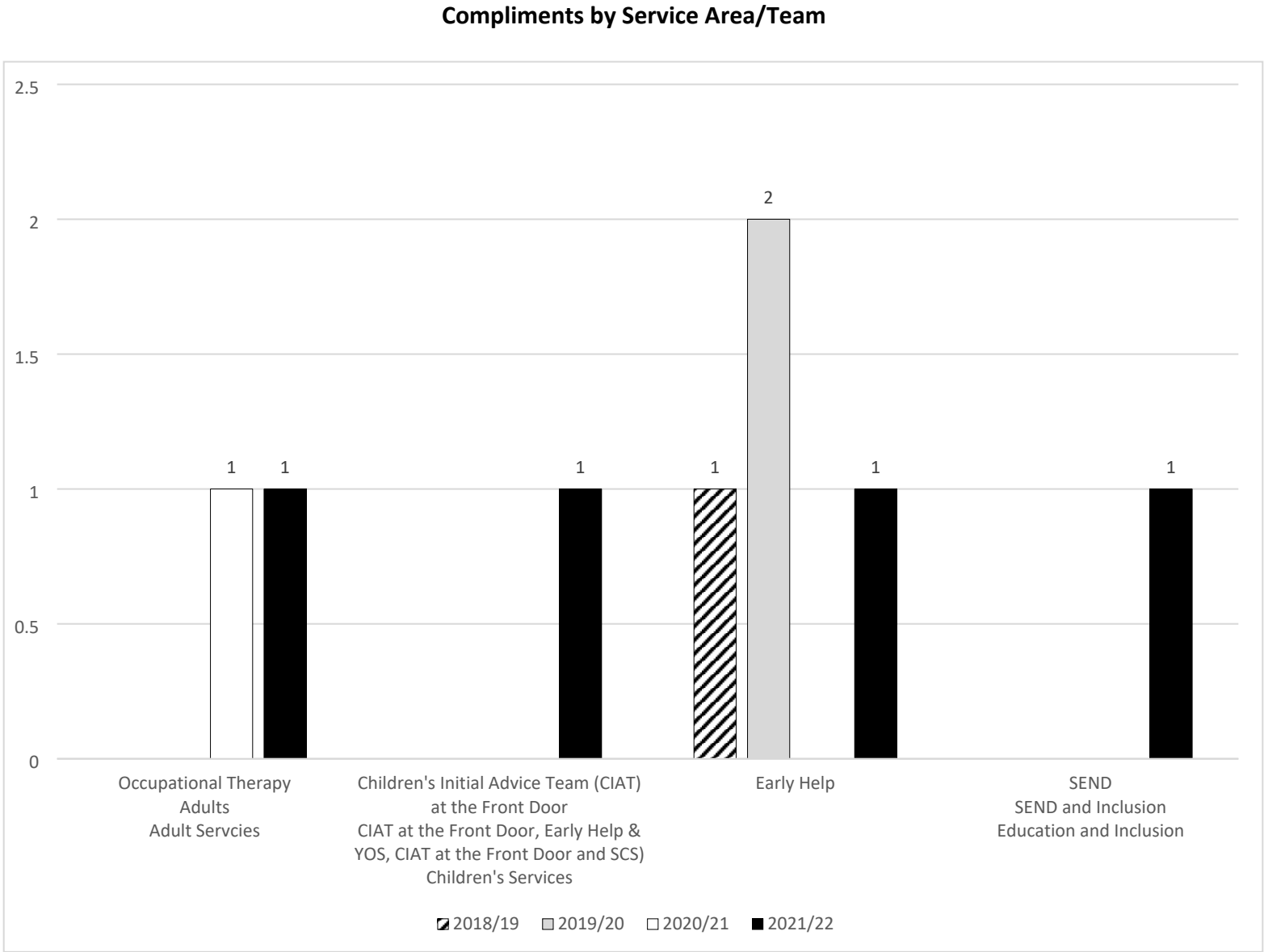
## Appendix 4

67. Adult Contact Team received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
68. Mental Health received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
69. Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21 and the same number the team received in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
70. Strengthening Families received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
71. Team D received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21 and a decrease from two in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
72. Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) at the Front Door received two corporate complaints during 2021/22, a decrease from three in 2020/21 and an increase from zero in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
73. People and Families Information Service received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
74. School Admissions and Transport received three corporate complaints during 2021/22, the same number as in 2020/21. Complaint numbers remain lower than pre-pandemic levels when the team received eight complaints in 2019/20 and four in 2018/19. There were no identifiable themes in the complaints received.
75. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, a decrease from two 2020/21. Complaint numbers remain lower than pre-pandemic levels when the team received seven complaints in 2019/20 and three in 2018/19.

Complaints by Stage



*N.B. Six complaints were escalated directly to Stage 2*



76. Occupational Therapy received once corporate compliment during 2021/22, the same number as in 2020/21 and an increase from zero in 2019/20 and 2018/29.

77. Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) at the Front Door received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.

78. Early Help received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, a decrease from two in 2019/20 and the same number the team received in 2018/19.

79. SEND received two corporate compliment during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/29.

### Comments by Service Area/Team

80. People did not receive any corporate comments during 2021/22.

### Complaints by Outcome

81. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2021/22.

#### Stage 1 Outcomes

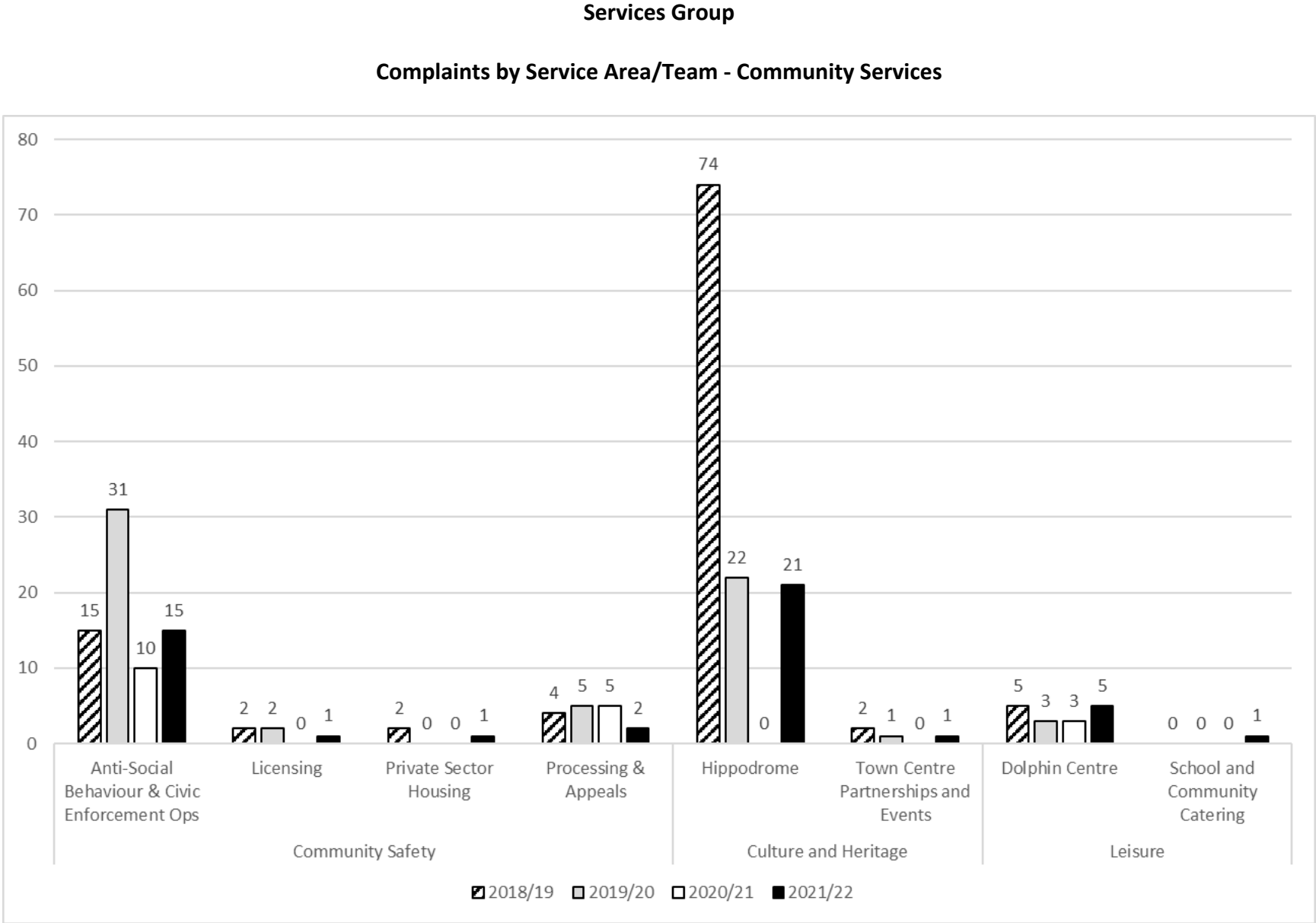
Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Strengthening Families	0	0	0	1	0	1
People and Families Information Service	0	0	0	1	0	1
SEND	0	0	1	0	0	1
School Admissions & Transport	0	1	1	0	0	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>

## Stage 2 Outcomes

<b>Service Area/Team</b>	<b>Inconclusive</b>	<b>Not Upheld</b>	<b>Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Upheld</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mental Health Team	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Adult Contact Team (ACT)	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
LADO	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Team D	1	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) at the Front Door	0	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
School Admissions & Transport	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>

## Organisational learning

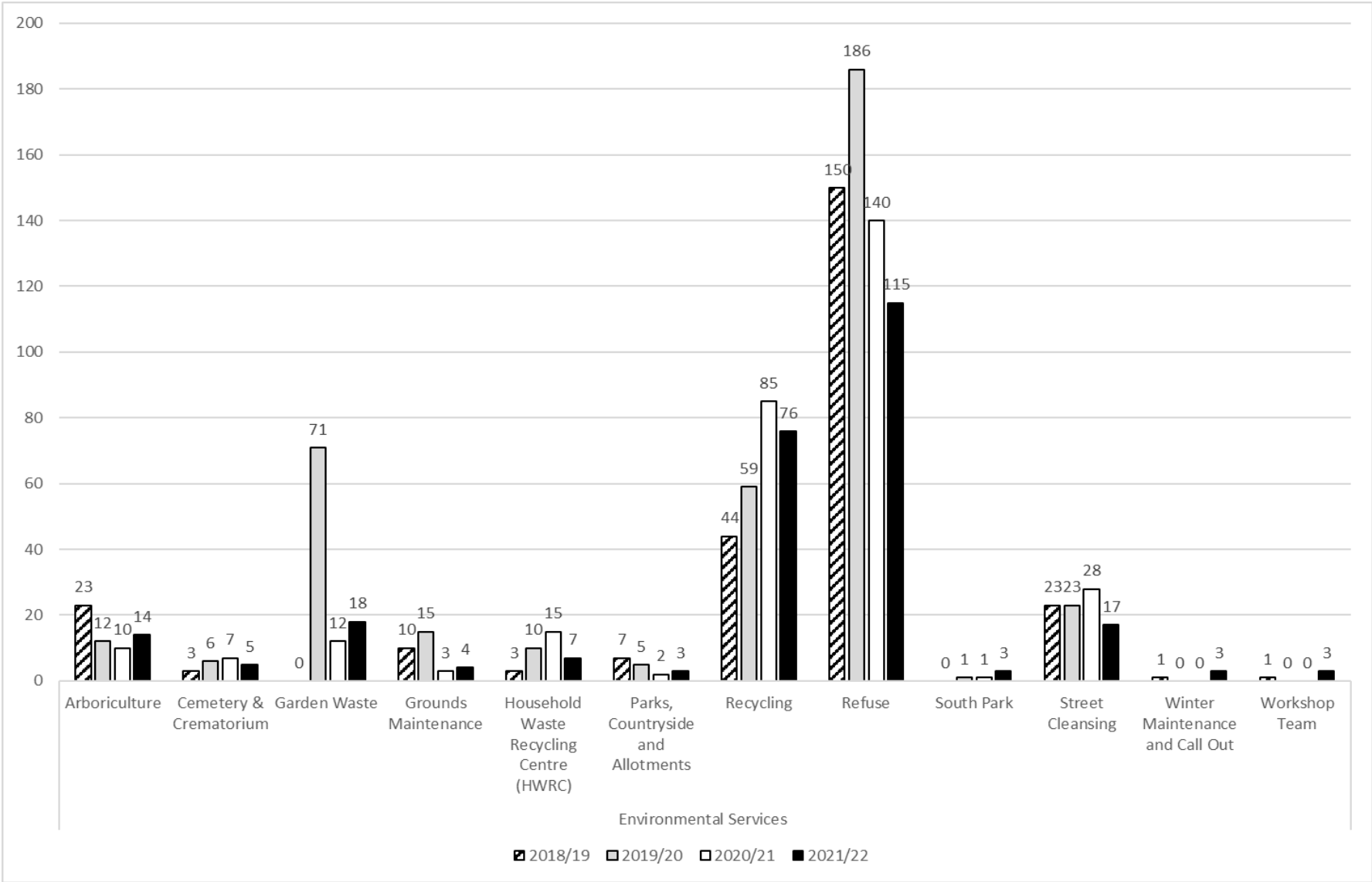
82. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, the following organisational learning resulted from the complaint investigations concluded during 2021/22.
83. Following a complaint for People and Families Information Service, it was agreed the Council would review entitlement for children and young people who reside in Darlington but attend a school setting out of area.
84. Following a complaint for Strengthening Families, it was agreed the assessment for Direct Payments as part of an Early Help Assessment for children under the age of five would be reviewed to ensure the service is appropriate for those who need it.



## Appendix 4

85. Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops received 16 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 10 in 2020/21, significantly less than the 31 received in 2019/20 and an increase from 15 in 2018/19. The most common theme was dissatisfaction with perceived lack of action in relation to requests for enforcement.
86. Licensing received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21 and a decrease from two in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
87. Private Sector Housing received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and a decrease from two in 2018/19.
88. Processing & Appeals received two corporate complaints during 2021/22, a decrease from five in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and four in 2018/19.
89. Hippodrome received 21 corporate complaints during 2021/22, a significant increase from zero during 2020/21, although this was largely due to the COVID-19 restrictions in place during 2020/21. Complaints about the Hippodrome remain lower than pre-pandemic levels, when the team received 22 complaints in 2019/20 and 74 complaints in 2018/19. The main causes of complaints was people's dissatisfaction with the service provided by Hippodrome staff and the enforcing of the Hippodrome's COVID policy following the theatre re-opening.
90. Town Centre Partnerships and Events received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, the same number the team received in 2019/20 and a decrease from two in 2018/19.
91. Dolphin Centre received five corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from three in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and the same number the team received in 2018/19.
92. School and Community Catering received one corporate complaint during 2020/21, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.

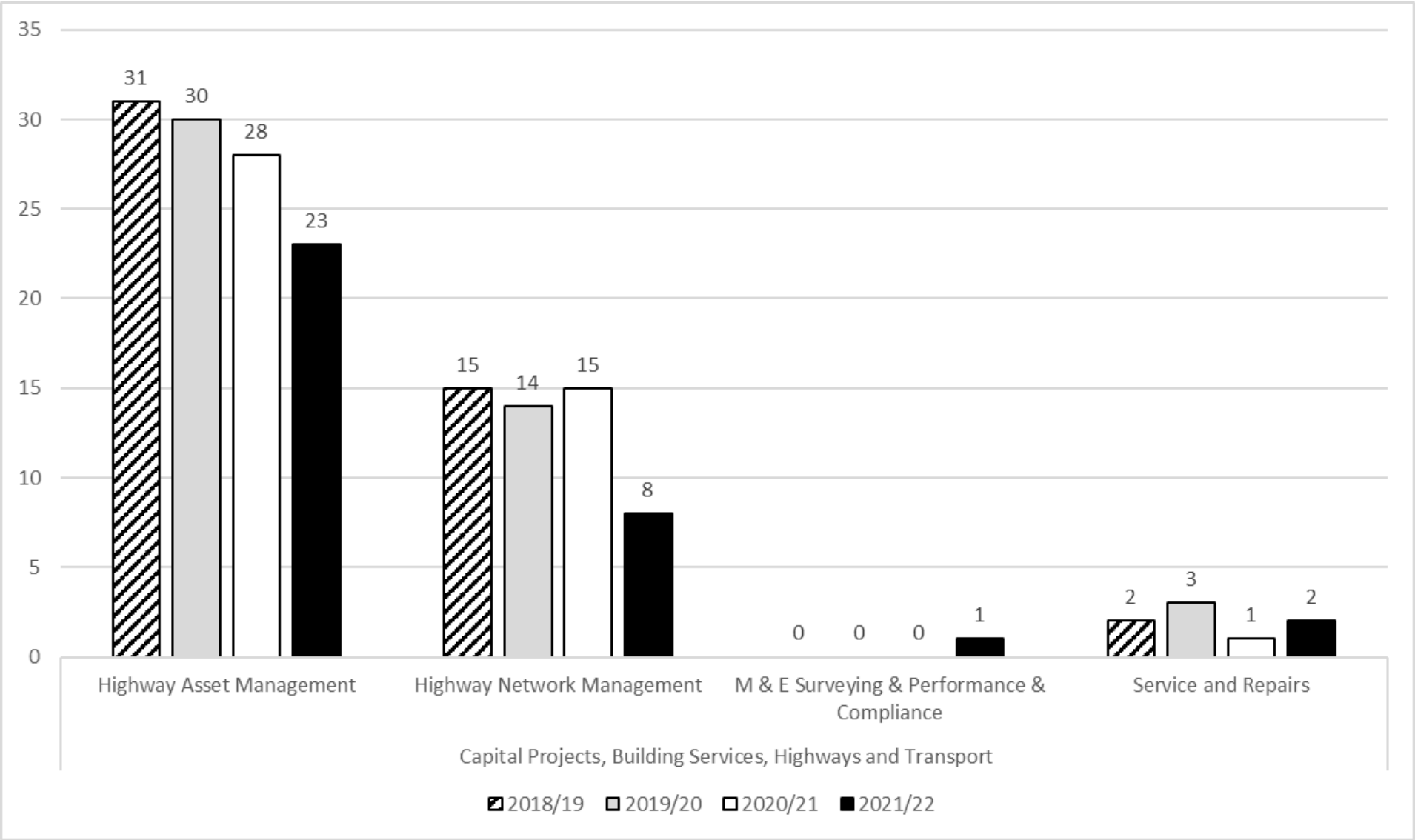
Community Services continued...



## Appendix 4

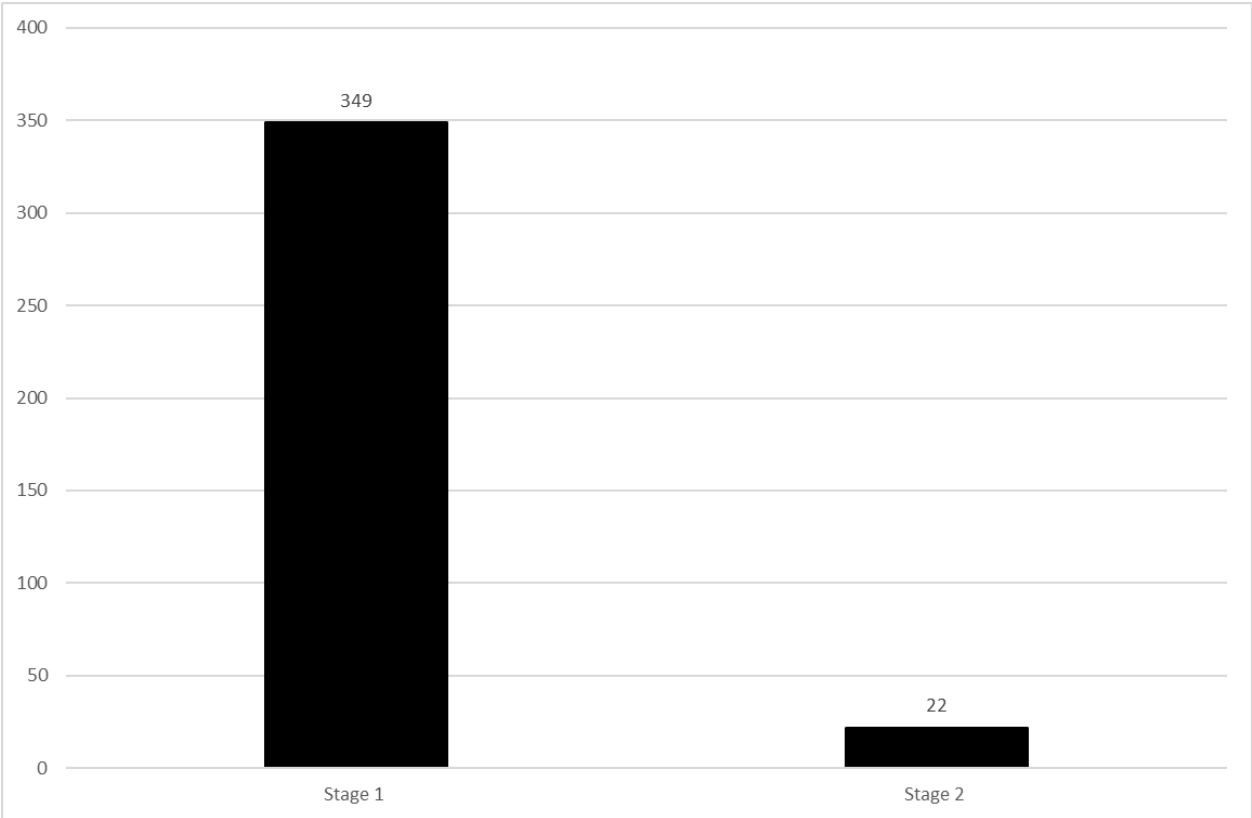
93. Arboriculture received 14 corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from 10 in 2020/21 and 12 in 2019/20, although a significant decrease from 23 in 2018/19. These complaints generally resulted from a lack of response to initial enquiries and/or dissatisfaction with a decision not to undertake works to a tree for the reasons requested.
94. Cemetery & Crematorium received five corporate complaints during 2021/22, a decrease from seven in 2020/21, six in 2019/20 and an increase from three in 2018/19. Lack of maintenance in the cemetery was the only identifiable theme.
95. Garden Waste received 29 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. 11 pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 12 in 2020/21, although a significant decrease from 71 in 2019/20 following the service being launched. Themes included dissatisfaction with missed collections and delays in delivering garden waste bins following people signing up for the service.
96. Grounds Maintenance received four corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from three in 2020/21, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the team receiving 15 complaints in 2019/20 and 10 in 2018/19.
97. HWRC received 11 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. four pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 15 in 2020/21, an increase from 10 in 2019/20 and an increase from three in 2018/19.
98. Parks, Countryside and Allotments received three corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from two in 2020/21, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the team receiving five complaints in 2019/20 and seven in 2018/19.
99. Recycling received 90 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. 14 pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 85 in 2020/21. Complaints have increased since the pandemic with the team receiving 59 complaints in 2019/20 and 54 in 2018/19. The most common cause of complaint was recycling not being collected and bins and boxes either being broken or not returned during collection.
100. Refuse received 141 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. 26 pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 140 in 2020/21, although complaints remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the team receiving 186 complaints in 2019/20 and 150 in 2018/19. Complaints primarily related to collections being missed on one or more occasions.
101. South Park received three corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and zero in 2018/19.
102. Street Cleansing received 19 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. two pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 28 in 2020/21 and 23 in 2019/20 and 2018/19. Complaints primarily related to the lack and quality of the service provided
103. Winter Maintenance and Call Out received three corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and one in 2018/19.
104. Workshop Team received three corporate complaints during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and one in 2018/19.

Capital Projects, Building Services, Highways and Transport



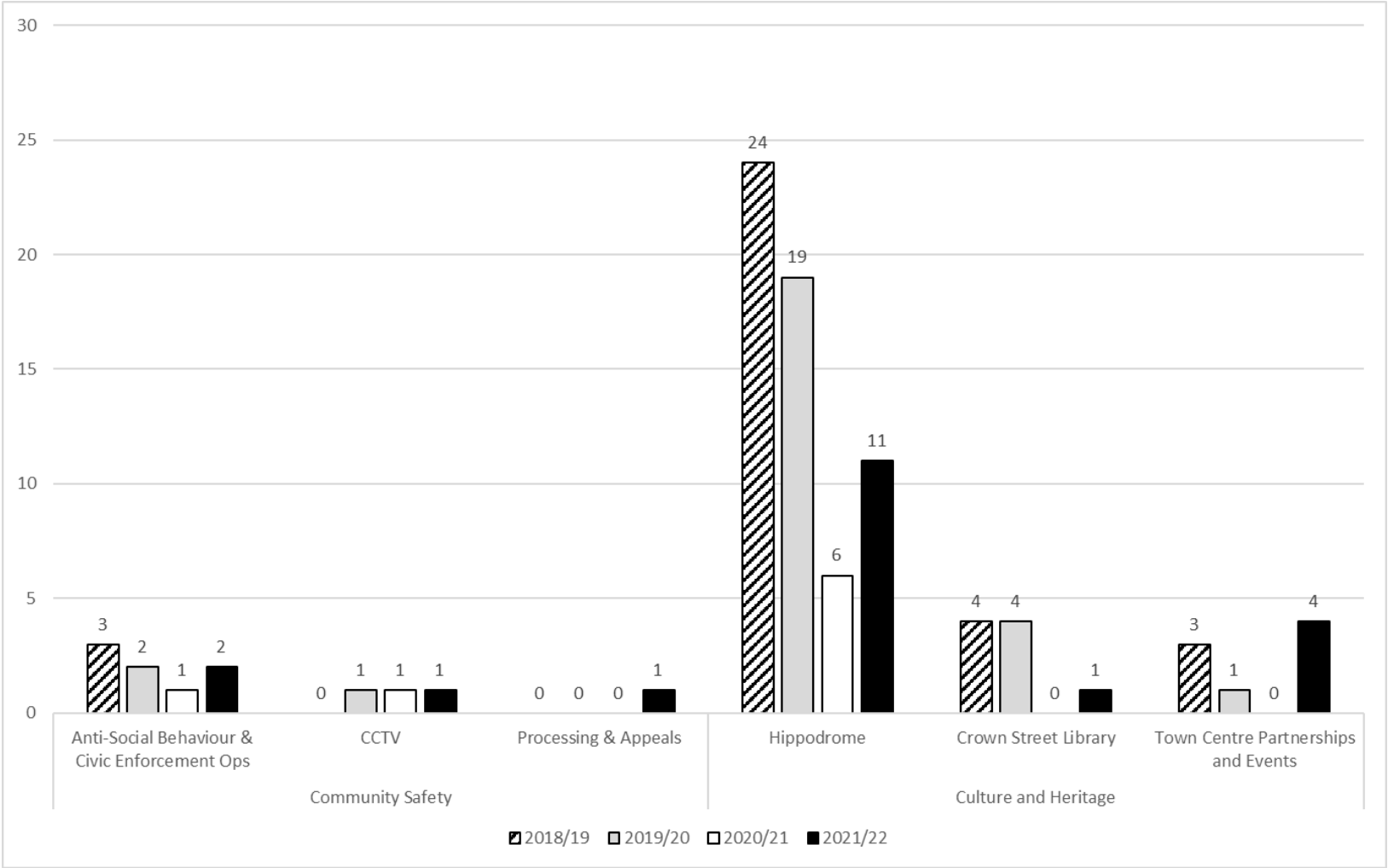
105. Highway Asset Management received 29 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. six pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 28 in 2020/21 and a decrease from 30 in 2019/20 and 31 in 2018/19. Themes included delays in responding to requests for service and dissatisfaction with the impact of highways decisions on individuals and their property.
106. Highway Network Management received 11 corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. three pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 15 in 2020/21, 14 in 2019/20 and 15 in 2018/19. There were no common themes identified.
107. M & E Surveying & Performance & Compliance received one corporate complaint during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
108. Service and Repairs received four corporate complaints during 2021/22 (inc. two pre 31 May 2021), an increase from one in 2020/21, three in 2019/20 and two in 2018/19.

Complaints by Stage



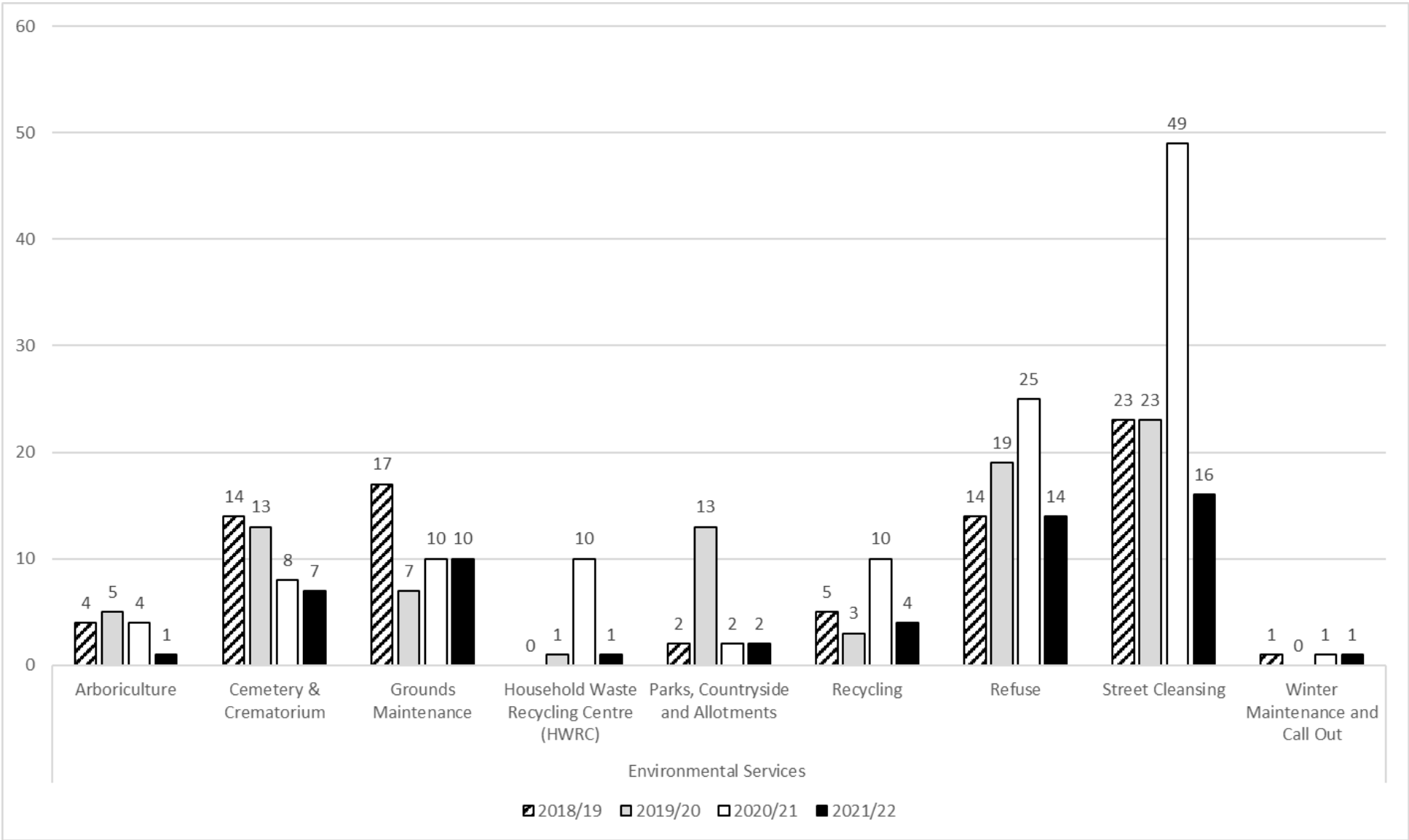
Compliments by Service Area/Team

Community Services



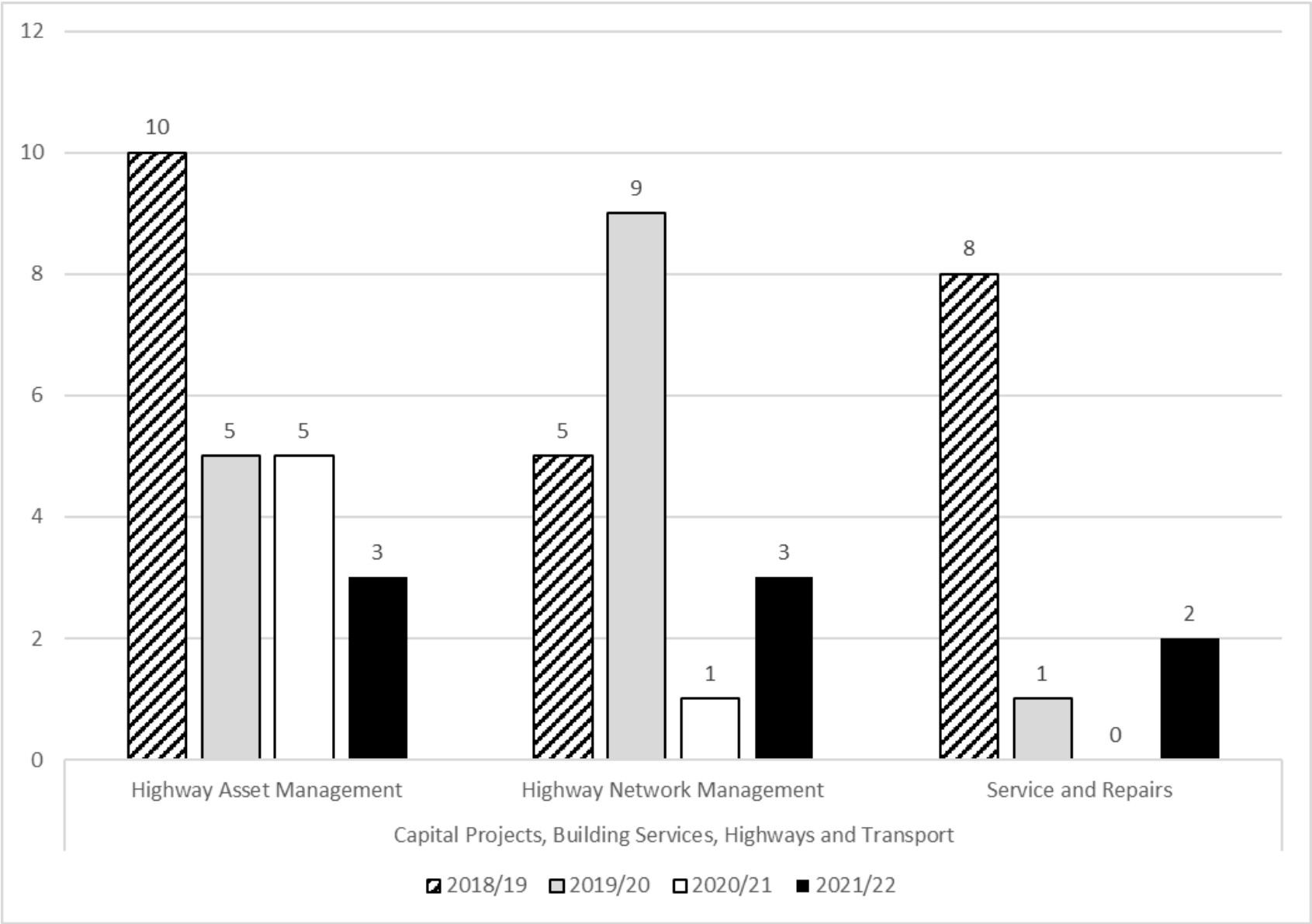
109. Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops received two corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, the same number as the team received in 2019/20 and a decrease from three in 2018/19.
110. CCTV received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, the same number as the team received in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and an increase from zero in 2018/19.
111. Processing & Appeals received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
112. Hippodrome received 11 corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from six in 2020/21, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the team receiving 19 compliments in 2019/20 and 24 in 2018/19.
113. Crown Street Library received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, and a decrease from the four received in 2019/20 and 2018/19 before the pandemic.
114. Town Centre Partnerships and Events received four corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, one in 2019/20 and three in 2018/19.

Community Services continued...



115. Arboriculture received three corporate compliment during 2021/22 (inc. two pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from four in 2020/21, five in 2019/20 and the same number the team received 2018/19.
116. Cemetery & Crematorium received eight corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), the same number as 2020/21, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the team receiving 13 compliments in 2019/20 and 14 in 2018/19.
117. Grounds Maintenance received 10 corporate compliments during 2021/22, the same number as in 2020/21, an increase from seven in 2019/20, although a decrease from 17 in 2018/19.
118. HWRC received two corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 10 in 2020/21, and an increase from one in 2019/20 and zero in 2018/19.
119. Parks, Countryside and Allotments received four corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. two pre 31 May 2021), an increase from two in 2020/21, a decrease from 13 in 2019/20 and an increase from two in 2018/19.
120. Recycling received seven corporate compliment during 2021/22 (inc. three pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 10 in 2020/21, an increase from three in 2019/20 and an increase from five in 2018/19.
121. Refuse received 15 corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 25 in 2020/21 and 19 in 2019/20 and an increase from 14 in 2018/19.
122. Street Cleansing received 27 corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. 11 pre 31 May 2021), a significant decrease from 49 in 2020/21, although an increase from 23 in 2019/20 and 2018/19, before the pandemic.
123. Winter Maintenance and Call Out received one corporate compliment during 2021/22, the same number the team received in 2020/21, an increase from zero in 2019/20 and the same number the team received in 2018/19.

Capital Projects, Building Services, Highways and Transport

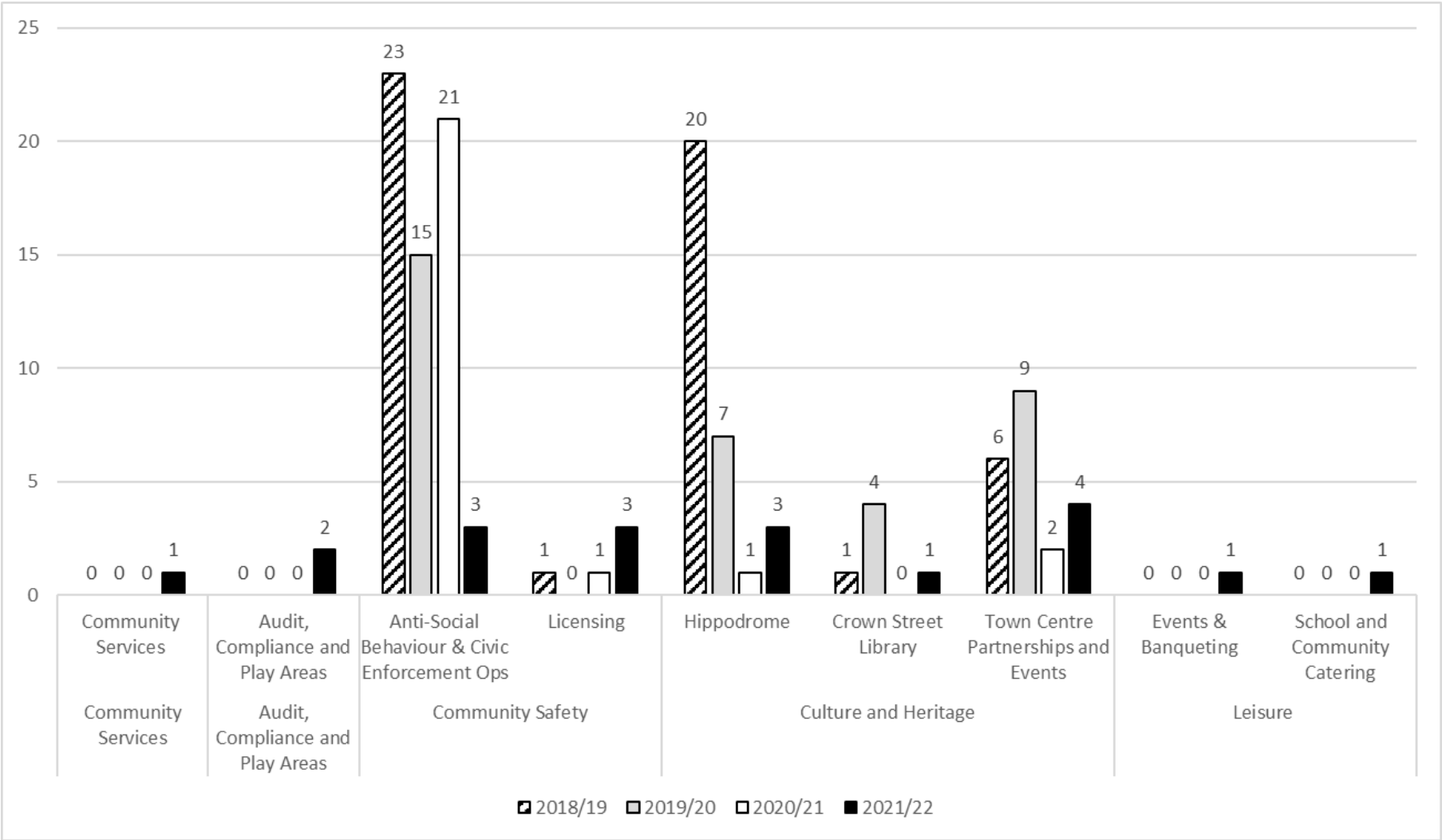


## Appendix 4

124. Highway Asset Management received four corporate compliments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from five in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and 10 in 2018/19.
125. Highway Network Management received three corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, although a decrease from nine received in 2019/20 and five in 2018/19, prior to the pandemic.
126. Service and Repairs received two corporate compliments during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, one in 2019/20 and a decrease from eight in 2018/19.

Comments by Service Area/Team

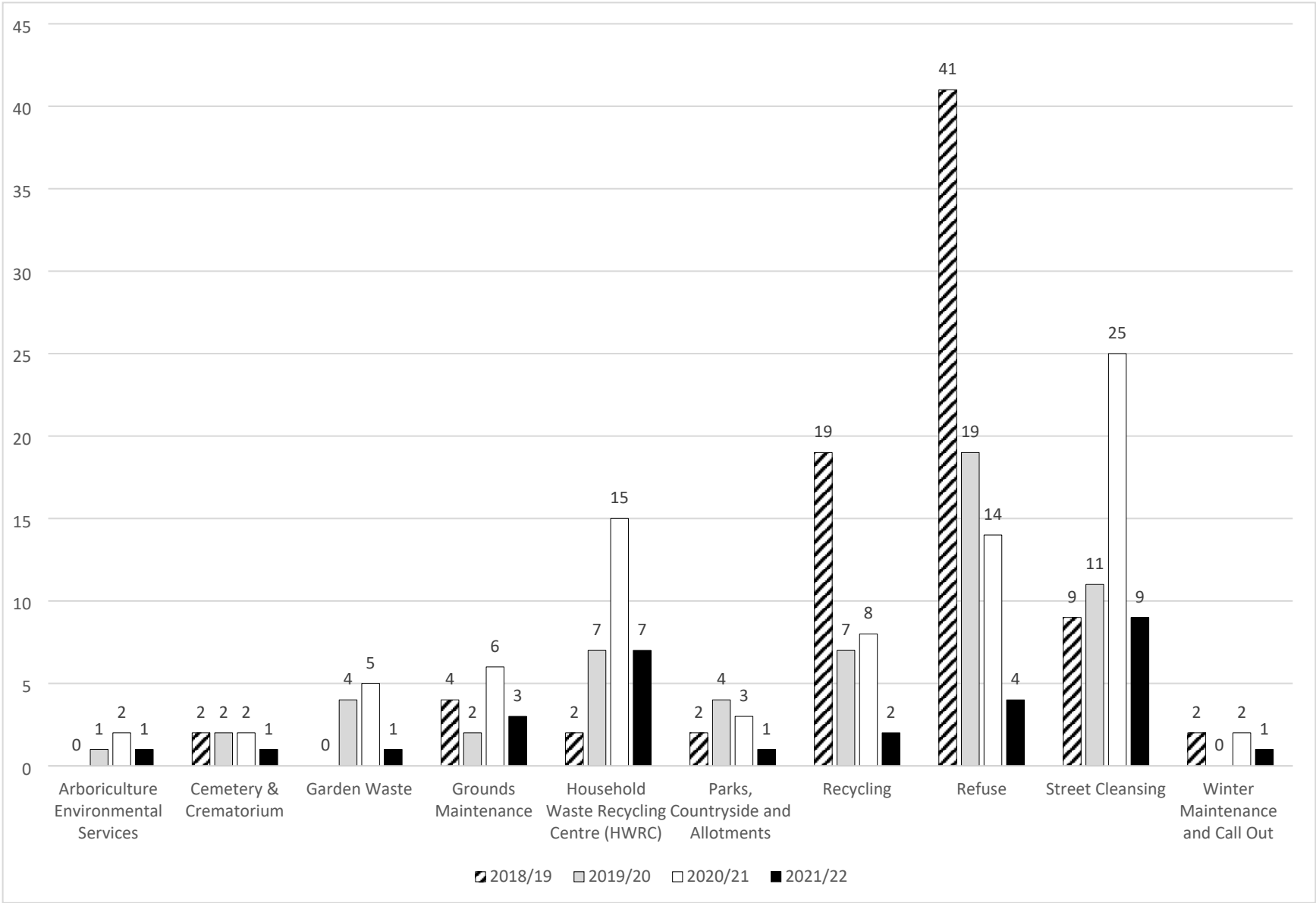
Community Services



## Appendix 4

127. Community Services received one corporate comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19. It comment concerned the lack of public toilets.
128. Audit, Compliance and Play Areas received two corporate comments during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
129. Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops received three corporate comments during 2021/22, a significant decrease from 21 in 2020/21, 15 in 2019/20 and 23 in 2018/19.
130. Licensing received three corporate comments during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, zero in 2019/20 and one 2018/19.
131. Hippodrome received three corporate comments during 2021/22, an increase from one in 2020/21, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the team receiving seven comments in 2019/20 and 20 in 2018/19.
132. Crown Street Library received one corporate comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the Crown Street Library receiving four comments in 2019/20 and one in 2018/19.
133. Town Centre Partnerships and Events received four corporate comments during 2021/22, an increase from two in 2020/21, although they remain lower than pre-pandemic levels with the team receiving nine comments in 2019/20 and six in 2018/19.
134. Events and Banqueting received one corporate comment during 2020/21, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
135. School and Community Catering received one corporate comment during 2020/21, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.

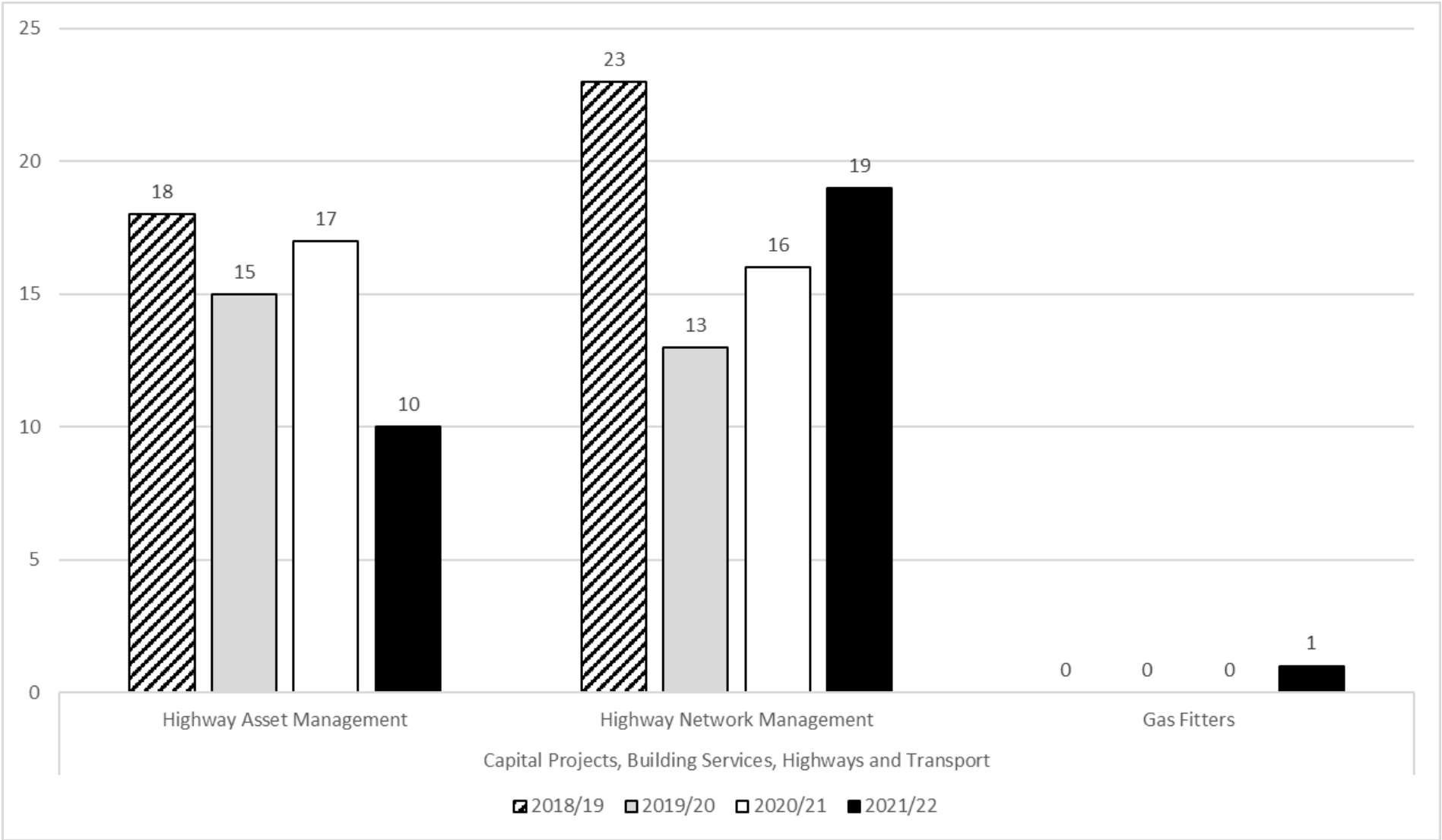
Community Services continued...



## Appendix 4

136. Arboriculture received one corporate comment during 2021/22, a decrease from two in 2020/21, the same number the team received as in 2019/20 and an increase from zero in 2018/19.
137. Cemetery & Crematorium received one corporate comment during 2021/22, a decrease from two in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
138. Garden Waste received one corporate comment during 2021/22, a decrease from five in 2020/21, four in 2019/20.
139. Grounds Maintenance received five corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. two pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from six in 2020/21, an increase from two in 2019/20 and four in 2018/19.
140. HWRC received seven corporate comments during 2021/22, a decrease from 15 in 2020/21, the same number the team received in 2019/20 and an increase from two in 2018/19.
141. Parks, Countryside and Allotments received two corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from three in 2020/21, four in 2019/20 and the same number the team received in 2018/19.
142. Recycling received three corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from eight in 2020/21, seven in 2019/20 and 19 in 2018/19.
143. Refuse received seven corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. three pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 14 in 2020/21, 19 in 2019/20 and 41 in 2018/19.
144. Street Cleansing received 10 corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. one pre 31 May 2021), a significant decrease from 25 in 2020/21, a decrease from 11 in 2019/20 and an increase from nine in 2018/19.
145. Winter Maintenance and Call Out received one corporate comment during 2021/22, a decrease from two in 2020/21, an increase from zero in 2019/20 and a decrease from two in 2018/19.

Capital Projects, Building Services, Highways and Transport



146. Highway Asset Management received 12 corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. two pre 31 May 2021), a decrease from 17 in 2020/21, 15 in 2019/20 and 18 in 2018/19. There were no common themes identified.
147. Highway Network Management received 26 corporate comments during 2021/22 (inc. seven pre 31 May 2021), an increase from 16 in 2020/21, 13 in 2019/20 and 23 in 2018/19. The only identifiable theme was dissatisfaction with road closures for events.
148. Gas fitters received one corporate comment during 2021/22, an increase from zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.

### Complaints by Outcome

149. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2021/22.

#### Stage 1 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Services	0	0	0	1	0	1
Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops	0	0	4	1	0	5
Processing & Appeals	0	1	1	0	0	2
Licensing	0	0	0	0	1	1
Private Sector Housing	0	0	1	0	0	1
Hippodrome	0	9	4	4	1	18
Town Centre Partnerships and Events	0	1	0	0	0	1
Arboriculture	0	5	2	2	0	9
Cemetery & Crematorium	0	0	0	2	0	2
Parks, Countryside and Allotments	0	0	1	1	0	2
South Park	0	0	0	2	0	2
Grounds Maintenance	0	0	0	4	0	4
Street Cleansing	2	3	2	6	0	13
Garden Waste	1	2	0	14	1	18
Recycling	6	31	4	31	1	73
Refuse	11	35	7	53	4	110
Winter Maintenance and Call Out	1	0	0	1	0	2
Workshop Team	0	3	0	0	0	3
HWRC	0	5	0	0	0	5
School and Community Catering	0	0	0	0	1	1
Dolphin Centre	0	2	0	2	0	4
Highway Asset Management	0	11	2	6	1	20
Highway Network Management	0	0	2	2	1	5

M & E Surveying & Performance & Compliance	0	0	1	0	0	1
Service and Repairs	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>304</b>

## Stage 2 Outcomes

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops	0	1	1	1	0	3
Processing & Appeals	0	0	1	0	0	1
Arboriculture	0	2	0	0	0	2
Cemetery & Crematorium	0	0	0	0	1	1
Recycling	1	0	0	0	0	1
Refuse	1	0	1	1	0	3
Dolphin Centre	0	0	1	0	0	1
Highway Asset Management	0	5	1	0	0	6
M & E Surveying & Performance & Compliance	0	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>

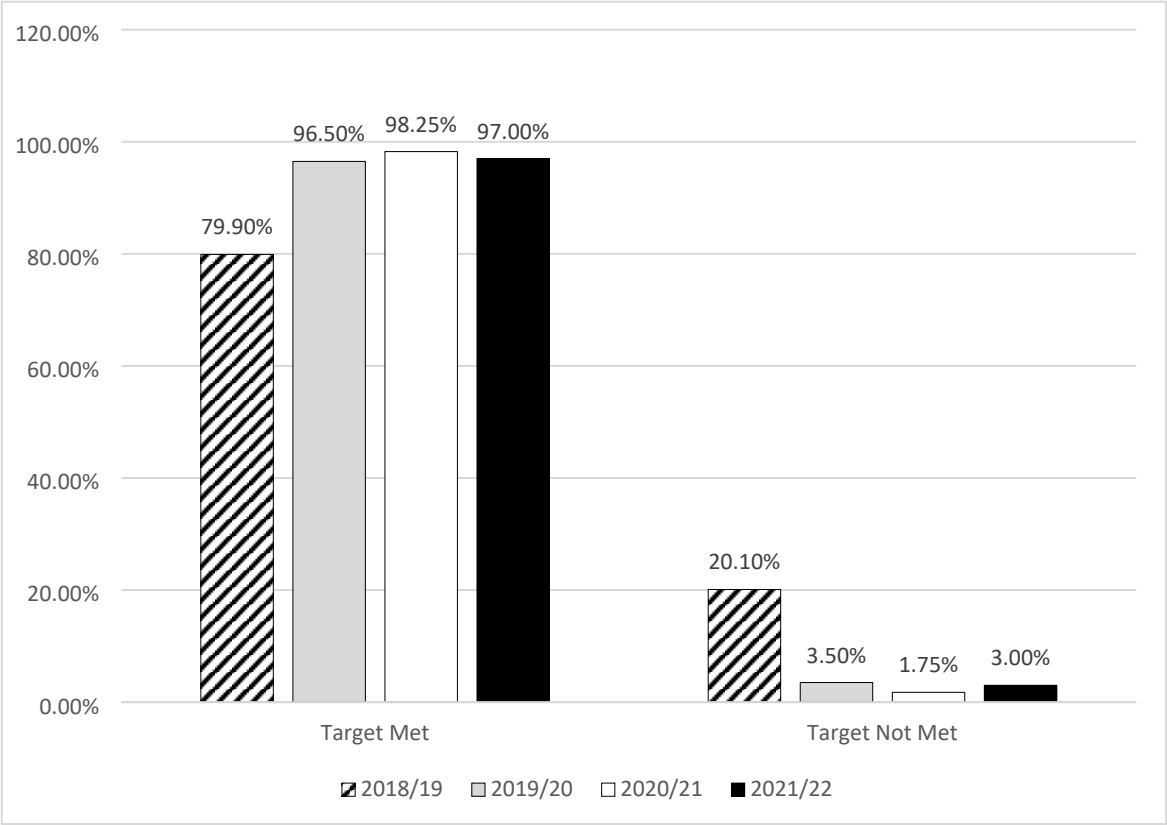
## Organisational Learning

150. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, the following organisational learning resulted from the complaint investigations concluded during 2021/22.
151. Following a complaint for Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops, it was agreed refresher training would be provided to Civic Enforcement Officers (CEOs) in relation to their jurisdiction.
152. Following a further complaint for Anti-Social Behaviour & Civic Enforcement Ops, it was agreed policies and procedures would be reviewed, including service standards, whereby all emails/complaints will be initially responded to within 24 hours.
153. Following a complaint for Garden Waste, from a resident who is visually impaired, the crews were spoken to about the importance of returning bins to the correct location.
154. Following a complaint for Highway Network Management, officers were reminded of how to speak to members of the public about road closures.
155. Following a complaint for the Hippodrome, immediate action was taken to address the issues identified with a ticket agent's practice.
156. Following a complaint for Recycling, the team were spoken to about leaving broken glass on the floor following collections.
157. Following a further complaint for Recycling, the crew was spoken to about the importance of returning bins to the correct location.
158. Following a complaint for South Park, the reason for the toilets being closed on a Saturday was established to prevent a re-occurrence, the reason for refusing to allow the customer to use the Café toilets was also established and the staff who work in the café were spoken to about customers who may have medical conditions that are not always visible and asked to exercise discretion in future.

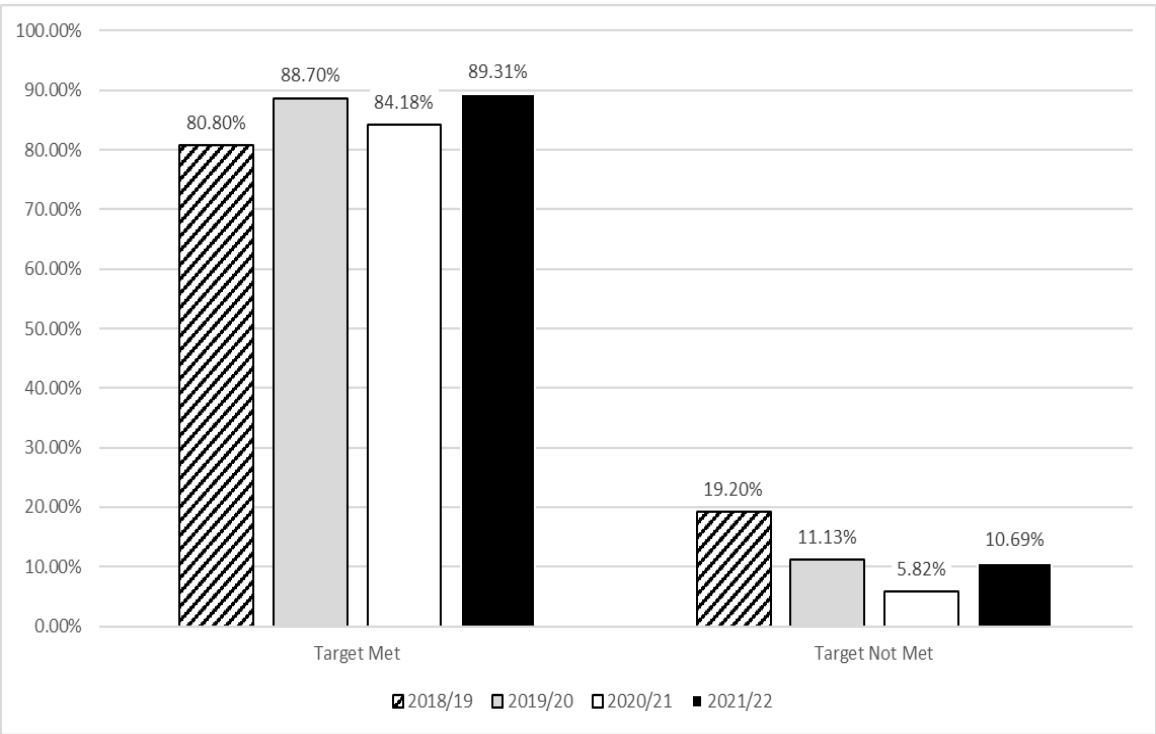
Performance against the Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure

Stage 1

Performance against Stage 1 complaint acknowledgement target (3 working days)

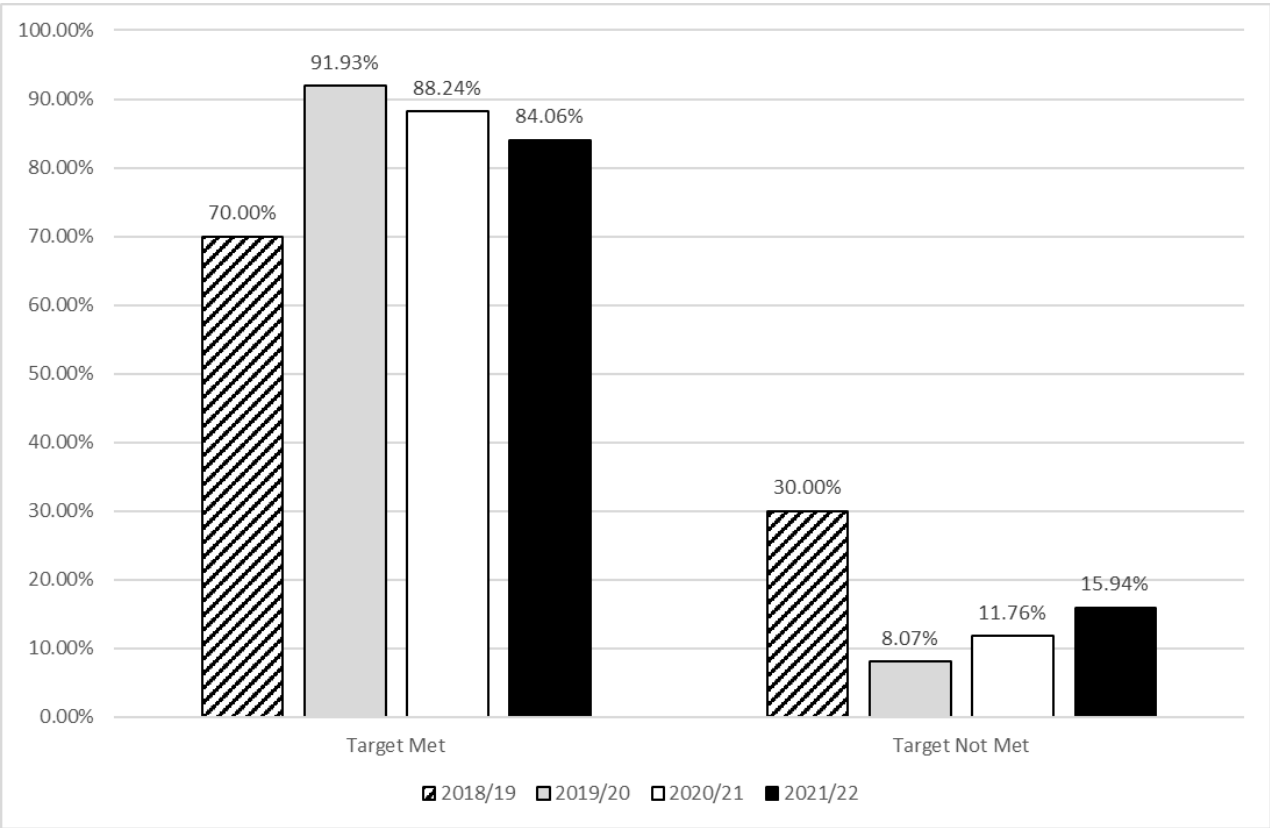


Performance against Stage 1 complaint response target (25 working days)

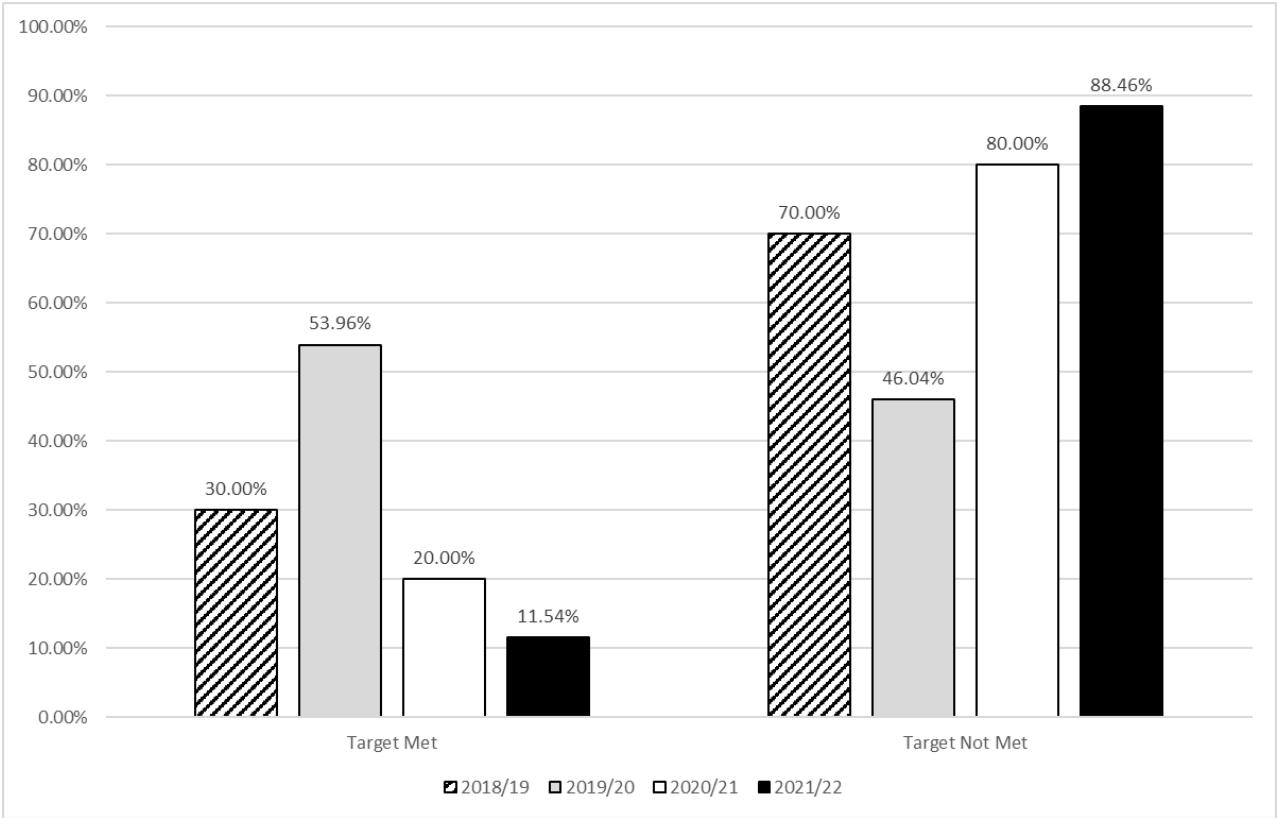


Stage 2

Performance against Stage 2 complaint acknowledgement target (3 working days)



Performance against Stage 2 complaint response target (30 working days)



### **Further Recommendations**

159. The Complaints & Information Governance Team should work to improve performance against the Corporate Stage 2 complaint response target.

### **Performance against Local Performance Indicators**

160. In relation to corporate complaints the Council's key performance indicator is the number of maladministration decisions received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Council received one maladministration decision during 2021/22, a decrease from two in 2020/21, the same as received in 2019/20 and an increase from zero in 2018/19.
161. Full details of those complaints determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are included in the Cabinet reports of 7 December 2021 and 6 September 2022 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).

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# **DARLINGTON**

## Borough Council

### **Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report 2021/22**

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## **Introduction**

1. This report provides an analysis of the complaints, compliments and comments received by the Council during 2021/22 under the Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure (the procedure). The purpose of the report is to identify topics and trends in relation to complaints; identify areas of organisational learning that have taken place over the past year as a result of the complaints received and make further recommendations based on trend data to improve services. The report also highlights any areas of good practice and seeks to identify topics and trends in relation to comments made by members of the public so that the Council can take action where appropriate to improve services.
2. In addition to the statistical information presented in this report it is important to recognise the work of the Complaints and Information Governance (CIG) Team that underpins this in terms of promoting an organisational culture in which complaints are recognised, accepted, owned and resolved as efficiently and as close to the point of service delivery as possible. This also enables the Council to collect accurate information on complaints in order to identify topics and trends and improve services accordingly.
3. It is also important to recognise the work of Housing Services who have ensured that all senior management have taken part in the Housing Ombudsman online complaint training in 2021 with a plan for Housing Officers to also complete this training thereby enhancing the offer to customers and increasing Officer knowledge.

## **Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure**

4. The procedure sets out how the Council will deal with complaints, compliments and comments received about the Council as a social landlord (as well as in respect of its ownership and management of leasehold housing).
5. The procedure has three stages. Stage 1 is a local resolution stage where we try to resolve those complaints that cannot be resolved immediately as part of our day to day business. Stage 1 complaints are dealt with locally, that is within the service being complained about. We aim to resolve the majority of complaints at Stage 1 of the procedure.
6. Stage 2 is a formal investigation stage where complaints will usually be investigated by the Complaints Investigator or Complaints Manager.
7. Stage 3 is a mandatory stage between the Council and the Housing Ombudsman. This is referred to as the 'designated person' or 'democratic filter'. The designated person or democratic filter can be an MP, a local Councillor or a recognised Tenant Panel (from here onwards referred to as the Tenants' Complaints Panel, to differentiate it from our Tenant Panel). In Darlington we do not currently have a recognised Tenants' Complaints Panel. Should a tenant remain dissatisfied with the Council's response to their complaint, they will be required to refer the matter to the 'designated person' or

‘democratic filter’. The ‘designated person’ or ‘democratic filter’ may help resolve the complaint directly, refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman or decide to do neither. If the ‘designated person’ or ‘democratic filter’ decides not to take any action the complainant will be entitled to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman directly. The complainant will also be able to approach the Housing Ombudsman directly in cases where eight weeks have elapsed since the Council’s response to their complaint at Stage 2 of the procedure.

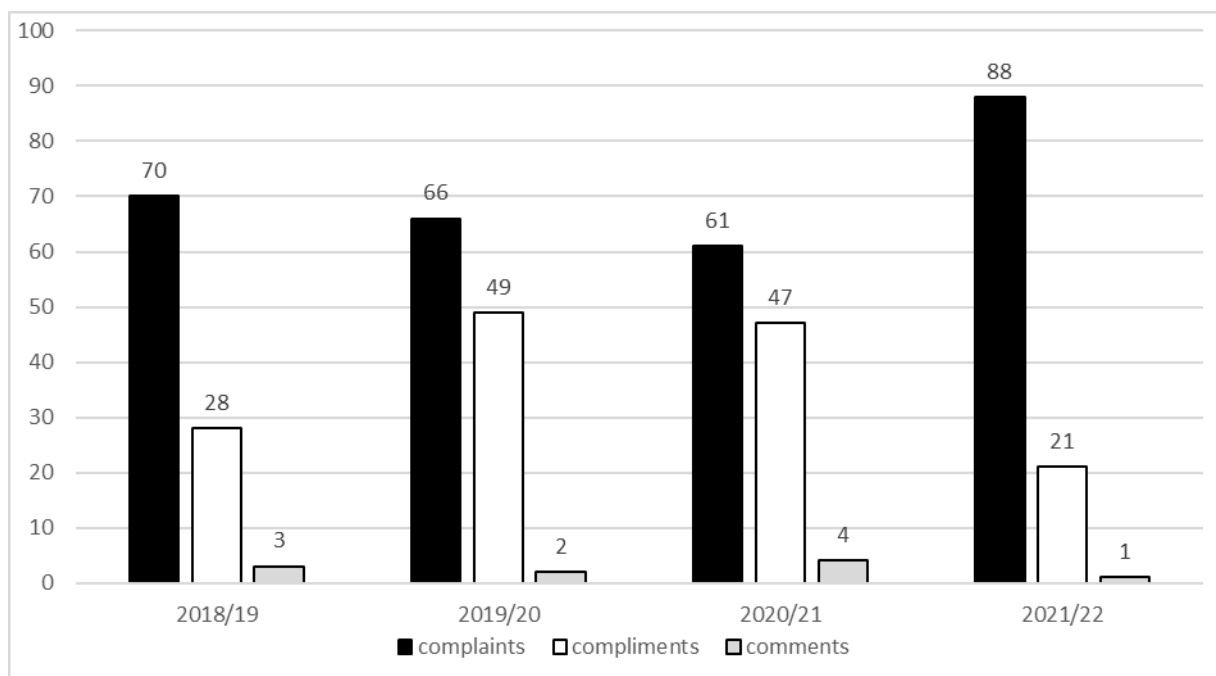
### **Public Information and Accessibility**

8. We are committed to making sure that everyone has equal access to all our services. To help make sure the Council’s complaints procedures are easily accessible we have produced two leaflets (one for children and young people and one for adults) covering all Council services to reflect the single point of access for complainants within the Council. The leaflets are available in all Council buildings. They have been written in line with the Plain English Campaign standards. The title is written in the most commonly used community languages and it contains details on how to access the information in other formats, for example, large print, audio and Braille.
9. Information is available on the Council’s website which contains an electronic form people can use to make a complaint, pay someone a compliment or pass comment on Council services. People may make a complaint in any format they wish. This can be in writing, email, via the web, over the phone, in person or by any other reasonable means.
10. The Complaints and Information Governance Manager can arrange advocates and interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters) where appropriate.

## Complaints Information and Organisational Learning

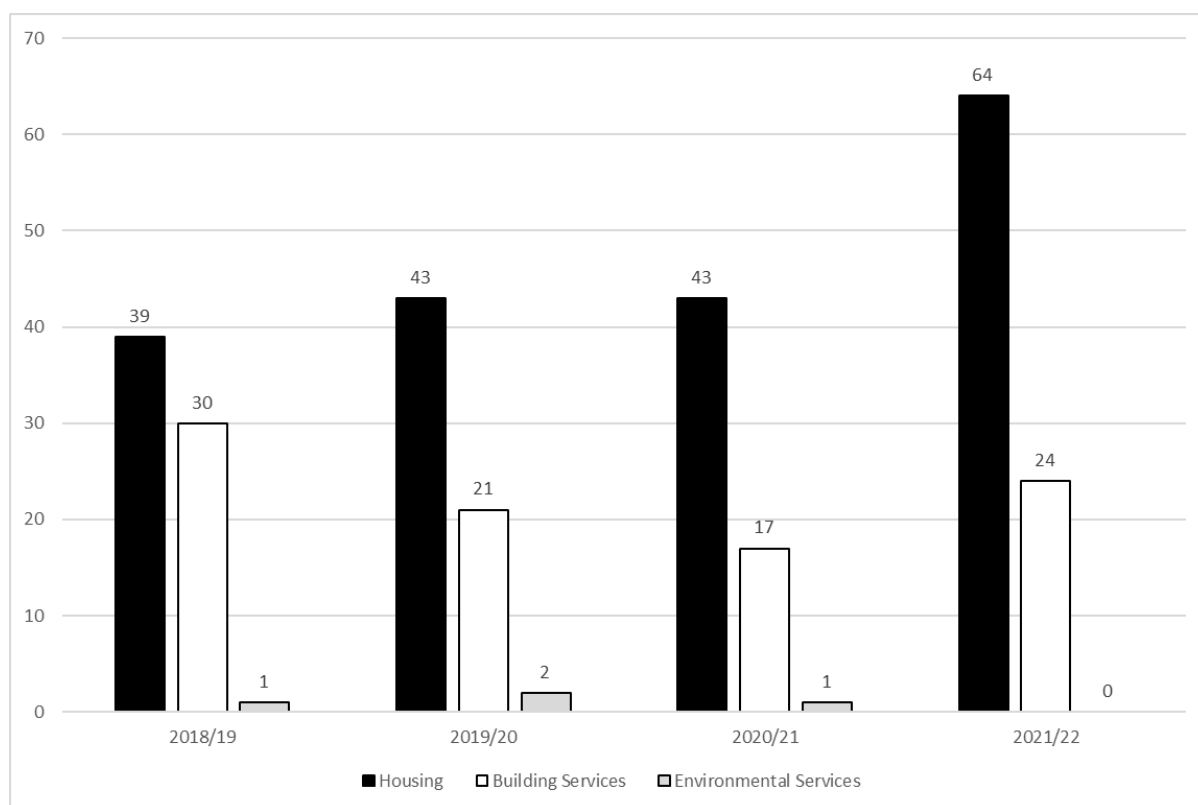
### Overview of Complaints, Compliments and Comments

#### Total Complaints, Compliments and Comments



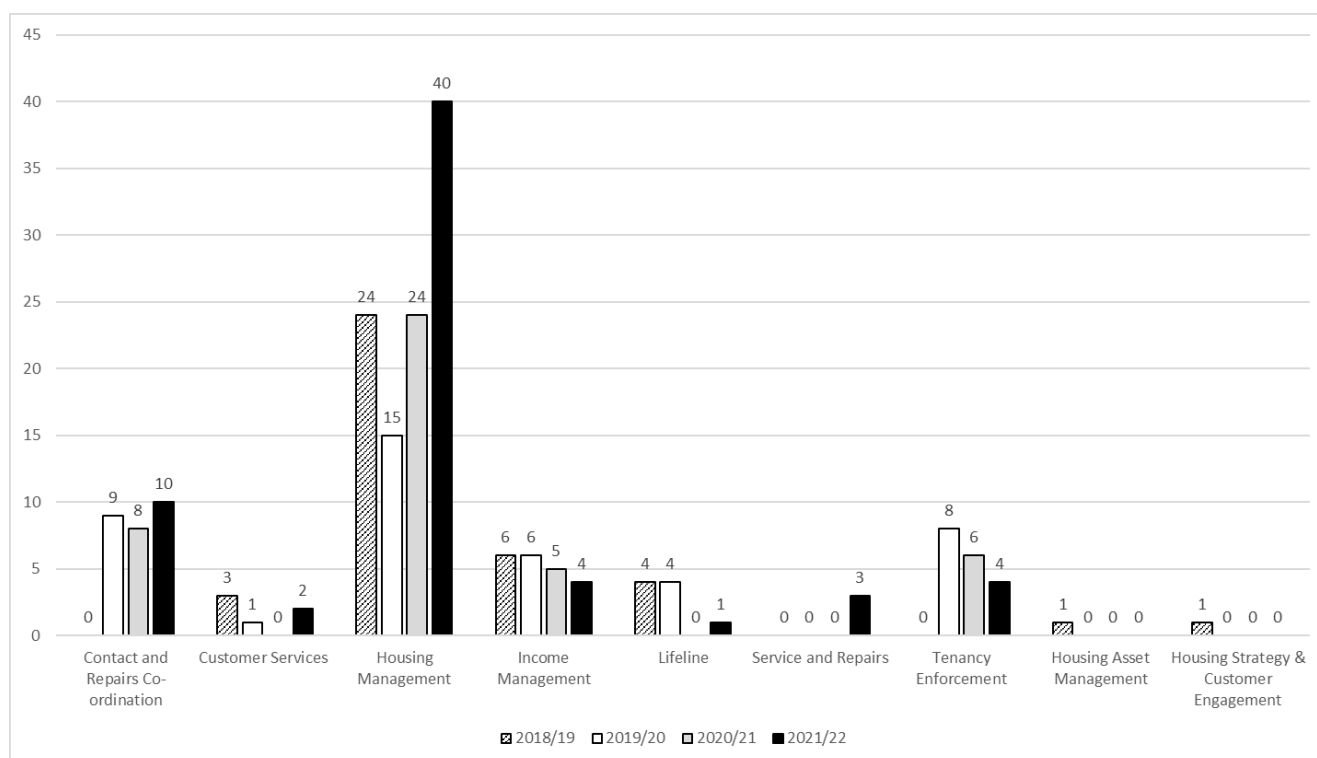
11. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 the Council received a total of 88 complaints under the procedure, a significant increase from 61 in 2020/21, 66 in 2019/20 and 70 in 2018/19. Housing Services have recently encouraged residents to make contact through the Housing Facebook page, which has continued to increase its number of followers and set up an additional complaints page within their section of the Council's website, which may in part account for the increase. We believe the increase is also, in part, attributable to the legacy of the pandemic, with people reporting fewer issues in the earlier part of the pandemic and spending more time at home resulting in the need for increased contact and repairs during 2020/21. As a result of the restrictions in place officers also had less of a presence in neighbourhoods meaning they were unable to resolve issues as part of their day to day work.
12. A total of 16 complaints were considered at Stage 2, an increase from 13 in 2020/21, seven in 2019/20 and 10 in 2018/19. All of the Stage 2 complaints were initially dealt with at Stage 1. No complaints were considered at Stage 3, as was the case in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
13. The Council received 21 compliments under the procedure, a significant decrease from 47 in 2020/21, 49 in 2019/20 and 28 in 2018/19.
14. The Council also receive one comment under the procedure, a decrease from four in 2020/21, two in 2019/20 and three in 2018/19.

### Complaints by Service



15. Housing received 64 complaints, an increase from 43 in 2020/21 and 2019/20 and 39 in 2018/19.
16. Building Services received 24 complaints, an increase from 17 in 2020/21, 21 in 2019/20 and a decrease from 30 in 2018/19.
17. Environmental Services did not receive any complaints, a decrease from one in 2020/21, two in 2019/20 and 1 in 2018/19.

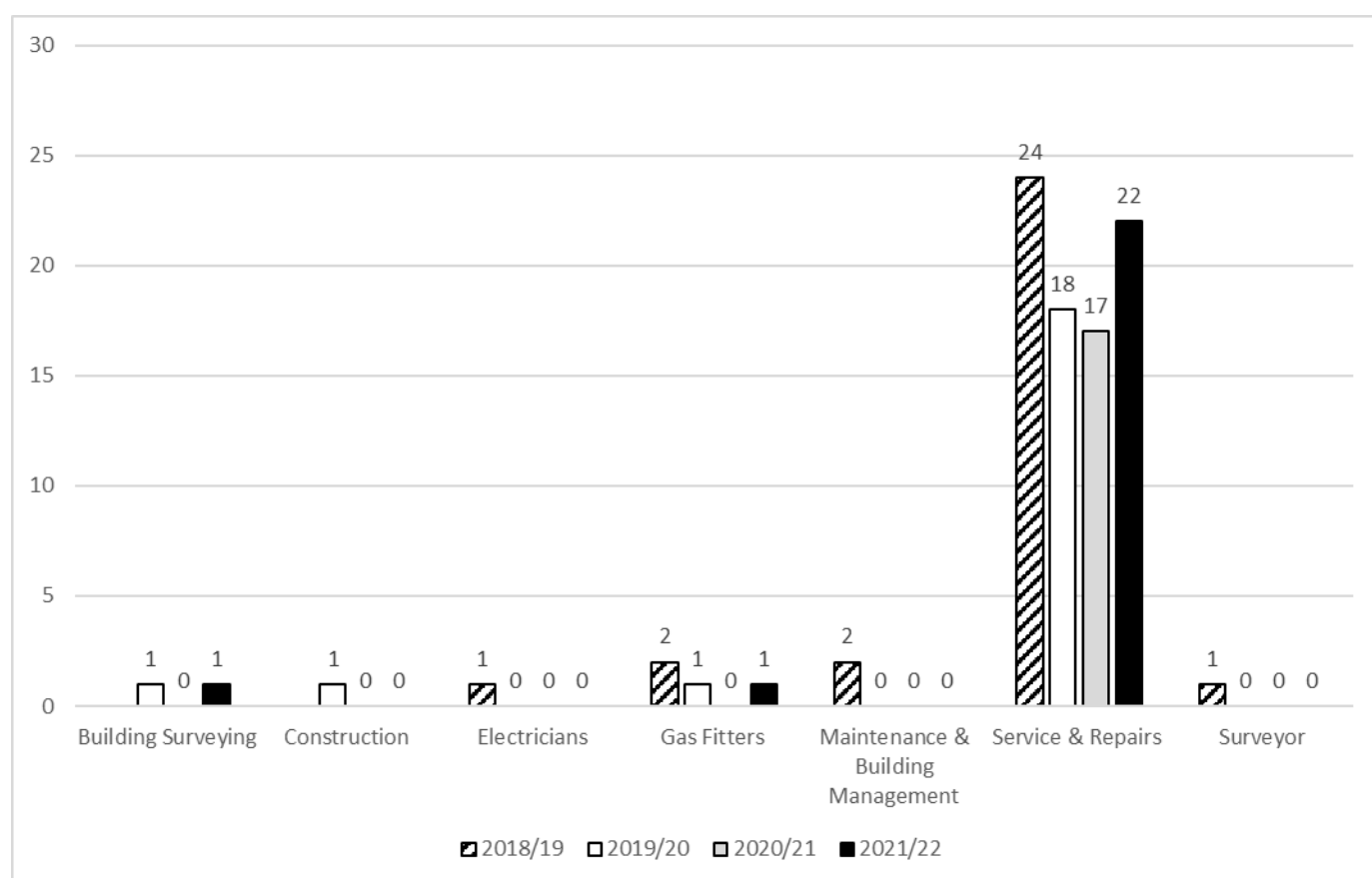
### Complaints by Team – Housing Service



18. Housing Management received 40 complaints, a significant increase from 24 in 2020/21, 15 in 2019/20 and 24 in 2018/19. There is no particular theme that would account for the increase. Complaints concerned communication, the service provided in relation to various housing management issues, dissatisfaction with proposed repairs, changes to the tenancy agreement and the wording of the gas check letter.
19. Contact & Repairs Co-ordination received 10 complaints, an increase from eight complaints in 2020/21, nine in 2019/20 and zero in 2018/19. Complaints concerned communication, appointments not being kept and delays in undertaking repairs.
20. Customer Services received two complaints, compared to zero complaints in 2020/21, one in 2019/20 and three in 2018/19.
21. Housing Income Management received four complaints, a decrease from five complaints in 2020/21 and six in 2019/20 and 2018/19. There were no identifiable themes in the complaints received.
22. Lifeline received one complaint, and increase from zero complaints 2020/21, but a decrease from four in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
23. Service and Repairs received three complaints, compared to zero in 2020/21, 2019/20 and 2018/19.
24. Tenancy Enforcement received four complaints, a decrease from six complaints in 2020/21, eight in 2019/20 and an increase from zero in 2018/19.

25. Housing Asset management did not receive any complaints, as was the case in 2020/21, 2019/20. They received one complaint in 2018/19.
26. Housing Strategy & Customer Engagement did not receive any complaints, as was the case in 2020/21, 2019/20. They received one complaint in 2018/19.

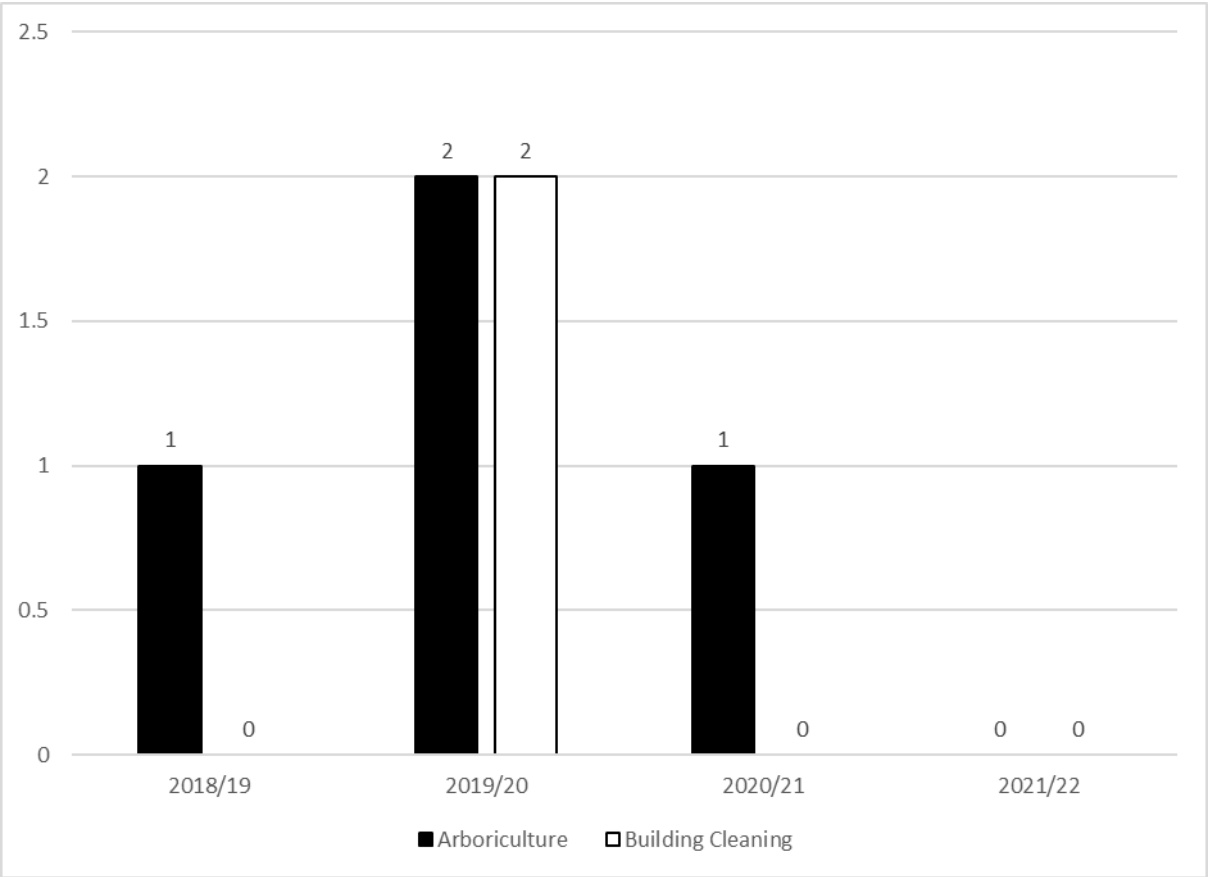
### Complaints by Team – Building Services



27. Building Surveying received one complaint, compared to zero in 2020/21, one in 2019/20 and zero in 2018/19.
28. Construction received zero complaints, the same as in 2020/21, compared to one in 2019/20 and zero in 2018/19.
29. Electricians received zero complaints again, as in 2020/21 and 2019/20. They received one complaint in 2018/19.
30. Gas Fitters received one complaint, compared to zero in 2020/21, one in 2019/20 and two in 2018/19.
31. Maintenance & Building Management received zero complaints again, as in 2020/21 and 2019/20. They received two complaints in 2018/19.

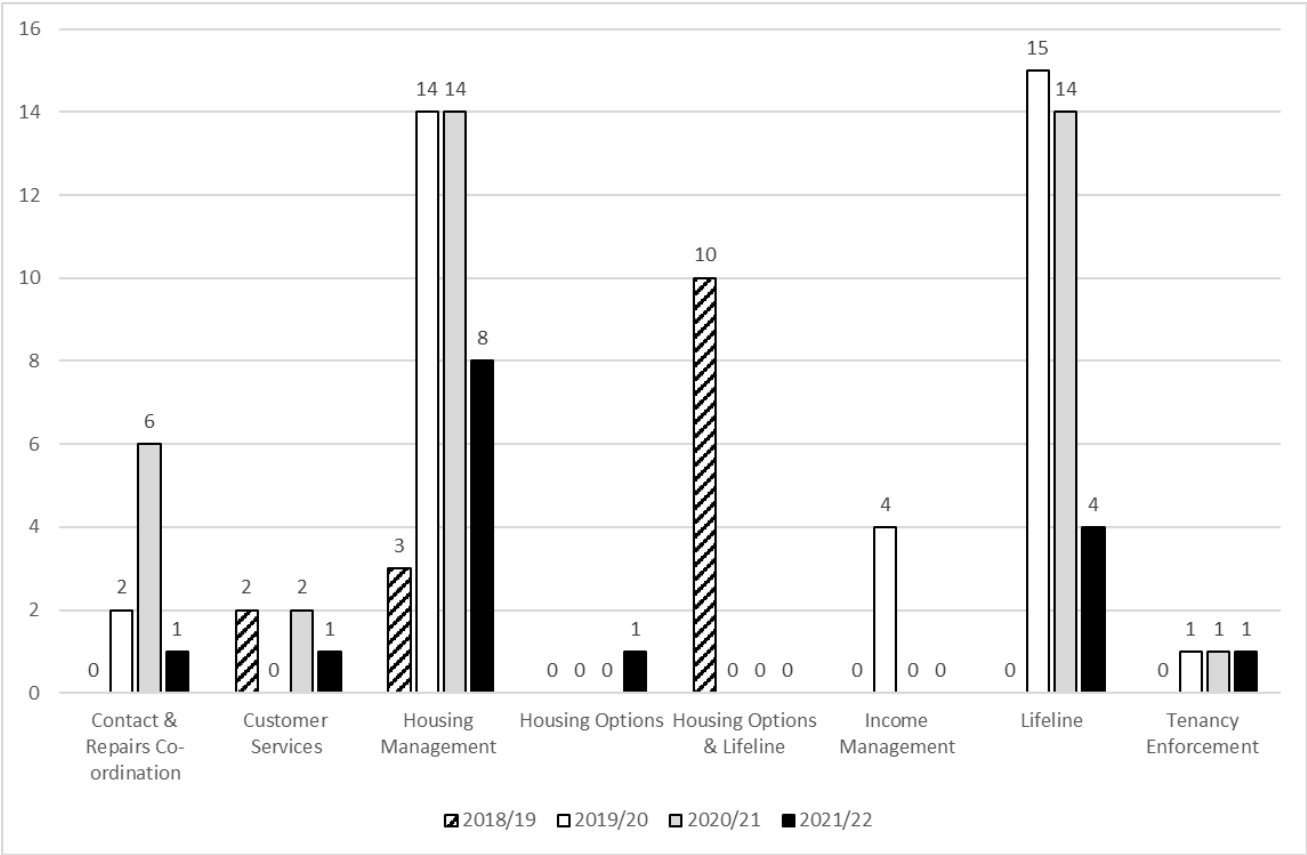
- 32. Service & Repairs received 22 complaints, an increase from 17 in 2020/21, 18 in 2019/20 and a decrease from 24 in 2018/19. The most common cause of complaints were dissatisfaction with quality of repairs, the time take to complete repairs and staff attitude.
- 33. Surveyor did not receive any complaints, as was the case in 2020/21, 2019/20. They received one complaint in 2018/19.

Complaints by Team - Environmental Services



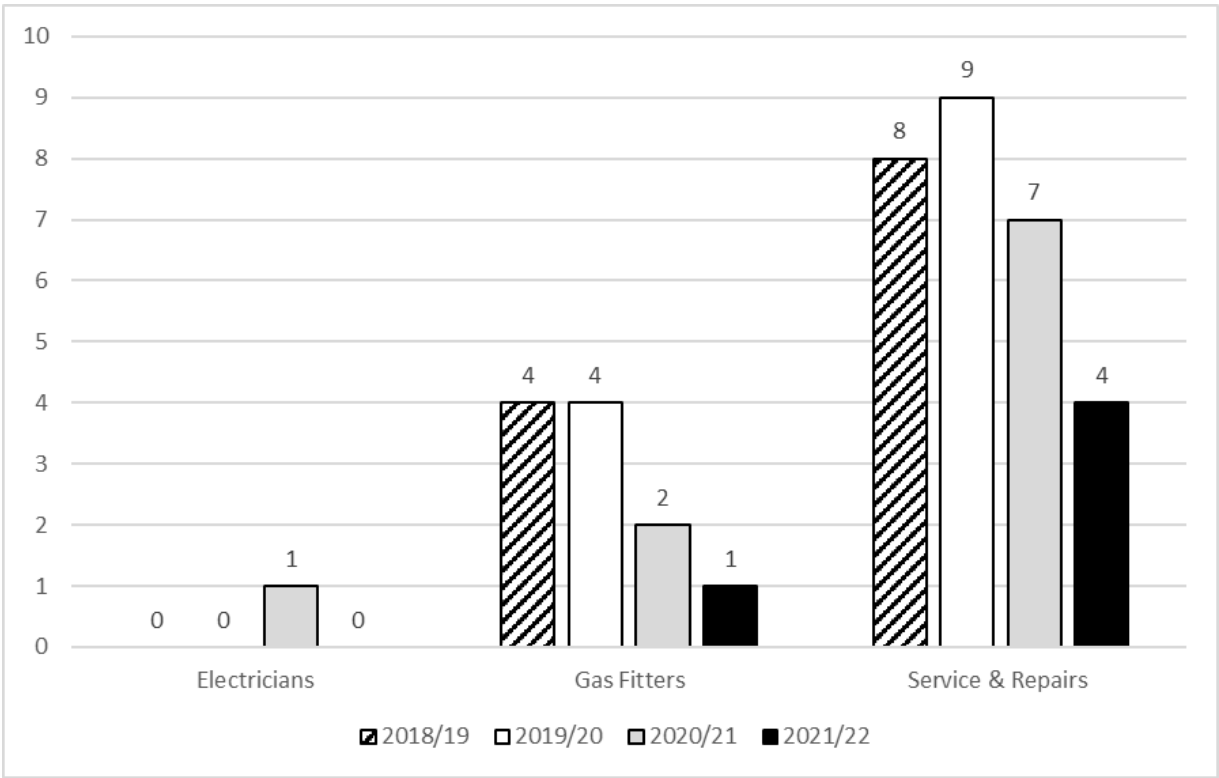
- 34. Arboriculture did not receive any complaints, compared to one in 2020/21, two in 2019/20 and one in 2018/19.
- 35. Building Cleaning did not receive any complaints, the same number as in 2020/21, a decrease from two in 2019/20 and the same number as in 2018/19.

Compliments by Team – Housing Services



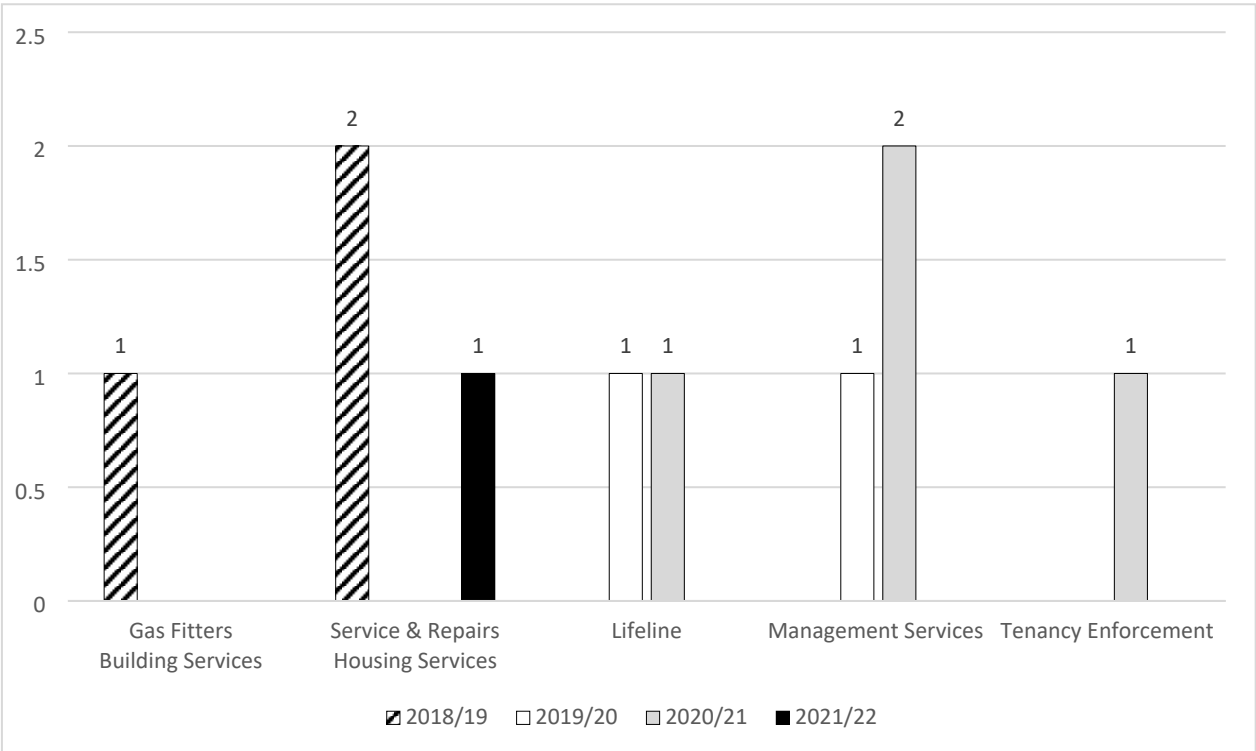
36. Housing received 16 compliments, a significant decrease from 37 in 2020/21, 36 in 2019/20, although slightly higher than the 15 received in 2018/19.

Compliments by Team – Building Services



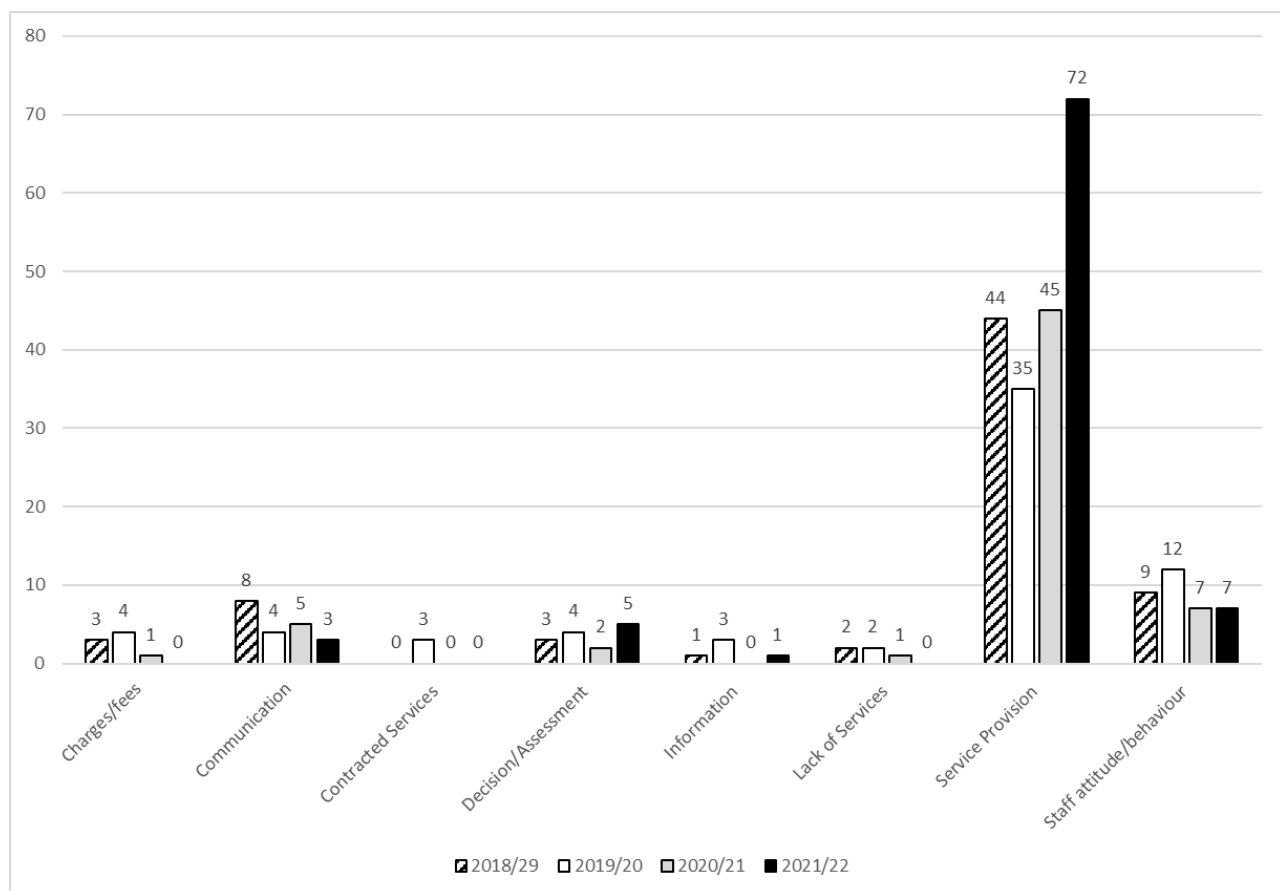
37. Building Services received five compliments, a decrease from 10 in 2020/21, 13 in 2019/20 and 12 in 2018/19.

Comments by Team - Housing



38. The Council received one comment, a decrease from four 2020/21, two in 2019/20 and three in 2018/19.

### Complaints by Issue

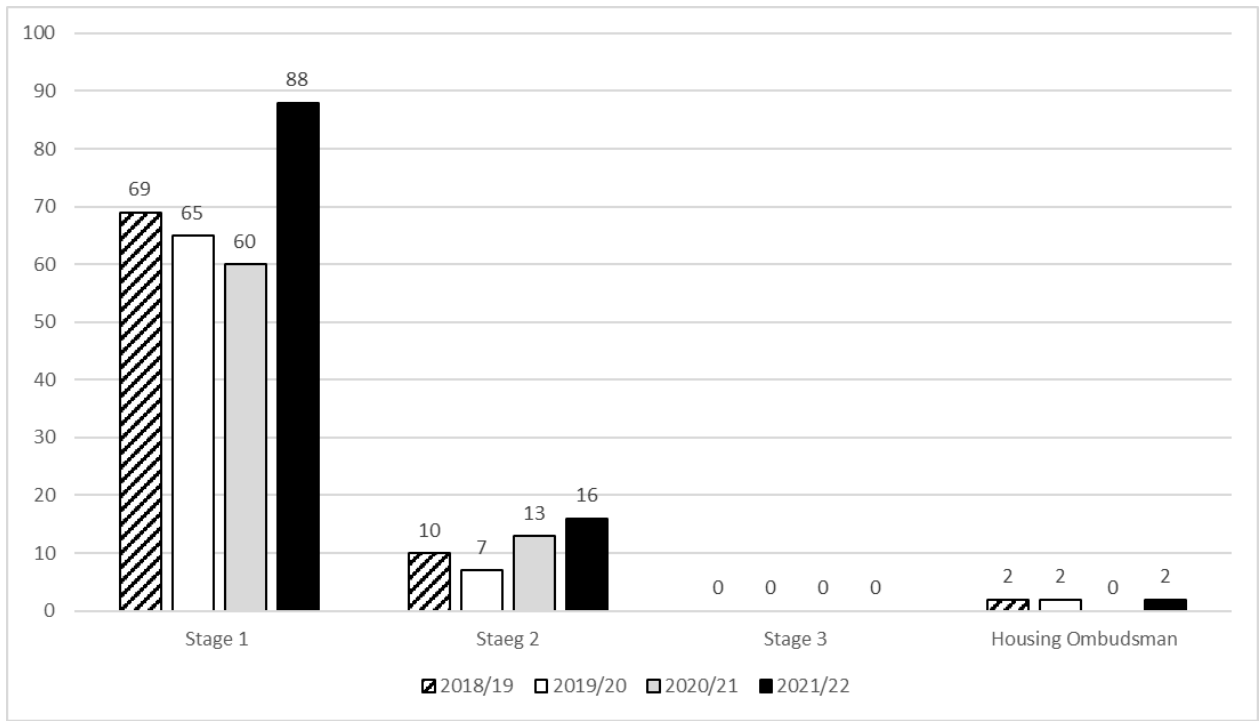


39. No complaints related to charges/fees, compared to one in 2020/21, four in 2019/20 and three in 2018/19.
40. Three complaints related to communication, compared to five in 2020/21, four in 2019/20 and 8 in 2018/19.
41. No complaints concerned contracted services, as was the case in 2020/21, a decrease from three in 2019/20 and the same number as in 2018/19.
42. Five complaints related to decision/assessments, an increase from two in 2020/21, four 2019/20 and 3 in 2018/19.
43. One complaint related to informaiton, compared to zero in 2020/21, three in 2019/20 and one in 2018/19.
44. There were no complaints about lack of services, compared to one in 2020/21, two in 2019/20 and 2018/19.
45. There were 72 complaints about service provision, a significant increase from 45 in 2020/21, 35 in 2019/20 and 44 in 2018/19.

46. Seven complaints related to staff attitude/behaviour, the same number as in 2020/21, a decrease from 12 in 2019/20 and nine in 2018/19.

Complaints by Stage

47. The below graph shows the number of complaints received at each stage of the procedure during 2021/22.



48. The Council received 88 Stage 1 complaints, an increase from 60 in 2020/21, 65 in 2019/20 and 69 in 2018/19.

49. 16 were investigated at Stage 2, an increase from 13 in 2020/21, seven in 2019/20 and 10 in 2018/19.

50. Two complaints were escalated to the Housing Ombudsman, an increase from zero in 2020/21 and the same number as in 2019/20 and 2018/19.

### Complaints Outcomes

51. The below tables show the decisions reached on complaints during 2020/21.

#### Stage 1

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
<b><i>Housing</i></b>						
Income Management	0	0	3	1	0	4
Contact & Repairs Co-ordination	0	2	1	4	2	9
Customer Services	0	1	0	1	0	2
Housing Management	2	10	11	11	3	37
Tenancy Enforcement	0	1	0	3	0	4
Lifeline	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b><i>Building Services</i></b>						
Building Surveying	0	1	0	0	0	1
Service & Repairs	0	1	2	12	3	18
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>76</b>

## Stage 2

Service Area/Team	Inconclusive	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Withdrawn	Total
<b><i>Housing</i></b>						
Contact & Repairs Co-ordination	0	0	0	1	1	2
Customer Services	0	1	0	0	0	1
Housing Management	0	0	6	2	2	10
Tenancy Enforcement	0	0	1	1	0	2
<b><i>Building Services</i></b>						
Service & Repairs	0	0	1	1	2	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>

## Stage 3

52. The 'designated person' or 'democratic filter' did not determine any complaints during 2021/22.

### Housing Ombudsman

53. The Housing Ombudsman determined two complaints, compared to one during 2020/21 and 2019/20. The Housing Ombudsman also determined two complaints during 2018/19.
54. Full details of those complaints determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are included in the Cabinet reports of 7 December 2021 and 6 September 2022 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).

## **Organisational Learning**

55. All resolution and organisational learning actions identified as a result of complaints are assigned to a responsible manager and progress against those actions is monitored by the Complaints Manager. In addition to those actions taken to resolve individual complaints, several service improvements were made following complaint investigations during 2021/22 and are detailed below:

## **Complaints**

56. Following a complaint considered by the Housing Ombudsman Service, the Council has now amended its investigative practice in relation to housing complaints, where the officer and complainant provide conflicting accounts of events.

## **Contact and Repairs Co-ordination**

57. Following a complaint for Contact and Repairs Co-ordination, it was agreed communication between teams and the process for inspecting and ordering work to external contractors needed to be improved.
58. Following another complaint for Contact and Repairs Co-ordination, the Planning Team the importance of getting it right was reiterated with the Planning Team.

## **Housing Management**

59. Following a complaint for Housing Management, further staff training was provided in relation to the process of void inspections and void standards and all major work voids are now jointly inspected by both Asset Management and the Housing Management Officer prior to a person taking on that tenancy, with any failed post-inspections immediately addressed with Building Services.
60. Following a complaint for Housing Management, the Council agreed to look at the processes around voids and glazing to ensure we reduce the chances of delays happening in future.
61. Following a complaint for Housing Management, it was agreed that Housing Management would provide tenants with a copy of repair notices and information on how the right to repair scheme works.
62. As a result of another complaint for Housing Management, the Council agreed to review its 'Belongings left in a Council Property' form.
63. Following a complaint for Housing Management, regarding the handing of a noise nuisance complaint, the Housing Management officer was spoken to regarding the correct process to follow to ensure they respond to future noise nuisance complaints in a timely manner.

- 64. As a result of a further complaint for Housing Management, Surveyors were reminded letters need to be sent to all tenants before a survey is carried out.
- 65. Following another complaint for Housing Management, Building Services were reminded of the need to confirm the time and date of appointments before arriving to undertake works and it was agreed a detailed operational manual would be provided to prospective tenants.
- 66. Following a complaint for Housing Management, the Council advised it indeed to introduce MOT style servicing in relation to Gas checks i.e. where the check would be undertaken within a certain date range each year.
- 67. As a result of a complaint for Housing Management, Housing Officers and Customer Services staff were made aware of who can apply for the County Durham & Darlington Community Safety Fund to avoid inaccurate advice being given the future.
- 68. Following a complaint for Management Services considered by the Housing Ombudsman Service, the Council was ordered to ensure it has procedures in place so that it is able to conduct risk assessments when residents report that they have been subject to verbal abuse or threats related to Anti-Social Behaviour.

#### **Tenancy Enforcement**

- 69. Following a complaint for Tenancy Enforcement it was recommended that the clauses in the Tenancy Agreement regarding succession of properties be reviewed and that all relevant staff receive refresher training in relation to this.

#### **Service & Repairs**

- 70. Following a complaint for Service & Repairs it was agreed the Head of Building Services would hold a meeting with the relevant members of staff to address the practice issues and training needs identified in relation to boiler repairs.

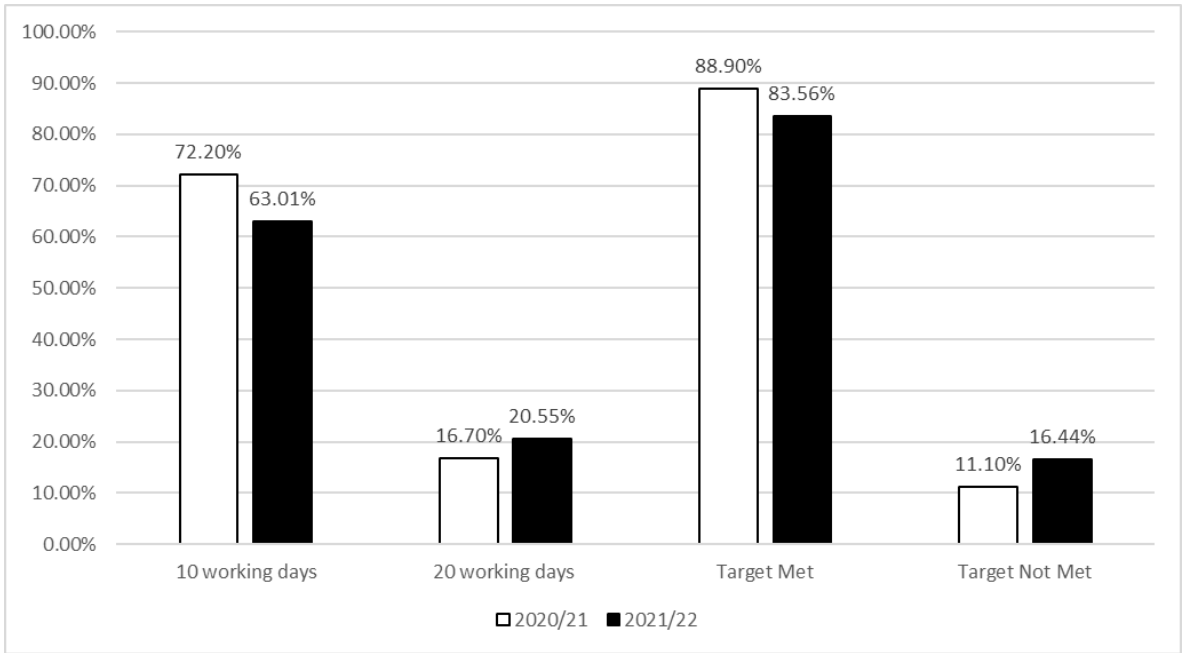
Performance against the Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure

71. On the 1 January 2021 the Council updated its Housing Complaints procedure to ensure it was compliant with the [Housing Ombudsman Code](#). This included amending the Stage 1 and Stage 2 timescales.

Stage 1

72. The below graph shows Stage 1 performance in relation to those complaints received after 1 January 2021.

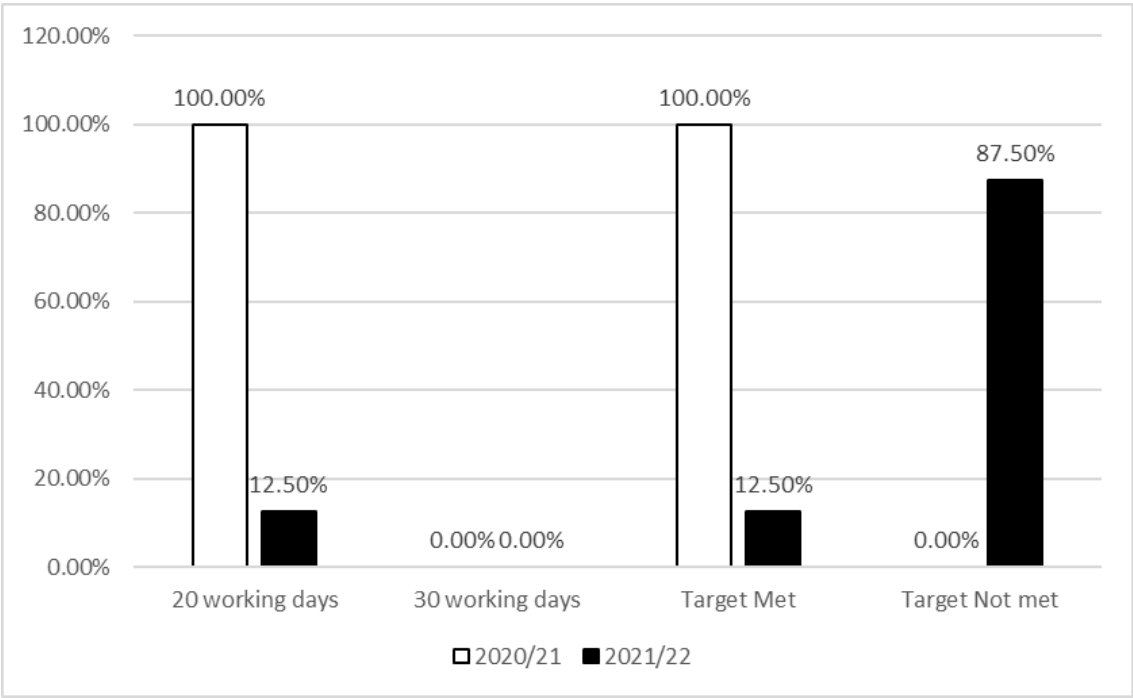
Performance against Stage 1 response target  
(10 working days, with an extension up to 20 working days)



Stage 2

73. The below graph shows Stage 2 performance in relation to those complaints received after 1 January 2021.

**Performance against Stage 2 response target  
(20 working days, with an extension up to 30 working days)**



**Further recommendations**

74. The Complaints & Information Governance Team should work to improve performance against the Housing Stage 2 response target.

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# **DARLINGTON**

## Borough Council

### **Public Health Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Report 2021/22**

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Performance against the Procedure	7
Performance Indicator	7

## Introduction

1. The purpose of this annual report is to inform service users, carers, the public, Council Members and staff of the effectiveness of the Public Health Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure (the Procedure).
2. On the 1 April 2013 the NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations) came into force. Part five of the Regulations deals with Complaints about Public Health Functions of Local Authorities.
3. The Council implemented a new procedure providing a local framework to ensure complaints are handled effectively and in line with the regulations.
4. The procedure aims to:
  - (a) Make it as easy and accessible as possible for service users and their carers to raise complaints;
  - (b) Foster an organisational culture in which complaints are accepted, owned and resolved as efficiently as possible;
  - (c) Ensure high levels of customer satisfaction with complaints handling;
  - (d) Resolve individual issues when they arise and reduce the number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman; and
  - (e) Enable the Council to identify topics and trends in relation to Public Health complaints and improve services as a result.
5. The Chief Executive is the designated as the 'Responsible Person' for ensuring compliance with the arrangements made under the Regulations, and in particular ensuring that action is taken if necessary in the light of the outcome of a complaint. The functions of the responsible person will usually be performed by the Director of Public Health.
6. The Complaints and Information Governance Manager is designated the 'Complaints Manager' in accordance with the regulations and is responsible for managing the procedures for handling and considering complaints in accordance with the arrangements made under the Regulations.

## **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

7. Although complainants can refer their complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) from the outset, the LGSCO will not normally investigate until the Council or service provider has conducted its own investigation and provided a response. Where it has not been possible for the complaint to be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant they may refer the matter to the LGSCO.

## **Information and Accessibility**

8. We are committed to making sure that everyone has equal access to all our services, including the complaints procedure. To help make sure the Council's complaints procedures are easily accessible we have produced two leaflets (one for children and young people and one for adults) covering all Council services to reflect the single point of access for complainants within the Council. The leaflets are available in all Council buildings. They have been written in line with the Plain English Campaign standards. The title is written in the most commonly used community languages and it contains details on how to access the information in other formats, for example, large print, audio and Braille.
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10. The Complaints Manager can arrange advocates and interpreters (including British Sign Language interpreters) where appropriate.

## Summary

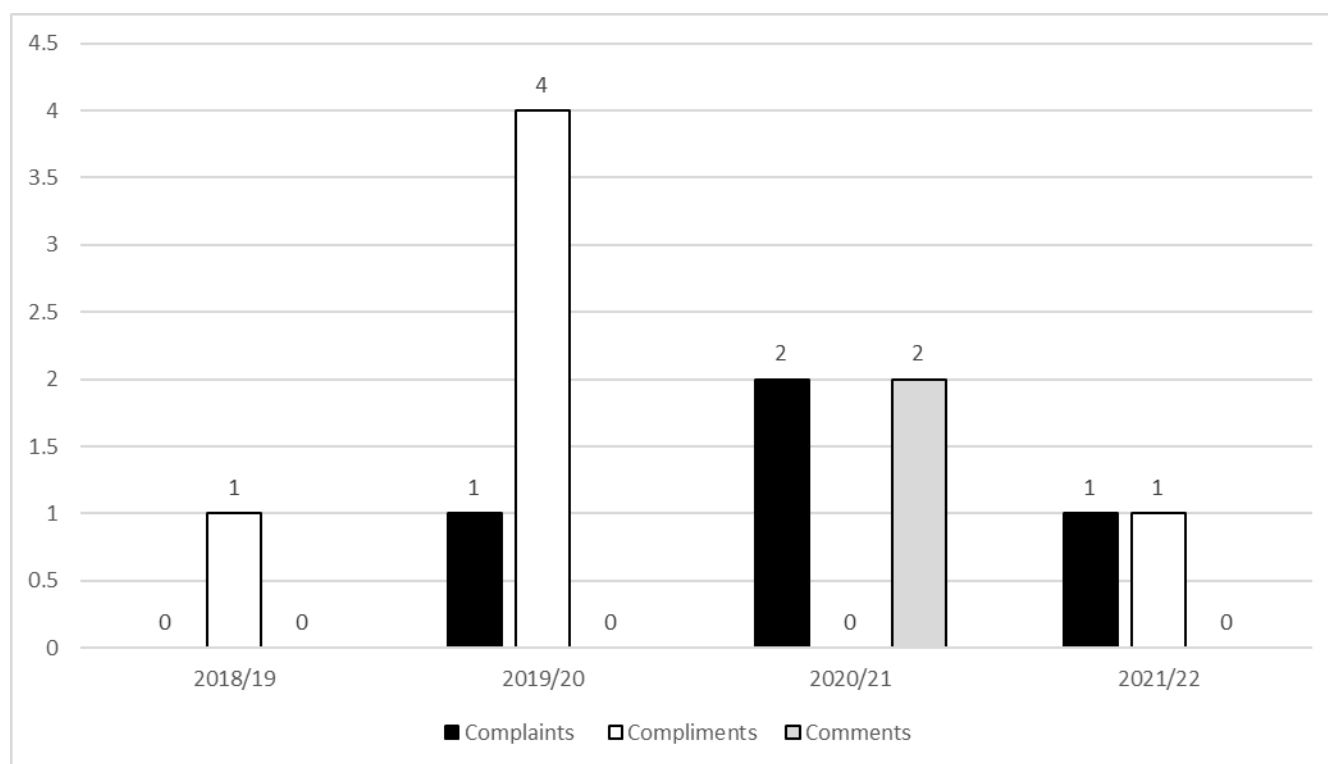
11. The Council received one complaint about Public Health services in 2021/22 compared to two in 2020/21, one in 2019/20 and zero in 2018/19.
12. The Council received one compliment about Public Health services in 2021/22 compared to zero in 2020/21, four in 2019/20 and one in 2018/19.
13. The Council received zero comments about Public Health services in 2021/22 compared to two in 2020/21 and zero in 2019/20 and 2018/19.

## Review of the Year

### Breakdown of all Representations

14. A total of two representations were handled under the procedure during 2021/22.

**Total Complaints, Compliments and Comments Received**



15. The complaint related to the COVID-19 NHS Track and Trace programme.
16. The compliment related to the 0-19 Growing Healthy Service.

### **Complaint Outcomes**

17. One complaint was determined during 2021/22. It concerned the consultation process when changing provider from NECA to We Are With You and was **NOT UPHELD**.

### **Local Government Ombudsman Complaints (LGSCO) Received 2021/22**

18. No Public Health complaints were progressed to the LGSCO during 2021/22, the same as in 2020/21.

### **Local Government Ombudsman Complaint Outcomes (LGSCO) 2020/21**

19. No Public Health complaints were determined by the LGSCO during 2021/22, the same as in 2020/21.

### **Organisational Learning**

20. There was no organisational learning resulting from the complaint that was concluded during 2021/22.

### **Further recommendations**

21. There are no further recommendations.

### **Performance against the Procedure**

22. While the regulations allow a maximum of six months to respond to a complaint we aim to respond to complaints within 30 working days.
23. The above complaint was responded to in 34 working days.

### **Performance Indicator for 2021/22**

24. In relation to Public Health complaints the Council's key performance indicator is the number of maladministration decisions received from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Council received zero maladministration decisions during 2021/22.
25. Full details of those complaints determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are included in the Cabinet reports of 7 December 2021 and 6 September 2022 entitled [Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman](#).

**CABINET  
6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**COMPLAINTS MADE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN**

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**Responsible Cabinet Members**

**Councillor Jonathan Dulston, Leader  
Councillor Andy Keir – Local Services  
Councillor Scott Durham, Resources Portfolio  
Councillor Lorraine Tostevin - Adults  
Councillor Jon Clarke - Children and Young People  
Councilor Kevin Nicholson - Health and Housing  
Councillors Mike Renton – Stronger Communities  
Councillor Alan Marshall – Economy**

**Responsible Directors**

**Ian Williams, Chief Executive  
Elizabeth Davison, Group Director of Operations  
James Stroyan, Group Director of People  
Dave Winstanley, Group Director of Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Members with an update of the outcome of cases which have been determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) since the preparation of the previous report to Cabinet on 7 December 2021.
2. To provide Members with the Annual Review Letter of the LGSCO (**Appendix 1**).

**Summary**

3. This report sets out in abbreviated form the decisions reached by the LGSCO and the HOS between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 and outlines actions taken as a result.

**Recommendation**

4. It is recommended that the contents of the report be noted.

## Reasons

5. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons:-

- (a) It is important that Members are aware of the outcome of complaints made to the LGSCO and the HOS in respect of the Council's activities.
- (b) The contents of this report do not suggest that further action, other than detailed in the report, is required.

**Elizabeth Davison**  
**Group Director of Operations**

## Background Papers

Correspondence with the LGSCO and HOS is treated as confidential to preserve anonymity of complainants.

Lee Downey : Extension 5451

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Crime and Disorder.
Health and Wellbeing	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Health and Well Being.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Carbon Impact and Climate Change
Diversity	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Diversity.
Wards Affected	This report affects all wards equally.
Groups Affected	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there is no impact on any particular group.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend any changes to the Budget or Policy Framework.
Key Decision	This is not a Key Decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent Decision.
Council Plan	This report contributes to all the priorities in the Council Plan.
Efficiency	Efficiency issues are highlighted through complaints.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

## MAIN REPORT

### Background

6. Cabinet has previously resolved that they would consider reports on the outcome of cases referred to the LGSCO and HOS during the Municipal Year on a bi-annual basis.
7. The opportunity is normally taken to analyse the areas of the Council's functions where complaints have arisen. It is appropriate to do that in order to establish whether there is any pattern to complaints received or whether there is a particular Directorate affected or a type of complaint which is prevalent. If there were a significant number of cases in any one particular area, that might indicate a problem which the Council would seek to address.

### Decisions reached by the LGSCO and the HOS during 2021/22

8. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, 16 cases were the subject of decision by the LGSCO.
9. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, 2 cases were the subject of decision by the HOS.
10. The outcome of cases on which the LGSCO reached a view is as follows:

LGSCO Findings	No. of cases 2021/22	No. of cases 2020/21	No. of cases 2019/20	No. of cases 2018/19
Closed after initial enquiries: no further action	9	4	7	10
Closed after initial enquiries: out of jurisdiction	1	1	2	2
Not upheld: no maladministration	1	2	1	3
Premature	0	0	0	4
Upheld: Maladministration and Injustice	4	2	6	10
Upheld: Maladministration, No Injustice	0	1	0	0
Upheld: maladministration and injustice - no further action, satisfactory remedy provided by the org	1	0	0	0
Upheld: not investigated - injustice remedied during Body in Jurisdiction's complaint process	0	1	0	0

11. The outcome of cases on which the HOS reached a view is as follows:

HOS Findings	No. of cases 2021/22	No. of cases 2020/21	No. of cases 2019/20	No. of cases 2018/19
No Maladministration	0	0	1	2
Service Failure	2	1	0	2

## **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)**

### ***Closed after initial enquiries: no further action***

12. The LGSCO decided not to investigate this complaint about the actions of the Council's building control officers because it was unlikely an investigation could add to the Council's response. The complainant was also not caused any personal injustice by the matter.
13. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about the Council's refusal to award the complainant a COVID-19 hardship payment for the 2021/22 financial year because there was no evidence of fault in the Council's decision. The LGSCO added they would not investigate the Council's publication of misleading information on its website as the issue did not cause the complainant a significant injustice.
14. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about contact restrictions placed on the complainant by the Council because there was no evidence of fault in how the Council dealt with the matter.
15. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about how the Council dealt with planning applications for a development near the complainant's property because the last planning decision was made by the Council in 2019, the complaint was late and there were no good reasons to investigate it now. The LGSCO added they would not investigate a complaint about a recent ecology survey because the Council was not involved in this being carried out.
16. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about problems the complainant faced in registering to vote because the Council provided an explanation and the complainant did not wish to pursue the complaint further.
17. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about renewing a bus pass for an older person because there was insufficient evidence of fault by the Council and insufficient evidence of injustice.
18. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about the location of a street light which impacts on the complainant's property because there was not enough evidence that any fault by the Council caused the injustice the complainant claimed.
19. The LGSCO decided they would not investigate a complaint about the Council's actions regarding the placement of three children with the complainant because they would be unable to add anything significant to the Council's investigation.
20. The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about the Council's actions relating to how much an individual should pay for their social care, because the complaint was late and there was not good reason to accept it.

### ***Closed after initial enquiries: out of jurisdiction***

21. The LGSCO concluded they cannot investigate a complaint about maintenance work to Council properties next to the complainant's home because they do not have the power to investigate complaints about the management of social housing by councils.

***Not upheld: no maladministration***

22. The LGSCO did not find any fault with the Council's actions in approving planning applications for development near the complainant's property. The LGSCO found the Council properly considered the impact on surface water drainage and potential flooding of nearby properties including the complainants.

***Upheld: Maladministration and Injustice***

23. The LGSCO upheld an Adult Social Care complaint about the Council's handling of a Direct Payment between 2015 and 2018, resulting in the Council issuing the complainant an invoice for approximately £7000 for unaccounted and unauthorised spending of the Direct Payments. The LGSCO determined the Council was at fault for failing to monitor, audit and provide support on the spending of the direct payment. It was also at fault for failing to keep adequate records. The Council agreed to apologise for the distress and uncertainty this caused and reduce the outstanding debt owed.
24. The LGSCO upheld another Adult Social Care complaint regarding the Council failing to carry out its safeguarding duties towards the complainant. The complainant said the Council's actions had a negative impact on their mental health. The LGSCO found the Council at fault for not recording the rationale for its decision in accordance with its Safeguarding Policy. The Council has agreed to apologise; make a payment to recognise the uncertainty caused by the fault identified and remind staff to adhere to the Safeguarding Policy, in particular retaining complete and accurate records demonstrating how decisions are made in relation to safeguarding enquires.
25. The LGSCO upheld a further Adult Social Care complaint about the Council reducing the complainants support package without proper consideration of their needs and fettering their discretion in deciding to refuse some elements of support, unlawfully applying a blanket policy in the allocation of domestic support hours. The Council agreed to apologise for its failure to properly reassess the complainant's care needs; review the complainant's care needs and produce a care and support plan which details, how these needs will be met, in consultation with the complainant; consider what, if any support the complainant had missed, and decide on a suitable remedy; pay the complainant £250 for their time and trouble pursuing the complaint with the Council and the Ombudsman and ensure staff undertake assessments/reviews in accordance with the law and guidance.
26. The LGSCO upheld a complaint about the Council's failure to carry out cleansing of the lane next to the complainant's home and the fact it confiscated the complainant's bin without notice, delayed in returning the bin and delayed in responding to their complaint. The LGSCO concluded this caused the complainant distress, led to them having to dispose of their own refuse and led to them going to time and trouble to pursue their complaint. The Council agreed to apologise; make a payment to the complainant and introduce a monitoring schedule to ensure the lane is cleansed fortnightly.

***Upheld: maladministration and injustice - no further action, satisfactory remedy provided by the org***

27. The LGSCO upheld a complaint about the Council's Financial Assessment Team's handing of a direct payment in relation to adult social care services. The LGSCO concluded there

was evidence of delay by the Council in sending an invoice. The Council had already offered a satisfactory remedy for this complaint before the complaint came to the LGSCO offering a payment plan, an apology and £100 compensation. The LGSCO also concluded there was no fault on the Council's part in relation to the calculation of invoices or in asking for direct payments to be repaid in accordance with its policy.

## **Housing Ombudsman Services (HOS)**

### ***Service Failure***

28. The HOS found service failure in respect of the Council's handling of the resident's allegations of unacceptable staff conduct towards them. The HOS concluded that following the residents decision not to disclose their CCTV footage of the incident to the Council in order to determine the complaint it would have been reasonable for the Council to have approached the witnesses to the incident and asked for their version of events. The HOS ordered the Council to award the resident £100 and write to the resident to apologise for the limitations in its investigation.
29. The HOS found Housing Services failed to take any meaningful actions to investigate new ASB reports from a resident after mediation attempts ended, even after the resident advised how the situation had impacted their health. It also contributed to a lack of clarity on why it had decided a particular course of action, did not address their concerns about the impact of this decision and failed to offer any compensation for the errors identified through its complaints process. The HOS ordered the Council to write to the resident to apologise for the service failures identified; pay the resident compensation of £250 in recognition of the distress and inconvenience caused and ensure it has procedures in place so that it is able to conduct risk assessments when residents report that they have been subject to verbal abuse or threats related to ASB.
30. The organisational learning identified as a result of these complaints should ensure there is not a re-occurrence.

### **LGSCO's Annual Review letter 2022.**

31. In their annual review letter (Appendix 1) the LGSCO focus on three key statistics and compare the Council's performance against that of other Unitary Council's (further information is available from the LGSCO's interactive map).
32. 83% of complaints the LGSCO investigated were upheld, compared to 64% in similar authorities (The LGSCO uphold complaints when they find some form of fault in an authority's actions, including where the authority accepted fault before they investigated).
33. The LGSCO found that in 20% of upheld cases the Council had already provided a satisfactory remedy, compared to an average of 12% in similar authorities.
34. The LGSCO were satisfied the Council successfully implemented their recommendations in 100% of cases compared to an average of 99% in similar authorities. However, they did note there was again a delay in implementing their recommendations in two cases and asked the Council to consider how it might make improvements to reduce delays in the remedy process.

## **Analysis**

- 35. The organisational learning identified as a result of these complaints should ensure there is no re-occurrence.
- 36. The delay in implementing the LGSCO's remedies was, in part, as a result of the pandemic. The Complaints Manager has highlighted this issue with officers responsible for implementing remedies to complaints agreed with the LGSCO in order to reduce delays in the remedy process.

## **Outcome of Consultation**

- 37. The issues contained within this report do not require formal consultation.

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# Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

20 July 2022

*By email*

Mr Williams  
Chief Executive  
Darlington Borough Council

Dear Mr Williams

## **Annual Review letter 2022**

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2022. The information offers valuable insight about your organisation's approach to complaints. As such, I have sought to share this letter with the Leader of your Council and Chair of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee, to encourage effective ownership and oversight of complaint outcomes, which offer such valuable opportunities to learn and improve.

### **Complaint statistics**

Our statistics focus on three key areas that help to assess your organisation's commitment to putting things right when they go wrong:

**Complaints upheld** - We uphold complaints when we find fault in an organisation's actions, including where the organisation accepted fault before we investigated. We include the total number of investigations completed to provide important context for the statistic.

**Compliance with recommendations** - We recommend ways for organisations to put things right when faults have caused injustice and monitor their compliance with our recommendations. Failure to comply is rare and a compliance rate below 100% is a cause for concern.

**Satisfactory remedy provided by the authority** - In these cases, the organisation upheld the complaint and we agreed with how it offered to put things right. We encourage the early resolution of complaints and credit organisations that accept fault and find appropriate ways to put things right.

Finally, we compare the three key annual statistics for your organisation with similar authorities to provide an average marker of performance. We do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

Your annual data, and a copy of this letter, will be uploaded to our interactive map, [Your council's performance](#), on 27 July 2022. This useful tool places all our data and information

about councils in one place. You can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

### **Your organisation's performance**

I welcome that your Council agreed to, and implemented, the recommendations we made in three cases during the year, however, it is disappointing that in two of these cases remedies were not completed within the agreed timescales. I acknowledge the pressures councils are under, but such delays add to the injustice already suffered by complainants.

This is the third consecutive year where I have raised concerns about delays in the remedy process and yet these delays persist. I once again invite the Council to consider how it might make improvements to act on our recommendations within the agreed timescales. If the Council consider the proposed timescales are not achievable, it can request further time to complete the recommendations when it responds to our draft decisions.

### **Supporting complaint and service improvement**

I know your organisation, like ours, will have been through a period of adaptation as the restrictions imposed by the pandemic lifted. While some pre-pandemic practices returned, many new ways of working are here to stay. It is my continued view that complaint functions have been under-resourced in recent years, a trend only exacerbated by the challenges of the pandemic. Through the lens of this recent upheaval and adjustment, I urge you to consider how your organisation prioritises complaints, particularly in terms of capacity and visibility. Properly resourced complaint functions that are well-connected and valued by service areas, management teams and elected members are capable of providing valuable insight about an organisation's performance, detecting early warning signs of problems and offering opportunities to improve service delivery.

I want to support your organisation to harness the value of complaints and we continue to develop our programme of support. Significantly, we are working in partnership with the Housing Ombudsman Service to develop a joint complaint handling code. We are aiming to consolidate our approaches and therefore simplify guidance to enable organisations to provide an effective, quality response to each and every complaint. We will keep you informed as this work develops, and expect that, once launched, we will assess your compliance with the code during our investigations and report your performance via this letter.

An already established tool we have for supporting improvements in local complaint handling is our successful training programme. We adapted our courses during the Covid-19 pandemic to an online format and successfully delivered 122 online workshops during the year, reaching more than 1,600 people. To find out more visit [www.lgo.org.uk/training](http://www.lgo.org.uk/training).

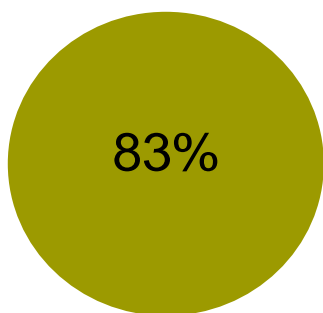
We were pleased to deliver an online complaint handling course to your staff during the year. I welcome your Council's investment in good complaint handling training and trust the course was useful to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M King', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael King  
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

### Complaints upheld



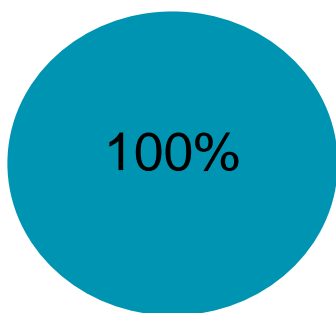
**83%** of complaints we investigated were upheld.

This compares to an average of **64%** in similar organisations.

**5**  
upheld decisions

Statistics are based on a total of **6** investigations for the period between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

### Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations



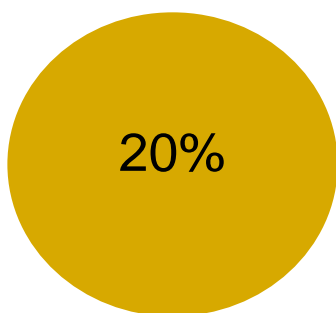
In **100%** of cases we were satisfied the organisation had successfully implemented our recommendations.

This compares to an average of **99%** in similar organisations.

Statistics are based on a total of **3** compliance outcomes for the period between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

- Failure to comply with our recommendations is rare. An organisation with a compliance rate below 100% should scrutinise those complaints where it failed to comply and identify any learning.

### Satisfactory remedy provided by the organisation



In **20%** of upheld cases we found the organisation had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.

This compares to an average of **12%** in similar organisations.

**1**  
satisfactory remedy decision

Statistics are based on a total of **5** upheld decisions for the period between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

**CABINET**  
**6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**HOUSING SERVICES ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member -  
Councillor Kevin Nicholson, Health and Housing Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -  
Elizabeth Davison, Group Director of Operations**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To approve the Housing Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2022-2026.

**Summary**

2. Darlington Borough Council provides over 5,300 high quality homes for local residents. We are committed to ensuring that all of our tenants enjoy their right to a safe home and community.
3. The Housing Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2022-2026 at **Appendix 1** sets out how we will deal with reports of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and hate crime effectively and promptly, taking appropriate, swift, proportionate action, including legal action, when necessary.
4. The Tenants Panel has been consulted on the draft policy and the outcome of this consultation is given at paragraph 16. However, the proposals have received overwhelming support.
5. This report was considered by Health and Housing Scrutiny on 29 June 2022, who agreed its onward submission for approval by Cabinet.

**Recommendation**

6. It is recommended that Cabinet :-
  - (a) Consider the contents of this report.
  - (b) Approve the Housing Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2022-2026.

**Reasons**

7. The recommendations are supported as the Social Housing Regulator's Consumer Standards places a duty on social housing landlords to publish a policy on how they work with relevant partners to prevent and tackle ASB in areas where they own properties.

**Elizabeth Davison**  
**Group Director of Operations**

**Background Papers**

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

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for crime and disorder
Health and Wellbeing	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Diversity	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	All wards with Council housing
Groups Affected	Council tenants and leaseholders
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This report supports the Council plan to provide Council tenants with a comprehensive range of good quality housing management and support services
Efficiency	There are no implications
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

8. Darlington Borough Council provides over 5,300 high quality homes for local residents. We are committed to ensuring that all of our tenants enjoy their right to a safe home and community.
9. The Housing Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2022-2026 at Appendix 1 sets out how we will deal with reports of ASB and hate crime effectively and promptly, taking appropriate, swift, proportionate action, including legal action, when necessary.
10. The policy covers the following areas:
  - (a) **Vision and aims** – this section sets our policy objectives in striking the right balance between prevention, early intervention, support, and enforcement to tackle ASB.
  - (b) **Definitions and examples of ASB** – this section sets out how we define ASB and hate crime in the context of the management of our Council homes. The wording reflects those used in our new Tenancy Agreement, implemented in February 2022 and consulted on with our tenants, setting out clearly that we do not tolerate ASB and will take action whenever necessary and/or appropriate.
  - (c) **Support for victims and witnesses** – this section sets out the support we will put in place for victims and witnesses to ensure they feel confident and safe in coming forward to report ASB.
  - (d) **What we expect of our tenants** – this section confirms our expectations that all of our tenants will comply with the terms of their Tenancy Agreement. Specifically, that tenants, members of their household or visitors must not carry out or encourage any ASB which is likely to cause nuisance, annoyance, harassment, alarm or distress to other residents.
  - (e) **How to report ASB** – contains details of how tenants and residents can report ASB.
  - (f) **Our response** – this section sets out how we will respond to reports of ASB and the timescales for response.
  - (g) **What legal action(s) can we take as a landlord?** – this sets out our legal options for dealing with serious or repeat ASB, including Notices of Seeking Possession through to eviction.
  - (h) **Partnership working, confidentiality, data protection and information sharing** – confirms our partnership approach to tackling ASB.

### Regulator of Social Housing

11. Social Housing is controlled by the Regulator of Social Housing and they have set out specific expectations and outcomes that providers of social housing must comply with. One of the four statutory Consumer Standards set by the Regulator is the Neighbourhood

and Community Standard.

12. The Neighbourhood and Community Standard sets expectations for registered providers of social housing to keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes they own clean and safe, co-operate with relevant partners to promote the wellbeing of the local area and help prevent and tackle ASB.
13. Specifically, registered providers must publish a policy on how they work with relevant partners to prevent and tackle ASB in areas where they own properties. This policy must demonstrate:
  - (a) That tenants are made aware of their responsibilities and rights in relation to ASB.
  - (b) Strong leadership, commitment and accountability on preventing and tackling ASB that reflects a shared understanding of responsibilities with other local agencies.
  - (c) A strong focus exists on preventative measures tailored towards the needs of tenants and their families.
  - (d) Prompt, appropriate and decisive action is taken to deal with ASB before it escalates, which focuses on resolving the problem having regard to the full range of tools and legal powers available.
  - (e) That all tenants and residents can easily report ASB and are kept informed about the status of their case.
  - (f) The provision of support to victims and witnesses.

#### Tenancy Enforcement

14. Housing Services employs two full-time Tenancy Enforcement Officers whose specific role is to:
  - (a) Investigate and respond to reports of ASB in relation to Council tenants, members of their household or visitors to their property.
  - (b) Work with key local agencies to tackle ASB, including the Police and the Civic Enforcement Team.
  - (c) Support Housing Management Officers to deal with reports of neighbour nuisance and other potential tenancy breaches in relation to the management of Council properties.
  - (d) Support victims and witnesses in relation to reports of ASB.
  - (e) Issue tenancy breach notices and advice to tenants where a breach of the Tenancy Agreement in relation to ASB has occurred.

- (f) Take legal action up to and including eviction, in relation to serious ASB, criminal activity or repeated tenancy breaches.

### Performance 2021-22

15. The following information relates to reports of ASB to Housing Services and investigations undertaken by our Tenancy Enforcement Officers in 2021-22:

- (a) Number of telephone calls to our Housing Contact Team in relation to ASB = **1,803**. This represents 2.7% of all the telephone calls received by Housing Services.
- (b) Number of reports of ASB resulting in a case being opened = **370**. The following lists the top 5 main reasons for reports of ASB being made, noise nuisance making up nearly half of all reports:

Category	Number
Noise nuisance	175
Pets and animal nuisance	43
Drugs misuse / dealing	37
Verbal abuse / harassment / threats	25
Nuisance from vehicles	15

- (c) Number of ASB cases closed = **365**. The following lists the reasons for case closure and confirms that in most cases, reports of ASB can be dealt with through advice and mediation between tenants:

Reason for closure	Number
Advice given and no further reports	175
No further reports from complainant	138
Complaint withdrawn	43
Successful mediation	3
Keys voluntarily given back following legal notice served	3
Eviction	3

- (d) Notices of Seeking Possession (NOSP) / Notices of Possession Proceedings (NPP) issued = **21**.

Outcome	Number
Eviction	3
Keys voluntarily given back following legal notice served	3
Possession not granted	1
Court action not taken as behaviour improved (NOSP remains in place for 12 months)	5
Referred to Mental Health services and behaviour improved	1
Deceased	2
Awaiting court date	6

## Outcome of Consultation

16. The Tenants Panel were consulted in May 2022 and overall, the Panel supported the proposed Housing Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. Examples of the Panel's comments were as follows:

- (a) "I think the ASB Policy seems to cover everything pretty well, it was more comprehensive than expected and all in all I am happy with policy. One thing I would say is that I haven't been a victim of ASB myself, maybe an option would be to show this to someone who has. This will show a different perspective and maybe a point of view from someone with more experience. The language is easily understandable and I believe most people would read it with no problem whatsoever. The only people who would find this difficult to read are people who struggle in general. Like the way that examples were used right throughout the Policy. An example of this is Birds and Pigeons. It is something that I wouldn't have thought of myself, so interesting to see that other people would find it a problem."
- (b) "I believe that the ASB Policy is pretty sound. I feel that everything was succinct and explained properly and it is clear why the actions that are taken are done so. I also feel that it goes hand in hand with the new Tenancy Agreement."
- (c) "After looking at the policy, I believe that it is extremely well worded. It not only explains ASB appropriately but covers everything that could come up and any questions I may have had were all in the document. The processes are explained from start to finish and didn't leave anything unanswered. From reading the document, I believe that the support that the Council offers goes above and beyond and I am comforted knowing that ASB is important to Darlington Borough Council."
- (d) 'All in all, I agreed with everything that the ASB Policy had to say. It is a rather long document and I would assume that not everyone would read the full version. It may be an idea for a shorter version to be sent to tenants with the key points or even a Facebook Post to go alongside such a large document. The document was well written and reinforces the Tenancy Agreement. Over the years I have received comments from tenants that they feel they were causing a nuisance by reporting ASB. It is nice to know that this is changing and that more support will be available moving forward. I would like the Tenancy Enforcement Officers to come to the Tenants Panel meetings so that they can explain the process."
- (e) "After looking over the document, I agree that the ASB policy is comprehensive and will give tenants a higher level of safety in their homes and in communal areas."
- (f) "In general, I think it is a really good document. As far as I can see, all the important information has been covered and as a document of intent, there is no faulting it. Some people may see it is a little longwinded, but it is important that nothing is left out or people will complain. People don't generally read all the information but pick out the bits that are important to them. I think tenants do feel that they are being supported by the council and this reinforces that notion."

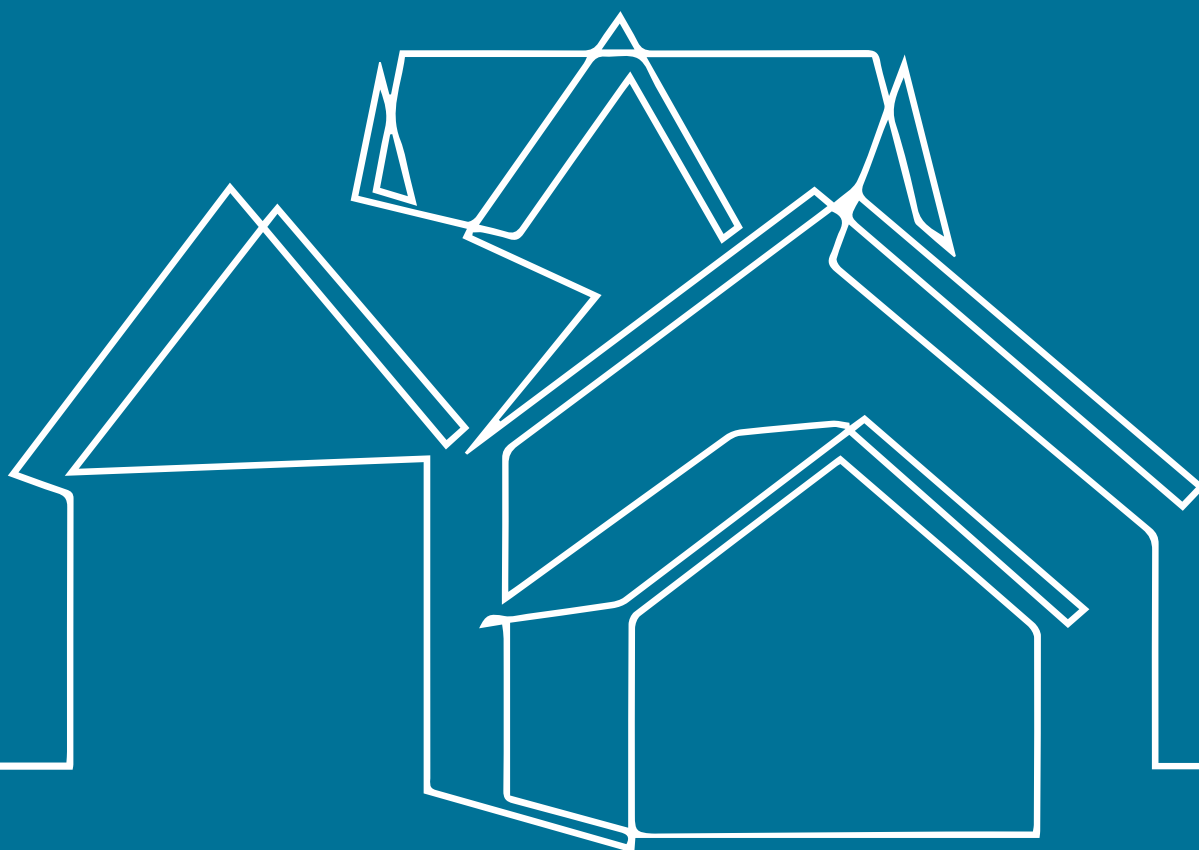
17. The last tenant's survey was carried out in September 2019 and in terms of importance rating (1 being of no importance and 10 being extremely important), tenants rated "safety and security in your home" as a rating of 9.4, which was the highest rated issue for tenants at that time.

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**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council

# Housing Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2022 – 2026





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# Our vision

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We are committed to ensuring that all of our tenants enjoy their right to a safe home and community. Under the terms of our Tenancy Agreement, we do not tolerate anti-social behaviour (ASB) or hate crime and will act whenever necessary. We are committed to preventing and tackling ASB and we will take robust action against tenants who commit ASB or who allow members of their household or visitors to commit ASB. We want our communities to be secure and peaceful places to live and we will work hard with our tenants and partners to ensure this.

To do this we will deal with reports of ASB and hate crime effectively and promptly, taking appropriate, swift, proportionate action, including legal action, when necessary. We have effective support in place for victims of ASB and we will assess the risk of the potential impact of ASB prior to the commencement of a tenancy. For the majority of lettings this will not be a factor, but in situations where, due to an applicant's housing or life history, their relative vulnerability, and where there have been recent or on-going issues within a neighbourhood, a local lettings policy will apply.

## Aims

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To help our tenants feel safe, we will strike a balance between prevention, early intervention, support, and enforcement. To do this we will:

- Ensure that all tenants in our communities feel safe by preventing and tackling ASB.
- Ensure that our communities are safe and tolerant places to live for all tenants by tackling hate crime and discrimination.
- Take prompt, appropriate, and decisive action to deal with ASB, responding to the most serious cases of ASB within 1 working day of it being reported to us.
- Listen to our tenants and involve them in decisions around our policies.
- Put victims first by considering from the outset the effect of ASB on victims and any risk to them.
- Empower tenants to report ASB by making it easy to report ASB online, by telephone, by email or in writing.
- Work in partnership with agencies and communities to reduce ASB and increase feelings of safety within our communities.
- Take a problem solving and flexible approach for each individual case by providing each complainant with a personal action plan so they have a direct contact, when we will contact them, how we will deal with their case and any actions they are required to carry out, such as completion of diary sheets.
- Work closely and collaboratively with the Police to address criminality and serious ASB.

# What is Anti-Social Behaviour?

'Anti-social behaviour' is a broad term for describing different types of behaviour but for the purposes of this policy we mean behaviour that:

- can cause a nuisance or annoyance to any person; and
- which directly or indirectly relates to or affects the landlord's housing management functions; or
- conduct which consists of, or involves using or threatening to use, housing accommodation owned or managed by the landlord for an unlawful purpose.

For ASB in a housing context, this is conduct which can cause nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or the conduct can cause housing related nuisance or annoyance to any person. In most cases, this policy will apply to ASB complaints in relation to our tenants, and anyone else either living in, or visiting one of our properties.

Hate crime, as defined by the Crown Prosecution Service, is a term that can be used to describe a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrated hostility based on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

A hate crime can include verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, harassment, assault, bullying or damage to property. The perpetrator can also be a friend, carer or acquaintance who exploits their relationship with the victim for financial gain or another criminal purpose.



# Examples of Anti-Social Behaviour

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Under the terms of our Tenancy Agreement, we do not tolerate ASB and regard any activity that impacts on other people in a negative way and interferes with a person's right to live peacefully in their home and in the surrounding area as ASB.

Each case will be considered individually and on its own facts and evidence and our response will be one that is both reasonable and proportionate. The impact of ASB upon others is an important element in determining our response but it is not the only consideration.

Examples of ASB could include but are not limited to:

- Using or threatening to use violence
- Using abusive or insulting words
- Using behaviour, gestures or language which could be considered by any person to be motivated by a hatred of their disability, gender, race, religion or sexuality, or any actions or behaviours meeting the definition of a Hate Crime
- Noise nuisance such as playing loud music, loud televisions, shouting or arguing, banging doors, burglar alarms, DIY work, dog barking
- Making false or malicious complaints about the behaviour of any other person
- Damaging or threatening to damage another person's home or possessions, including spraying, or writing graffiti
- Allowing pets or animals to cause noise or other nuisance or fouling, to roam or by not keeping them under proper control
- Selling, possessing, or storing drugs, cultivating, or manufacturing, using/abusing drugs or leaving drug related litter and needles
- Using your property for unlawful activity
- Dumping rubbish, storing scrap materials or rubbish or settings fires
- Obstructing any shared areas, doorways and other entrances or exits, throwing rubbish or any items from balconies and windows
- Using technology and/or social media to harass, alarm or distress a person residing, visiting, or otherwise engaging in lawful activity in the locality, or an employee of the Council
- Using surveillance equipment or drones in a way that interferes with the privacy of other people in the locality
- Doing anything that interferes with the peace, comfort, or convenience of other people
- Vehicle repairs and noise arising from vehicle repairs, repairing cars on estate roads or parking areas
- Parking so as to block access for other people in the locality or emergency service vehicles, this includes parking that blocks shared driveways and garages
- Revving of motor vehicle engines, speeding in motor vehicles in the locality or riding motorbikes, quadbikes, and mopeds anywhere other than on roads and authorised tracks
- Rioting or engaging in public disorder
- Being convicted of a serious criminal offence, being found by a Court to have breached a civil injunction, being convicted for a breach of a Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO), being convicted for a breach of a noise abatement notice or the property being closed under a closure order for ASB for more than 48 hours.

Examples of what might not be considered ASB could include:

- Noise from children when they are playing
- Family disputes
- Sounds of normal living such as opening and closing of doors

- Noise from household appliances
- One-off parties or celebrations if they don't cause an unacceptable disturbance to others
- Minor personal differences such as the giving of dirty looks or falling out between or over children
- Disagreements about parking

Behaviour that results from different lifestyles, or which would not be considered unreasonable by most people is not ASB. We will offer advice and guidance to encourage and enable tenants to deal with or to manage the situation without our involvement.

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 can also be used to stop people feeding pigeons/birds due to the nuisance caused to neighbours.

Pigeons and birds have become an increasingly common sight and thrive in areas where there is usually a good food source and the absence of predators. The result is that they can become a pest in built up areas. Pigeons or birds may be classed as a pest and the control of their numbers may be the responsibility of the local council for various reasons:

1. Noise
2. Damage to property
3. Hazards
4. Attracting other pests.

We may therefore restrict the use of bird feeders in Council properties, gardens or communal areas where any of the above problems have been identified.



# Support for victims and witnesses

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We aim to create sustainable communities and an environment where victims and witnesses feel confident and safe in coming forward to report ASB.

We will:

- Take all reports of ASB seriously and investigate.
- Support witnesses and victims throughout our investigations and work with appropriate agencies.
- Ensure our staff are aware of the ASB policy and procedures so they can appropriately offer support.
- Involve victims and witnesses in discussions about the action we will take to resolve their issue(s).
- Communicate with tenants by their preferred method and at an agreed frequency we can deliver.
- Keep tenants informed about the progress of their complaint.

- Refer victims, witnesses, and perpetrators to mediation when appropriate and other external agencies to assist in quickly resolving incidents.

We acknowledge that we cannot always prevent people becoming repeat victims of ASB; therefore, it is important that we work towards ensuring that there is a suitable and appropriate support network around everyone to enable them to manage their situation until a satisfactory resolution is achieved.

It is equally important that we work with perpetrators of ASB to assist them to resolve problems on a long-term basis. In all cases, will consider whether the ASB is a consequence of substance misuse, mental health or disability and we will liaise and refer to specialist agencies and organisations that may be able to provide support and/or assistance to perpetrators of ASB, including our Housing Plus Service.



# What we expect of our tenants

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We do not tolerate ASB and expect our tenants to behave responsibly and with consideration and not to commit or allow their family, household members or visitors to commit ASB. These expectations are clearly set out in the Tenancy Agreement.

We accept that neighbours will have different values or opinions and that sometimes this can cause problems which may or may not be ASB. However, we expect our tenants to show consideration and tolerance towards their neighbours as well as understanding that we all have a right to live our lives in the way that we choose.

In addition, we expect tenants to:

- Take responsibility for minor personal disputes with their neighbours and to try to resolve any such problems themselves in the first instance in a reasonable neighbourly manner.
- Respect other people at all times
- Co-operate with the Council when seeking to resolve problems
- Engage with mediation services if this is recommended by the Council to resolve disputes.

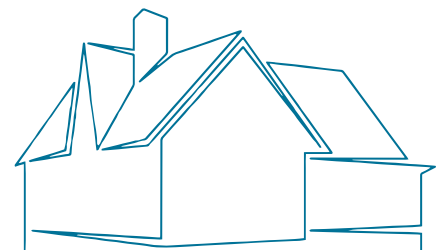
## How to report ASB

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Tenants can report ASB in a number of ways to us, as follows:

- Online via our website: **[www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/your-home/your-tenancy/nuisance-and-anti-social-behaviour/](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/your-home/your-tenancy/nuisance-and-anti-social-behaviour/)**
- Via email to **[housing@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:housing@darlington.gov.uk)**
- Over the phone on **01325 405333**
- By letter to Housing Services,  
Darlington Borough Council, Town Hall,  
Feethams, Darlington, DL1 5QT

To report incidents of criminal behaviour residents should contact the Police, either via the non-emergency police number **101** or call **999** for emergencies.



# Our response

The vast majority of ASB reports do not require legal action and will be effectively resolved through early intervention actions.

Each case will be dealt with in relation to its own facts and what we do in one case will not automatically mean that we will adopt the same approach in another. Our response is flexible, so that we can respond effectively to the different types of ASB that are reported.

We will contact complainants of serious reports of ASB within 1 working day of it being reported to us and we will agree a personal action plan, timescales and collect information and evidence. For all other reports of ASB we will make contact with complainants within 5 working days of it being reported to us.

Our approach towards dealing with ASB will be a combination of:

- **Case management** - We will work closely and collaboratively with tenants to agree personal action plans, based on the needs of the victim and the severity of the incident(s). We will also collect evidence throughout the investigation ranging from information from agencies and tenants to noise monitoring equipment. We will work particularly closely with the Police and Civic Enforcement Team to collect corroborating evidence.
- **Prevention and early intervention** - We will investigate and deal with incidents promptly. Early intervention may include verbal and written warnings to perpetrators, referrals to Restorative Justice and mediation or Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Undertakings.
- **Information** - Our Tenancy Agreement clearly sets out our stance towards ASB and we will provide tenants with information on our website, social media and at the beginning and during their tenancy. We have a dedicated Tenancy Enforcement Team who will provide information, support, and assistance throughout an investigation.
- **Safeguarding and vulnerability** - We will always consider these factors in our case management, working closely and in partnership with a range of agencies to safeguard vulnerable tenants and their family.
- **Support** - We will offer support to victims and witnesses.
- **Enforcement and legal action** - We will take enforcement and legal action when appropriate and when other measures and attempts to resolve the problem have failed. We will seek to take legal action, which is appropriate, proportionate, and effective and we will ensure we follow all pre-court protocols when considering undertaking any possession action.



# What legal action(s) can we take as a landlord?

Where all measures and attempts to resolve the problem have failed, or in instances of serious ASB, we will take a number of legal measures up to and including re-possession of tenant's homes through the eviction process. These include but are not limited to:

- **Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP)** - This is a notice informing the tenant(s) that we intend to seek possession of their home due to breaching the terms of their Tenancy Agreement. We must serve this notice before making an application to court. A NOSP is valid for 12 months and we can take legal action at any time in that period.
- **Injunctions (ASB, Crime and Policing Act)** - A court may grant an injunction to a person aged 10 or over if certain conditions are met. If an injunction is granted, it can prohibit a person from doing actions prescribed in the injunction and it can also require the person to do certain actions. A power of arrest can be attached to an injunction.
- **Possession Proceedings** - A court may grant us possession of a tenant(s) home, meaning an eviction warrant would be issued. This will only be carried out at the judgement of the Court where ASB is a ground for termination of the tenancy. Victims and witnesses may be required to provide statements and/or attend court hearings to give evidence to the judge as well as ourselves.
- **Introductory Tenancies** - All new tenants start with an Introductory Tenancy which lasts 12 months. It can be extended by up to a further 6 months or we can apply to bring it to an end sooner through the courts if there are instances of ASB and breaches of the Tenancy Agreement. An Introductory Tenancy does not have as many key rights as a Secure Tenancy.
- **Demotion Orders** - We can apply for a tenancy to be demoted where a tenant, member of their household or visitor has been involved in ASB. This will result in the tenant losing some of the key rights of a Secure Tenancy such as Right to Buy, Mutual Exchange, transfer of tenancy etc.



# Partnership Working

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Partnership working is key to reducing ASB and making our tenants feel safe in their communities. We will work closely with existing partnerships such as Police, Civic Enforcement, Community Safety Partnerships, and we continually look to build new partnerships with other agencies where it will add value to our processes and communities.

Housing Services are also key partners of an ASB Strategic Group comprising of a range of agencies and departments. This is called Multi-Agency Problem Solving (MAPS).

# Confidentiality, Data Protection and Information Sharing

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Where appropriate, we will share information with the Police and other key agencies so that all agencies can carry out their functions and duties in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and subsequent legislation.

We will work within the provisions of General Data Protection Regulations 2018 which provide a background for the sharing of information and the need for confidentiality and privacy.

# Performance Monitoring & Review

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As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we will monitor satisfaction levels and use customer feedback to improve our service. We will provide periodic performance reports for discussion with appropriate Customer Panels such as the Tenants Panel.

We will carry out a regular review of this policy to include any legislative changes and good practice examples









**CABINET  
6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**MUSEUM ACCREDITATION POLICIES**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member -  
Councillor Andy Keir, Local Services Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -  
Dave Winstanley, Group Director of Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval of the for the Head of Steam Forward Plan 2022-2024, the Collections Management Framework 2022-2027 and Access Policy and Plan 2022-2024 ahead of submission to Arts Council England for the re-accreditation of Museum status.

**Summary**

2. The museum is due to submit an Accreditation Return in 2023-2024 when the museum is undergoing redevelopment. The return must include commitments to standards, quality, accessibility and forward planning. The report seeks approval for the:
  - (a) Head of Steam Forward Plan 2022-2024 attached at **Appendix 1**, which outlines the vision for the museum service for the next two years
  - (b) Head of Steam Collections Management Framework 2022-2027 attached at **Appendix 2**, which includes the museum's policy for developing its collections, its documentation policy and its care and conservation policy.
  - (c) Head of Steam Access Policy and Plan 2022-2024 attached at **Appendix 3**, which outlines the museum's commitment is to accessibility for all visitors.

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the Head of Steam Forward Plan 2022-2024, Head of Steam Collections Management Framework 2022-2027 and Head of Steam Access Policy and Plan 2022-2024 in preparation for submission to the Arts Council England for Museum Accreditation.

**Reasons**

4. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons :-

- (a) To prove effective and professional management of Darlington's Museum Service so that the museum remains an accredited museum and entitled to future support from the Arts Council England (Central Government Body).
- (b) To be eligible for future funding from external bodies, e.g. Arts Council England, English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- (c) To be eligible for future loans from other museums, e.g. The National Railway Museum.
- (d) To ensure that the museum remains registered and complies with the standards and ethics as set out by the Museums Association.

**Dave Winstanley**  
**Group Director of Services**

### Background Papers

- i. Accreditation Standard (November 2018)
- ii. Accreditation Guidance (March 2019)
- iii. Head of Steam Forward Plan 2016-2019
- iv. Head of Steam Collections Management Strategy 2016-2021
- v. Head of Steam Access Policy Statement 2016-2021

Ian Thompson / Leona White-Hannant : Ext 6628/5544  
CD

S17 Crime and Disorder	The content of this report has no impact on Crime and Disorder.
Health and Wellbeing	The content of this report does not impact on Health and Well Being.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no carbon impact implications in this report.
Diversity	There is no impact on Diversity or Equality as a result of this report.
Wards Affected	Head of Steam is located in Northgate Ward.
Groups Affected	No particular or individual groups are affected as a result of this report.
Budget and Policy Framework	There are no Budget and Policy Framework implications in this report.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Council Plan	History and heritage of Darlington is an important aspect of Darlington as a place, the Head of Steam being one of the key locations where Darlington's story is told.
Efficiency	There is no impact on efficiency as a result of this report.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

## **MAIN REPORT**


### **Information and Analysis**

5. Accreditation is the UK standard for museums and galleries. It defines good practice and identifies agreed standards, thereby encouraging development. It is a baseline quality standard that helps guide museums to be the best they can be, for current and future users.
6. One of the aims of the Accreditation Scheme is to encourage all museums and galleries to achieve agreed standards in how they are run, how they manage their collections and the experiences of their users.
7. To be Accredited, museums must (amongst other things) be committed to forward planning to improve the service for users and hold a long-term collection of artefacts.
8. The museum's Forward Plan 2022-2024 (Appendix 1) outlines the vision for the museum service for the next two years and is a precursor to the countdown to the launch of the Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter in 2024 and the 200th Anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway celebrations in 2025.
9. The museum's Collections Management Framework 2022-2027 (Appendix 2) includes the museum's policy for developing its collections, its documentation policy and its care and conservation policy. Accredited museums must manage collections effectively and make them and the information they hold about them available to everyone.
10. The museum's Access Policy and Plan 2022-2024 (Appendix 3) outlines the museum's commitment is to accessibility for all visitors.

### **Financial Implications**

11. If the museum does not achieve Accreditation, it will no longer be eligible for future funding from external bodies, e.g. Arts Council England, English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

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The background of the page features a vibrant, stylized illustration of a steam locomotive in blue and green, with a person in a blue uniform and a yellow headlamp working on a track. The scene is set in a railway yard with various mechanical components and a large circular gauge visible.

# HEAD OF STEAM – DARLINGTON RAILWAY MUSEUM

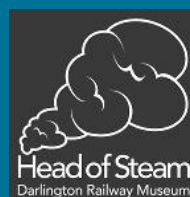
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## Forward Plan 2022-2024

Strategic objectives of Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum for the period May 2022 to May 2024.



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The forward plan outlines the strategic objectives of Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum for the period May 2022 to May 2024.
- 1.2. The plan will be reviewed annually, with the first review being in May 2023. The plan will be reviewed by the museum's management team.
- 1.3. A two year gap between this forward plan and the previous forward plan exists as a result of the Covid pandemic (2020-2022) when the museum was subject to government imposed closures and restrictions.
- 1.4. In February 2022 Darlington Borough Council's Cabinet and Full Council approved the business plan that will see the redevelopment of the Head of Steam site, known as Darlington Railway Heritage Quarter (DRHQ), using £20 million funding from the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA). The DRHQ project will develop the current site into an international visitor attraction by 2024 to enable Darlington to be a central part of the Bicentenary celebrations of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 2025.
- 1.5. The museum site is due to close for redevelopment at the end of December 2022. This forward plan is designed to be cover the period when the museum site is open to the public in 2022 and outline the work plan for the period of redevelopment 2023-24 when the museum site will be closed to the public (but museum engagement with the local communities will continue). A new forward plan will be developed alongside partners to drive the DRHQ, due to open in Spring/Summer 2024.
- 1.6. Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: XXXX

## 2. Statement of Purpose

Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum aims to delight all its visitors in the town that is the birthplace of modern passenger rail.

The museum's **mission** is to explain the significance of Darlington to railways, and for Darlington to be known for its railway heritage and its unique place in the birth of the modern railway.

The museum's **responsibility** is to preserve for future generations, and to make available for education and enjoyment, the unique historical collections it holds in trust.

The museum's **objective** is to make, in relation to the funding it receives, a worthwhile contribution to community development and economic prosperity in Darlington.

### **3. Background to Museum**

- 3.1.** Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum is located on the route of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, the world's first steam hauled railway to carry fare-paying passengers. The museum consists of the Stockton and Darlington Railway's buildings of the 1830s/50s, North Road Passenger Station and a range of north-eastern region railway exhibits.
- 3.2.** The museum was founded in 1975, to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Darlington and Stockton Railway, when the campaigning of enthusiasts and community activists resulted in the preservation of the passenger station. One side of the platform was partitioned off for ongoing main line usage and the remainder opened as 'Darlington Railway Museum'. The museum was originally administered by a charitable trust, but responsibility passed to Darlington Borough Council in 1984.
- 3.3.** The museum changed its name again in the early 1980's and became the 'Darlington Railway Centre and Museum'. This name change was adopted to highlight the other historical buildings on the site, i.e. Hopetown Carriage Works, Goods Agents Office and Goods Shed. As a whole, the site represents the world's most important surviving group of early railway buildings.
- 3.4.** Over the past 30 years the site has become home to several independent heritage railway organizations, working in partnership with the Council. Partnerships include A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, Darlington Railway Preservation Society, Darlington Model Railway Club, North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group, North Eastern Railway Association and the Friends of Darlington Railway Centre and Museum.
- 3.5.** In 2007/2008 a £1.7m refurbishment project was undertaken with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Northern Rock Foundation, the Railway Heritage Trust, English Heritage, European Regional Development Fund and other sources - Darlington Borough Council and the museum was re-branded the Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum.

#### 4. Review of the Previous Forward Plan (2016-2019)

4.1. The previous Forward Plan was created in 2016.

4.2. The plan was created by the Museum Manager Curator, Leona White-Hannant, for inclusion in the Museum's Accreditation Return in December 2016.

4.3. The plan addressed five aims and their associated objectives for the period 2016-2019 and was created with the input of the museum team.

4.4. Aim: To encourage activity, interaction and enjoyment of the site.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
<b>Develop an exciting events and exhibitions programme that appeals to a varied audience.</b>  <i>(See Audience Development Policy and Plan)</i>	Develop a Lego Show at the museum (2017)	Check other regional Lego events to avoid clashes	January 2017 <i>Completed June 2017</i>	Events & Administration Officer / Events budget
		Liaise with Brick Alley LUG	February 2017 <i>Completed June 2017</i>	
		Set date of event (November 2017?)	March 2017 <i>Completed June 2017</i>	
	Mark the 175 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of North Road Station (2017)	Press Release asking for memories and photographs	April 2017 <i>Completed March 2017</i>	Manager Curator / Events budget
		Develop history of station tours and trails	August 2017 <i>Completed Oct 2017</i>	
		Launch tours and trail to coincide with NERA station display	September 2017 <i>Completed Oct 2017</i>	
	Development of summer blockbuster exhibition (Summer 2019)	Join Touring Exhibitions Group	January 2018 <i>Completed Jan 2017</i>	Manager Curator / Exhibitions budget
		Block out diary for Summer 2019	January 2018 <i>Completed Jan 2017</i>	
		Identify which exhibitions are available	March 2018 <i>Completed Sep 2018</i>	
		Feasibility study re: environ conditions in Meeting Room	April 2018 <i>Completed Jun-Sep 2018</i>	
		Investigate funding streams	July 2018 <i>Completed Apr 2019</i>	

		Identify need for new display equipment	September 2018 <i>Completed Feb 2019</i>	
	Develop 'Focus on' Collections Event (2018)	Investigate whether other museum have done a similar event	January 2018 <i>Completed Mar 2018</i>	Manager Curator / Collections budget
		Staff training re: conservation etc.	June 2018 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Launch sessions	October 2018 <i>Completed Ju-Aug 2018</i>	

**4.5. Aim: To develop the museum to inspire learning and connect people with the past, present and future.**

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer (s)
<b>Engage with new groups and schools, in particular Secondary schools, through activities and new workshops.</b>  <i>(See Learning and Access Policy and Plan)</i>	Consult with Secondary Schools about that they want (2017)	Identify Secondary Schools in Darlington.	January 2017 <i>Completed July 2017</i>	Learning and Access Officer / Education budget
		Contact schools	February 2017 <i>Completed Sep 2017</i>	
		Consult with History / Science Technology leaders	March 2017 <i>Completed Sep 2017</i>	
	Recruit Front of House (Interpreters) Volunteers (2017)	Send out Press Release	June 2017 <i>Completed - ongoing recruitment</i>	Learning and Access Officer / Education budget
		Drop In/Open Day session	August 2017 <i>Completed - ongoing recruitment</i>	
		Training of volunteers	September 2017 <i>Completed - ongoing recruitment</i>	
	Develop new STEM Workshop for schools (2019)	Consult STEM subject leaders	June 2018 <i>Completed Sep 2017</i>	Learning and Access Officer / Education budget & external funding
		Talk to STEM NE	July 2018 <i>Completed Sep 2017</i>	
		Investigate funding streams	September 2018 <i>Completed Sep 2017</i>	
		Talk to 'Foundation for	October 2018 <i>Not completed</i>	

		Jobs' & 'Darlington Partnership'		
		Develop and trial new activities	April 2019 <i>Completed Nov 2019</i>	
	Recruit and Train volunteer Engine Cleaning Team (2019)	Liaise with NRM re: cleaning procedure and guidelines	April 2018 <i>E-mailed Jan 2018 but NRM never got back to us</i>	Learning and Access Officer / Manager Curator / Collections budget
		Involve Health & Wellbeing groups e.g. GOLD	May 2018 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Develop a training day for new recruits	August 2018 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Send out Press Release	January 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Drop In/Open Day session	March 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Launch project 'Spring Clean'	April 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	

4.6. Aim: To care for the museum's collections and ensure they are accessible to the public.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s)
Complete Documentation Backlog and increase access to the collection through partnership working, outreach and digital media.  (See Collections Management Framework)	Complete Documentation Backlog	Complete Documentation Stage Two	December 2017 <i>Ongoing</i>	Manager Curator / Collections budget
		Complete Documentation Stage Three	December 2018 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Complete Documentation Stage Four	December 2021	
	Promotion of Collections and Archive (2017)	Purchase new camera and photography cube (funded by Friends?)	December 2016 <i>Completed March 2017</i>	Manager Curator / Collections budget
		Develop 'Objects in Focus' section on website	January 2017 <i>Completed January 2017</i>	
		Attend at least three outreach events	December 2017 <i>Completed April 2017</i>	
		Basic museum database on-line	December 2017 <i>Not completed</i>	

	Partnership working within Darlington (2017)	Establish link with Hippodrome's new Heritage and Engagement Officer	January 2017 <i>Completed November 2016</i>	Manager Curator / Collections budget
		Develop closer links with Centre for Local Studies e.g. exhibition sharing	July 2017 <i>Completed July 2017</i>	
		Work with the Ingenious Darlington concept to further develop the Heritage Offer in Darlington	December 2017 <i>Completed Dec 2017 (website, social media)</i>	
	Relocation of collection stored elsewhere on site (2019)	Get safe access to the site	January 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	Manager Curator / Collections budget
		Organise area for removal of artefacts to (interim location)	January 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Inventory of the container	March 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Rationalise artefacts	May 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Identify artefacts for conservation	June 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	
		Move artefacts to new storage area	October 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	

4.7. Aim: For Darlington to be known for its railway heritage and as the place of the birth of the modern railway.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s)
Promote the museum and Darlington's railway heritage through an improved marketing strategy and		Liaise with Communications Team and D&P	December 2016 <i>Completed December 2016</i>	Manager Curator / Marketing budget
		Develop new marketing strategy using data from	January 2017 <i>Completed December 2016</i>	

<b>online presence.</b>  <i>(See Marketing Policy and Plan)</i>		The Audience Agency		
	New museum marketing material (2017)	Design new museum leaflet	January 2017 <i>Completed Feb 2017</i>	Manager Curator / Marketing budget
		Print new museum leaflet	February 2017 <i>Completed Jul 2017</i>	
		Distribute new leaflet	March 2017 <i>Completed Aug 2017</i>	
	Develop standalone website (2019)	Meeting with Neil Bowerbank	December 2017 <i>Completed</i>	Manager Curator / Marketing budget and Museum budget
		Xentrall ICT re: website	March 2018 <i>Completed Mar 2018</i>	
		Development & test period	November 2019 <i>Completed Jan-Apr 2019</i>	
		Launch website	December 2019 <i>Completed May 2019</i>	
	Work collaboratively with other Tees Valley Partners (2019)	Liaise with Tees Valley Partners on future projects e.g. TV Combined Authority bid 'Great Places'.	December 2019 <i>Completed Apr 2017 - ongoing</i>	Manager Curator / Marketing budget

**4.8. Aim: To ensure the museum is operated successfully as a financially sustainable model.**

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s)
<b>Promote the facilities available to hire and increase retail income through new lines of stock and online presence.</b>  <i>(See Marketing Policy and Plan)</i>	Retail discount for annual members to encourage repeat spend (2017)	Mailshot regarding annual member discount in shop	December 2016 <i>Completed Jul 2017</i>	Events & Administration Officer / Retail budget
		Trial run	January 2017 <i>Completed Aug 2017</i>	
		Evaluate results	February 2017 <i>Completed ongoing</i>	
	Darlington souvenirs shop stock (2017)	Identify suppliers	December 2016 <i>Completed Dec 2016</i>	Events & Administration Officer / Retail budget
		Liaise with suppliers	January 2017 <i>Completed Aug 2017</i>	
		Order shop stock	March 2017 <i>Completed ongoing</i>	

	Promotion of museum as venue to hire (2017)	Promote the meeting room for private hire	May 2017 <i>Completed Aug 2017</i>	Events & Administration Officer / Retail budget
		Promote the museum for weddings	July 2017 <i>Completed Jan 2018</i>	
	Develop on-line shop via new standalone website(2019)	Talk to other museums with on-line shop	December 2018 <i>Not completed</i>	Events & Administration Officer / Retail budget and Museum Budget
		Photograph shop stock	July 2019 <i>Not completed</i>	

#### 4.9. Summary of Previous Forward Plan

The previous Forward Plan was written with the input of the museum team (Events and Admin Officer, Learning and Access Officer and Collections and Learning Assistant). The aims and objectives were written to be SMART and achievable within the three year period with a small team delivering the outcomes. The majority of the actions outlined in the forward plan were achieved within the time frame.

One of the main objectives of the previous Forward Plan was to increase and diversify the museum's audience through a varied events, exhibitions and learning programme. The visitor figures in the table below show the increase in visitor numbers over the 2016-2019 period that the previous forward plan covered. The peak in 2018 was due to a highly successful Lego event that took place in February 2018 during which over 2600 people visited the museum in one day. The table shows an increase in visitor figures of 10,000 from 2016-2019. That is a 30% increase in visitors to the museum during the period of the previous forward plan. During 2020 and 2021 the museum's visitor figures were affected by Covid. A combination of closure and restricted numbers had a huge impact of figures for these years and for this reason have not been included in the comparison as this was out of our control.

Year	Visitor Figures	Comparison
2014	32,612	-
2015	34,071	4.5%
2016	32,580	4.6%
2017	36,365	11.6%
2018	44,727	23%
2019	42,746	4.4%
2020	10,092*	-
2021	20,366*	-

\*Covid

## 5. Current Position

### 5.1. Environmental Sustainability

In July 2019 Darlington Borough Council (DBC) Members acknowledged the threat of climate change and passed a motion committing the Council to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

As part of our commitment DBC have developed a strategy and action plan to set out the baseline of our own carbon emissions, to identify the key actions and intervention measures required to meet this commitment and what measures we will take to deal with unavoidable impacts of climate change.

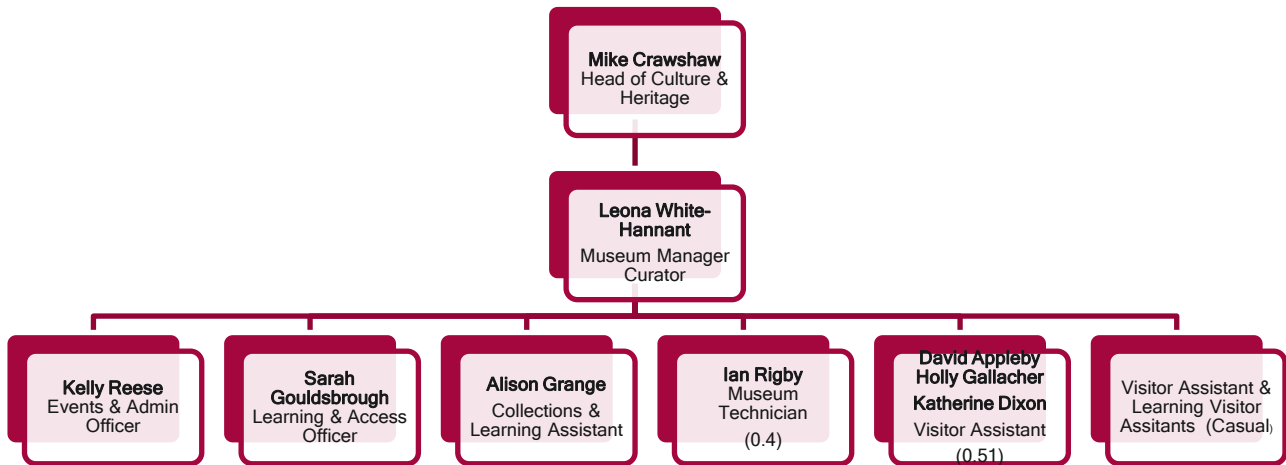
The museum has signed up to the NPO Tees Valley Museums Group Green Policy. The policy is motivated by the understanding that we need to change the way we operate to ensure that our actions are sustainable and that the damage that we do to the environment through our operations is minimal. Being 'Environmentally Sustainable' is one of 6 key destinations NPO want to reach as part of our long term vision. This is a positive process that will improve our working environment, our ways of working and our communities. We all are part of larger organisations who have robust and ambitious targets and the tools for change to realise their ambitions.

To ensure green policies are adopted each site will nominate a person responsible for championing green actions within each service. Head of Steam's contribution to the plan is below:

**Head of Steam continues to consider the environmental impact when purchasing materials or services. The main changes have been:**

- The implementation of recycling facilities at reception and in the café to enable visitors to recycle their empty food and drinks packaging. We recycle or reuse materials wherever possible.
- The museum is slowly reducing the amount of single use plastic and paper it uses in the café by replacing it with proper cutlery and crockery.
- Visitors are able to refill their reusable water bottles during their visit to the museum. Staff use public transport, walk or car share wherever possible.
- Sustainable and smarter travel choices are at the heart of the plans for the redevelopment of the museum site
- We are looking for a source of renewable energy to provide power for the site.
- Introduced paper straws
- No longer buying single use event decorations
- Organised regular recycling collection with local authority.
- Installed water butt on platform to collect rain water for plants.
- Reuse packaging from café for seedlings for station garden.
- Reduction in use of plastic in craft activities.
- Encourage use of recycled materials in craft activities (done virtually during lockdown).
- **Y4 Aims:**
- Purchase recycling box from teracycle for nitrile gloves.
- Ensure sustainability and recycling are part of redevelopment.
- Reconsider our reliance on individually wrapped products in café and meeting room

## 5.2. Organisational Structure



## 5.3. Darlington Railway Heritage Quarter

Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter (DRHQ) is a project that will invest in our rail heritage and assets ahead of the bicentennial anniversary in 2025 that will create a national visitor destination in Darlington. The Vision for DRHQ is:

*“By 2024, Darlington is recognised as the world’s most historic railway town with the Railway Heritage Quarter becoming a major visitor attraction showcasing internationally significant heritage in the Tees Valley, which will be central to the Stockton and Darlington Railway’s bicentennial celebrations in 2025. This project will reveal the story of Darlington and its communities that saw an opportunity and seized it, connecting, and transforming the world in the process. Our unique and authentic heritage will be reimagined with a strong narrative, varied interpretation, reimagined spaces, and new experiences to engage a wider audience, including local residents, businesses and visitors from around the globe. This site will act as a catalyst for heritage-led regeneration and social cohesion, empowering our communities and businesses to be part of the next transformational change.”*

The Rail Heritage Project also delivers against several the Council’s Priorities to:

- *Grow Darlington’s economy*
- *Maximise the potential of our young people*
- *Support the most vulnerable in the Borough*
- *Working with communities to maximise their potential*

Heritage and cultural regeneration are now recognised as a key ingredient in delivering economic growth. The DRHQ will add to the economic growth story of the town, and Northgate

in particular, and will be a key venue for 2025 bi-centenary anniversary events, which will put Darlington and the wider region on the world map being a place to be truly proud of, demonstrating the Council's commitment to valuing our heritage and culture.

DRHQ will contribute to the development of young people through a heritage educational experience in a fun environment, creating a community hub for the local area and offering opportunities for all residents and visitors to explore Darlington's role in the birthplace of modern passenger rail. There are strong links and synergy with the wider developments at Darlington Station, Central Park and the town centre. The DRHQ will be a key visitor attraction within walking distance of the town centre, helping attract people to live in Darlington, visit Darlington and enjoy all that Darlington has to offer. DRHQ will be connected to the town centre via the linear park along the River Skerne; providing an accessible and attractive route will encourage visitors to not only go to DRHQ but also explore the town centre where they will contribute to the wider local economy.

**The objectives are:**

- **Heritage** - to reveal, conserve, protect and promote aspects of the heritage on site and secure its long-term future. The project will remove the Goods Shed from the Historic England Buildings at Risk register and will conserve and interpret the rest of the site attracting around 369,000 visits to the site each year. This restoration, development and interpretation of the heritage will act as a key element in the bicentenary celebrations which will remind the world of Darlington's impact.
- **Engineering** - retain live engineering on site through developing third sector capacity and providing opportunities for the wider community through skills, learning and volunteering.
- **Innovation** - use past, current and future innovation to inspire, engage and motivate visitors and communities to raise aspirations and instil pride in the area.
- **Play** - through bespoke play, engage the local community and improve the wider visitor experience across the whole site.
- **Events and Activities** - develop an events and activity programme with an extended and engaging plan to increase the range and number of site users and audiences.
- **Skills and Learning** - deliver an educational programme for local and regional schools alongside more formal and informal skills and training opportunities in partnership with on-site partners and other interested relevant education bodies.
- **Community** - be a vehicle for improved health and well-being through increased activity and volunteering opportunities that provide positive social, health and quality of life benefits.
- **Interpretation** - engage a diverse audience including those that do not normally visit, and interpretation helps to do that by being exciting, creative and immersive through the telling of the story to keep the site fresh and vibrant.
- **Economy** - the site will act as a catalyst for economic growth by attracting local, national and international visitors, investment and spend, and creating employment and enterprise opportunities for the local community.
- **Heritage Action Zone** - act as one of the key orientation points along the 26 miles of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, providing a hub for visitors to not only access the site but also the S&DR walking and cycling route, and wider interpretation.
- **Commercial** - applying a commercial approach, demonstrating heritage and tourism as a viable sector for private investment.
- **Sustainability** - proposals will work towards contributing to the overall climate change 2050 target.

## What is planned for the Rail Heritage Quarter

The development will transform DRHQ into a major visitor attraction and museum by 2024 so that it can be a central part of the bicentenary events of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) in 2025. Essential improvements will be undertaken to a number of significantly historic buildings on the site linking them together to create cluster attractions including the Skerne Bridge, the oldest working railway bridge in the world. Digital and technological investment will bring history to life into and there will be a new immersive ride experience only seen at theme parks. The DRHQ will have a café and shop, themed play area, a new live engineering building, temporary exhibition space and extended car parking all of which attract all generations to visit.

### There are a number of elements to the overall site:

- **The Goods Shed** - Currently occupied by Darlington Rail Preservation Society (DRPS), this Grade II\* Listed building will be repaired and restored (removing it from the Historic Buildings at Risk register). This will be the entry/admission point to DRHQ café and will have an immersive visitor digital media experience and a Hologauze projection of locomotives.
- **North Road Station Building** - A Grade II Listed building on a 200-year lease from Network Rail to Darlington Borough Council that houses the Head of Steam Museum. The refreshed museum will offer a rich visitor experience, immersed and engaged in the S&DR story and Darlington's place within it. Visitors will learn about where they are standing - the station itself - through its beautifully preserved original space, enticing visuals, and accounts drawn from archival ephemera - that will draw them back to the site repeatedly. There will be a number of exciting augmented and virtual reality installations that the visitor can engage with alongside traditional interpretation. The most memorable encounter of all within the museum is likely to be the Black Box experience, an extraordinarily vivid immersion into passenger rail travel from 1825 to the present day (if not also the future), and the extraordinary impact it had across societies and cultures around the world. The detail of the black box experience is under development, it is proposed that it will include a 9 or 12 seat 4D cinema type experience where the hydraulic cinema seat moves in different directions given the feeling of movement. The design will be capable of delivering the heritage experience but will also be such that different shows can be easily added for different times of the year to stimulate repeat visit. The museum will be free (which removes the financial barrier to heritage allowing improved access to local deprived neighbourhoods) with the Black Box generating income through being a charged for experience.
- **The Carriage Works** - Currently occupied by the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust (A1SLT) and North East Locomotion Preservation Group (NELPG). Within the carriage works a new archive store, study centre, reading rooms and open store on one side and temporary exhibition on the other, will be created. This will attract touring exhibitions improving local access to national collections and exhibitions.
- **External Play Area** - The development of a must-see play area designed to fit with the heritage story of the S&DR. Provides a new attraction and activity for locals and visitors that will increase the overall visitors to DRHQ, generating increased secondary spend opportunities at the café and shop.
- **New Build Engineering Shed** - Creation of new engineering shed to house A1SLT with public visitor access via a bridge across the main line into a viewing gallery. The element of DRHQ creates the space for ongoing new build locomotives adding to the authenticity of the site, drawing in additional visitors.

- **Footbridge Link** - A footbridge link from DRHQ site, over live operational rail track to the new live steam engineering building - providing safe and accessible access to this aspect of the visitor attraction.
- **1861 Shed** - The 1861 Shed and surrounding land have been purchased to be part of the DRHQ with the restoration of the building to provide space to relocate DRPS into one half and the other half used for storage and garaging of locomotives. The outside spaces will provide the connection to the wider site with the cycling and walking route coming through this space as well as the private rail siding.
- **Private Siding and Turntable** - The private siding linking the mainline to the site will allow locomotives to arrive on site by rail and provide the opportunity to run steam train rides as part of the events programme through the year. The cost of providing and laying and maintaining the private siding is the responsibility of A1SLT with support from DRPS. The turntable currently is aspirational and subject to further funding applications.
- **The Lime Cells** - A building recently acquired by Darlington Borough Council is derelict and in poor condition. The Lime Cells will be repaired and will become an office for Friends of S&DR to support the continued work of the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) and provide focus for an extensive programme of community engagement activity in relation to HAZ and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). Subject to a successful Round 2 application to NLHF (a first-round pass was granted in December 2021) this development will enable the Friends organisation to recruit and train more volunteers to take part in management of the HAZ.
- **Car Park** - Whilst we would anticipate some visitors will arrive by train to North Road Station, and over time hopefully this will increase, there is still a requirement to provide a car park which is placed purposefully close to the iconic Grade I listed Skerne Bridge, the oldest operating railway bridge in the world and a key player in the First Day, 27 September 1825. It is also famous for its illustration on the five-pound note. Close to the car park will be points of interpretation, all of which will convey a top-level introduction to the significance of the site in which they stand.
- **External Works** - This includes entrance works, pedestrian areas on McNay Street, coach drop off, pedestrian crossing for North Road, highways work, drainage, bus stops, cycleways and landscaping.

## Interpretive Approach

- The unique selling point of the DRHQ is the site itself, the cluster of heritage buildings and its proximity to the historic Skerne Bridge are assets only Darlington can seize upon. However, the interpretation of the site is key to making it a success and this has been developed in tandem with the physical aspects of the project.
- The investment in interpretation and bringing the experience to life will create an awe-inspiring, memorable 'sense of place' and the realisation that 'it happened here'. The site will provide accessible entry points to the main themes of the Stockton & Darlington Railway story and Darlington's key role within it. The main themes are:
  - **A global innovation** - The birth of the modern railway happened here in Darlington and was an innovation that changed the world forever.
  - **The First Day** - Over 10,000 people witnessed the first ride of the first passenger steam train here in Darlington on 27 September 1825.
  - **Darlington then and now** - The railway heritage of Darlington is all around us, and innovation continues to thrive in Darlington today.
- The latest technologies offer opportunities for the rich heritage of the site to be brought alive for visitors, where using immersive, multi-sensory approaches, they can experience the sights and sounds of Victorian Darlington.
- Once visitors have experienced the DRHQ, they will fully appreciate just how much the S&DR transformed the town and its fortunes forever. It will be a place where local heritage will lead to sustainable regional regeneration, investment and the transfer of new knowledge and skills to local communities. With a strong narrative, varied interpretation, reimagined spaces, and the creation of new experiences, it will explore the S&DR's enduring influence on the people, development and identity of Darlington and the region - past, present and future.
- It will tell the story of a place, a time and range of people that brought together unique combinations of existing ideas and technologies and new solutions that combined the ingenuity and determination of engineers, entrepreneurs, financiers, surveyors, builders, navies, and countless unnamed individuals who gave their knowledge, expertise and faith to a great, world-changing endeavours.
- Alongside all of this, the DRHQ will showcase and inspire the innovation and invention currently going on in the region - in industry, universities, entrepreneurial start-ups, and established companies - and build connections with knowledge, technology and heritage communities around the world through the interpretation of the collection and the site.
- The interpretation will appeal to a wide range of audiences, both formal and informal learners, and is fundamentally visitor-focussed in its approach. Interpretation across the site ensures that there are engaging opportunities for a range of ages and preferences. The digital 'black box' experience is balanced with beautifully lit, iconic star objects such as Derwent, the celebrated Hackworth engine of 1845. Hands-on, interactive exhibits are included as well as a playful use of audio. The printed word will be clear and accessible, and an engaging use of existing archival material - newspapers, illustrations, photos, letters and diary entries - will provide authentic insights for all visitors. Provision for the under 5's is integrated throughout the interpretation and through bespoke play spaces.

- The approach adopted to interpretation will be:
  - Welcoming, friendly and informed
  - Presenting a sense of place
  - Inclusive
  - A playful approach
  - Content delivered through themes and stories
  - Digital ‘wows’
  - Interactive, hands-on experiences
  - Intellectually accessible and engaging
  - Physically accessible
  - Participative
  - Environmentally responsible
  - A vibrant programme of activities and events
  - Attracting repeat visits

### **Delivery Timetable**

- Cabinet and Council approval February 2022
- Phase 1 construction mobilisation March 2022
- Phase 1 construction completion March 2023
- Phase 2 construction mobilisation January 2023

### **5.4. Succession Planning**

The museum has the following procedures in place for effective continuity and resilience to ensure the continuous running of the service. This will enable staff to ‘multi-task’ and cover other posts’ work if required.

- Building Operations Management
- Banking Procedures
- Opening & Closing Procedures
- Events Development
- Education & Community Activities
- Collection Management
- Acquisitions
- Temporary Exhibition Planning and Delivery
- Marketing and Development
- Externally Funded Projects.

For examples of the procedures see appendices (*See Appendices 12.1*).

## 5.5. Access at the Museum

- The museum's last access assessment was in 2019 and was conducted by the NPO's Access Officer.
- The museum is Dementia Friendly and Autism friendly.
- An access kit is available at reception. It includes magnifying sheets, easy to hold pens, signature guides etc.
- All labels and interpretation panels are in an accessible font.
- The building is accessible. The building accessible via a ramp and a wheelchair is available for use by visitors.
- The museum has prepared a Visual Guide for visitors on the autistic spectrum, which is available to download from the website or collect from reception.
- The museum's access statement is available on the website.
- Access to the museum's collections is available by appointment through the Ken Hoole Study Centre.
- Large print guides are available.
- The museum has introduced guides to the museum in several languages for our international visitors.

## 5.6. Tees Valley Museums Group (TVMG)

- Tees Valley Museum Group is a consortium of five Local Authority Museum services: Stockton (the lead authority), Darlington BC, Redcar and Cleveland BC, Middlesbrough BC and Hartlepool BC.
- Mission statement: TVMG will ensure we remain ambitious and relevant for all of our communities; sharing and preserving their heritage and stories, giving real meaning to the work we do together.
- The museum service will continue to work with the Tees Valley Museums Group (funded by the Arts Council) during the period of this Forward Plan and beyond.

## 6. Consultation and Analysis of Views

In 2019 TGAC were commissioned by Darlington Borough Council and Tees Valley Combined Authority to undertake audience research as part of the Railway Heritage Quarter Grand Narrative & Interpretation Strategy.

TGAC used a wide range of information gathering techniques including desk based and archival research, site visits, stakeholder engagement, and meetings with experts and enthusiasts, special interest groups and representatives of the local communities. This was combined with 'in depth' community consultations, reviews of the collections held in the three museums along the line, and benchmarking exercises at other cultural and heritage sites.

### Stakeholder Consultations

Between November 2018 and March 2019, TGAC met with stakeholders, specialist interest groups, arts organisations and potential industry partners.

### Online Survey

An online survey was live from Monday 18th February until Monday 18th March 2019 with 240 respondents. The survey link was distributed through several known networks and was largely filled in by people who knew about or had some connection with the Stockton and Darlington Railway.

### Community Consultation

JHA conducted a range of group and individual consultation interviews in the development process. Conclusions from their report are provided later in this document.

### Community Open Days

TGAC and JHA undertook three days of community consultation during February half term, 2019. 286 people attended and contributed to the open day sessions which took place over four days at the following venues: Preston Park Museum and Grounds, Locomotion, Shildon and Head of Steam, Darlington.

It was identified that the general breakdown of existing audiences is as follows: Older Adults, Local Families, Local People, Day Visitors, Rail enthusiasts (national and international).

Target Audiences were deemed to be: Adults over 50, Families with Children under 11, Young People and those Not in Education, Employment or Training, People in ill health, Local BAME Communities, Communities living along the 26 miles.

### Overall Summary of Consultation Findings

Local communities and educators alike are engaged with the SD&R heritage and supportive of the plans to raise awareness of it through access to the 26 mile line and across the Railway Heritage Quarter interpretation and activities. This interest extends to a wide range of benefits and outcomes that those consulted perceive will result from the project, including:

- A renewed sense of local awareness of the region's heritage.
- Younger and future generations learning about the region's heritage leading to a new appreciation for their local area and a sense of grass roots local pride.
- Family history projects galvanising local communities to engage with the heritage and revealing new, personal stories.
- Raised levels of aspirations, particularly in young people.
- New facilities and activities that will fulfil existing community needs.

- Activities and volunteering opportunities that provide positive social and health and quality of life benefits.

The research found that it is clear that the Railway Heritage Quarter promises to thrive as a community hub, if it takes on the activity related preferences and recommendations voiced by the audiences consulted as part of this process:

- To engage audiences from across the spectrum of abilities, ages, social, cultural or economic backgrounds.
- To provide opportunities for young people to gain new skills, experience and qualifications which will be a valuable resource to help set them up for their next, vital stage in life.
- To be a vehicle for new social interactions and improved health and quality of life, and it will be a source of pride for all.

The museum will continue to use the Audience Agency to produce surveys and reports on the museum's visitor profile (funded via Tees Valley Museums Group NPO). An example of the museum's questionnaire can be found here: <https://www.head-of-steam.co.uk/plan-your-visit/we-value-your-feedback/>

Looking forward DRHQ will implement a ticketing solution that will support collection of visitor data to help diversify our audience.

## 7. Aims

**The museum team agreed that aims for the next three years were the same as in the previous forward plan as they are relevant to the current museum and the future DRHQ.**

- 7.1. To encourage activity, interaction and enjoyment of the site.
- 7.2. To develop the museum to inspire learning and connect people with the past, present and future.
- 7.3. To care for the museum's collections and ensure they are accessible to the public.
- 7.4. For Darlington to be known for its railway heritage and as the birthplace of modern passenger rail.
- 7.5. To ensure the museum is operated successfully as a financially sustainable model.

## 8. Objectives

- 8.1. Develop an exciting events and exhibitions programme that appeals to a varied audience.
- 8.2. Engage with new groups and schools through partnership working, activities and new workshops.
- 8.3. Increase access to the collection through partnership working, outreach and digital media.
- 8.4. Commitment to a successful transition from HOS to DRHQ, by retaining existing audience and supporting growth of new audiences.
- 8.5. Promote the facilities available to hire and increase retail income.

## 9. Action Plan 2022-24

### 9.1. Aim: To encourage activity, interaction and enjoyment of the site.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
<b>Develop an exciting events and exhibitions programme that appeals to a varied audience.</b>  <i>(See Audience Development Policy and Plan)</i>	Develop Events on the Road programme (2023)	Talk to Events Team about possible locations	August 2022	Events Officer / Events budget
		Plan events and activity programme.	October 2022	
		Promote the events and activity programme.	January 2023	
		Deliver the Events on the Road programme.	December 2023	
	Develop STEAM focussed event for our main summer event (2023)	Investigate companies that can deliver STEAM activities	September 2022	Events Officer & Learning Officer / Events budget
		Select a venue and a date for the event	October 2022	
		Book activities for event	December 2022	
		Promote the event	June 2023	
	Develop hard hat tours for during redevelopment (2023)	Talk to Hippodrome about their tours during redevelopment	March 2022	Events Officer & Museum Manager / Events budget
		Talk to RHQ Project Team about health & safety on site	May 2022	
		Organise dates for tours	September 2022	
		Organise tour guides and route for tours	October 2022	
		Promote the tours	December 2022	
		Start hard hat tours	April 2023	

**9.2. Aim: To develop the museum to inspire learning and connect people with the past, present and future.**

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
Engage with new groups and schools through partnership working, activities and new workshops. <i>(See Learning and Access Policy and Plan)</i>	Engage with one new (non-visiting) school or group per term (2022)	Identify and contact non-visiting schools/group	April 2022	Learning & Access Officer / Education budget
		Consult with History/Science Technology leaders	June 2022	
		Book in one visit per term	December 2022	
	Create Accessible Tours for Museum on the Move (2023)	Identify key objects that can be touched	September 2022	Learning & Access Officer & Collections Assistant / Education budget
		Check any conservation issues	October 2022	
		Develop tour	October / November 2022	
		Trial tour	December 2022	
		Promote tours	February 2023	
		Launch tours	April 2023	
	Research and Development workshops for new site (2024)	Liaise with collections staff to identify relevant themes	May 2023	Learning & Access Officer & Collections Assistant / Education budget
		Develop 3 new workshops in consultation with teachers	October 2023	
		Develop 5 supporting resources to support blended learning offer	December 2023	
		Promote learning offer	April 2024	
	Develop one new talk per year to give to interest groups (2022, 2023, 2024)	Identify topics for lectures	May 2022	Learning & Access Officer / Education budget
		Research topics	August 2022 / 2023	
		Write talks	October 2023 / 2024	
		Promote talks	January 2023 / 2024	

**9.3. Aim: To care for the museum's collections and ensure they are accessible to the public.**

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
<p><b>Increase access to the collection through partnership working, outreach and digital media.</b></p> <p><i>(See Collections Management Framework)</i></p>	<p>Prepare the collection to be moved to an interim location (2022)</p>	Inventory of the container	June 2022	<p>Collections and Learning Assistant / Collections budget</p>
		Organise area for removal of artefacts to during redevelopment	August 2022	
		Undertake a full collections audit.	December 2022	
		Pack all stored objects ready for move to interim location	December 2022	
		Remove all objects from display in the museum and pack ready for move to new location	January 2022	
		Identify artefacts for conservation	March 2023	
		Move artefacts to open store/archive store	April 2024	
	<p>Actively engage with young people and local community by developing Museum on the Move programme (2024)</p>	Secure lease of a van through DBC	October 2022	<p>Manager Curator &amp; Collections and Learning Assistant / Collections budget</p>
		Consult with partners on possible workshop and touring programme	December 2022	
		Liaise with insurance team	December 2022	
		Fit out van and choose objects to be included	March 2023	
		Launch Museum on the Move project	April 2023	

**9.4. Aim: For Darlington to be known for its railway heritage and as the place of the birth of the modern railway.**

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
<b>Commitment to a successful transition from HOS to DRHQ, by retaining existing audience and supporting growth of new audiences.</b>  <i>(See Marketing Policy and Plan)</i>	Keep the public informed about the redevelopment of the site (2023)	Regular social media posts	April 2022	All staff / Museum budget
		Write blog with updates about the site	July 2022	
		Organise hard hat tours of the site	January 2023	
	Develop e-newsletter (2023)	Liaise with IT on implementation of e-newsletter.	July 2022	Manager Curator / Marketing budget
		Liaise with D&P on the design of the newsletter	October 2022	
		Distribute first edition of newsletter	January 2023	
	Investigate satellite presence in the town centre for outreach during redevelopment (2023)	Talk to council buildings and retail outlets to see what is available	May 2022	Manager Curator / Museum budget
		Select a venue and hire the space	October 2022	
		Deliver outreach sessions	February 2023	

**9.5. Aim: To ensure the museum is operated successfully as a financially sustainable model.**

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
<b>Promote the facilities available to hire and increase retail income.</b>  <i>(See Marketing Policy and Plan)</i>	Develop satellite shop during redevelopment (2023)	Identify stock for sale	December 2022	Events Officer / Museum budget
		Install stock displays in shop and set up till system	January 2023	
		Launch and promote shop	February 2023	
	Investigate options for mobile retail stall (2023)	Investigate mobile card payment device	December 2022	Events Officer / Museum budget
		Identify events we can attend with retail stall	March 2023	
		Investigate transportation of mobile retail stall	February 2023	
	Develop a new offer in the shop each month (2022)	Decide a new promotion for each month	April 2022	Events Officer / Museum budget
		Launch shops offer	May 2022	
	Develop on-line shop via website (2024)	Liaise with IT on implementation of on-line shop	January 2024	Events Officer / Museum budget
		Test on-line shop	March 2024	
		Launch of on-line shop	Summer 2024	

## 10. Resources

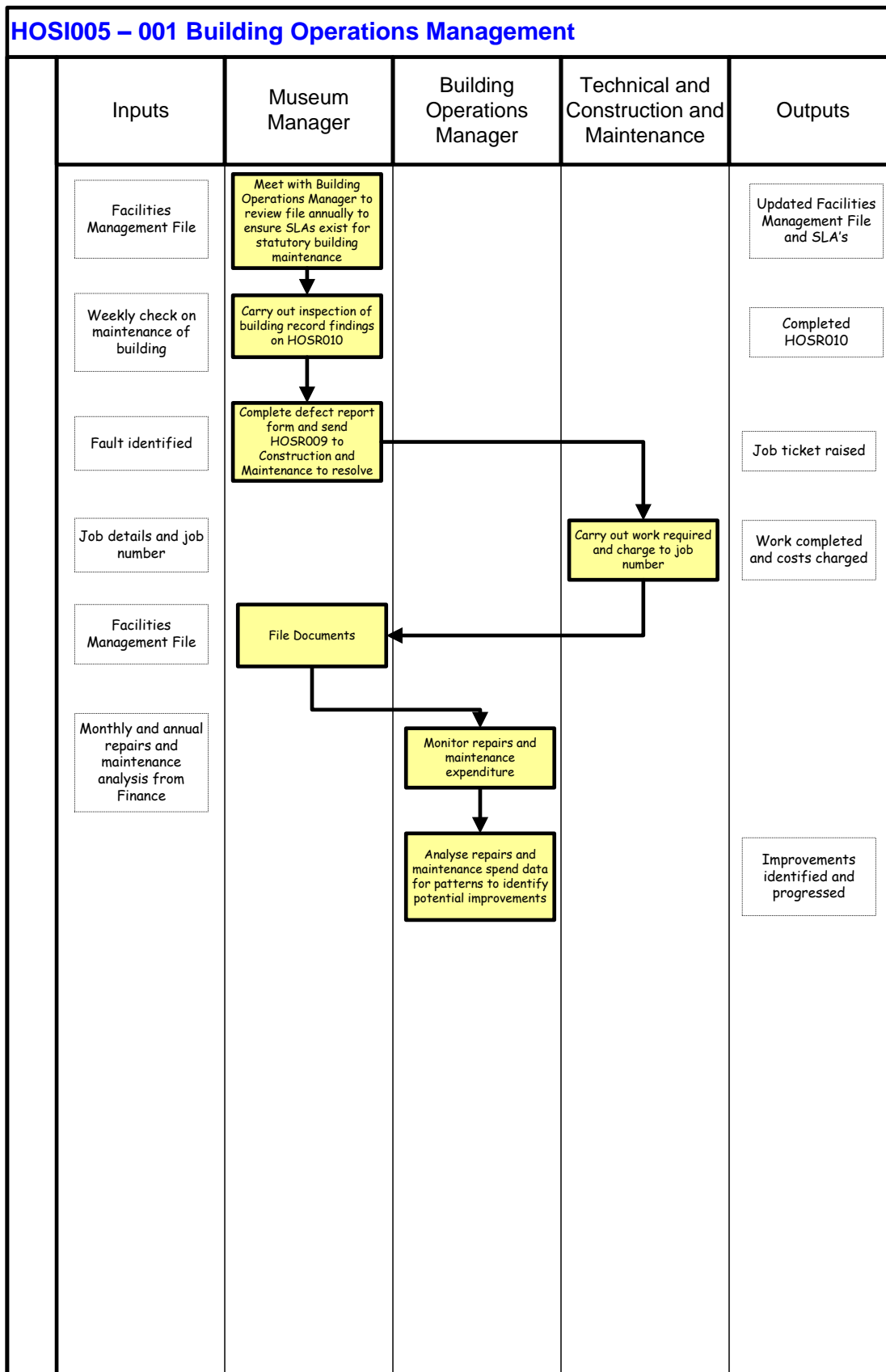
- 10.1. The museum employs four full time museum professionals for the effective delivery of the service. The Museum Manager Curator oversees the strategic and operational management of the museum service in addition to curatorial duties such as collections management, exhibitions and overseeing the Ken Hoole Study Centre. The Learning and Access Officer develops and delivers the learning programme for the museum including being responsible for all access issues relating to the museum. The Collections and Learning Assistant assists the Manager Curator with collections management, enquiries, exhibitions and the running of the Ken Hoole Study Centre as well as helping to deliver educational workshops with the Learning and Access Officer. The museum also employs an Events and Administration Officer who organises and delivers all of the museum's events as well as overseeing the retail offer at the museum and handling all of the museum's administrative duties. The museum employs three Visitor Assistants (3 x 0.51) and a pool of casual Visitor Assistants to work front of house.
- 10.2. The museum uses volunteers to assist (not replace) staff with activities such as cataloguing, guided tours etc. although the number of volunteers has greatly reduced since the Covid pandemic.
- 10.3. The budget for utilities lies with Corporate Landlord.
- 10.4. The museum generates income through admissions, room hire, venue hire (weddings), monetary donations, retail and events.
- 10.5. The museum's budget for 2022/23 can be found in *Appendices 12.2*.

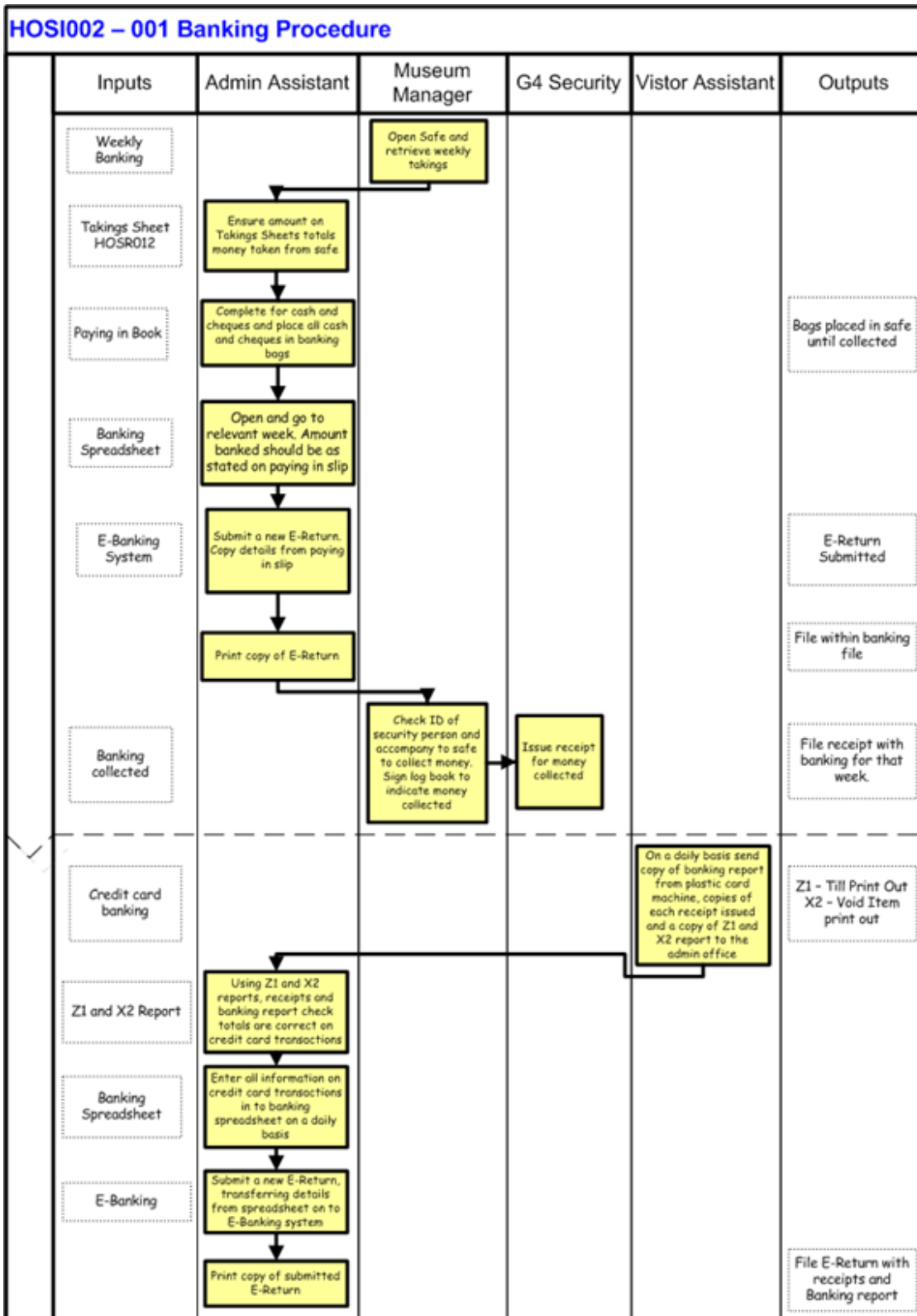
## 11. Review Date

The Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum Forward Plan will be reviewed annually with the first review taking place in May 2023.

## 12. Appendices

### 12.1 Examples of museum's procedures





## 12.2 Museum budget for 2022-23

Costc	Costc(T)	Account	Account(T)	Approved Budget
90871	Railway Museum	1000	Basic Pay	174,360.00
90871	Railway Museum	1050	Nic Employers	13,250.00
90871	Railway Museum	1060	Superann `Ers	33,300.00
90871	Railway Museum	1707	Employee Training Course Costs	1,000.00
90871	Railway Museum	1710	Employee Related Insurance	2,360.00
90871	Railway Museum	2015	Non-Domestic Rates	34,630.00
90871	Railway Museum	2021	Building Repairs And Maintenance	3,230.00
90871	Railway Museum	2027	Soft Landscaping	610.00
90871	Railway Museum	2811	Responsive - Grounds Maint	0.00
90871	Railway Museum	3001	Casual Mileage	220.00
90871	Railway Museum	3016	Officers - Other	540.00
90871	Railway Museum	4004	Commissions & Other Services	770.00
90871	Railway Museum	4009	Equipment	2,310.00
90871	Railway Museum	4028	Licences	150.00
90871	Railway Museum	4030	Marketing & Advertising	16,000.00
90871	Railway Museum	4031	Materials	3,070.00
90871	Railway Museum	4037	Professional Fees & Consultancy	10,260.00
90871	Railway Museum	4043	Security Services	1,700.00
90871	Railway Museum	4045	Stationery	810.00
90871	Railway Museum	4046	Subscriptions	340.00
90871	Railway Museum	4048	Telephone Costs	570.00
90871	Railway Museum	4050	Postages	650.00
90871	Railway Museum	4072	Misc. Insurances	4,320.00
90871	Railway Museum	4083	DBS Checks	100.00
90871	Railway Museum	4094	Printer Consolidation Charge	1,000.00
90871	Railway Museum	4507	Ppe Clothing & Equipment	750.00
90871	Railway Museum	4815	Production Costs	3,340.00
90871	Railway Museum	4850	Other Supplies & Services	1,390.00
90871	Railway Museum	7014	Printing	0.00
90871	Railway Museum	7801	Man & Admin Allocation	830.00
90871	Railway Museum	8002	Leasing Charges	470.00
90871	Railway Museum	8004	Principal Repayments	590.00
90871	Railway Museum	9218	Fees & Charges General (Standard Rated Vat)	-220.00
90871	Railway Museum	9263	Reports Photocopying, Etc(Standard Rated Vat)	-220.00
90871	Railway Museum	9271	Admissions	-46,030.00
90871	Railway Museum	9803	Other Income(Outside Scope Vat)	0.00
90871	Railway Museum	9816	Contributions/Donations	0.00
90871	Railway Museum	9838	Rents, Wayleaves (Outside Scope Vat)	-3,720.00
90871	Railway Museum	9839	Lettings (Standard Rated Vat)	-40.00
<b>90871</b>	<b>Railway Museum</b>			<b>262,690.00</b>
90872	Railway Education	4009	Equipment	400.00
90872	Railway Education	4031	Materials	1,000.00
90872	Railway Education	4037	Professional Fees & Consultancy	6,260.00
90872	Railway Education	4815	Production Costs	0.00
90872	Railway Education	4850	Other Supplies & Services	600.00
90872	Railway Education	9012	Other Government Grants	0.00
90872	Railway Education	9816	Contributions/Donations	-2,000.00
90872	Railway Education	9926	Other Grants (Outside Scope Vat)	0.00
<b>90872</b>	<b>Railway Education</b>			<b>6,260.00</b>
90874	MUSEUM TRADING	4037	Professional Fees & Consultancy	0.00
90874	MUSEUM TRADING	4805	Items For Resale	6,240.00
90874	MUSEUM TRADING	9928	Sales - Goods (Standard Rated Vat)	-7,910.00
<b>90874</b>	<b>MUSEUM TRADING</b>			<b>-1,670.00</b>
90875	Railway Museum Catering	4013	Food & Drink Costs	0.00
90875	Railway Museum Catering	4045	Stationery	0.00
90875	Railway Museum Catering	4054	Catering Provisions	1,770.00
90875	Railway Museum Catering	4136	Catering Consumables (Cutlery Etc)	0.00
90875	Railway Museum Catering	9940	Catering Income (Standard Rated Vat)	-3,000.00
<b>90875</b>	<b>Railway Museum Catering</b>			<b>-1,230.00</b>
				<b>266,050.00</b>

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**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council

# **Collections Management Framework 2022 - 2027**

Head of Steam – Darlington Railway Museum

Collections Development Policy and accompanying Documentation,  
Loans and Conservation Policies and Plans.

**Leona White-Hannant**  
**Museum Manager Curator**  
**March 2022**

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## Collections Development Policy 2022-2027

**Name of museum:** Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum

**Name of governing body:** Darlington Borough Council

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:**

**Policy review procedure:** The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. *Arts Council England* will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** March 2027

### 1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

#### 1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:

Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum aims to delight all its visitors in the town that is the birthplace of the modern railway.

The museum's **mission** is to explain the significance of Darlington to railways, and of railways to Darlington.

The museum's **responsibility** is to preserve for future generations, and to make available for education and enjoyment, the unique historical collections it holds in trust.

The museum's **objective** is to make, in relation to the funding it receives, a worthwhile contribution to community development and economic prosperity in Darlington.

#### 1.2. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

#### 1.3. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

#### 1.4. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

- 1.5. The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.6. The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift or bequest, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 1.7. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons

## **2. History of the collections**

- 2.1. The museum was opened in 1975 to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, when the campaigning of enthusiasts and community activists resulted in the preservation of the passenger station. The museum opened as 'Darlington Railway Museum' and was originally administered by a charitable trust.
- 2.2. The Trust Collection consisted of a combination of donations, loans from private donors (short-term and indefinite) and loans from local and national museums. In 1985 responsibility for the running of the museum, and the management of the collections, passed to Darlington Borough Council.
- 2.3. The collection consisted of railway items relating to the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR) and the railways and railway industry of the north-east region. They also collected generic railway items not specifically associated with north-east England.
- 2.4. Any items donated after this date belong to the museum and the council. Any items donated prior to this date remain the property of the Trust (which has yet to be wound up despite numerous attempts by the council). These items (along with the loans taken in by the Trust) are regarded as Trust Loans.
- 2.5. Under the management of the council the museum continued to accept donations and loans of railway related artefacts not associated with north-east England, in particular generic railway ephemera, magazines and published material as well as the more relevant S&DR and north-eastern artefacts.
- 2.6. The museum has a number of artefacts on loan from the National Railway Museum including locomotives Locomotion No 1, Derwent, Tennant 1463 and Q7 901, a third class carriage and artefacts relating to the S&DR.
- 2.7. In the 1990's the town's local history museum, Tubwell Row Museum, closed its doors. All artefacts relating to the railways and/or Darlington were transferred to the museum.
- 2.8. In 1992 the collection of Ken Hoole, a renowned railway enthusiast, was transferred to the museum from Durham County Council so that the museum could open a research room called

the Ken Hoole Study Centre. The collection made up the bulk of the research material along with archival material from the museums own collection.

- 2.9. From approximately 2000 the museum's *Collections Development Policy* was updated to only accept material relating to the S&DR and the development and operation of railways in north-east England.
- 2.10. In 2004 the museum received a bequest from local railway enthusiast John Mallon. The John Mallon Collection included a unique collection of railway photographs mapping different railway lines in the region, plus a large collection of railway ephemera collected by Mr Mallon during his time working on the railways. The collection is jointly owned by the museum and the North Eastern Railway Association (NERA).

### 3. An overview of current collections

- 3.1. The museum collection consists of **33,135** accessioned artefacts or groups of artefacts.
- 3.2. The museum's existing collections are almost wholly limited to material illustrating the development and operation of railways in north-east England. Although regional in scope, in some areas they are of national importance because of their association with the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR), as the world's first modern railway.
- 3.3. The existing collections cover:
  - the S&DR and its associated lines
  - the North Eastern Railway (NER)
  - the London & North Eastern Railway (LNER)
  - British Railways (BR)
  - the railway manufacturing industry in Darlington
  - industrial railways in Darlington
- 3.4. The material held includes:
  - archives, maps, photographs and printed ephemera
  - one locomotive and two wagons
  - items used in railway operating
  - 'branded' items associated with the railway infrastructure
  - models and toys
- 3.5. The museum also holds the largest existing collection of Darlington ceramic commemorative ware, and a small group of local history curiosities and bygones in the form of the remaining collections of the former Tubwell Row Museum.
- 3.6. The museum holds a large archive of railway related ephemera, maps and photographs from two donors in particular: Ken Hoole and John Mallon.

- 3.7. Although not strictly 'collections' in the traditional sense, in that they are fixed structures in their original locations, there is an argument that the most important items the museum holds are the buildings from the occupation of the site known by the S&DR as 'North Road'. These at present comprise North Road Goods Station, built in 1833 and extended in 1839-40; the Goods Agent's Offices, built in 1840; Darlington (North Road) Station, built in 1841-42 and extended in 1853, 1856, 1860, 1864, 1872 and 1876; and Hopetown Carriage Works, built in 1853. The museum also holds the site of the demolished Kitching's Foundry, developed between 1831 and 1855 and effectively the S&DR's locomotive works until 1863.
- 3.8. The museum also maintains a reference library of published texts relevant to the history and development of railways, with particular reference, although not restricted to, north-east England.

#### **4. Themes and priorities for future collecting**

- 4.1. The museum recognises its responsibility, when collecting new items, to ensure that collections care, documentation and use will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collections arrangements (see Documentation Policy and Care and Conservation Policy). Where the acquisition of an item would have significant financial implications, either in terms of purchase price or future preservation, the matter will be referred to the Assistant Director of Services Group for approval.
- 4.2. The primary objective in collections development will be to acquire material, by donation or purchase, which can document and interpret the following themes:
- The evolution and significance of the North Road site and its buildings.
  - The origins, development and historical significance of the S&DR.
  - The history and significance of S&DR 0-4-0 No 1 Locomotion, particularly the story of its iconisation by railway company publicity and the contribution this made to the birth of railway preservation.
  - The history of Darlington as a railway manufacturing town, with particular reference to North Road Locomotive Works, 'Stivvies' (Robert Stephenson & Co), Faverdale Wagon Works, and their products.
  - The impact of railway transport and haulage on the economic and social development of Darlington and its surrounding area, including the town's industrial railways.
  - The role of railways in popular culture and leisure, through such things as toys and model engineering.
- 4.3. The museum will continue to add to its collection of Darlington ceramic commemorative ware, as appropriate items are donated. It will also, as a home of last resort, be open to the acquisition of particularly significant individual items relating to the town's local history.
- 4.4. In relation to archives, maps, photographs and printed ephemera, the museum will continue to collect material generally relevant to the development and history of railways in north-east England. It will also continue to purchase, or to accept gifts of, relevant books and other publications for addition to its reference library.

- 4.5. The museum will collect relevant items from any historical period. In practice, and with the possible exception of significant local history items, few potential acquisitions are likely to be older than 1800. Where appropriate, particularly in the field of locally relevant 'branded' railway ephemera, the museum will selectively collect contemporary material.
- 4.6. In terms of geographical area, the museum's primary interest will be the Borough of Darlington and its dependent and surrounding area in terms of railway operating and use. This will be deemed to include the routes of the S&DR and its associated companies in their entirety, and the route over Stainmore.
- 4.7. The museum will also selectively collect items associated with the NER, the LNER and BR, provenanced to the area covered by the pre-1974 counties of Durham and the North Riding of Yorkshire, where these illustrate aspects of railway history that are not covered by more locally provenanced material.
- 4.8. The museum will only collect large structural items or historic buildings (such as stations or signal boxes) where these can specifically contribute towards the delivery of the Museum Forward Plan or are functionally required for railway operating purposes. No large structural items or buildings will be acquired unless, on an item by item basis, it has been ascertained in advance that their erection and use on the site would be acceptable under planning legislation and to English Heritage.
- 4.9. Since its establishment in 1975, the museum has traditionally depended upon loans, from other museums or heritage railway organisations and from private individuals, for the great majority of the locomotives, carriages and wagons that have made up the core of its displays. As permitted by available opportunities and resources, the museum would like to significantly reduce the extent of its dependence on loans by acquiring its own collection of railway vehicles relevant to its mission and stated interpretive objectives.
- 4.10. The museum recognises that the collection only represents a small portion of society and includes limited histories of women, people living with disabilities and those from a minority background. These stories exist and the museum will seek to actively collect them through traditional collecting and contemporary collecting in order to rebalance the histories within the collection.
- 4.11. The museum will seek to collect a representative selection of locomotives built in Darlington, both to show how railway motive power has developed chronologically and the part the town once played in the manufacture of such locomotives.
- 4.12. A number of locomotives built elsewhere but used at Darlington industrial sites do survive in heritage railway ownership. Should opportunities arise, the museum would wish to acquire single examples of steam, diesel and electric locomotives used in Darlington industry. At the date of adoption of this Policy, the museum owns no passenger carriages.
- 4.13. The movement of goods by rail had a significant impact on the urban and economic development of Darlington, and on life in the area. Therefore the museum will seek to acquire a small selection of appropriate vehicles, to illustrate how railway travel in the area has changed over time.

- 4.14. The museum will seek to collect a small, representative, selection of wagons of different types, to illustrate the range and nature of railway goods traffic in the past.

## **5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

- 5.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.
- 5.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.
- 5.3 The museum will undertake rationalisation of the collection where:
- The artefact does not match the current *Collections Development Policy*.
  - It is a duplicate of another artefact in the collection.
  - The artefact is unprovenanced (i.e. does not have sufficient background information to provide context).
  - It is too badly damaged or decayed to be worthy of retention, or was not in the first instance actually of museum quality.
  - Its ongoing retention would represent a threat to the health or safety of museum staff or members of the public.
  - Would be more appropriate to another museum or organisation's collection.

## **6 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items**

- 6.1 The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

## **7 Collecting policies of other museums**

- 7.1 The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.
- 7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):
- National Railway Museum (York & Shildon)
  - Beamish, the North of England Open Air Museum
  - Tyne & Wear Museums Service
  - Hartlepool Borough Council
  - Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council

- Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
- Middlesbrough Borough Council
- Durham County Council

Specific reference is made to the following Heritage Railways:

- Tanfield Railway
- Bowes Railway
- North Yorkshire Moors Railway
- Weardale Railway
- Wensleydale Railway

The museum also acknowledges the collecting activities of Darlington Library in the field of local history, and will work with the Library to ensure that significant material is preserved in the most appropriate place.

## 8 Archival holdings

- 8.1 The museum holds a large collection of archival material including photographs, ephemera, maps and plans, and locomotive diagrams. The majority of the acquisitions that the museum receives are archival in nature and we will continue to collect relevant material for our collection. Archival material is available to the public for research purposes and is a much used resource.

## 9 Acquisition

- 9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

All acquisitions must be approved by a member of the Collections Team (either the Manager Curator or the Collections and Learning Assistant). No other member of staff may approve an acquisition in their absence. All acquisitions must comply with the museum's current *Collections Development Policy*. Where the acquisition of an item would have significant financial implications, either in terms of purchase price or future preservation, the matter will be referred to the Assistant Director of Services Group for approval.

- 9.2 The museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

- 9.3 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

## **10 Human remains**

10.1 The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

## **11 Biological and geological material**

11.1 The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

## **12 Archaeological material**

12.1 The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

## **13 Exceptions**

13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

## **14 Spoliation**

14.1 The museum will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

## **15 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains**

15.1 The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean

that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

## **16 Disposal procedures**

- 16.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 16.2 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 16.3 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 16.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, or as a last resort - destruction.
- 16.5 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.
- 16.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 16.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 16.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.9 The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may

consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

- 16.10 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England.
- 16.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12 Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

#### *Disposal by exchange*

- 16.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

#### *Disposal by destruction*

- 16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 16.16 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
- 16.17 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.
- 16.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.



## **Documentation Policy 2022-2027**

**Name of museum:** Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum

**Name of governing body:** Darlington Borough Council

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:**

**Policy review procedure:** The documentation policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. *Arts Council England* will be notified of any changes to the documentation policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** March 2027

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The museum's collections consist of archival material, held within the Ken Hoole Study Centre, display objects within the Museum exhibition rooms and platforms, and artefacts and archive material held within the reserve collection housed in the museum storerooms.
- 1.2 The museum's collection department currently consists of one full-time Manager Curator, one full-time Collections and Learning Assistant and a small team of volunteers.
- 1.3 The maintenance of information about all artefacts deposited in the museum, to the SPECTRUM Standard, is a minimum requirement.
- 1.4 The acquisition and disposal of objects from the collections is covered by the current version of the Collections Development Policy.
- 1.5 Detailed operational guidelines for documentation procedures, in order to meet the SPECTRUM standard, can be found in the museum's Documentation Procedures manual.

### **2 Aims of the Documentation Policy**

The aims of the Head of Steam Museum Documentation Policy are that for every artefact in its collection:

- 2.1 The museum has documentary proof of legal title, which also meets ethical standards.
- 2.2 There is an accurate entry in the Accessions Register.
- 2.3 A unique accession number is allocated and the artefact is marked or labelled with this number.
- 2.4 There is an up to date location (recorded on MODES).
- 2.5 There is a strong link between all associated documentation.
- 2.6 All documentation meets SPECTRUM standards.

### **3 Documentation Policy**

- 3.1 The museum will ensure that these aims are met for all new acquisitions and will aim to achieve them for all artefacts already in the museum collection.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all collections within the museum, including artefacts transferred from Tubwell Row Museum.
- 3.3 This policy also refers to every artefact on loan to the museum, with the exception of accessioning and marking (although temporary labelling is permitted).
- 3.4 The museum will on the advice of the senior museum professional, and where funds allow, ensure that the electronic system used to catalogue the collection is suitable for the job and will still be accessible in the future.
- 3.5 The museum will save all electronic records on the Council's networked system and will be backed up on remote server offsite.
- 3.6 The museum will store museum accession registers in a fire-proof safe.
- 3.7 The museum will ensure that security copies are made of all museum accession registers.
- 3.8 Only suitably trained museum staff or volunteers will be responsible for carrying out documentation procedures.
- 3.9 The museum will aim to make information about the collection accessible to the public through on-line catalogues.
- 3.10 This policy is to be read in conjunction with the museum's Collections Development Policy and the Care and Conservation Policy.
- 3.11 The Documentation Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is **March 2027**.
- 3.12 A Documentation Plan for the next five years will accompany this policy.



## Care and Conservation Policy 2022-2027

**Name of museum:** Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum

**Name of governing body:** Darlington Borough Council

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:**

**Policy review procedure:** The care and conservation policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. *Arts Council England* will be notified of any changes to the care and conservation policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** March 2027

### 1 Introduction

1.1 Head of Steam Museum's statement of purpose highlights the museum's responsibility to preserve the collections for future generations:

*The museum's **responsibility** is to **preserve** for future generations, and to make available for education and enjoyment, the unique historical collections it holds in trust.*

1.2 The Museums Association Code of Ethics states that museums have a duty to:

*'**maintain** and develop collections for current and future generations'*

1.3 Head of Steam Museum does not employ a conservator. However, the Manager Curator has access to advice from a conservator/collections care adviser.

1.4 The museum is housed in a Grade II listed building, which was previously a railway station. The collections consist of industrial collections, social history collections and archive collections.

1.5 The Care and Conservation Policy is based on a combination of preventative conservation (measures to slow down or minimise deterioration of museum artefacts) and remedial conservation (measure which involve treatments to stabilise or improve the condition of an artefact).

1.6 The Care and Conservation Policy is to be read in conjunction with the museum's Forward Plan, Collections Development Policy, Documentation Policy and Emergency Manual.

1.7 The Care and Conservation Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is **March 2027**.

1.8 A Care and Conservation Plan for the next five years will accompany this policy.

## **2 Aims of the Care and Conservation Policy**

The aims of the Head of Steam Museum Care and Conservation Policy are that for every artefact in its collection (in store, on display or on loan to/from) the museum will:

2.1 Take steps to slow down deterioration and prevent damage to artefacts.

2.2 Provide systems and equipment that monitor the environment, the artefacts and the buildings they are stored in.

2.3 Control and improve the environment, the artefacts and the buildings they are stored in.

2.4 Regularly seek professional advice from a conservator or collection care advisor.

2.5 Ensure that any conservator or conservation practice that is contracted to provide advice or services is included on the Conservation Register operated by the Institute of Conservation (ICON).

2.6 Ensure that all members of staff working with the museum collection are aware of and follow all policies and procedures.

## **3 Collections Conditions Overview**

3.1 Head of Steam Museum will survey and visually inspect the conditions of the collections in order to identify areas for improvement in line with best practice as defined by 'Benchmarks in Collections Care'. Head of Steam Museum will aim to meet, as a minimum, the 'basic level' requirement of Benchmarks. This Policy will be supported by a Care and Conservation Plan.

## **4 Preventative Conservation**

4.1 The Head of Steam Museum is situated in a Grade II listed building owned by Network Rail and leased by Darlington Borough Council until 2174. The building is maintained by Darlington Borough Council. Museum staff are responsible for regularly inspecting the building and ensuring that it is suitably maintained, undertaking repairs as required. The following systems are implemented to safeguard the collection:

- Building Maintenance
- Electrical Maintenance
- Intruder Alarms
- Fire and Evacuation Systems
- Building Maintenance Systems

- CCTV Systems
- Overnight Security Firm

#### 4.2 Environmental Monitoring

- Head of Steam Museum will monitor and record the environment (temperature, relative humidity and light levels) of the exhibition and storage areas using continuous recording systems and hand held devices.
- The museum will analyse the results of the environmental monitoring and take action to control and improve the environment where necessary (subject to funding availability).
- The museum will monitor, manage and eliminate pests.

#### 4.3 Environmental Control

Head of Steam Museum will store and display collections in a managed environment that minimises their rate of deterioration, using the following control factors and methods:

- Temperature: 18- 25 degrees centigrade
- Relative Humidity: 40-60% RH with less than a 10% fluctuation in any 24 hour period (mixed collections)
- Visible Light: 50 – 250 lux, depending on the light sensitivity of the object
- Storage: where practicable stored collections will be protected from dust using inert boxes, crates, covered racking or covered pallets
- Display: where appropriate, objects on display will be cased and the internal case environments tailored to suit the objects within.

#### 4.4 Housekeeping

- Housekeeping programmes will be established and followed in line with benchmarking action plans.
- Staff and volunteers will be trained to clean display areas in a way that will not damage the collections. Dry cleaning methods will be favoured.
- New acquisitions and loans will be quarantined pending full inspection.
- Storage and display areas vulnerable to pest attack will be monitored on a monthly basis. Trap contents will be recorded and infestations located and eradicated.

#### 4.5 Handling, movement and transportation of artefacts

- All museum staff will be trained in object handling procedures.
- The movement of large or awkward items will be planned in advance with advice from the Manager Curator.
- All artefacts that are to be transported will be suitably wrapped and protected to avoid damage during movement.
- Items that are to be transported abroad will be accompanied by a courier, who will be either a member of museum staff or a suitably trained individual from another organisation.

#### 4.6 Emergency Planning

- The Emergency Manual will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

### 5 Remedial Conservation

5.1 The museum will allow the basic cleaning of artefacts to be undertaken by suitably trained museum staff only.

5.2 If an artefact requires more advanced treatment the museum will contact a suitably qualified conservator/collections care advisor (e.g. Conservation Advisory Network).

5.3 All treatments will be photographed and documented on MODES and records will be maintained in accordance with SPECTRUM standards.



## **Loans Policy 2022-2027**

**Name of museum:** Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum

**Name of governing body:** Darlington Borough Council

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:**

**Policy review procedure:** The loans policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. *Arts Council England* will be notified of any changes to the loans policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** March 2027

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 From time to time it is appropriate for Head of Steam Museum to borrow items of historical significance from museums, other organisations or private individuals. Comparably, it is also sometimes appropriate for the museum to lend items from its collections.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to regulate the approval and management of both outgoing and incoming loans. In doing so, it seeks to meet two objectives. Firstly, to minimise any risk the Council may face of a claim from a lender alleging that items of their property in the museum's care have been stolen, lost, destroyed or damaged. Secondly, to safeguard items from the museum's own collections loaned to others by ensuring that such items are appropriately cared for by their borrowers.
- 1.3 This Policy follows the procedures for loans outlined in SPECTRUM: the UK Museum Documentation Standard.

### **2 Authority and Responsibility**

- 2.1 The Assistant Director of Services Group, as advised by the Museum Collections Team, will have delegated authority for approving and terminating both incoming and outgoing loans for items of major financial or historical significance, consistent with this Policy.
- 2.2 The Museum Collections Team will be responsible for all other loans as consistent with this Policy.
- 2.3 The following general exceptions to this position are noted:

- Where, in the view of the Council's museum collections team, an incoming loan might involve significant financial implications in terms of its movement or ongoing care; or
- Where, in the view of the Council's museum collections team, the nature of an incoming or outgoing loan might attract an adverse public reaction.

In such circumstances, the prior approval of the Assistant Director of Services Group will be required.

2.4 Responsibility for the security and physical care of incoming loans will be delegated to the Council's museum collections team. Equally, the museum collections team will be regarded as responsible for ensuring that outgoing loans are monitored, and that borrowers are taking all reasonable steps with regard to the security and physical care of items in their possession.

### **3 Outgoing Loans**

3.1 Any item from the museum's collections may, at the discretion of the Assistant Director of Services Group, as advised by the Council's museum collections team, be loaned to an accredited museum, other organisation or private individual provided that:

- The item is not currently required by the museum for public display;
- Appropriate arrangements will be put in place by the borrower for the item's physical care, to safeguard its security, and to insure it against all risks for an agreed value;
- The borrower can provide sound and sufficient justification for wishing to borrow the item; and
- The terms of the loan are recorded in writing over the signatures of authorised representatives of both the museum and the borrower.

3.2 It is accepted that in certain circumstances it may be proper for the museum to actively seek to place an item on loan with another accredited museum, other organisation or private individual.

3.3 By agreement between the parties, the duration of an outgoing loan may be for any stated period up to ten years. Where circumstances have not materially changed on either side, an outgoing loan that has naturally reached the end of its term may be renewed as many times as is felt desirable by both parties, although never for a period exceeding ten years at any one time.

3.4 Where an outgoing loan is to another accredited museum, no financial recompense will be sought, other than that the museum will have the discretion to recharge any costs that it would not otherwise have incurred.

3.5 Where a request for the loan of an item comes from another accredited museum, subject to the provisions of 3.1 above there will be a strong presumption in favour of the request being granted.

3.6 Relevant third parties must ensure that appropriate insurance arrangements covering outgoing loans are in place from the moment the item(s) pass from the museum's custody until the point when responsibility is formally returned to the museum.

- 3.7 When on display or otherwise in the public eye, it will be a condition of all outgoing loans that the borrower should appropriately acknowledge the museum's ownership of the item in question.
- 3.8 There will be a general, although not universal, expectation that borrowers will cover the cost of transport in both directions and any costs associated with the item's care whilst it is in their possession.
- 3.9 There is a general expectation that any concerns about the condition of an item on loan to a third party will be referred immediately back to the museum.
- 3.10 All borrowers will be required to fully indemnify the Council in respect of any claim or health and safety liability that may arise, other than where information that should reasonably have been known to the Council was not effectively communicated to the borrower.
- 3.11 An outgoing loan may be terminated by the Assistant Director of Services Group, as advised by the Council's museum collections team, at any time for breach or with a period of notice to be set out in the loan agreement. However, other than when terminated for breach, where an outgoing loan is terminated early the borrower will be entitled to ask to be indemnified by the Council in respect to part of any costs the borrower incurred in the expectation that the loan would subsist for its duration as originally agreed.

## **4 Incoming Loans**

- 4.1 Subject to 2.2 above, at the discretion of the Assistant Director of Services Group, as advised by the Council's museum collections team the museum may borrow any item deemed relevant to its purposes as set out below, from an accredited museum, other organisation or private individual.
- 4.2 The museum may borrow any item, without restriction, where it is identified as being relevant for inclusion within a temporary exhibition. Other than in making reasonable time allowances for exhibition preparation and disassembly, the duration of such loans will not normally extend beyond the period of the exhibition in question.
- 4.3 The museum may borrow any item covered by its *Collections Development Policy*, or specifically required for comparative purposes, for inclusion in its long-term displays or for research purposes. When such an item is no longer wanted for display or once active research involving it has come to an end, it will normally be returned to its owners as soon as is practicably possible. Any such loan will be for a maximum of ten years at any one time, subject to renewal as necessary by mutual agreement between the parties.
- 4.4 From time to time, the museum may identify items of great individual significance and covered by its *Collections Development Policy*, which are owned by non-museum organisations or private individuals, which the museum would actively seek to acquire on a permanent basis given the opportunity to do so, but of which the owners wish to retain ownership. In such circumstances the Assistant Director of Services Group, as advised by the Council's museum collections team, may authorise the item to be held on loan in storage as well as when required for display. Any such loan will be for a maximum of ten years at any one time, subject to renewal as necessary by mutual

agreement between the parties. However, subject to this specific exclusion, as a general rule the museum will not hold items on loan for long periods unless required for display or active research.

## **5 Operational Items**

- 5.1 This Policy is not intended to apply to circumstances where the museum wishes to borrow or hire an item, including locomotives and other railway vehicles, for operational use rather than because of the item's historical significance. In such circumstances, terms of contract will be agreed between the parties.
- 5.2 However, for the avoidance of doubt, where the museum wishes to borrow an item because of its historical significance and it is also intended that the item should work, this Policy will apply. Other than as set out below, no item may be operated on the museum site unless it is formally on loan to the museum or covered by contractual arrangements as an item of working plant.
- 5.3 An exception to this general rule is noted in relation to locomotives and other railway vehicles being moved around by one of the Council's partner organisations with right of access to the site's internal railway system, solely to meet that organisation's own operational needs and not for public demonstration or display purposes. Items being moved under such circumstances need not be placed on loan with, or hired to, the museum, provided that the organisation in question operates in accordance with the museum's Safety Management System and has insurance cover to the satisfaction of the Council's Insurance Unit.
- 5.4 In all circumstances where an operational locomotive or other vehicle belonging to a third party is present on the site, it will remain the responsibility of the owners, rather than the museum, to arrange steam boiler or pressure vessel inspections and insurances as necessary.
- 5.5 Where the museum hires or, under this Policy borrows, an operational locomotive, the arrangement may (but need not) be made subject to the terms of a Private Owner Agreement in a form recognised by the Heritage Railway Association.

## **6 Insurance**

- 6.1 All incoming loans will be fully covered at an Agreed Value by All Risks insurance cover put in place by the Council, from the moment the item passes into the museum's custody until the point when responsibility is formally returned to the owner or an agreed third party such as a road haulage contractor.

## **7 Maintenance of Records**

- 7.1 The museum will maintain full, detailed records of the current location, condition and agreed value of all incoming and outgoing loans, to the satisfaction of the Council's Insurance Unit. From time to time the Audit Section will make spot checks or undertake a full review of these records.

- 7.2 No less than once every twelve months, an inventory and condition check will be completed for all incoming loans. On an equivalent cycle the museum will check the status of all outgoing loans, making a site visit and visual inspection where appropriate.

## **8 Revision of Policy**

- 8.1 The Loans Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is **March 2027**.



## Documentation Plan 2022-2027

### 1 Target Position

Head of Steam - Darlington Museum will meet the Accreditation standard for Documentation as outlined in Section 2.

We will use the minimum standards for the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures for the following procedures;

- Object Entry
- Loans in
- Acquisition
- Location and movement control
- Cataloguing
- Object exit
- Loans out

We have documentation backlogs in our collections, in particular in store rooms 1 and 4. We will use SPECTRUM minimum standards to bring our records up to the required standard.

### 2 Review of Current Procedures

#### 2.1 Object Entry

- An *Object Entry* form must accompany all items entering the Museum (see appendices for an example of an *Object Entry* form).
- A *Donating Objects to the Museum* leaflet (see appendices) should be given to all persons wishing to donate items to the Museum (also available on the museum website).
- The *Object Entry* form number and details must be recorded in the *Object Entry* form register.
- All relevant sections of the form must be completed, signed and dated. The *Object Entry* form should always include full details of ownership, including rights of information if known.
- A summary description of the objects (numbering them where possible) with any known historical background, including any associated rights (e.g. copyright).
- The reason the objects are entering the museum.

- On completion of the *Object Entry* form the top white copy should immediately go into the *Object Entry* file as the master copy. The second pink copy is given to the donor as a receipt. The third blue copy remains with the artefact(s). If the material is accessioned the blue copy is filed in the Object History file. If the material is returned the blue copy is filed in the Loans In Returned file, a note is made in the *Entry Form* register and the white copy of the *Object Entry* form is signed and dated to record that the objects have left the museum.
- All objects on entering the museum will be stored in Room 5.

## 2.2 Acquisition

- Staff must never accept donations to the museum. Only the Manager Curator and Collections and Learning Assistant may accept items and this is by prior appointment only.
- Each item being offered for donation must comply with the museum's current *Collections Development Policy*. If after consideration the material is considered not appropriate to the Museum Collection, the item will be returned to the owner.
- If the material is being donated to the museum a *Transfer of Title* form must be completed (see appendices for an example of a *Transfer of Title* form).
- The *Transfer of Title* form number and details must be recorded in the *Transfer of Title Form* register. The *Object Entry* number must be recorded on the *Transfer of Title* form and in the *Transfer of Title* register and vice-versa.
- All relevant sections of the form must be completed, signed and dated. The *Transfer of Title* form should always include:
  - Full details of ownership, including rights of information if known.
  - A summary description of the objects (numbering them where possible) with any known historical background, including any associated rights (e.g. copyright).
  - The reason the objects are entering the museum.
- On completion of the *Transfer of Title* form the top white copy should immediately go into the *Transfer of Title* file as the master copy. The second yellow copy is given to the donor as a receipt. The third blue copy remains with the artefact(s). When the material is accessioned the blue copy is filed in the *Object History* file.
- It is the aim of the museum to accession artefacts within a month of donation.
- The artefact will be given its unique accession number; photographed and using MODES entered onto the Museum Catalogue and assigned a permanent location.
- Artefacts should be numbered using the following rules:
  - The number will be prefixed with DARRM (to identify the item belonging to Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum) followed by the year, then followed by the number of the object

- e.g.DARRM:2003.102 (103 will be used to accession the next item).
  - At the start of each year the number of the item will return to 1  
e.g.DARRM:2004.1
  - Suffixes can be added to identify individual items within a group  
e.g.DARRM:2003.102.1  
e.g.DARRM:2003.102.2
  - If an item has several parts to it, for example a teapot, this can be accessioned using the following sequence  
e.g. Teapot (body) DARRM:2003.103a  
e.g. Teapot (lid) DARRM:2003.103b
- The artefact will then be recorded in the museum *Accession Register* using archival quality ink (stored in the Room 5 safe).
- All items must be marked with their accession number either directly onto the artefact or using a label (see appendices for *Object Marking Procedures*).
- A letter of acknowledgement will be sent to the donor.
- The item will then be appropriately wrapped and placed in its new permanent location.
- A security copy of the *Accession Register* will be made as and when required (on completion of a register).
- The MODES database and artefact photographs are stored on the council server and therefore are automatically backed up. However, regular back-ups will be made of both resources on a monthly basis.

### 2.3 Location and Movement Control

- A *Location Movement* ticket must be completed for any object moved from its present location (see appendices for an example of a *Location Movement* ticket).
- Only the Manager Curator and Collections and Learning Assistant are authorised to move or remove items from their location.
- For temporary moves one copy of the ticket must be left in the objects usual location and the second copy should be used to update the catalogue. This can then be filed in the *Temporary Locations* file.
- If the items are re-housed for any length of time, for example exhibition use, the new location should be documented in the object file under the TEMPORARY\_LOCATION field on the MODES catalogue.
- For permanent moves record the move as permanent on the *Location Movement* ticket. One copy of the ticket should be used to update the catalogue and filed in the *Object History* file (or disposed of). The second copy can be disposed of.

- If the object is given a new permanent location, the information must be documented in the object file under PERMANENT\_LOCATION field on the MODES catalogue.

## 2.4 Cataloguing

- Items should be catalogued as soon as possible after accessioning. The museum aims to catalogue items at the same time as they are accessioned, within a month of donation.
- Cataloguing should only be carried out by a trained museum professional or volunteer under supervision of the Manager Curator or the Collections and Learning Assistant.
- Catalogue information is held on the MODES computer database and should be accompanied by a photograph of the object.
- The minimum amount of information that should be catalogued is:
  - Accession number
  - Simple name
  - Number of items/parts
  - Brief physical description
  - Acquisition method, date and source material
  - Location information
  - Reference to available images
  - Recorder
- Where possible the following information should also be catalogued:
  - Title
  - Full name
  - Classification information
  - Field collection information
  - Production information
  - Association information
  - Valuation
  - Entry number
- The MODES database and artefact photographs are stored on the council server and therefore are automatically backed up.

## 2.5 Object Exit

- For details of who can authorise the exit of objects please consult the *Loans Policy* and the *Collections Development Policy*.
- An *Object Exit* form must be completed for all items leaving the museum (see appendices for an example of an *Object Exit* form). The *Object Exit* form must include:
  - Removers and/or Recipients name and address
  - Contact telephone number
  - Reason for exit
  - Return date (if appropriate)

- DARRM number of the object
  - Description of the object(s)
  - Condition of object(s)
  - Insurance Valuation
  - If the object(s) are to be returned
- On completion of the *Object Exit* form the top white copy should immediately go into the *Object Exit* file as the master copy. The second yellow copy is given to the recipient as a receipt. If the items are on loan the third blue copy is filed in the *Loans Out Active* file. If the material is to be permanently removed from the collection the blue copy is filed in the *Object History* file.
- The *Object Exit* form number and details must be recorded in the *Object Exit Form* register, along with the return date (if appropriate).
- If the material is returned the white and yellow copy of the *Object Exit* form should be signed and dated by the Museum Manager Curator or Collections and Learning Assistant in recognition of having received the item(s) back in satisfactory condition (subject to later detailed examination). Both the recipient (yellow) and the museum (white) will keep their respected parts of the form for receipt. If the items were on loan the third blue copy is filed in the *Loans Out Returned* file.

## 2.6 Loans In

- Loans will only be accepted within the Museum if they comply with the *Loans Policy*. Only in exceptional circumstances will items be accepted as a loan and will usually only be accepted for exhibition displays.
- An *Object Entry* form must be completed, signed and dated by one of the museum collections team and the person who has loaned the artefact (see appendices for an example of an *Object Entry* form). The form must include:
  - The owner's name and address
  - Length of the loan (usually from one to ten years)
  - The term PERMANENT LOAN must not be used.
  - Any particular terms of the loan
  - Description of object(s)
  - Condition of object(s)
  - Insurance Valuation
- On completion of the *Object Entry* form the top white copy should immediately go into the *Object Entry* file as the master copy. The second pink copy is given to the donor as a receipt. The third blue copy is filed in the *Loans In Active* file.
- The *Object Entry* form number and details must be recorded in the *Object Entry Form* register along with the end date of the loan.

- At the end of the loan period when the material is returned the white copy is signed and dated by both parties. The blue copy is filed in the *Loans In Returned* file and a note is made in the *Entry Form* register.
- The previous loan procedure within the Museum was to add the item to the catalogue, giving the item a DARRM number followed by /L. The item was then added to the accessions register. Loan objects must now **not** be added to the accession register.
- For loans taken into the museum using the old procedures: When the loan object exits the Museum, all records must be altered. An *Object Exit* form must be completed and a copy attached to the loan agreement (if there is one). The date of exit must be added to the MODES catalogue and the record moved to the *Returned* file.

## 2.7 Loans Out

- The Assistant Director of Services Group, as advised by the Museum Collections Team, will have delegated authority for approving and terminating both incoming and outgoing loans for items of major financial or historical significance, consistent with this Policy.
- The museum collections team will be responsible for all other loans as consistent with the *Loans Policy*.
- An *Object Exit* form must be completed for all items leaving the Museum on loan and must be accompanied by the *Loan Agreement* which includes the *Conditions of Loan* (see appendices for an example of an *Object Exit* form, *Loan Agreement* and *Conditions of Loan*). The *Object Exit* form must include:
  - Removers and/or Recipients name and address
  - Contact telephone number
  - Location of the Loan
  - Period of Loan (start and end date)
  - DARRM number of the object
  - Description of the object(s)
  - Condition of object(s)
  - Insurance Valuation
  - Any particular terms of the loan
- On completion of the *Object Exit* form the top white copy should immediately go into the *Object Exit* file as the master copy. The second yellow copy is given to the recipient as a receipt. The third blue copy is filed in the *Loans Out Active* file.
- The *Object Exit* form number and details must be recorded in the *Object Exit Form* register along with the end date of the loan.
- Details of the outgoing loan must be added to the relevant file on the MODES catalogue database under the LOAN\_OUT field.

- At the end of the loan period when the material is returned the white and yellow copy of the *Object Exit* form should be signed and dated by the Museum Manager Curator or Collections and Learning Assistant in recognition of having received the item(s) back in satisfactory condition (subject to later detailed examination). Both the RECIPIENT and MUSEUM will keep their respected parts of the form for receipt.
- The blue copy is filed in the *Loans Out Returned* file and a note is made in the *Object Exit Form* register. The date of return must be added to the MODES catalogue.

### 3 Retrospective Documentation

#### 3.1 Background

- The museum opened in 1975 and was originally administered by a charitable trust. The Trust Collection consisted of a combination of donations, loans from private donors (short-term and indefinite) and loans from local and national museums. In 1985 responsibility for the running of the museum, and the management of the collections, passed to Darlington Borough Council. Any items donated after this date belong to the museum and the council. Any items donated prior to this date remain the property of the Trust (which has yet to be wound up despite numerous attempts by the council). These items (along with the loans taken in by the Trust) are regarded as Trust Loans.
- From 1990 all artefacts donated to the museum were given an accession number. At the same time a retrospective documentation project commenced to accession artefacts donated to the museum prior to 1990 and to identify any Trust Loans.
- In 2012 the museum has underwent a change in staffing. The Curator's post was merged with that of the Manager in 2013 (becoming the Manager Curator). This meant that the Curator's time was taken away from the collections department to focus on the management of the museum. In 2015 a Collections and Learning Assistant was appointed and since this time a considerable amount of progress has been achieved with regards to the documentation backlog.
- Since the last return in 2016, progress continued until March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the closure of the museum for two periods, March to June 2020 and November to May 2021. With no access to collections during this time, the planned milestones in the 2016-2021 plan were not reached.
- Unfortunately not all artefacts donated to the museum from 1975 to 2009 (when the current Curator was appointed) have been formally accessioned and catalogued as part of the museum collection, in line with SPECTRUM and Accreditation Standard procedures.
- As the collection has been assembled on an ad hoc basis, with little consideration of a Collections Development Policy, an assessment will need to be made of the suitability of items for the collection ahead of accessioning.

- This procedure has been written using the guidance in the Collections Trust SPECTRUM Advice Sheet *Retrospective Documentation and Making an Inventory*  
[http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk/images/documents/c1/a210/f6/Retrospective\\_documentation.pdf](http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk/images/documents/c1/a210/f6/Retrospective_documentation.pdf)

### 3.2 Aim

- To complete a basic inventory of all museum collection items in order to:
  - Make decisions about retention of items for the collection, in line with the museum's *Collections Development Policy*.
  - Gain a better understanding of the scope of the collection.
  - Match any existing documentation (e.g. entry forms, correspondence) against the inventoried items.
  - Identify Trust Loans and other loans that require termination so that artefacts can be returned to their owners.

### 3.3 Procedure

- Work systematically through the museum where collections are held to record each item or group of items directly on to the collections management database, MODES Complete.
- Where an object (or group of objects) does not have an existing number, assign a temporary number using the number system INV+ running number- i.e. INV1, INV2, INV3- attach a temporary paper label and create a new record on MODES.
- Record the following information on the database record about the item(s)
  - Temporary INV number
  - Simple name
  - Brief description (e.g. no of items)
  - Dimensions
  - Location
  - Date
  - Name of recorder
- On completing the inventory, review the items against existing documentation/ correspondence etc. to ensure that any other information about objects is brought into the system.
- At this point an assessment of what to be retained and disposed of can be made. This must follow the procedures laid out in the *Collections Development Policy*.
- For objects to be retained they should then be accessioned, marked and catalogued, in line with the museum's procedures. (N.B. entry forms are never filled out retrospectively).

### 3.4 Retrospective Documentation Action Plan

	Action	Timescale	Resources
1	<b>Documentation Stage 1</b>  All procedures are in place.	Complete	
2	<b>Documentation Stage 2</b>  Inventory work is currently ongoing as described above for the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store Room 1</li> <li>• Store Room 2</li> <li>• Store Room 3</li> <li>• Store Room 4</li> <li>• Store Room 5</li> <li>• Store Room 7</li> <li>• Store Room 22</li> </ul>	December 2022 December 2022 Complete December 2022 December 2022 Complete Complete	Collections Team Volunteers
3	<b>Documentation Stage 3</b>  Discrepancy checking of the stage 2 inventory against existing paperwork for the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store Room 1</li> <li>• Store Room 2</li> <li>• Store Room 3</li> <li>• Store Room 4</li> <li>• Store Room 5</li> <li>• Store Room 7</li> <li>• Store Room 22</li> </ul>	December 2023 December 2023 December 2023 December 2023 December 2023 Complete Complete	Collections Team Volunteers
4	<b>Documentation Stage 4</b>  Complete acquisition and cataloguing procedures for inventoried items in the identified backlog for the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store Room 1</li> <li>• Store Room 2</li> <li>• Store Room 3</li> <li>• Store Room 4</li> <li>• Store Room 5</li> <li>• Store Room 7</li> <li>• Store Room 22</li> </ul>	December 2027 December 2027 December 2027 December 2027 December 2027 Complete Complete	Collections Team Volunteers

A *Documentation Policy* for the next five years will accompany this plan.



## **Care and Conservation Plan 2022-2027**

### **1 Collections Condition Overview**

- 1.1 The museum collection consists of railway related industrial collections, social history and costume items plus an extensive archive collection including ephemera and photographs. Although not strictly 'collections' in the traditional sense, in that they are fixed structures in their original locations, there is an argument that the most important items the museum holds are the buildings from the occupation of the site known by the S&DR as 'North Road'.
- 1.2 The museum currently undertakes a programme of collections care and conservation on a regular basis. The museum uses Benchmarks in Collection Care (version 2.0) to review its collection which enables us to improve the collections care we provide.
- 1.3 The museum staff undertake visual inspections of all artefacts on display and in storage on a regular basis.

### **2 Environmental Monitoring**

- 2.1 The museum ensures that the collection is environmentally monitored for temperature and humidity on a weekly basis using data loggers. The information retrieved is downloaded, analysed and recorded. The museum undertakes light monitoring (for UV and lux) on a monthly basis. The results are analysed and recorded. The museum undertakes pest management on a monthly basis. The results are analysed and recorded.

### **3 Environmental Control**

- 3.1 Due to the nature of the building (Grade II\* listed railway station) and the lack of resources it is difficult to implement hi-tech modes of environmental control. The museum endeavours to keep temperature, humidity and light levels within the recommended perimeters. A dehumidifier is available to treat fluctuations in humidity. Light sensitive items are displayed away from damaging light sources and only for short periods. Where practicable artefacts in storage are protected from dust using inert boxes, crates, covered racking or covered pallets. Where appropriate objects on display are cased and the internal case environments are tailored to suit the objects within.

### **4 Provision of a Suitable Building**

- 4.1 The museum building is a Grade II\* listed railway station, which is owned by Network Rail and maintained by Darlington Borough Council.

- 4.2 Darlington Borough Council's Corporate Landlord team undertake the day to day maintenance of the museum building with specialist contractors employed when necessary.

## 5 Housekeeping

- 5.1 The Cleaner and Visitor Assistants undertake general housekeeping on a weekly basis (with advice and guidance from the Curator).
- 5.2 The Visitor Assistants monitor the artefacts on display during the daily duties and notify the Curator if they notice any issues relating to the artefact on display.
- 5.3 The buildings on-site are checked on a weekly basis and any maintenance issues are reported to the Museum Manager so that they can be rectified.
- 5.4 Housekeeping is of the highest importance since the introduction of a café area within the museum exhibition area in 2012. All staff are aware of the importance of reporting any pest sightings to the Curator. All vulnerable areas are monitored with pest traps.

## 6 Remedial Conservation

- 6.1 Priorities for remedial conservation will be identified during the inventory stage of the Documentation Plan (Documentation Stage 2) and /or if artefacts will be required for exhibition.
- 6.2 If an artefact requires remedial conservation the museum will contact a suitably qualified conservator/collections care advisor (e.g. Conservation Advisory Network).

## 7 Care and Conservation Action Plan 2022-2027

Subject	Aim	Solution	Deadline
Collections Condition Overview	To ensure that all artefacts are condition checked and conservation undertaken where necessary.	Condition check all artefacts on display.	Yearly
		Condition check all artefacts in storage during collections inventory (see <i>Documentation Plan</i> ).	December 2022 (Every five years)
		Contact a suitably qualified conservator/collections care advisor for advice and guidance.	Ongoing (as and when required)

Environmental Monitoring	To ensure that all artefacts are accurately environmentally monitored and action taken where required.	Monitor and record temperature and humidity levels.	Weekly
		Monitor and record light levels.	Monthly
		Contact a suitably qualified conservator/collections care advisor for advice and guidance.	Ongoing (as and when required)
		Calibrate environmental monitoring equipment.	Every two years
Building Maintenance	To ensure that the museum building is suitably maintained.	Report any building maintenance issues as soon as they arise.	Ongoing (as and when required)
Housekeeping	To ensure that all of the exhibition and storage areas are clean and pest free.	Undertake cleaning of museum exhibition areas.	Weekly
		Undertake cleaning of museum storage areas.	Monthly
		Monitor and record pest activity.	Monthly
		Contact a suitably qualified conservator/collections care advisor for advice and guidance.	Ongoing (as and when required)
Remedial Conservation	To ensure that all artefacts that require remedial conservation receive it.	Identify artefacts that require conservation.  Investigate funding opportunities to enable conservation of artefacts.	December 2022  Ongoing (as and when required)

A *Care and Conservation Policy* for the next five years will accompany this plan.



**Appendices**

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### Conditions of Loan

1. The artefact shall at all times remain the property of Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum and may require the artefact to be returned immediately at the expense of the Borrower in any of the following circumstances:
  - a. If the Borrower fails to carry out any of the terms of this agreement to the satisfaction of Head of Steam Museum.
  - b. If the artefact becomes surplus to the requirements of the Borrower.
  - c. If the Borrower dies, becomes bankrupt, enters into liquidation or otherwise ceases to exist.
2. The Borrower must nominate a primary individual to whom all correspondence relating to the loan will be addressed. The Borrower must notify Head of Steam Museum immediately of any change in the identity or address of this contact.
3. Reasonable access to the artefact must be allowed by the Borrower to officers of Head of Steam Museum, or such persons as it may nominate, to inspect the artefact and premises where it is housed to ensure that the provisions of this Agreement and the requirements of Head of Steam Museum are being complied with. This shall be at the Borrower's expense.
4. The Borrower may not lend the artefact to any third party nor may the artefact be removed from the specified display premises without the prior written permission of Head of Steam Museum.
5. The Borrower will ensure that the artefact is maintained in a suitable condition for display. Dusting and other light cleaning may be carried out by trained staff but no repairs, restoration, conservation or extensive cleaning may be undertaken.
6. The artefact will not be released until Head of Steam Museum is satisfied with the standard of packing and of the security of the artefact on any vehicle. For the return to Head of Steam Museum the Borrower will provide packing and transport equivalent to that used on the outward journey. The cost of all packing and transport may be borne by the Borrower.
7. The artefact must be exhibited in a secure building in areas adequately protected against extremes of temperature, humidity, light and vibration.
8. The artefact must be on regular surveillance by the Borrower's staff whilst open to the public.
9. The artefact must be in an area monitored by an alarm system whilst closed to the public.
10. An acknowledgement to Head of Steam Museum must be given in all press releases, leaflets, exhibition labels, catalogues and programmes. The wording of these must be agreed in advance with Head of Steam Museum.
11. Photographs or other reproductions of the artefact must not be made for commercial purposes by the Borrower or other bodies or persons without the prior written permission of Head of Steam Museum.
12. The Borrower may not produce any new products relating to the loaned artefact without the prior written permission of Head of Steam Museum.
13. No Press Releases may be issued until the Loan Agreement (Exit Form) has been signed by both parties and returned to the Head of Steam Museum Manager Curator.
14. On finalisation of the Loan Agreement Press activity must be co-ordinated by and agreed by Head of Steam Museum.
15. No agreement between the Borrower and any third party shall be entered into without the prior written permission of Head of Steam Museum.
16. The Borrower will be responsible for the safe custody of the artefact throughout the loan period and will make good any loss or damage at his own expense to the satisfaction of Head of Steam Museum.
17. The Borrower accepts full responsibility for any loss or damage incurred while in transit from or to Head of Steam Museum.
18. The Borrower will insure the artefact for All Risks. Evidence of the insurance or written acceptance of liability for any loss or damage to the artefact will be required before the artefact is released from Head of Steam Museum. Any excess due to be paid on any claim shall be paid by the Borrower.
19. Head of Steam Museum must be informed immediately of any loss or damage to the artefact.

Revised March 2012 by Leona White-Hannant (Curator)



### Donating objects to the museum

**We hope this information will explain what objects the museum collects and how you can donate objects to the museum.**

The museum collects objects relating to the railways of North East England, with particular emphasis on the Darlington area. This can include archive material, photographs, costume, tools and items used on the railways.

#### **How do we decide what to collect?**

- Does it relate to the railways of North East England or Darlington?
- Is it in good condition?
- Do we already have one in the collection?
- Does the item have a history or a provenance?
- Does the object fit in with our Collecting Policy?

*The Collecting Policy allows us to manage how many objects enter the collection and ensures that we do not collect objects that we cannot store properly or that would be of more benefit in another museum.*

#### **How do you donate objects to the museum?**

- If you would like to donate items to the museum you **must** first contact the Curator either by telephone, e-mail or letter.
- The museum is unable to accept objects if you do not make a prior appointment with the Curator.
- If the item meets all the requirements above the Curator will ask you to complete two forms (an entry form and a transfer of title form). This means that you have donated the object to the museum and it is now part of the museum collection.
- If the object does not meet all the requirements and we are unable to accession the item into the museum collection we may ask if we can use the object with school groups as part of an education handling box. Otherwise the item will be returned.

#### **Contact the Manager Curator:**

**Telephone: (01325) 405060**

**E-mail: [museumstudycentre@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:museumstudycentre@darlington.gov.uk)**

**Address: Head of Steam Museum, North Road Station, Darlington, DL3 6ST**

## MUSEUM OBJECT ENTRY FORM

<b>MUSEUM NAME:</b> DARLINGTON RAILWAY MUSEUM DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL		<b>Form No:</b> 00405
Received from: Address:  Tel No:		Owner (if different): Address:  Tel No:
<b>DESCRIPTION OF OBJECT/COLLECTION</b> (note obvious damage, & any related information eg. when, where, or how was it found or used; names, dates & details of the people who made or previously owned it, etc. <b>Continue on a new sheet if necessary</b> )		
<div style="text-align: right; padding-right: 20px;">Total no. of items:</div>		
<b>REASON FOR ENTRY</b> (tick as applicable, and sign) <input type="checkbox"/> Donation - I offer to donate the object(s) listed above to the museum's governing body. <input type="checkbox"/> Sale - I offer to sell the object(s) listed above to the museum's governing body (price sought £ .....). <input type="checkbox"/> Loan - I offer to loan the object(s) listed above for the use of the museum's governing body for a period of ..... months. <input type="checkbox"/> Identification - I leave the object(s) listed above for identification & undertake to collect these no later than 4 weeks from today. <p>I confirm that the information given on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, &amp; that I accept the terms and conditions described overleaf.</p>		
Signed:		Date:
<b>ADDITIONAL AGREEMENT (DONATIONS/SALES ONLY)</b> (tick as applicable, and sign) <input type="checkbox"/> I, the owner, confirm that I have undisputed title to the object(s) listed above, with full power to dispose of the items and transfer such title to the museum's governing body. <b>OR</b> <input type="checkbox"/> I, the depositor acting on behalf of the owner(s), confirm that the owner(s) have undisputed title to the object(s) listed above, with full power to dispose of the items and transfer such title to the museum's governing body, & that I am authorised by the owner(s) to act on their behalf to that effect. <p>The title in the objects listed above, &amp; subject to the conditions overleaf, is hereby transferred to the governing body of the museum.</p>		
Signed:		Date:
<b>MUSEUM SIGNATORY</b> Receipt of the object(s) described above is hereby acknowledged.		
Signed:		Date:
on behalf of the museum's governing body		

<b>RETURN OF OBJECT TO OWNER</b> (tick as applicable, and sign) I, the depositor/owner, acknowledge the return of the object(s) described above in a satisfactory condition following: <input type="checkbox"/> identification <input type="checkbox"/> the end of the period of loan <input type="checkbox"/> the museum's governing body declining to accept the donation, loan or purchase of the object(s)		
Signed:	Countersigned (for museum):	Date:

## TRANSFER OF TITLE FORM

Street  
of

**DARLINGTON RAILWAY MUSEUM**  
**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Institution: transfer of title number

0017

## ACQUISITION

The museum gratefully acknowledges the acquisition into the collection of the items described below, from:

DESCRIPTION  
OF  
ACQUIRED  
MATERIAL

Acquisition method: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

entry form number

accession number

identity number

brief description

TRANSFER

In order to complete the transfer of title from you to the museum, we would be grateful if you could read the relevant notes overleaf and then sign this form to confirm that the details above are correct and that you accept the conditions overleaf. Please retain the second (yellow) part of the form for your files and return the first (white) part to the museum.

Museum officer: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

Depositor: \_\_\_\_\_ date: \_\_\_\_\_

HDSR003 - 001

We recommend that you keep the second part of this form in a secure place. It would help the museum if it could be produced in the event of any query concerning the acquisition or the items.

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WHITE - MUSEUM TRANSFER OF TITLE FILE  
YELLOW - DONOR  
BLUE - MUSEUM OBJECT HISTORY FILE

Sheet  
of

EXIT FORM

HEAD OF STEAM-DARLINGTON RAILWAY MUSEUM  
North Road Station  
Darlington  
Co. Durham  
DL3 6ST  
Tel: 01325 460532

Institution: exit number

00049

REMOVAL

remover

phone number

address

recipient

phone number

address

ITEMS

identity number	brief description	condition	insurance valuation

EXIT

method or reason	insurance valuation	return required?	agreed return date
note			
museum: I agree that the information given on this form is correct:		signed	date
remover: I acknowledge receipt of the item(s) described above		signed	date
recipient: I acknowledge receipt of the items and accept the conditions overleaf:		group number	signed
third part of form passed to file:		signed	date
second part of form returned and passed to file:		signed	date
note			
returned items: I acknowledge the return of the item(s) described above, in satisfactory condition:		signed	date

ACTION

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HOSR005 - 001

See over for instructions on how to use this form



## Loan Agreement

**Head of Steam – Darlington Railway Museum, North Road Station, Darlington, DL3 6ST**

<b>Head of Steam's main contact</b>	Leona White-Hannant Museum Manager Curator <a href="mailto:leona.white-hannant@darlington.gov.uk">leona.white-hannant@darlington.gov.uk</a> 01325 405544  Alison Grange Collections & Learning Assistant <a href="mailto:alison.grange@darlington.gov.uk">alison.grange@darlington.gov.uk</a> 01325 405542
<b>Borrower</b>	
<b>Borrower's main contact</b>	
<b>Loan object</b>	
<b>Valuation</b>	
<b>Loan start date</b>	
<b>Loan end date</b>	
<b>Reason for loan</b>	
<b>Evidence of insurance attached</b>	Yes/No

**Signed on behalf of the BORROWER to accept the object(s) listed above and to agree to meet the Terms and Conditions of Loan outlined overleaf:**

Signature:

Name:

Position:

Date:

**Head of Steam – Darlington Railway Museum agrees to loan the object(s) listed above to the Borrower on acceptance that the Terms and Conditions of Loan overleaf are adhered to:**

Signature:

Name:

Position:

Date:

**HEAD OF STEAM MUSEUM - MOVEMENT FORM**

Object Number	
Description	
Permanent Location	
Reason for Movement	
Temporary Location	
Date of Movement	
Moved By	



## **Labelling and Marking Museum Objects Booklet**

## Collections Trust

The Collections Trust is the UK's independent organisation for collections. It sets professional Collections Management standards, and provides advice, support and training to help people meet them. Its aim is to connect people and collections, making collections accessible to everyone, now and in the future.

The Collections Trust manages the award-winning Collections Link advisory service and publishes *SPECTRUM*, the UK and international standard for Collections Management.

**[www.collectionstrust.org.uk](http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk)**

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## Labelling and Marking Museum Objects

### *SPECTRUM Procedure Acquisition*

These labelling and marking guidelines have been developed by the Collections Trust with the help of Vivien Chapman at the National Conservation Centre, National Museums Liverpool (NML).

#### Why do it?

Labelling and marking is part of the *SPECTRUM* procedure Acquisition, a *SPECTRUM* Primary Procedure, required to be in place for *Museum Accreditation* (see below). The *Accreditation Standard* says that:

*'Marking and Labelling: Each accessioned item, or group of items, must be marked and/or labelled with its/their unique identity number in a way that is as permanent as possible without damaging the item.'*

Every item in a museum collection must carry its identity number at all times, so that it can be linked to the information a museum holds about the object. If this bond between the object and its documentation is broken, the consequences may be serious. At best, time will be wasted because of the need to track down documentation and re-establish the link. At worst, the object will lose its provenance and other associated information for all time.

Note that the marking an object is not intended to act as a security device in the case of theft of the object.

The *Minimum Standard* for labelling and marking under Acquisition, states that museums should:

- Ensure that a unique number is assigned to, and physically associated with all objects.

#### When is it done and who does it?

Marking and/or labelling an object should be done as part of the accessioning process. Items on loan or not yet accepted into the collection should not be marked. Items which do not belong to the museum, such as loans or potential donations should be labelled.

The preference should normally be to physically mark objects; however in some cases this may not be possible. These guidelines will help you label and mark the items in your collections in ways which are:

- **Secure** - The chances of accidental removal of the label or mark from the object must be extremely low;
- **Reversible** - It should be possible for a label or mark to be removed intentionally from an object, even after 50-100 years with as little trace as possible;
- **Safe for the object** - Neither the materials applied to the object nor the method by which they are applied should risk significant damage to the object;
- **Discreet but visible** - The recommended methods should not spoil the appearance of the object, nor obscure important detail. However, the number should be visible enough to reduce the need to handle the object;
- **Convenient and safe for staff and volunteers** - Materials should be easily available in small quantities at a reasonable price, and should not pose significant risks to health if used in accordance with the guidelines recommended by a local CoSHH risk assessment.

1

## Health and Safety

Before using any technique, assess the health and safety risks associated with it. Under the CoSHH legislation (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health), it is the responsibility of each museum to carry out such an assessment, and to develop internal guidelines to ensure safe working practices. Guidance is available from the Health & Safety Executive, from introductory leaflets on CoSHH published by HMSO and from product information sheets available from suppliers.

As with any work involving the use of potentially hazardous substances consider, for example, the need for:

- Washing of hands before and after a labelling and marking session;
- Adequate ventilation;
- Disposal of waste;
- Cleaning and care of equipment;
- Hand and eye protection;
- Safe storage of materials and safe methods of decanting them;
- A ban on food, drink and smoking from the work area.

Particular care is needed when working with acetone - a highly flammable solvent.

For more Health and Safety advice and help with Health and Safety assessments go to [www.coshh-essentials.org.uk](http://www.coshh-essentials.org.uk)

The following are Health and Safety assessments produced by National Museums Liverpool from the CoSHH essentials website:

- Paraloid B67 20% in white spirit
- Paraloid B72 20% in acetone

The following are relevant COSHH Essentials guidelines:

- General advice
- General ventilation
- Selection of personal protective equipment

## Materials to avoid

It is tempting, for the sake of cheapness and convenience, to substitute non archive alternatives such as Tippex™ or clear nail varnish for white ink and Paraloid B72. These materials are unsuitable, and should never be used on museum objects for the following reasons:

- Tippex™ dries to form an inflexible surface layer subject to cracking and detachment. It is not designed for long-term stability, and may discolour and deteriorate with age. If it comes into direct contact with the surface of an object, it can be extremely difficult to remove and leaves an unsightly white residue; Tippex™ has a tendency to dry out and thicken in its container, making it difficult to apply smoothly, and resulting in an obtrusive and unsightly mark;
- Different manufacturers produce clear nail varnishes to a variety of formulations. They are not designed for long-term stability, and their ageing properties are unknown. However, in common with many other polymers, they are likely to cross-link with age, resulting in embrittlement and discolouration, and possible loss of primary information;
- Nail varnish remover is not a substitute for laboratory-grade acetone. It is a different solvent called amyl acetate.

Remember that any chemical substance, unless it has been developed or tested within the museum profession so that its properties are known, may have adverse effects on museum objects. Always check with a conservator before proceeding.

Also remember that even commonplace materials like Tippex™ can contain harmful chemicals, and bear hazard warning symbols. Treat them with the same care you would any other chemical, and observe CoSHH and H&S regulations for their use, storage and disposal.

### **Security marking**

Ordinary UV security marker pens or Smartwater™ (an aqueous suspension of marker chemicals that fluoresce under UV light) can be applied to a Paraloid B72 base coat, as described in *Basic Technique 1: Writing on the Object*. This makes them easier to remove, ensuring reversibility, although it correspondingly lessens the degree of security protection.

Alternatively, an object could be marked on its pedestal, frame or mount (see *Basic Technique 11: Marking packaging or support*, bearing in mind that these can become separated from the object itself).

### Positioning of labels and marks

- Avoid physically unstable surfaces. Also avoid placing labels or marks across a line of weakness or fracture;
- Choose a position so that the number is unlikely to be visible when the object is on display but is accessible in store;
- Avoid decoration and painted/varnished/pigmented/waxed areas;
- Avoid surfaces where the mark is likely to be at risk from abrasion, such as surfaces on which it normally rests, or where touched during handling;
- Mark all detachable parts of an object (using suffixes to the Object number);
- Locate the number so that the handling necessary to read it is minimised (consider marking the packaging or adding an extra tie-on label as well);
- With composite objects, mark the part on which the most secure method can be used;
- Where duplicate marks are made these should be in different positions on the object (bearing in mind, of course, the other principles listed above).

For suggestions on choosing a technique and where to mark different types of object see the NML's guidelines on Marking and Labelling Methods and Positions.

## Basic Techniques

*This advice is based on guidelines provided by the NML*

### 1. Writing on the object

#### Barrier coat

- Paraloid (acrylic polymers)
- B72 poly (ethyl methacrylate/methylacrylate)

B72 20% in acetone is used as a barrier coat on the object. B72 has the best ageing characteristics of any barrier coating, it doesn't change colour and stays soluble in solvents. It doesn't dissolve in white spirit. Acetone is quick drying. It may damage some types of objects

#### Top coat

- Paraloid (acrylic polymers)
- B67 poly isobutyl methacrylate

B67 20% in white spirit is used as a top coat. B67 also has good ageing characteristics but yellows a little in time. It is used dissolved in white spirit to reduce the risk of the barrier coat of B72 being dissolved.

#### Materials

- Paraloid B72 20% solution in acetone
- Paraloid B67 20% solution in white spirit
- Permanent black markers or Rotring pens and permanent black ink
- Permanent white markers
- Acetone
- Artists brushes or brush in cap containers
- Paper towels
- Cotton wool swabs

#### Tools

Tool	Pros	Cons
Metal pen eg Mapping pen or Rotring pen or Rotring and Indian Ink	Traditional and excellent in experienced hands	May scratch and blob
Brush	Kindest to most surfaces	Hardest to control
Felt tip or roller ball pen with pigment ink	Easiest to control	Ink may not be acid free or permanent

#### Method

1. Read the Health and Safety data sheets and check that you are working in a well ventilated area.
2. Select a clean area on the object's surface.
3. Support the object if necessary so that you will be able to leave it to dry after marking.
4. Fill the cap brush or an artist's brush with the Paraloid B72 solution but do not overload it to avoid drips.
5. For non-porous surfaces: with one steady movement first move the brush in one direction to make a mark only slightly larger than the size of the number to be applied. Then stroke again in the opposite direction to use the solution on the other side of the brush. Then leave it to dry. Some people find it easier to apply single brush strokes.
6. For porous surfaces it is important to build up enough lacquer to prevent the ink penetrating the surface. Apply at least three coats of B72, allowing it to dry before applying the next coat. Enough lacquer has been applied when it dries to a fairly consistent smooth dull sheen. Hint: try this out on a similar trial surface or even paper first then see if you can remove the number or if the ink has penetrated the surface.
7. The ink should be applied in quite thick strokes with a pen appropriate to the size of the number you want to write. Leave it to set for a minute before applying a top layer of the Paraloid B67. If the ink is applied too thinly it may be damaged by the top layer of B67.
8. Only one layer of B67 should be necessary, spread lightly over the surface to avoid smudging of the ink below. You can add additional layers after the first is dry to give added protection against the number being worn away.
9. If you make a mistake wipe it off with a swab soaked in acetone.

## 2. Sticking a label on the object

*This advice is based on guidelines provided by the NML*

This method can be used on many types of object but do not use on surfaces that are crumbly, flaky or hairy.

#### Materials

- Use Paraloid B72, starch paste or SCMC (sodium carboxy methyl cellulose). Do not use self adhesive labels or tapes as they always deteriorate. For example, they drop off, refuse to come off and / or stain the object
- Consider printing the number using a laser printer or photocopier (both pigment based) onto acid free paper
- For varnished surfaces use starch paste
- For plastics use dry starch paste or SCMC

#### Method

- 1) Write or print the number on a small strip of acid free paper.
- 2) Apply the adhesive to the label.
- 3) Press the label onto the object, sufficiently firmly that it moulds itself to the object's contours.

### 3. Sewn on label

*This advice is based on guidelines provided by the NML*

#### Materials

- Tyvek (spun bonded polyolefin)
- Permanent markers or Rotring pens and permanent black ink
- Washed or unbleached cotton tape in various widths (to wash cotton tape soak it very hot water)
- Tie on tags
- Fine cotton or polyester thread

#### Tyvek

##### Pros:

- Water resistant;
- Cheap to buy as a sheet and cut to size;
- Available in a range of weights. Soft weights are more sympathetic to soft, fragile objects;
- Smoother to write on than cotton tape for textiles and do not need hemming.

##### Cons:

- Not all pens write on it. Some inks float off on immersion in water, so test;
- Risk of static charge which could attract particles from the object surface eg pigment.

#### Method

- 1) Assess the object and decide whether to sew on a label, attach a tie on label, or make a special tag. If you are going to sew on a label it must be possible to stitch into the textile without causing damage. Tie on labels should be attached through a buttonhole, or similar, so that the fabric is not damaged.
- 2) Choose a location. Bear in mind whether the label needs to be visible when the textile is in storage. If the textile is going to be rolled it may be worth marking a long cotton tape with the same number and tying it round the rolled textile.
- 3) Choose a tape width or label size appropriate to the object size.
- 4) Write the label neatly. This is easier with a marker.
- 5) For a standard flat cotton tape sewn-in label cut the tape approximately 5mm longer at each end than the finished length of the label. Turn under the raw ends and stitch in place with several long stitches at each end in a fine thread, preferable one that matches the textile not the label. The procedure for a sewn-in Tyvek label is the same, except no turnings are needed.
- 6) Tape and Tyvek can also be used to make looped labels sewn to the textile at one end only. This is particularly suitable for flat textiles with a hemmed edge. The loop can be arranged so that the number can be seen with the textile flat in store, but tucked beneath for display. The stitching can be concealed in the hem so that it cannot be seen from the right side.
- 7) Special Tyvek tags are used for fragile textiles, where a stitched label or a tie-on tag would cause damage. The number is written on a small piece of Tyvek and a fine needle is used with a length of fine polyester thread which is passed through the Tyvek and through an existing hole in the textile or between the threads from which it is woven. The ends of the thread are then knotted. This lightweight label puts little strain on the textile.

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#### **4. Immersible label (for specimen preserved in fluid)**

This method is used for specimens preserved in fluid:

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Write the number on an Aquascribe label or strip of Tyvek, using a pencil or a drawing ink and drawing pen.
3. If using ink, allow it to dry for 24 hours. Also, check the ink for survival in fluid to be used.
4. Place label in fluid with specimen and seal.
5. Mark the packaging/container as well (see *Basic Technique 11: Marking packaging or support*).

#### **5. Water immersible label (for object stored in water)**

This method is used for objects stored in water, typically waterlogged glass or organic materials from terrestrial archaeological sites, and most categories of finds from maritime sites.

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Write the number on a Tyvek label, using a black waterproof ink marker. Avoid pencil as it becomes illegible over time.
3. Allow ink to dry for 24 hours. Also, check the ink for survival in water.
4. Place label in container with object, and seal. Labels may be tied to larger objects using synthetic materials such as terylene or polypropylene twine, or plastic garden ties (which can be easily re-used).
5. When labelling any type of archaeological artefact, always refer to the UKIC publications, *First Aid for Finds* and *First Aid for Marine Finds*. If in doubt, consult a specialist archaeological conservator or finds officer.

#### **6. Label on pin (for pinned biological specimen)**

This method is used for pinned biological specimens:

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Write the object number on a small strip of acid-free paper or Tyvek using a suitable drawing ink and drawing pen.
3. Stick the pin on which the specimen is mounted through this label, making sure that the hole is not too close to the edge and that the number can be read without disturbing the specimen.

## 7. Loose label (for small objects such as coins)

Some objects, such as coins, are too small and detailed to be marked, nor is it easy to tie a label onto them. The only option is to use a loose label:

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Write the object number on an acid-free paper or Tyvek label using a suitable drawing ink and drawing pen. Put it underneath the object in its storage tray.
3. Take a photograph of the object, and mark the object number on the rear border of the print using a suitable drawing ink and drawing pen (record the weight of the object as an additional means of identification).

Always keep the label with the object. When the object (and hence label) is moved, a proxy card should be put in its place.

## 8. Tie-on label

*This advice is based on guidelines provided by the NML*

Pros:

- Easy to get from conservation suppliers;
- Easy to write on;
- Noticeable and easy to find;
- Can be written on in pencil or pen.

Cons:

- PH (acidity) should be tested if you don't know the origin;
- Tyvek is slightly more difficult;
- Easy to remove and lose;
- Paper labels may fall apart in a flood;
- Fibres from cotton may stick to artefacts;
- String may be nylon not cotton and deteriorate and harm the object;
- Cotton string may wick oil from the object, oil may cause ink to run;
- Paper and cotton labels are an insect food source.

### Materials

- Use white acid free paper or card labels or Tyvek tags with tape or string.

### Method

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Write the object number on an acid-free paper or Tyvek using a suitable drawing ink and drawing pen.
3. Pass tape, string or thread (as appropriate to the object) through hole in label.
4. Tie tape loosely round the 'hole', 'handle' or 'neck' of the object using a reef knot or by looping it round and through itself.

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## 9. Duplicated pencil mark

Paper is easily marked with a good-quality 2B pencil, which can be removed with a very soft, clean eraser or Draftclean granules (available from conservation suppliers).

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Number the object in two separate locations in pencil on the reverse, using gentle pressure.
3. If newly sharpened, scribble with pencil until it writes smoothly.

## 10. Number applied with paint

Larger objects, particularly in agricultural, transport or industrial collections, could have their number painted on using a suitable paint. If the object is kept outdoors, it may be necessary to monitor the effects of weathering on the number.

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Paint on the number with a suitably sized brush.
3. Allow 24 hours to dry.
4. Acrylics should be used on objects with medium porosity. Oils may be used on objects with low porosity.

## 11. Marking packaging or support

1. Examine the object to check if the method is appropriate. If in doubt, consult a conservator.
2. Label and mark the packaging of the object rather than the object itself, or place a label in the packaging.
3. The packaging should, where possible, be transparent (unless the items are light sensitive) to reduce the need for handling.
4. Where the marking methods that can be applied to the exterior are unreliable, labels should be placed within the transparent packaging - in addition to the outside of the packaging being marked - or a separate compartment may be provided for the label.

Plastic bags are difficult to mark effectively as few substances adhere well to their shiny surface (try the Shachinata Artline 70 pen). Marking on a whitened section is not recommended as the whitening wears off over time. Bags with a separate compartment for the label are a good solution if they are available in the required size. Custom-made bags can easily be made up using heat-sealing equipment. Otherwise internal Tyvek labels may be used to duplicate external marks.

Since an object may be removed from its packaging, it might be safest also to:

- Photograph the object OR
- Record the total number of objects in the packaging OR
- Weigh the object, if appropriate (not suitable for hygroscopic or volatile objects).

## 12. Mixing the varnish

*This advice is based on guidelines provided by the NML*

### Paraloid B72 20% in acetone

#### Method

- 1) Mix up a solution of Paraloid B72 granules in acetone at 20% weight to volume (for example, 20g of Paraloid in 100ml acetone) in a container that can be made airtight. (N.B. Paraloid B72 is also supplied as an adhesive in tubes, but granules are more convenient for making this varnish.
- 2) Seal the container and wait for the granules to dissolve (shaking the container periodically aids dissolution).
- 3) Small quantities can be decanted into a more convenient container, such as a 35mm film canister with a hole in the lid for the brush.
- 4) Paraloid B72 in acetone should be stored in a sealed container.

### Paraloid B67 in white spirit or Stoddard Solvent

It is recommended that you allow plenty of time for mixing this resin solution as it can take up to two days to dissolve large quantities thoroughly eg 250ml upwards. If available a stirrer hot plate would be a very useful piece of equipment, speeding up the process and taking less time while mixing.

#### Method using a stirrer hotplate:

- 1) Add the full amount of solvent to a sealable, heat proof container.
- 2) If mixing large quantities only add half of the required resin to begin with. If only mixing small amounts add all of the resin at this stage.
- 3) Add a large bar magnet to the mixture and stir with the lid on for one to two hours on heat setting 2. Gentle heating of the mixture will help speed up the process. Do not increase the temperature as this will cause the adhesive to bake to the bottom of the container, rendering it useless, and will evaporate the solvent.
- 4) After approximately two hours switch off the stirrer and stir the mixture manually. As the adhesive begins to mix it becomes too tacky for the bar magnet to have any effect, regular manual stirring after this point allows the adhesive to mix thoroughly, although bar magnet can be used in between.
- 5) Once the first half of the consolidant is mixed in add any remaining resin and repeat the process.

#### Method without a stirrer hotplate:

- 1) Suspend the Paraloid B67 in a muslin bag in a jar of white spirit or Stoddard solvent. The muslin bag can be fixed to a jam jar by screwing on the lid.
- 2) Leave for about 24 hours for the Paraloid B67 to dissolve.

## Assembling a labelling and marking kit

For the sake of safety and convenience, it is helpful to assemble all the equipment and materials required for labelling objects into a single general kit, or a series of specialist kits for use with different types of collections. For instance, natural history kits would need entomological pins and materials for spirit-based collections, whilst textile kits would require cotton tape, sewing materials etc.

Metal toolboxes with internal compartments make suitable holders for labelling and marking kits. Any chemicals and solvents in the kit should be stored upright in sealed and labelled containers. The box itself should be clearly marked with its contents, and stored in a secure, cool, well-ventilated area.

A general labelling kit might contain the following items:

### Equipment

- Copies of the Collections Trust labelling and marking guidelines, in-house standardised labelling procedures, H&S/CoSHH information on chemicals used
- Graduated vessel/measuring jug, stirring rod, glass pipettes
- Safety glasses
- Gloves for object handling (vinyl or cotton)
- Drawing/marker pens, pencils, sharpeners, erasers, black and white drawing inks
- Cotton buds
- Labels (various types), Tyvek tags, string, thread and tape
- Cotton tape, sewing needles, cotton or polyester thread, stainless steel dressmaker's pins, scissors
- Polythene artefact bags (various sizes)
- Muslin bag
- Hotplate stirrer (if using)

### Chemicals

- 100ml each of acetone, white spirit or Stoddard solvent and distilled water in sealed and labelled containers
- 100ml of ready mixed 20% Paraloid B72 in acetone in sealed and labelled container
- 100ml of ready mixed 20% Paraloid B67 in white spirit or Stoddard solvent in a sealed and labelled container

### Suppliers

- Atlantis European Ltd
- Conservation Resources (UK) Ltd
- Cornhillson & Son: (retail unit) 0207 636 1045
- Conservation by Design
- Preservation Equipment Ltd
- Lion Picture Framing Supplies
- Watkins & Doncaster
- Whaley's (Bradford) Ltd
- Bowmer Bond Narrow Fabrics Ltd
- Cash's UK Ltd
- Aquascribe
- Oakes Eddon Scientific Services Ltd: 0151 207 3062

For suppliers of chemicals see your local Yellow Pages.

For more suppliers see the Museums Association website [www.museumsassociation.org](http://www.museumsassociation.org)

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## **Materials**

### **Acetone**

Used for:

- Writing on the object
- Sticking a label on the object

Local suppliers.

### **Acid-free paper**

Used for:

- Label on pin
- loose label
- Sticking a label on the object

100% rag paper, no mineral coating or loading. Available from conservation suppliers.

### **Aquascribe waterproof label**

Used for:

- Immersible label

Aquascribe.

### **Brush**

Used for:

- Writing on the object
- Number applied directly with paint

High quality brush with secure hairs eg squirrel or sable (Finish on handle may be soluble in acetone). Local suppliers.

### **Cotton bud**

Used for:

- Writing on the object

Natural cotton wool buds eg Johnson and Johnson. Local suppliers.

**Distiller or de-ionised water**

Used for:

- Sewn-on label - final rinsing of tape

Local suppliers.

**Drawing Ink**

Used for:

- Writing on the object
- Sewn-on label
- Immersible label
- Label on pin
- Loose label
- Tie on label
- Sticking a label on the object

Rotring 591 017 black ink

Rotring 591 018 white ink

Rotring 591 003 red ink

Winsor & Newton Ink is an alternative. Local suppliers.

**Drawing pen**

Used for:

- Writing on the object
- Sewn-on label
- Immersible label
- Label on pin
- Loose label
- Sticking a label on the object

Steel/ceramic nibbed pen eg Rotring Isograph 0.1 - 0.5 (0.2 - 0.3 are good for general use);

Faber-Castell TG 1.0 - 0.5. Local suppliers.

**Eraser**

Used for:

- Duplicated pencil marks

Local suppliers.

**Felt tip pen**

Used for:

- Writing on the object
- Sewn-on label
- Immersible label
- Label on pin
- Loose label
- Tie-on label
- Sticking a label on the object

For example, Pigma pens or any felt tip pen described as waterproof and permanent. These can be purchased from conservation and craft suppliers.

**Muslin**

Used for:

- Writing on the object

Local suppliers.

**Needle**

Used for:

- Sewn-on label

Size 10, 11 or 12 needles. Local suppliers.

**Paint**

Used for:

- Number applied directly with paint

Winsor & Newton Alkyd Oil Paints: Light (iron oxide), Red, Lamp (carbon), Black, Titanium White. Use an odorless-type thinner eg Winsor & Newton Sansidor. Local suppliers.

**Paraloid B72 adhesive**

Used for:

- Sticking a label on the object

Available from conservation suppliers.

**Paraloid B72 granules**

Used for:

- Writing on the object

Available from conservation suppliers.

**Paraloid B67**

Used for:

- Writing on the object

Available from Conservation suppliers.

**Pencil**

Used for:

- Immersible label
- Duplicated pencil marks

Artist's quality 2B pencil. Local suppliers.

**Pin**

Used for:

- Label on pin

Stainless steel entomological pins available from Watkins and Doncaster.

**Starch Paste**

Used for:

- Sticking a label on the object

Readymade wheat starch is available from Preservation Equipment Ltd and Lion Picture Framing Supplies.

**Stoddard solvent**

Used for:

- Writing on the object

Local chemical suppliers.

**Tape**

Used for:

- Tie-on label

Fine plain-woven inert tape 3-12mm. Standard polyester tape is available from large department stores.

**Thread**

Used for:

- Sewn-on label

If possible use a fine thread similar to the textile from which the object is made. Otherwise, a fine spun thread eg Coates Drima. Local suppliers.

**Tyvek**

Used for:

- Immersible label
- Label on pin
- Loose label
- Tie-on label

Available from conservation suppliers.

**Unbleached cotton tape**

Used for:

- Sewn-on label
- Tie-on label

Fine plain weave, 6-10mm. Conservation Resources, Whaleys (Bradford) Ltd, Bowmer Bond Narrow Fabrics Ltd, Cash's UK Ltd.

**White spirit**

Used for:

- Writing on the object

Local chemical suppliers.

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# Access Policy and Plan 2022 – 2024

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Head of Steam- Darlington Railway Museum



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council

## Head of Steam- Darlington Railway Museum Access Policy

This policy links to and guides the Museum Forward Plan.

The Museum is about to undergo a significant redevelopment project and this policy and plan covers the period up to reopening.

### 1. Statement of Purpose

Head of Steam - Darlington Railway Museum aims to delight all its visitors in the town that is the birthplace of the modern railway.

The museum's **mission** is to explain the significance of Darlington to railways, and for Darlington to be known for its railway heritage and its unique place in the birth of the modern railway.

The museum's **responsibility** is to preserve for future generations, and to make available for education and enjoyment, the unique historical collections it holds in trust.

The museum's **objective** is to make, in relation to the funding it receives, a worthwhile contribution to community development and economic prosperity in Darlington.

### 2. Aims

**2.1.** To encourage activity, interaction and enjoyment of the site.

**2.2.** To develop the museum to inspire learning and connect people with the past, present and future.

**2.3.** To care for the museum's collections and ensure they are accessible to the public.

**2.4.** For Darlington to be known for its railway heritage and as the birthplace of the modern railway.

**2.5.** To ensure the museum is operated successfully as a financially sustainable model.

### 3. Objectives

**3.1.** Develop an exciting events and exhibitions programme that appeals to a varied audience.

- 3.2.** Engage with new groups and schools through partnership working, activities and new workshops.
- 3.3.** Increase access to the collection through partnership working, outreach and digital media.
- 3.4.** Promote the museum and Darlington's railway heritage in preparation for the redevelopment of the site and the bi-centenary.
- 3.5.** Promote the facilities available to hire and increase retail income.

## **4. Access and Inclusion**

### **4.1 Physical**

The Museum recognises the need to ensure that the building and as many learning opportunities as possible are accessible under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act, and is working hard to achieve this. Through market research and consultation with users and non - users the Museum will seek to update its information on the learning and physical needs of our target audiences. The Museum is committed to ensuring that our buildings and displays are as accessible to as many users as possible, and we would like them to be able to see our exhibits and information, to find their way round easily, to have places to rest, and to be able to access toilets and refreshments.

### **4.2 Intellectual**

The Museum wants to engage with all our users and takes into account the different educational experiences, learning styles and ways of understanding of users of all ages. To help to achieve this, the Museum presents information and interpretation in a variety of text and graphic panels, as well as with museum objects, sound clips, audio visual displays, hands-on interactives and with staff.

### **4.3 Cultural**

The Museum is committed to equality and diversity and adheres to Darlington Borough Council's Equalities Policy. The Museum recognises that users have differing cultural, ethnic, racial and gender backgrounds and have different religions or beliefs, nationalities, sexual orientations, gender identities, ages, and physical and mental abilities.

### **4.4 Social Inclusion**

The Museum aims to engage with all sections of the community, particularly non users who may be from the following backgrounds: young people; isolated older people; people from ethnic minorities; people with disabilities; people from C2DE communities. The museum has an admission charge, which can be seen as a barrier to some groups, and the museum is actively seeking ways to overcome this. The Museum aims to develop creative learning programmes in partnership with organisations which already work with the above groups of people, and can bring their knowledge, expertise and existing relationships to bear.

#### **4.4.1 Potential Barriers – Admission Charges**

We are aware that having an admission charge to the museum constitutes a barrier to access.

Admission charges have remained the same since 2007 and are currently:

Adults: £4.95

Concession (over 60, Student): £3.75

Child (6 to 16): £3.00

Child aged 5 and under: Free

Members of partner and on-site organisations: Free on production on a membership card

We have annual passes for the museum for families (2 adults and up to 4 children) which were £15, and in our last year before redevelopment have been reduced to £10. Single person passes were £10 and are now £7.50. It is our intention to have free admission to the museum when we reopen, with some paid for elements, such as some temporary exhibitions.

We also provide many activities and groups either free of charge or are included in admission and annual passes. These include our Dementia Café, Ex-Railway workers coffee morning, Station Scamps (under fives), family activities in school holidays.

Carers / companions are free, and we have arranged discounted admission for families of looked after children in the regional MAX card scheme.

Learning activities for schools and outreach activities, such as talks, are free and we encourage groups to make a donation to the museum if they are able.

We are currently working with Children North East on a Poverty Proofing process. This involves training for staff as well as looking at how we work and what we provide.

### **5. Audiences**

Existing audiences include: schools (mainly Key Stages 1 & 2), early years providers, tourists, family groups, visitors with special interests (eg railway / family historians), adult groups (eg: Women's Institute), older visitors on general visits, visitors who come for specific talks, home educated children and their families, child minders, people with dementia and their carers/care workers.

As well as seeking to increase the numbers of visitors within existing audiences, the Museum and will actively seek out and encourage (through the development of activities and resources) the following potential audiences: schools - particularly Key Stages 3 & 4 students in further and higher education, and adults with learning difficulties and / or physical disabilities.

#### **5.1 Community Engagement**

Our aim to engage our hyper-local community is central to our current engagement programme and our future site after redevelopment. We have already started to change our practices to be more inclusive of our neighbours, by changing our marketing strategy for the area and liaising with community leaders to access an audience that finds the museum hard to reach.

We hope to build relationships with our neighbours so they will feel confident in not only visiting the new site but also engaging with events, exhibitions, workshops and feeling a sense of ownership over the site. We are working towards democratisation and making the museum collections relevant and meaningful for users and non-users.

The surrounding wards of the museum, Northgate, North Road and Pierremont are one of our priority target audiences. They represent a diverse community, of ranging income levels, attainment rates and ages. Despite being our neighbours, annual visitor surveys show that they do not currently engage with the museum and collection. Local insight reports show that in Northgate Ward alone, 47% of children are living in relative low income families. The engagement with all of our community includes those with protected characteristics.

## **6. Safeguarding**

This Policy links to our Safeguarding Policy covering staff, volunteers and people on work placements who will be in contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

## **7. Access Assessment**

Access assessment carried out in November 2018, with follow up self-assessments to monitor progress in 2019, 2020 and 2021. The original assessment was carried out by staff from the Tees Valley Museums National Portfolio Organisation.

### **7.1 Access at Head of Steam**

**A number of measures have been put into place, some of which were highlighted in the Access Assessment carried out in 2018.**

- Access statement online
- Accessibility Guide (Visit Britain) online
- The museum is Dementia Friendly
- The museum is Autism Friendly
- An access kit is available at reception. It includes magnifying sheets, easy to hold pens, signature guides etc.
- All labels and interpretation panels are in an accessible font.
- The building is accessible. The building is accessible via a ramp and is level throughout. It has accessible parking and toilet facilities.
- Visitor Visual Guide online
- Sensory and fidget toys available to borrow
- BSL interpretation of Star Objects online, on youtube and accessible via QR codes in the museum
- Large print guides on site

- Short general guides in other languages for tourists – French, Italian, Spanish, German, Mandarin Chinese and Japanese
- Family friendly measures – step stools and potty training seats, free access to spare nappies, age appropriate activities around the museum
- Contrasting toilet seats in accessible toilets and contrasting grab rail by urinal.
- The museum is breast feeding friendly
- Manual wheelchair and walker available, and seating around the museum

**Regular activities:**

- Under 5's group – every Friday morning
- Relaxed Opening – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month
- Dementia Café – 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month
- Railway coffee morning – last Thursday of the month.

## **8. Access to Collections**

**This policy and plan links to the Collections Management Strategy and Learning and Engagement Policy and Plan.**

### **8.1 The Ken Hoole Study Centre**

The museum has a large archival collection which is available for the public, researchers, family historians and specialist interest groups through appointments in the Ken Hoole Study Centre. This is available in person and through enquiries to our Collections and Learning Assistant who is able to search for material and send printed or electronic copies. There are charges for reproducing materials and we have copyright arrangements in place.

### **8.2 Collections not on display**

At present we have an object in focus display in the museum and online which features objects not usually on display. As part of the redevelopment plans we will be relocating our stores and wish to ensure they are appropriately displayed for people to tour.

### **8.3 Interpretation**

We follow guidance from the RNIB, Tees Valley NPO and other bodies regarding our interpretation. This includes the physical appearance of the material in terms of size, colour and type of font, as well as considerations such as word count and reading age.

As well as printed materials we have audio visual materials, films and sound effects. We have recently had British Sign Language interpretation for some of our Star objects developed. This is available on our website, on our Youtube channel and via QR codes on display in the museum.

We also have front of house volunteers available to talk to, as well as our staff team.

#### **8.4 Access to specialist knowledge and expertise**

When creating interpretation for in-house temporary exhibitions we seek to work with those with relevant lived experiences, specialist knowledge and expertise, and where possible to co-curate.

### **9. Volunteers**

This policy and plan links to our Volunteer Policy.

We have a team of volunteers who give their time to help support access to the building and our collections in a variety of ways.

We have front of house volunteers who come in weekly and are available in the museum to talk to visitors.

We have a team who work behind the scenes in collections on such projects as transcribing information from our North Eastern Railway Staff History Books into an excel document to allow much easier searches for information – when complete the documents are made available online, as with some of our catalogues and other information.

We have recently recruited a temporary member of staff to establish a digital volunteering programme. This will allow volunteers to assist with collections tasks without having to come into the building and allow more flexibility about when they volunteer.

We also have volunteers who help us on event days with tasks such as working with families in our activity room, or helping with visitor enquiries and flow. As well as our own team, we also work in partnership with Darlington Culture Volunteers who have, for example, helped with additional volunteers for room stewarding in a temporary exhibition and on busy event days such as Santa at the Station.

### **10. Staff training and Awareness**

Staff receive mandatory training from Darlington Borough Council (who runs the museum) including First Aid and Equalities. Other training in more specialist areas is provided by the relevant organisation as and when required. Staff are able to self identify a training need.

#### **Staff have received training in the following areas since 2019:**

- Dementia Friends
- Autism Awareness
- Equalities
- Poverty Proofing

#### **Our Learning and Access Officer has also had awareness training in the following areas:**

- LGBTQIA+
- Unconscious bias
- Working meaningfully with young people
- Anti-racism

- Introduction to Makaton

### Access Plan

Access work crosses all aspects of the aims and objectives of the museum's Forward Plan.

Objective	Action	Task	Completion by	Lead Officer(s) /Resources
<b>Increase access to collections and site</b>	Get short guides translated to reflect two of the main languages spoken in our hyper local area. (2022)	Identify languages spoken in hyper local area	April 2022	Learning & Access Officer / Education budget
		Arrange for translations to be done	April 2022	
		Have copies of guide available in museum	May/ June 2022	
		Promote the range of languages we have guides for.	May/ June 2022	
	Update the easy read guide created just before the pandemic and before a large object move. (2022)	Edit Easy Read guide, remove references to Locomotion No 1.	May 2022	Learning & Access Officer Education budget
		Make copies available on website and at Reception.	May/June 2022	
		Promote the easy read guide.	May/ June 2022	
	Create Museum on the Move programme ready for closure period (2024)	Secure lease of a vehicle through DBC	October 2022	Manager Curator & Collections and Learning Assistant / Collections budget
		Consult with partners on possible workshop and touring programme	December 2022	
		Fit out vehicle and choose objects to be included	March 2023	
		Liaise with insurance team	December 2022	
		Consider access requirements	December 2022	

This policy and plan was written in March 2022 and is due for review in March 2023.

**CABINET  
6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**RESTORATION OF LOCOMOTION NO1 REPLICA - RELEASE OF CAPITAL**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member -  
Councillor Andy Keir, Local Services Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -  
Dave Winstanley, Group Director of Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To request the release of capital funding for the restoration of Locomotion No1 Replica.

**Summary**

2. Following the acquisition of Locomotion No1 Replica from Beamish, the assessment of the condition and the work required to bring back into full operational order in time for the 2025 bicentenary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway (S&DR) has now been completed. This report seeks release of capital to enable the works to progress.

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that Members release capital of £0.496m as detailed in this report to carry out the restoration of Locomotion No1 Replica and associated chaldron waggons and coach.

**Reasons**

4. The recommendation is supported by the following reason, to restore the Locomotion No 1 Replica ready for the bicentenary of the S&DR.

**Dave Winstanley  
Group Director of Services**

**Background Papers**

- (i) 13 April 2021 Cabinet – Locomotion No1 and Replica
- (ii) 8 February 2022 Cabinet – Revenue Budget Monitoring – Quarter 3

Ian Thompson : Extension 6628  
CD

S17 Crime and Disorder	No impact as a result of this report
Health and Wellbeing	No impact as a result of this report
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	No impact as a result of this report
Diversity	No impact as a result of this report
Wards Affected	The Head of Steam is located in Northgate Ward
Groups Affected	No particular group is affected
Budget and Policy Framework	No impact as a result of this report
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
Council Plan	The restoration of the Locomotion No1 Replica and its return to working order at the Head of Steam will have a significant impact on the Place outcomes
Efficiency	No impact as a result of this report
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

5. Members previously considered a report on Locomotion No1 and the Replica in April 2021 at which time Members:
  - (a) Approved the acquisition of the Replica of Locomotion No 1 from Beamish Museum;
  - (b) Approved the provision of a grant to Beamish Museum, to a maximum of £150,000, to enable them to restore the Locomotive Dunrobin.
6. In addition, as part of the Revenue Budget Monitoring Quarter 3 report in February 2022, £0.496m was allocated to a ring-fenced 2025 Rail Heritage Fund reserve to be utilised for the refurbishment of the Locomotion No1 Replica.
7. As part of the 2025 bicentenary for S&DR, the Locomotion No1 Replica will be operating under steam to be a central part of the overall celebrations. To achieve this, there is work required to bring the Locomotion No1 Replica back into working order and up to modern day standards to enable it to run on the rail network. An assessment of the work required has taken place by Locomotive Maintenance Services, specialists in the field.
8. The works required are extensive and cover mechanical, boiler, assembly, commissioning, testing and certification. Locomotive Maintenance Services has been contracted to carry out the work, which will be completed by summer 2024 in good time for the bicentenary celebrations.

9. In addition to the restoration of the Locomotion No1 Replica, there is also a requirement to build a number of chaldron waggons and coaches for people to ride in. Officers are working with Beamish on this aspect of the project
10. Work is also ongoing in developing a solution for the Locomotion No1 Replica to also operate with electric power as well as steam powered.
11. Once restored to working order, and post 2025, there will be the opportunity to operate the Locomotion No1 Replica on regular event days at the Rail Heritage Quarter and to loan out to partners.

#### **Financial Implications**

12. £0.496m was allocated to a ring-fenced 2025 Rail Heritage Fund reserve to be utilised for the refurbishment of the Loco No. 1 replica.

#### **Procurement Advice**

13. The procurement of the services of Locomotive Maintenance is in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

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**CABINET  
6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**THE TREATMENT OF WAR PENSIONS IN THE CALCULATION OF HOUSING BENEFIT**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member -  
Councillor Scott Durham, Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -  
Elizabeth Davison, Group Director of Operations**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To reconfirm that war pensions should be fully disregarded as income when calculating entitlement to Housing Benefit.

**Summary**

2. Legislation allows Councils the discretion to disregard up to 100% of War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions in the calculation of Housing Benefit entitlement (referred to as the "local scheme").
3. These war pensions have been fully disregarded in the calculation of Housing Benefit since the Social Security Administration Act was introduced in 1992.
4. Given the length of time that the local scheme has operated in Darlington, it is therefore recommended that Members reconfirm that the prescribed War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions continue to be fully disregarded in the calculation of Housing Benefit.

**Recommendation**

5. It is recommended that Cabinet :-
  - (a) Consider the contents of this report.
  - (b) Reconfirm that war pensions (as defined in paragraph 18) should be fully disregarded as income when calculating entitlement to Housing Benefit

**Reasons**

6. The recommendations are supported as the Social Security Administration Act 1992 requires the Council to formally adopt any modification of the Housing Benefit scheme where the whole or part of any war pension is disregarded.

**Elizabeth Davison**  
**Group Director of Operations**

**Background Papers**

- (i) The Social Security Administration Act 1992
- (ii) The Housing Benefit Regulations 2006
- (iii) The Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (War Pension Disregards) Regulations 2007
- (iv) The Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (War Pension Disregards) (Amendment) Regulations 2009

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for crime and disorder
Health and Wellbeing	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Diversity	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	All wards are potentially affected
Groups Affected	War pensioners in receipt of Housing Benefit
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This report supports the Council plan to ensure the most vulnerable residents of Darlington receive the support and assistance they require to maximise their independence and wellbeing
Efficiency	There are no implications
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

7. The rules about the way in which Housing Benefit entitlement is calculated are detailed within the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 and subsequent amending legislation. These regulations state that a weekly disregard (not taken into account) of £10 applies to the following income:
  - (a) War Disablement Pensions
  - (b) War Widow's Pensions
8. However, the Social Security Administration Act 1992 also allows Councils the discretion to disregard up to 100% of those incomes in the calculation of Housing Benefit entitlement (referred to as the "local scheme").
9. War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions have been fully disregarded in the calculation of Housing Benefit since the Social Security Administration Act was introduced in 1992. In addition, the local Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme also contains a full disregard of these incomes and this has been in place since it was introduced in 2013. Council approves the CTS scheme on an annual basis.
10. Given the length of time that the local scheme has operated in Darlington, it is therefore recommended that Members reconfirm that the prescribed War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions continue to be fully disregarded in the calculation of Housing Benefit.

### Financial Implications

11. Where a customer who is eligible for Housing Benefit and is also in receipt of Income Support, income based Jobseeker's Allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit or Pension Credit (guaranteed credit), they are automatically "passported" to full Housing Benefit entitlement. Claims that are not "passported" are subject to a means test and these are affected by the decision to fully disregard certain war pensions.
12. Generally, the Council is fully reimbursed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for payments of Housing Benefit and this is referred to as "subsidy". Subsidy payments are demand-led and are not subject to a fixed sum grant.
13. However, payments of Housing Benefit made under the local scheme are subject to different rules. Providing that expenditure does not exceed 0.2% of the overall subsidy claimed, 75% of payments made under the local scheme are subsidised by the DWP, with the Council meeting the remaining 25%.
14. In 2021-22, The total Housing Benefit subsidy claimed before any addition in respect of the operation of the local scheme was £22,405,012. The total Housing Benefit expenditure in relation to the local scheme was £38,316. As this amount was within 0.2% of the overall subsidy claimed, 75% (or £28,737) was met by DWP subsidy payments, meaning the cost

to the Council for the operation of the local scheme in 2021-22 was £9,579.

15. The continued operation of a local scheme in Darlington will have no financial implications, as provision has already been made within the MTFP.

### Legal Implications

16. The Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 schedule 5 sets out the statutory income disregards for war pensions, as follows:

*“Sums to be disregarded in the calculation of income other than earnings*

*15. £10 of any of the following, namely-*

*(a) a war disablement pension;*

*(b) a war widow’s pension or war widower’s pension;”*

17. The Social Security Administration Act 1992 section 134(8) gives Councils the discretion to fully disregard war pensions in the calculation of Housing Benefit, as follows:

*“An authority may modify any part of the housing benefit scheme administered by the authority-*

*(a) so as to provide for disregarding, in determining a person’s income (whether he is the occupier of a dwelling or any other person whose income falls to be aggregated with that of the occupier of a dwelling), the whole part of any prescribed war disablement pension or prescribed war widow’s pension payable to that person;*

*(b) to such extent in other respects as may be prescribed,*

*and any such modifications may be adopted by resolution of an authority.”*

18. The Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit (War Pension Disregards) (Amendment) Regulations 2009 sets out the types of war pensions that will fall to be disregarded under the local scheme, as follows:

*“1. The war disablement pensions prescribed are-*

*(a) any retired pay or pension or allowance payable in respect of disablement under an instrument specified in section 639(2) of the Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003;*

*(b) any retired pay or pension payable, to a member of the armed forces of the Crown in respect of a disablement which is attributable to service, under-*

*(i) an Order in Council made under section 3 of the Naval and Marine Pay and Pensions Act 1865,*

*(ii) the Army Pensions Warrant 1977,*

*(iii) any order or regulations made under section 2 of the Air Force (Constitution) Act 1917,*

*(iv) any order or regulations made under section 4 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996,*

*(v) any instrument amending or replacing any of the instruments referred to in paragraphs (i) to (iv), or*

- (vi) any power of Her Majesty otherwise than under an enactment to make provision about pensions for or in respect of persons who have been disabled or who have died in consequence of service as members of the armed forces of the Crown; and*
- (c) a payment made under article 14(1)(b) of the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation Scheme) Order 2005.*

*2. The war widow's pensions prescribed are-*

- (a) any pension or allowance payable to a widow, widower or surviving civil partner under an instrument specified in section 639(2) of the Income Tax (Earnings and Pension) Act 2003 in respect of the death or disablement of any person;*
- (b) a pension payable, to a widow, widower or surviving civil partner of a member of the armed forces of the Crown in respect of death which is attributable to service, under-*
  - (i) an Order in Council made under section 3 of the Naval and Marine Pay and Pensions Act 1865,*
  - (ii) the Army Pensions Warrant 1977,*
  - (iii) any order or regulations made under section 2 of the Air Force (Constitution) Act 1917,*
  - (iv) any order or regulations made under section 4 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996,*
  - (v) any instrument amending or replacing any of the instruments referred to in paragraphs (i) to (iv), or*
  - (vi) any power of Her Majesty otherwise than under an enactment to make provision about pensions for or in respect of persons who have been disabled or who have died in consequence of service as members of the armed forces of the Crown; and*
- (c) a payment made under article 21(1)(a) of the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation Scheme) Order 2005."*

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**CABINET**  
**6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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## **REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA)**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member -**  
**Councillor Scott Durham, Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -**  
**Elizabeth Davison, Group Director of Operations**

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### **SUMMARY REPORT**

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

1. The purpose of this report is to inform and update Members about issues relevant to the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and developments that have taken place since the last report to Cabinet in March 2022.

#### **Summary**

2. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ("RIPA") enables local authorities to carry out certain types of surveillance activity, as long as specified procedures are followed. The information obtained as a result of surveillance operations can be relied upon in court proceedings providing RIPA is complied with.
3. The Investigatory Powers Act 2016 ("IPA") is the main legislation governing the acquisition of communications data. The information obtained as a result of these acquisitions can also be relied upon in court proceedings providing IPA is complied with.
4. This report updates members on issues relevant to this area of work and gives details of RIPA directed surveillance applications and IPA communications data applications that have been authorised since the last report to Cabinet.

#### **Recommendation**

5. It is recommended that Members:-
  - (a) Approve the RIPA Policy at **Appendix 1** to this report
  - (b) Receive further reports on the Council's use of RIPA and IPA and other associated issues.

#### **Reasons**

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

- (a) As stated in the Home Office Code of Practice, the RIPA Policy should be approved by Members on an annual basis.
- (b) In order to ensure that the Council complies with the legal obligations under RIPA, IPA and national guidance.
- (c) To help in giving transparency about the use of RIPA and IPA in this Council.

**Elizabeth Davison**  
**Group Director of Operations**

## Background Papers

Home Office, Covert Surveillance and Property Interference, Revised Code of Practice, August 2018

Amy Wennington : Extension 5466

S17 Crime and Disorder	The appropriate use of and oversight of RIPA and IPA powers will enable the Council to provide evidence to support appropriate prosecutions and tackle crime.
Health and Wellbeing	There are no specific implications for Health and Wellbeing
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no issues that this report needs to address
Diversity	The RIPA Policy treats all groups equally
Wards Affected	All wards
Groups Affected	All groups
Budget and Policy Framework	This does not represent a change to the Council's budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	The appropriate use of powers is a legislative requirement
Efficiency	Clarity about the lawful use of RIPA and IPA will help in the efficient use of powers
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## **MAIN REPORT**

### **Information and Analysis**

#### **Annual Approval of this Council's RIPA Policy**

7. Paragraph 4.47 of the Home Office, Covert Surveillance and Property Interference, Revised Code of Practice, August 2018, states that elected members of a local authority should set the RIPA policy at least once a year. The policy is therefore due for approval again having last been approved by Members on 9 March 2021.
8. The Policy has undergone some very minor amendments since it was last approved. These amendments simply relate to the updating of job titles and some renumbering of sections and pages as a result of changes to formatting.

#### **Bi-Annual Report Regarding this Council's RIPA and IPA usage**

##### **Directed Surveillance Authorisations**

9. There have been no authorisations granted since the last Cabinet Report.

##### **Communications Data Authorisations**

10. There have been no authorisations granted since the last Cabinet Report.

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# **REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000**



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council

# **RIPA POLICY**

REVIEWED BY CABINET ON 6 September 2022

## REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS

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## THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000

### Policy Statement

1. Darlington Borough Council will apply the principles of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) to all activities where covert surveillance or covert human intelligence sources are used. In doing so the Council will also take into account their duties under other legislation, in particular the Human Rights Act 1998 and Data Protection Act 2018, and its common law obligations.

### Overview of the Act

2. The Act came into force on the 24th September 2000, and aims to balance, in accordance with the European Convention of Human Rights, the rights of individuals with the need for law enforcement and security agencies to have powers to perform their roles effectively. The Act and amending legislation allow local authorities to collect evidence of criminal activity lawfully where the investigation requires covert surveillance even where that may lead to them obtaining private information about individuals.

## **Purpose of the Act**

3. RIPA provides a statutory basis for local authorities to authorise the use of directed surveillance and covert human intelligence sources (undercover officers, agents, informants) and accessing communications data.
4. The Human Rights Act 1998 requires that all actions which may potentially breach an individual's human rights are: -
  - (a) proportionate
  - (b) necessary
  - (c) non-discriminatory
  - (d) lawful
5. RIPA provides lawful authority to carry out certain types of surveillance, the carrying out of which could potentially breach an individual's human rights, provided that specified procedures are followed.
6. Failure to comply with RIPA does not mean that an authority's actions in relation to surveillance will be unlawful however it does mean that evidence obtained from surveillance could be inadmissible in court proceedings and jeopardise a successful outcome. Such action could also be open to challenge as a breach of the Human Rights Act and a successful claim for damages could be made against the Council.

## **Definitions**

### Private Information

7. Should be taken generally to include any aspect of a person's private or personal relationship with others, including family and professional or business relationships.

### Confidential Information

8. Confidential information consists of matters subject to legal privilege, confidential journalistic material, constituent information and confidential personal information which is held in confidence about the physical or mental health or spiritual counselling of a person [whether living or dead] who can be identified from it. Where it is believed that knowledge of confidential information is likely to be acquired, authorisation can only come from the Group Director of Operations or, in their absence, the Group Director of People would deputise for them.

### Surveillance

9. Monitoring, observing, or listening to persons, their movements, conversations or other activities and communications.

10. Recording anything monitored, observed, or listened to in the course of surveillance.
11. Surveillance by or with the assistance of a surveillance device.

#### Covert Surveillance

12. Surveillance carried out in a manner which is calculated to ensure that any persons who are subject to the surveillance are unaware that it is or may be taking place.

#### Intrusive Surveillance

13. Local Authorities have no power to grant authorisations for intrusive surveillance but it is included here to alert Officers to be aware of inadvertently breaching this rule.
14. Intrusive Surveillance is covered by Section 26(3) of RIPA. Surveillance is intrusive for the purposes of RIPA if, and only if, it is covert surveillance that (a) is carried out in relation to anything taking place on any residential premises or in any private vehicle; and (b) involves the presence of an individual on the premises or in the vehicle or is carried out by means of a surveillance device.

#### Residential Premises

15. Any premises as is for the time being occupied or used by any person, however temporarily, for residential purposes or otherwise as living accommodation.
16. The definition does not include communal areas, front gardens, or driveways readily visible to the public.

#### Private Vehicles

17. Used primarily for the private purposes of the person who owns it or a person otherwise having the right to use it e.g. a company car.

#### Directed surveillance

18. Surveillance is “directed” if it is covert, but not intrusive, and is undertaken: -
  - (a) for the purposes of a specific investigation or operation
  - (b) in such a manner as is likely to result in the obtaining of private information about a person (whether or not one specifically identified for the purposes of the investigation).
19. Surveillance will not be directed, and therefore will not require authorisation, if it is done by way of an immediate response to events or circumstances the nature of which is such that it would not be reasonably practicable for an authorisation to be

sought for carrying out the surveillance.

#### Covert Human Intelligence Source

20. A person is identified as a CHIS if he establishes or maintains a personal or other relationship with a person for the covert purpose of facilitating the doing of anything falling within the following two categories: -
  - (a) he covertly uses such a relationship to obtain information or to provide access to any information to another person: or,
  - (b) he covertly discloses information obtained by the use of such a relationship or as a consequence of the existence of such a relationship.
21. It is possible that persons undertaking test purchases may fall into this category especially if they enter into a prolonged conversation with retail staff. If the purchaser simply enters a shop and purchases an item with the minimum of conversation it is arguable that they are not acting as a CHIS. Such an operation may still require an authorisation for directed surveillance.
22. In cases where members of the public contact Council Departments to provide information, consideration will need to be given about whether this person could be a CHIS. The provision of unsolicited historic information (for instance via a fraud hotline) would not be regarded as coming from a CHIS. However, if ongoing contact was maintained with an individual who continued to pass information on, consideration must be given about how the information has been obtained (for instance by establishing or maintaining a relationship) and whether the individual should be considered a potential CHIS
23. The Code of Practice relating to Covert Human Intelligence Sources can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ripa-codes>

#### Revised Code of Practice 2018

24. The Home Office have produced a Code of Practice for Covert Surveillance and Property Interference, this has been revised recently and this Policy has been updated in accordance with the Revised Code. The Revised Code of Practice 2018 provides guidance on the use by public authorities to authorise covert surveillance that is likely to result in obtaining private information about a person.
25. A copy of the Revised Code of Practice 2018 can also be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ripa-codes>

#### Collateral Intrusion

26. Collateral intrusion is the interference with the privacy of people not connected with your investigation. The risk and proportionality of such intrusion must be weighed up and steps taken to mitigate it, where possible.

### **Does RIPA apply?**

27. Before any authorisation takes place officers must consider whether the surveillance falls under RIPA. Consideration needs to be given to the changes introduced by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (see paragraphs 31 and 32 below) and also to circumstances when guidance suggests that RIPA does not apply.
28. The Revised Code of Practice 2018 at pages 24 to 29 outlines various circumstances when a RIPA authorisation is not required or not appropriate.
29. If the type of surveillance being considered does not fall under RIPA, it cannot be authorised. The Council will therefore not be afforded the legal protection that RIPA provides. For this reason, such operations should not be undertaken without the advice of Legal Officers. Please refer to paragraphs 97 to 100 at pages 16 to 17 of this Policy.
30. Even if RIPA does not apply, use of surveillance will still have to be in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998 and will therefore need to be:
  - (a) Proportionate
  - (b) Necessary
  - (c) Non-discriminatory
  - (d) Lawful.

### **Restrictions on the use of RIPA**

31. The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (in particular a statutory instrument made under the Act) restricts the use of RIPA to conduct that would constitute a criminal offence which is punishable by a maximum custodial sentence of 6 months or more. This effectively restricts the use of RIPA to circumstances when the conduct is considered to be serious criminal conduct, by reference to sentencing powers.
32. There are some limited exceptions to the 6 month rule, set out in the statutory instrument. These are:
  - (a) The sale of alcohol to children (s.146 of the Licensing Act 2003)
  - (b) Allowing the sale of alcohol to children (s.147 of the Licensing Act 2003)
  - (c) Persistently selling alcohol to children (s.147A of the Licensing Act 2003)
  - (d) The sale of tobacco to persons under 18 years of age (s.7 Children and Young Persons Act 1933)
  - (e) Purchase of tobacco or nicotine products on behalf of persons under 18 years of age (s.91 of the Children and Families Act 2014)
  - (f) The sale of nicotine products to persons under 18 years of age (s.92 of the Children and Families Act 2014)
33. If RIPA does apply then the investigation will only be lawful if the authorisation procedures set out below are followed.

## Authorisation Procedures

34. Each covert surveillance operation involving directed surveillance and/or covert human intelligence sources must be authorised internally in writing, using the standard forms provided. In addition to the internal authorisation process an application must also be externally approved by a Magistrate. **No investigation can commence until it has been both internally authorised and externally approved by the Court.**

## Written Authorisations

35. The application forms are available from the intranet (the forms portal). Each application will have a Unique Reference Number (URN). The URN is obtained from Legal Services, which holds the centrally retrievable recording system of all RIPA authorisations. This URN will be recorded on the application for all the forms completed in respect of a particular authorisation for identification and retrieval purposes.
36. The application will be made in writing (or can be typed) by completing the application form and forwarding this to the relevant authorising officer. Authorising officers are those officers listed on page 17. Authorising officers can only authorise the use of RIPA if they have completed the SRO approved mandatory training and attended the mandatory training updates. Authorisations, unlike applications, should be handwritten and not typed. This is best practice as, in a typed form, an authorising officer is open to the assertion that they received the authorisation form already completed and merely signed it or that it had been changed retrospectively.
37. Guidance and support in completing the application and authorisation process can be obtained from Legal Services.
38. Immediately after internal authorisation is granted an electronic copy of the form must be sent to the Assistant Director, Law and Governance with the original (with wet signatures) being sent in a confidential envelope via the internal post. This will be retained on the central record. A copy must also be retained by the applicant on the department file.
39. The application for judicial approval by a Magistrate will be made by Legal Services on receipt of the completed internal authorisation. The Authorising Officer should however make themselves available to attend court with the Legal Services' Officer.
40. For urgent applications Legal Services should be contacted at the earliest opportunity in order to make urgent arrangements to see a Magistrate. The application form and internal authorisation will still be needed but the time in which to get judicial approval should be reduced.

### Time Limits

41. Authorisations only remain valid for specific periods and will require either renewal or cancellation if these periods are to be either increased or reduced. Written authorisations for directed surveillance last for a fixed duration of 3 months and for CHIS they last for a fixed duration of 12 months (or 4 months in the case of a juvenile CHIS) from the date of the Magistrate's approval.
42. Authorisations MUST be cancelled if the conditions are no longer met. Authorisations do not expire when the conditions are no longer met and therefore cancellations are to be made at the earliest opportunity. Authorisations must also be cancelled when the fixed duration comes to an end (and renewal is not requested) as authorisations cannot simply expire.

### Reviews

43. Reviews of Authorisations should take place every four weeks or sooner if the risk of obtaining private information or of collateral intrusion is high and in accordance with the circumstances of the case.
44. A Review will take place by an applicant completing a Review Form which is located on the forms portal of the intranet before the date for review and forward the form to the Authorising Officer for consideration.
45. A copy of the review form should be forwarded electronically [immediately after the review is completed] to the Assistant Director, Law and Governance for inclusion onto the central file. The original form (wet signature) must also be forwarded to the Assistant Director, Law and Governance in the internal post. A copy of the review form should also be kept on the departmental file.

### Renewals

46. If your authorisation time period is about to end, it will be necessary to complete a renewal form and forward this to the relevant authorising officer who will then consider whether the grounds for authorisation still exist. An application for judicial approval by a Magistrate of the internal renewal decision will also be needed. The time in which to get judicial approval will need to be factored in when seeking to get an extension of authorisation. If in the meanwhile the original approval has lapsed no further surveillance should be carried out.
47. A copy of the renewal form should be forwarded electronically [immediately after completion] to the Assistant Director, Law and Governance for inclusion onto the central file. The original form (wet signature) must also be forwarded to the Assistant Director, Law and Governance in the internal post. A copy of the renewal form should also be kept on the departmental file.
48. Subject to internal authorisation and judicial approval, the surveillance can be extended for a further 3 months and a CHIS can be extended for a further 12

months, starting on the date of the day the old authorisation ended.

### Cancellations

49. If the conditions for surveillance being carried out are no longer satisfied, and the authorisation period has not ended, a cancellation form must be completed and all those involved in the surveillance should receive notification of the cancellation, which must be confirmed in writing at the earliest opportunity.
50. Copies of all completed cancellation forms must be forwarded electronically [immediately after cancellation] to the Assistant Director, Law and Governance for retention in the central record within 48 hours from the time of signing the cancellation form. The original (with wet signatures) should be sent to Legal Services in the internal post for the central record. A copy must also be retained by the applicant on the department file.
51. Authorisations must also be cancelled when the fixed duration expires (if renewal is not requested) as authorisations do not expire despite the fixed duration coming to an end.

### **Records**

52. The centrally retrievable record of authorisations, renewals and cancellations is held in a locked cabinet in Legal Services and overseen by the Assistant Director, Law and Governance. The record for each RIPA application contains the following information:-
  - (a) the URN of the investigation or operation
  - (b) the title of the investigation or operation
  - (c) the type of authorisation
  - (d) the date the authorisation was given
  - (e) name and rank and grade of the authorising officer
  - (f) the application for judicial approval and order made
  - (g) if the authorisation has been renewed, when it was renewed and who authorised the renewal
  - (h) whether the investigation or operation is likely to result in obtaining confidential information
  - (i) whether the authorisation was granted by an individual directly involved in the investigation
  - (j) the date the authorisation was cancelled
53. To ensure that the centrally retrievable record is up to date, and to allow proper central oversight, it is important that all applications approved and any subsequent renewals, extensions or cancellations are sent electronically to the Assistant Director, Law and Governance as soon as those decisions are made. Hard copy original application, extension and cancellation forms (i.e. with wet signatures) must also be forwarded to the Assistant Director, Law and Governance in the internal post. All documents sent by internal post must be marked confidential.

54. The documents in the centrally retrievable record are kept until such time as they have been made available for an OSC inspection and, in any event, for a period of at least three years from the date of the end of the authorisation.
55. All original and copy documents shall be destroyed after a period of three years from the date the authorisation comes to an end. Regular reviews should take place to ensure that retention and destruction take place appropriately.
56. Departments should also keep copies of all application forms (whether the application is granted or not), including renewal and cancellation forms on an accessible record. All records should be kept in a secure place, preferably a locked cabinet or drawer with limited key holders. All authorisations, renewals, cancellations and records of reviews shall be retained for a period of three years commencing on the date the authorisation comes to an end.
57. In relation to the use of covert human intelligence sources additional records must be maintained (see pages 14 to 16 below).

#### **Monitoring and Review**

58. Officers who made applications for Authorisations and Authorising Officers should monitor any Authorisation and keep them under review. Consideration should also be given by applicant officers and authorising officers as to whether Authorisations should be cancelled or renewed. Decisions should be recorded in addition to the reasons for those decisions.
59. In addition to the above review mechanism the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) or their designated officer will review the authorisations held on the central file on a quarterly basis to ensure that the Act is being used consistently with the policy and the policy remains fit for purpose and that authorisation forms are being correctly completed.
60. The Group Director of Operations is appointed by the Council as the SRO for the purpose of RIPA within the Council. The SRO is responsible for:-
  - (a) the integrity of the process in place within the Council to authorise directed surveillance and the use of CHIS
  - (b) Compliance with RIPA and its Codes
  - (c) Engagement with the Commissioners and Inspectors when conducting their inspections
  - (d) Where necessary overseeing the implementation of any post-inspection action plans recommended or approved by a Commissioner
  - (e) Ensuring that all authorising officers are of an appropriate standard

61. The Assistant Director, Law and Governance is the Co-Ordinating Officer for RIPA. They are responsible for record-keeping; oversight of the applications, authorisations, reviews, renewals and cancellations; organising training; and raising RIPA awareness within the Council.
62. Elected members will review the RIPA policy annually and will consider internal reports on the use of RIPA bi-annually. These reports will be completed by the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) or their designated officer and update members about RIPA usage (or non-usage if there has been no covert surveillance undertaken in that half of a year), compliance reviews and other matters of general relevance concerning RIPA including proposals for legislative change and guidance updates.
63. Elected members should not be involved in making decisions on specific authorisations.
64. The Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office has set up an Inspectorate to monitor the various authorities' compliance with the Act. For local authorities the first point of contact for the Inspectors will be the Assistant Director, Law and Governance, however potentially any of the Councils' employees and records could be subject to inspection.

#### **Granting Authorisations - Guidance for Authorising Officers**

65. Where an application for authorisation is received, it should only be approved where the authorising officer believes the surveillance :-
  - (a) Relates to criminal conduct, and is
  - (b) Necessary
  - (c) Proportionate to what it aims to do
  - (d) Non-discriminatory.
66. The authorisation forms contain various sections for completion and, when completed fully, they address all considerations to be taken into account when deciding whether an authorisation can be granted or not. Use the notes below to assist you when applying for authorisations or when asked to authorise applications. Only if all these conditions are satisfied should an application for authorisation be granted.
67. The authorisation form must always be completed and copied. The copy will be held on a file within the Department. Authorising Officers should also retain their own separate copy. Immediately after an authorisation is granted the form should be forwarded electronically to the Assistant Director, Law and Governance with the original form (with wet signatures) sent in the internal post to the Assistant Director, Law and Governance for retention on the central file.

## **Criminal Conduct**

68. The use of RIPA is limited to circumstances when the conduct being investigated is criminal conduct of a certain level of seriousness. Subject to the exceptions set out in the paragraph below, the conduct being investigated must constitute a criminal offence that is punishable by a maximum custodial sentence of 6 months or more.
69. There are some limited exceptions to the 6 month rule. These are:
- (a) The sale of alcohol to children (S.146 of the Licensing Act 2003).
  - (b) Allowing the sale of alcohol to children (S.147 of the Licensing Act 2003).
  - (c) Persistently selling alcohol to children (S.147A of the Licensing Act 2003).
  - (d) The sale of tobacco to persons under 18 years of age (S.7 Children and Young Persons Act 1933).
  - (e) Purchase of tobacco or nicotine products on behalf of persons under 18 years of age (s.91 of the Children and Families Act 2014)
  - (f) The sale of nicotine products to persons under 18 years of age (s.92 of the Children and Families Act 2014)

## **Necessity**

70. Local authorities are only permitted to obtain such information where it is necessary for the purpose of preventing or detecting crime or of preventing disorder:-

When completing the application form the applicant should set out:

- (a) The nature of the enquiry or investigation.
- (b) What offences are being investigated?
- (c) When was the complaint received/investigation started?
- (d) Where relevant, outline the intelligence case indicating how the intended surveillance will further the enquiry. This should indicate what steps have already been taken in the investigation to identify any suspects and the evidential value to the investigation of obtaining the information (in other words what will it give you?).
- (e) Where relevant, give the exact date/time/place of the incident under investigation.
- (f) Date of the offence being investigated for which the information is required (or period if relevant). This will demonstrate how collateral intrusion is being minimised by focusing on the offence or search for supporting evidence.
- (g) In long-term or complex investigations it may be appropriate to have an opening paragraph in this section that briefly sets the scene and background which then leads into the specific applicants investigative requirements (in other words;

what do you actually want on this occasion).

- (h) In the case of applications for directed surveillance authorisations, both the applicant and the authorising officer MUST explain why covert surveillance is a necessary activity for the investigation.

### **Proportionality**

- 71. The applicant and authorising officer must also believe that the obtaining of the data is proportionate to what is sought to be achieved by ensuring that the conduct is no more than is required in the circumstances. There must be evidence that consideration has been given by both the applicant and the authorising officer to the issue of proportionality on the written authorisation.
- 72. This involves balancing the seriousness of the intrusion into the privacy of the subject of the operation (or any other person who may be affected) against the need for the activity in investigative and operational terms.
- 73. The following elements of proportionality should therefore be considered:-
  - (a) Balancing the size and scope of the proposed activity against the gravity and extent of the perceived crime or offence
  - (b) Explaining how and why the methods to be adopted will cause the least possible intrusion on the subject and others
  - (c) Considering whether the activity is an appropriate use of the legislation and a reasonable way, having considered all reasonable alternatives, of obtaining the necessary result
  - (d) Evidencing, as far as reasonably practicable, what other methods had been considered and why they were not implemented

### **Equipment**

- 74. Each department shall keep a record of equipment held and to be used for the purposes of RIPA. A copy of the list of equipment should be forwarded to the Assistant Director, Law and Governance in order for the central record of all equipment held by the Council to be maintained and kept up to date.
- 75. The equipment is to be held by the individual departments but should be accessible by other departments within the Council in order to carry out the functions under RIPA. Appropriate training must be given to the individual installing and using the equipment to ensure that the equipment is correctly installed and that data recorded is fit for purpose and meets the objectives of the investigation.
- 76. The impact on necessity and/or proportionality will be directed related to the type of equipment used. Any equipment used must be fit for purpose in meeting the

objectives of the investigation. It is therefore important for the authorising officer to be informed of what equipment is being used and its capabilities [i.e. range, how its turned on manually or remotely] on the application form so that due consideration can be given when considering whether or not to grant the authorisation. The authorising officer will also need to give consideration and advise how images will be managed, for example images will not be disclosed without first speaking with the data controller to ensure compliance with the appropriate data protection requirements under the Data Protection Act 2018 and any relevant codes of practice produced by the Council.

77. When equipment has been installed a check should be undertaken at least every 48 hours if not daily in order to ensure it remains operational.
78. The Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 Code of Practice makes provision for the storage and retention of the product of the surveillance. Retention of the investigation data, such as images etc, are to be kept by the relevant department in accordance with both the Code of Practice and any relevant policy of that Department. The investigator must retain material obtained in a criminal investigation which may be relevant to the investigation. Material may be photographed, video-recorded, captured digitally or otherwise retained in the form of a copy rather than the original at any time, if the original is perishable; the original was supplied to the investigator rather than generated by him and is to be returned to its owner; or the retention of a copy rather than the original is reasonable in all the circumstances. All original and copy documents shall be destroyed after a period of three years from the date the authorisation comes to an end. Regular reviews should take place to ensure that retention and destruction take place appropriately.

#### **Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS)**

79. If a CHIS is to be used, there are detailed requirements regarding management of their activities. The use of a CHIS who is an adult and not a vulnerable person can be authorised by any of the authorising officers. In a case where the proposed CHIS is a juvenile or a vulnerable person, only the Chief Executive can grant an authorisation or, in their absence, the Group Director of People would deputise for them and can grant the authorisation instead.
80. Because of the particular requirements when using a CHIS you should seek advice from the Assistant Director, Law and Governance when considering the use of a CHIS and before any decisions are made.
81. It is of primary importance when using a CHIS that the Local Authority officers involved comply with the statutory risk assessment requirements specified in section 29 of the Act which are designed for the safety of the individual acting as a CHIS and the protection of the Human Rights of those who may be directly or indirectly involved in the operation. The CHIS must be made aware of any potential risks associated with the role of CHIS.
82. The Code of Practice relating to Covert Human Intelligence Sources can be found

at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/ripa-codes](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ripa-codes) and provides:-

- (a) There will at all times be an officer who has day to day responsibility for dealing with the source and the sources safety and welfare.
  - (b) Another officer will have general oversight of the use made of the source.
  - (c) An officer will have responsibility for maintaining a record of the use made of the source.
  - (d) The records must contain all matters specified by the Secretary of State.
  - (e) Records which disclose the identity of the source are not available to persons other than those who need access to them.
83. There are special provisions relating to the use of juveniles as a CHIS
- (a) A CHIS under the age of 16 years old should never be authorised to give information against his parents or anyone with parental responsibility for him.
  - (b) The local authority must ensure that an appropriate adult is present at meetings with the CHIS
  - (c) Use of a CHIS under the age of eighteen must not be authorised, granted or renewed unless the Local Authority has carried out or updated a risk assessment sufficient to demonstrate that any risk has been identified and evaluated, that the risk is justified, that the risks have been properly explained and understood by the potential CHIS
  - (d) Only the Chief Executive or, in their absence, the Group Director of People who would deputise for them, can authorise the use of a juvenile CHIS.
84. A vulnerable individual is a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of himself, or unable to protect himself against significant harm or exploitation. Such a person should only be used as a CHIS in the most exceptional circumstances and only the Chief Executive may authorise use of a vulnerable adult as a CHIS or, in the absence of the Chief Executive, only the Group Director of People when deputising for them can grant the authorisation instead.
85. The Code of Practice details the records which must be kept when using a CHIS. Originals must be hand delivered to the Litigation Team, Legal Services.
86. Each department or section shall nominate an officer who will have responsibility for ensuring that such records are kept and retained and the Assistant Director, Law and Governance informed of the identity of the designated officer.

87. It should be noted that the Code of Practice states that an officer must not grant authorisation for use of a CHIS unless he believes that there are arrangements in place for ensuring that there is at all times a person with the responsibility for maintaining a record made of the use of the source.
88. Procedures, codes of conduct etc., developed by individual Departments in respect of their operations, which involve the use of a CHIS, must incorporate the requirements of this Policy.

### **Social Networking Sites and Internet Sites**

89. Although social networking and internet sites are easily accessible, if they are going to be used during the course of an investigation, consideration must be given as to whether RIPA authorisation should be obtained.
90. Care must be taken to understand how the social media site being used works. Officers must not be tempted to assume that one service provider is the same as another or that the services provided by a single provider are the same.
91. Officers are also reminded that they must not use personal devices or their personal social media profiles in the course of an investigation. All such investigation must take place using Council devices and generic Council profiles.
92. Paragraphs 3.10 through to 3.17 of the Covert Surveillance and Property Interference Revised Code of Practice (August 2018), which can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ripa-codes> sets out in detail the considerations to be worked through in order to establish whether a RIPA authorisation is necessary for any covert online investigation.

### **Lawful Business Practice**

93. The Investigatory Powers (Interception by Businesses etc. for Monitoring and Record-keeping Purposes) Regulations 2018 deals with the lawful interception of communications and the restrictions on such interception. This statutory instrument can be found by accessing the link below:  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/356/contents/made>
94. Such interceptions are only allowed if the controller of the telecommunications system on which they are affected has made all reasonable efforts to inform potential users that interceptions may be made. This Council's Internet and E- mail Usage policy does inform employees that internet and e-mail usage is monitored. Please note however that the telephone system is not subject to such monitoring therefore these regulations cannot be used as authorisation to intercept telephone calls.
95. Telephone calls may be intercepted with the consent of one of the parties to the call. However, an authorisation for directed surveillance or for the use of a Covert Human Intelligence Source must first be granted.

96. Local Authorities may not intercept communications where neither party has been made aware that the communication is being monitored.

### **Surveillance outside of RIPA**

97. RIPA provides a lawful means of carrying out directed surveillance and using CHIS. There is case law that suggests that RIPA only applies to circumstances when the local authority is carrying out a core function (these are the specific public functions undertaken by the local authority, for instance a regulatory function). This means that if a matter relates to an ordinary function RIPA does not apply. Accordingly, any surveillance activity will be undertaken outside of RIPA (but without the statutory protection afforded by RIPA compliance). In such circumstances the activity will only be lawful if it can be shown that the requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998 have been complied with.
98. Under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights an individual has the right to respect for their private and family life. This is a qualified right, which means that in certain circumstances public authorities can interfere with the private and family life of an individual. Such interference must be proportionate, in accordance with law and necessary to protect national security, public safety or the economic wellbeing of the country; to prevent disorder or crime, protect health or morals, or to protect the rights and freedoms of others.
99. This is a highly technical area. Specific legal advice must be obtained from the Assistant Director, Law and Governance if it is considered that surveillance being contemplated relates to an ordinary function and on any occasion when any surveillance in this category is contemplated.
100. If it is agreed with Legal Services that such surveillance is permissible then there are relevant forms to be completed for audit and record keeping purposes that will be provided for completion, after that discussion with the Assistant Director, Law and Governance has taken place.

### **Darlington Borough Council Designated Authorising Officers**

101. The following persons are Authorising Officers:-

Ian Williams – Chief Executive  
Dave Winstanley – Group Director of Services  
Elizabeth Davison – Group Director of Operations  
James Stroyan – Group Director of People

**No officer with direct involvement in an operation should authorise the use of RIPA unless it is unavoidable. If considered to be unavoidable the centrally retrievable record should record that an officer with direct involvement in the operation has authorised the use of RIPA and this authorisation and reasons for it should be highlighted to the commissioner's inspector**

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**CABINET**  
**6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**PROJECT POSITION STATEMENT & CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING**  
**QUARTER 1 2022/23**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member -**  
**Councillor Scott Durham, Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -**  
**Elizabeth Davison, Group Director of Operations**  
**Dave Winstanley, Group Director of Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides:
  - (a) A summary of the latest Capital resource and commitment position, to inform monitoring of the affordability and funding of the Council's capital programme.
  - (b) An update on the current status of all construction projects currently being undertaken by the Council.
2. It also seeks approval for a number of changes to the programme.

**Summary**

3. The projected outturn of the current Capital Programme is £297.497m against an approved programme of £298.262m. The investment is delivering a wide range of improvements to the Council's assets and more critically, to Council services. Refurbishment of council homes, improved learning environments in schools, better traffic flows and opportunities for sustainable travel have been achieved and are detailed within the report. The programme, including commitments, remains affordable within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022/23 – 2025/26.
4. The Council has a substantial annual construction programme of work. The current project position statement (PPS) shows there are 48 live projects currently being managed by the Council with an overall projected outturn value of £186.911m. The majority of projects are running to time, cost and quality expectations but are being monitored given the current pressures on resources in the construction sector nationally.
5. The projects are managed either by the Council's in-house management team, a Framework Partner or by Consultants sourced via an open/OJEU tender process.

## **Recommendations**

6. It is recommended that Cabinet:
- (a) Note the attached status position on construction projects.
  - (b) Note projected capital expenditure and resources.
  - (c) Approve the adjustments to resources as detailed in paragraph 21.

## **Reasons**

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
- (a) To inform Cabinet of the current status of construction projects.
  - (b) To make Cabinet aware of the latest financial position of the Council.
  - (c) To maintain effective management of resources.

**Elizabeth Davison**  
**Group Director of Operations**

**Dave Winstanley**  
**Group Director of Services**

## **Background Papers**

- (i) Capital Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 – 2025/26
- (ii) Project Position Statement June 2022

Brian Robson : Extension 6608  
Claire Hayes : Extension 5404

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	There are no issues relating to health and wellbeing which this report needs to address.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no carbon impact implications in this report
Diversity	There are no specific implications for diversity
Wards Affected	All wards are affected.
Groups Affected	The proposals do not affect any particular groups within the community
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	The report does not represent a key decision
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
Council Plan	The Capital Programme referred to in the report supports delivery of the Council plan.
Efficiency	The recommendations support the effective and efficient use of resources.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

#### 2022/23 Capital Spend and Resources

### Information and Analysis

8. **Appendix 1** is for information and lists all live construction projects and provides details on numbers, type and of the key individuals responsible for the delivery of the projects. It also provides a statement on the current status position on each project, details of actions being taken, where required and any current issues.
9. **Appendix 2** summarises the Council's capital commitments which are yet to be financed and also shows how it is intended for them to be financed. The total value of commitments, including available resources brought forward from previous years and 2022-23 schemes previously released by Cabinet, is £159.678m.
10. **Appendix 3** shows the Council's projected capital receipts and how they are going to be utilised to help finance the capital programme over the life of the MTFP.

### Project Position Statement

11. Project management procedures require the production by project managers of a Project Position Statement (PPS) for all projects over £75,000. This report brings together the pertinent data from the current PPS with financial information from the Financial Management System (FMS) and approvals by Cabinet.

12. The Project Position Statement (Appendix 1) details the current live construction projects, up to the end of June 2022, by delivery area, and provides details on numbers, type and of the key individuals responsible for the delivery of the projects. It also provides a statement on the current status position on each project, details of actions being taken, where required and any current issues. The statement excludes any completed projects or those on hold.

13. The overview of live construction projects is as follows:

	Projects	Current Approved Budget £ / p	Projected Outturn £ / p	Variance %	Variance (Value) £ / p
Chief Executive & Economic Growth	15	55,648,101	55,506,218	(0.3)	(141,883)
Operations	19	56,104,838	56,984,688	1.6	879,850
People	2	4,154,566	3,968,246	(4.5)	(186,320)
Services	12	70,463,310	70,452,155	(0.0)	(11,155)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>186,370,815</b>	<b>186,911,307</b>	<b>(3.2)</b>	<b>540,492</b>

14. The table shown above includes a column for current approved budget. In certain cases this budget figure may be different from the original approved budget. This could be as a result of variances identified during construction or other variables not known at the initiation stage. The original budget and all subsequent changes have been reported to and approved by Cabinet.

15. The live projects are at the following stages:




Department	Brief	CP1	CP2	CP3	CP4	CP5	Total
Chief Executive & Economic Growth	0	3	1	7	7	3	<b>15</b>
Operations	0	6	0	10	3	0	<b>19</b>
People	0	0	0	0	1	1	<b>2</b>
Services	0	4	1	3	2	2	<b>12</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>48</b>

**Control Point 1 (CP1) – Start Up:** is used to define the position of a project at its conception stage.

- (a) **Control Point 2 (CP2) – Initiate:** defines a project at feasibility stage and will likely include a desktop assessment of a project and the use of informed estimates.
- (b) **Control Point 3 (CP3) – Define:** the point that the project is progressed to RIBA Stage F, i.e. detailed design.

- (c) **Control Point 4 (CP4) – Construction Phase:** is the stage at which work begins on the project, i.e. for a construction project on site through to build completion.
- (d) **Control Point 5 (CP5) – Evaluate:** is the stage post completion of the project at which time the project is reviewed and lessons learned are discussed in order that they can be taken to the next or similar projects.

16. The status on live projects is as follows:

Department			
Chief Executive & Economic Growth	3	12	0
Operations	2	17	0
People	0	2	0
Services	6	6	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>

- (a) Star and triangle symbols are used to identify projects that have variances which are:
  - (i) More than £5,000, if the variance is also more than 5% of the approved budget for the project, or
  - (ii) More than £50,000 regardless of the percentage variance
- (b) Projects that are within these margins are symbolised with circles.
- (c) In addition to cost, the same symbols are used to indicate similar levels of variances in time and quality/outputs/outcomes.

17. Current projects with the triangle symbol are as follows:

Project	Reason for Variance	Action
Skinnergate Re-development Housing	A delay was encountered following the need to produce a revised design to satisfy concerns raised by English Heritage at the planning application stage.	The design team are working on the Stage 4 design and reviewing the programme to see if there is an opportunity to recover time.
Ingenium Parc Masterplan + Infrastructure	Delays encountered due to difficult ground conditions. Works split across two phases.	The contractor has completed the first phase of the drainage works and commences the second phase in early August.
Dolphin Centre Bowling Alley & Soft Play	Work is complete but the outturn report has not yet been produced.	The over £1m Outturn report to be produced.

Darlington Station Enabling Works	Additional site complexities identified around utilities, neighbouring properties and highways impacts of works.	WDC (main contractor) is now managing all current enabling works to the East side and has begun to prepare the site for the demolition process. Demolitions in the West side are being split into multiple phases and are to commence from September.
Crown Library Refurbishment	Delays and additional costs have been encountered from the withdrawal of the originally appointed roofing contractor	Building Services have appointed a replacement roofing contractor and are investigating ways to recover time.
A68 Woodland Road Outram Street Duke Street	A delay has been encountered due to the need for a public Inquiry for the Duke Street proposals	Public Inquiry found that the scheme should proceed. Detailed design being finalised.
LAD 1b funding	The contractor has been delayed and will be delivering until the end of April with reporting to be carried out by May 22	Works being carried forward to 22/23
S & D Trackbed	Delays were encountered with some remedial works required.	Remedial works to be completed.
Skinnergate & Indoor Market	Revised completion date 31/07/23	Design to be progressed.
Walking Cycling Route MSG Yarm Road-Mill Lane	Scheme required additional drainage and structural design work which extended the programme.	Consultants to be appointed to complete design work.
Neasham Rd	The budget in the project position statement is the initial budget based upon the feasibility stage of the project. Between the CP2 stage and CP3 stage designs are developed and work is undertaken on cost certainty based on more developed designs and the market conditions. The figure reported reflects the outcome of tendering and is above	Inflation is a factor being considered in all capital schemes. Action has been taken to manage inflation in terms of modifying the scheme and seeking additional funding from Home England. The scheme remains viable and affordable within the Housing Revenue Account. Funding for the increase has previously been approved

	initial feasibility stages, which is why it is being reported as out of tolerance. However, the scheme remains viable and the revised costs are funded from the HRA new build capital programme which was released in February 2022.	and will be vired between the HRA new build programme budget and the scheme.
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### Reconciliation of Project Position Statement to Capital Programme

18. The table shown below reconciles the differences between the Capital Programme (CP) and the Project Position Statement (PPS). Differences occur because the Project Position Statement includes all construction projects over £75,000 in value funded from Capital and Revenue sources. Spending within the Capital Programme is not always of a construction nature and can be of any value and excludes Revenue funded schemes.

	Value £m
<b>Live Projects from Project Position Statement</b>	<b>186.911</b>
Schemes closed or on hold within CP but awaiting PPS post project review.	6.058
Annualised Schemes excluded from PPS - Housing Repairs & Maintenance	0.267
Annualised Schemes excluded from PPS - Highways Maintenance	5.583
Non construction excluded from PPS	15.122
Capital Investment fund excluded from PPS	29.216
Projects under 75k excluded from PPS	4.415
Capital Schemes not yet integrated into PPS reporting	18.760
Included in PPS & CMR	0.403
Funding not yet allocated	30.762
<b>Capital Programme</b>	<b>297.497</b>

19. The table below shows the split of the approved capital programme of £298.262m, between the different service areas and also the various categories of spend. When compared to the table above it shows that there is a projected £0.765m underspend on the approved capital programme.

	Construction							
	Live Schemes 75k & Over	Annualised Schemes	Completed Schemes awaiting review	Live Schemes under 75k	Non construction	Capital investment fund	Housing New Build not yet allocated	Total
Area	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Housing	36.049	0.667	0.000	0.160	1.205	0.000	59.161	97.242
Economic Growth	46.464	0.000	0.474	0.578	9.804	29.216	3.216	89.752
Highways/Transport	65.488	5.583	5.511	3.178	1.334	0.000	0.028	81.122
Leisure & Culture	22.351	0.000	0.073	0.175	0.000	0.000	0.000	22.599
Education	4.155	0.000	0.000	0.324	0.053	0.000	0.289	4.821
Adult Social Care	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.071
Other	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.655	0.000	0.000	2.655
<b>Total</b>	<b>174.507</b>	<b>6.250</b>	<b>6.058</b>	<b>4.415</b>	<b>15.122</b>	<b>29.216</b>	<b>62.694</b>	<b>298.262</b>

## Capital Programme

20. Paragraph 21 shows the movement in the Capital Programme since the approval of the 2022/23 Capital MTFP.

21. Adjustment to resources requested by departments:

### Virements
















Department	Scheme	Value £	Reason for adjustment	Impact on budget
Operations	Housing Investment Fund	(£893,520)	Housing Investment Fund moved to the Neasham Road scheme	Nil Effect
Operations	Neasham Road	£893,520	Housing Investment Fund moved to the Neasham Road scheme	Nil Effect
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£0</b>		

### Adjustments needing approval release

Department	Scheme	Value £	Reason for adjustment	Resource type adjusted
Operations	Green Homes Grant - LA Delivery Phase 2	£199,265	Match funded grant for energy efficiency as per MTFP	Release
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£199,265</b>		



### Outcome of Consultation

22. There has been no consultation in the preparation of this report.

Project	CP1 Start Up	CP2 Initiate	CP3 Design	CP4 Delivery	CP5 Review	Status Symbol	Status	Client Department	Delivery Department	Internal Project Sponsor	Internal Project Manager	Cost Centre	Feasibility Project Budget (CP1)	Initial Approved Budget	Increase To Initial Approved Budget	Current Approved Budget	Project Expected Out Turn Cost	Variance (%)	Variance (value)	Original Planned Project Completion Date	Revised Approved Project Completion Date	Anticipate d Project Completion Date	Schedule Variatio n (Days)	Project Residual Risk Level	CDM Notifiable Project	Principal Designer	Previous Plan Progress	Plan Progress	Budget Progress Report	Issue Status Report	Lead Consultant	Contracts in place	Contract Type/Form	Contract With	Contract Value
Yards Phase 2							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Mark Ladzman	Mike Bowron	R0180		£1,120,000	£0	£1,120,000	£1,120,000	%	£0	31-Mar-23	31-Mar-23	31-Mar-23	0	46			The initial properties identified within the project for works are now being re visited for final approval as some initial agreements with the owners are needing to be reviewed. Detailed inspections continue to be carried out on the viability and suitability of the properties for work within the project. A Programme is being formulated to procure and initiate the works when final designs are agreed by all sides, the project can progress.	Works have continued at pace. Further properties have now been identified and detailed designs and technical drawings are being created. Momentum of the project is being maintained whilst property works are being agreed and permissions sought.		Works continue to be progressed with positive results. Key locations in Post House Wynd and some properties in Skinnergate have already benefited from the works. Close liaison is taking place with property owners to agree designs and programme.		Main Contract	JCT	DBC Contract Services	
Yards Phase 1							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Mark Ladzman	Michael Bowron	R0176	£350,000	£488,000	£12,000	£500,000	£488,000	-2%	-£12,000	30-Nov-21	31-Mar-22	31-Mar-22	0	0	Y	DBC	Some works originally identified within Phase 1 have been moved into Phase 2 as they will be completed post 31st March. This was as a result of both supply chain issues and availability of the various business. Remaining works have been completed and a post project review is being arranged.	Some works originally identified within Phase 1 have been moved into Phase 2 as they will be completed post 31st March. This was as a result of both supply chain issues and availability of the various business. Remaining works have been completed and a post project review is being arranged.		Yards Phase One has overall been very successful. Due to the Pandemic, both access and supplier delays have meant that some of the works have needed to be re profiled into Phase 2. The required spend on the project will be achieved for the financial year 2021/2 through the re programming of other works that were able to be brought forward. Works not able to be achieved in 2021/2 have been committed and carried forward.		Main Contract	JCT	DBC Contract Services	£357,853
West Cemetery Development							Live	Services	Services	Ian Thompson	Brian Robson	R0154		£4,900,000	£1,500,000	£8,400,000	£8,400,000	%	£0	13-Jun-22	19-Jul-22	19-Jul-22	0	1	Y	Todd Mitburn	Crematorium 06/04/21 to 31/22.	The tender process for the drainage works has completed and the Project Team have awarded the contract. The works will commence upon receipt of the planning decision notice and will take approx. 12 weeks to complete.	The tender process for the drainage works has completed and the Project Team have awarded the contract. The works will commence upon receipt of the planning decision notice and will take approx. 12 weeks to complete.		The tender process for the drainage works has completed and the Project Team have awarded the contract. The works will commence upon receipt of the planning decision notice and will take approx. 12 weeks to complete.	Architect	Standard DBC T&C	Align	£500,539
Skinnergate Re-development Housing							Live	Services	Services	Anthony Sandys	Brian Robson	H6748		£4,950,000	£0	£4,950,000	£4,950,000	%	£0	31-Mar-22	31-Oct-23	31-Oct-23	0	1	Y	Andrew Burnley	Discussions ongoing with Historic England to enable demolition work to commence. RIBA Stage Design ongoing	RIBA Stage 4 design will complete for end of July. Asbestos removal work to former cash converters unit is to commence 6th July and complete for 4th August		1. Initial surveys undertaken, which reveal major loss of structure to heritage building and adjacent property. 2. Historic England opposition to designs are now addressed but significant delays have ensued.		Design Work	Bloom Framework	Design Services	£368,795
Sherborne Close Phase 2							Live	Operations	Operations	Anthony Sandys	Ben Walsdie	H6749		£2,375,962	£374,057	£2,750,019	£2,750,019	%	£0	08-Mar-23	22-Sep-23	08-Mar-23	0	32	Y	Lee Davill	22 units Planning approved November 2021. Start on site commenced Jan 22+ works to commence property April 22	22 units Planning approved November 2021. Start on site commenced Jan 22. Works on hold until root protection and surface water management plan planning conditions are discharged. Applications for discharge now with planning/LLFA (10). Expected recommencement on site by end July 2022.		Re-Start on site still delayed due to groundwater management statement required to discharge planning condition. July 2022 start date target.		Main Works	Split of JCT	Internal	£2,750,019
Rowen East Extension							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Gary Metcalfe	Richard Storey	D0192		£10,000	£0	£10,000	£10,000	%	£0				0	1	Y	Mike Johnson	Feasibility Study to commence 18th May	Design works up to stage 3 ongoing.		Initial plan for site extension agreed in principle with Homes England. Surveys completed. Design work ongoing.		Main Works	Scape	Willmott Dixon	£30,334,786
Heritage Quarter							Live	Services	Services	Ian Thompson	Brian Robson	R0155	£210,000	£20,000,000	£15,140,000	£35,140,000	£35,140,000	%	£0	30-Sep-24	30-Sep-24	30-Sep-24	0	1	Y	Space Architects	Site set up to commence on 3rd May 2022. A temporary fence to segregate the build area from Network Rail infrastructure is now in place	Works commenced on site with new engineering shed on Bonomi Way. An access issue has delayed the start of works on the 18th shed.		Issue with land acquisition with new engineering shed on Bonomi Way. An access issue has delayed the start of works on the 18th shed.		Main Works	Scape	Willmott Dixon	£30,334,786
Nasham Rd							Live	Operations	Operations	Anthony Sandys	Richard Storey	H6745		£31,069,000	£0	£31,069,000	£31,962,520	3%	£893,520	02-May-25	02-May-25	30-May-25	0	17	Y	Lee Davill	ESH handover delays until July 2022. Outline tender price received for DBC works.	ESH handover July 2022. DBC and consultants currently assessing infrastructure works done to date for acceptance of DBC housing construction by July 19th 2022. DBC housing programme to begin 25th July 2022.		Acceptance of site critical issue - DBC can not start until approved and JV payment approx £3m paid.	DBC			Internal	
Information Central							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Anthony Hewitt	Joanne Wood	R0157	£50,000	£500,000	£7,837,854	£8,337,854	£8,337,854	%	£0	31-Dec-21	31-Aug-22	31-Aug-22	0	131	Y	Napper Architects	Construction work is ongoing which includes M & E installation, installation of roof plant and some internal fit out to WC's. Presently on programme	Construction work is ongoing which includes M & E installation, joinery, decoration, commencement of the floor finishes and also the hard and soft landscaping. Presently on programme		Construction work is ongoing which includes M & E installation, joinery, decoration, commencement of the floor finishes and also the hard and soft landscaping. Presently on programme	SCAPE	NEC Engineering & Construction Contract Option A	Willmott Dixon	£7,223,510	
Ingenium Parc Masterplan + Infrastructure							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Anthony Hewitt	Joanne Wood	R0144	£611,500	£811,500	£4,265,593	£4,877,093	£4,877,093	%	£0	31-Aug-18	31-Aug-22	02-Nov-22	0	190		Noel Walecki	Works are to be undertaken in 2 phases. Phase 1 which is the installation of the drainage within the not trapped out areas from Jan 22 - 28th Feb 22 and Phase 2 which is the digging out of the basin and connections within the trapped out areas from May 22 - Aug 22. Phase 1 is now complete. Work is due to re-commence May 22. Work is presently on programme. The site is presently suffering from ASR. The semi-permanent new barrier and Heras fencing is getting vandalised on a daily basis. Due to the existing next licence this barrier requires repairing/replacing immediately and therefore costs may increase.	Following a further meeting with Seymours they have confirmed that recommencement of the drainage works will start from 27th July 2022. Prior to restarting on site Seymours are required to submit a revised Construction Phase Management Plan. A new programme has been submitted which now states that all the works, including landscaping will be complete by 2nd November 2022. Once these works have finished there is a requirement as part of the Natural England licence to provide a further 3 ponds within the site. Pond construction details have been submitted to Seymours to provide a quote.		The recent storms have caused problematic ground conditions although work has continued additional costs have been realised. Due to the weather conditions it is possible that phase 2 works will go beyond the programme.		Spire Road, Phase 2 Ecological mitigation planning & seeding	Short Term NEC	DBC Highways / Brambleton Dixon	£1,109,897
Eastbourne Sports Pitches & Drainage							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Ian Thompson	Rebecca Robson	L0154		£2,350,000	£0	£2,350,000	£2,350,000	%	£0	31-Jul-23	31-Jul-23	24-Mar-23	0	1	Y	SPACE	Pre App - February 2022 Planning Application - September 2022 Start on Site Phs 1 Athletics Track - November 2022 Start on Site Phs 2 Changing & Parking - April 2023 Start on Site Phs 3 3G & pitches - Mid-April 2023 Handover - July 2023	Pre App - February 2022 Planning Application - September 2022 Start on Site Phs 1 Athletics Track - November 2022 Start on Site Phs 2 Changing & Parking - April 2023 Start on Site Phs 3 3G & pitches - Mid-April 2023 Handover - July 2023		Currently working through the pre app comments.	Space	RIBA Stage 1-3 Design Work	Standard DBC T&C	Space Architects	£21,865
Dolphin Centre M & E Return							Live	Services	Services	Lisa Soderman	Ben Walsdie	D0191		£0	£0	£0	£0	%	£0				0	1	Y	AN Consultants - Andria Nicholls	TBC	Initial project launch meeting held with cost consultant, lead designer & client team. team to develop programme over Q3 2022			DTA				
Dolphin Centre Bowling & Soft Play							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Ian Thompson	Richard Storey	D0174		£1,600,000	£184,687	£1,784,687	£1,784,687	%	£0	27-Nov-20	19-Mar-21	19-Mar-21	0	1	Y	Mike Brown	Completed	Completed. Closure report outstanding.				In spirit of JCT Intermediate	In House no contract	£1,731,721	
Demolition Sports Direct Building							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Guy Metcalfe	Brian Robson	R0177		£300,000	£0	£300,000	£300,000	%	£0	30-Jun-22	30-Jun-22	30-Jun-22	0	1	Y	A & N Consultants	A pre-start meeting has been held with the demolition contractor and the demolition works are due to commence on 9th May	Demolition works are ongoing and is being managed through Building Services		Contractor will be working to DBC Building Services		Main Works	Nepo Framework	R&B Ltd	£178,350
Darlington Station Gateway West							Live	Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	Economic Growth	Dave Winstanley	Julia McCabe	R0169	£1,600,000	£1,915,246	£172,287	£2,087,533	£1,996,770	-4%	-£90,763	15-Apr-24	15-Apr-24	15-Apr-24	0	1	Y	Fairhurst	Design progressing by Fairhurst/Sandercock. Planning approval granted. Currently in RIBA Stage 4.	Design progressing by Fairhurst/Sandercock. Planning approval granted. Currently in RIBA Stage 4.		One property left to be acquired on west side therefore final demolition and construction start constrained by CPO and subsequent party wall process.		Stage 3 & 4 Design	NEC	Fairhursts through Willmott Dixon	£45,450



[illegible]

Walking Cycling Route M5G Yarn Road Mill Lane							Live	Services	Services	Andy Casey	Sue Dobson	TP241		£150,000		£150,000	£150,000	%	£0	31/03/2022	31/07/2022	31/03/2023	365	No	Yes	Noel Walecki	Scheduled for 2022/23. Consultant appointed to carry out AP. May outturn higher than expected dependant on cost of footway scheme. Drainage design required. Bridge design currently with Jacobs cost approximately £7k.	Scheduled for 2022/23. Consultant appointed to carry out AP. May outturn higher than expected dependant on cost of footway scheme. Drainage design required. Bridge design currently with Jacobs cost approximately £7k.	LTP plus Section 106 Developer contributions	Project required additional drainage and bridge design, completion date revised to be 31/07/22 dependent on final bridge design being received from Jacobs.			DBC	Agreed Contract Rates	DBC	
Window Replacement 22-23							Live	Operations	Housing	Cheryl Williams	Matthew Plews	H6241		£500,000	£2,206,916	£2,706,916	£2,706,916	%	£0	31/03/2023		31/03/2023					Programme has started to cover the 20/21 Houghton & Springfield Areas & the 21/22 Lascelles Programme. To maximise grant funding the windows programmes have been combined alongside additional grant funded properties. This will mean grant eligible properties will be installed first to meet grant tight timescales, with the remaining properties being completed after that.	Work has begun on our programmed works alongside completion of grant funded works	Budget 22/23 £500k + £1m slippage from 21/22 & 20/21 + £1.366m slippage from PM agreed to be spent on windows delivery				Yes	Extension	Anglian	£2,886,000.00
Total													Sum of Feasibility Project Budget	Sum of Initial Approved Budget	Sum of Increase To IAB	Sum of Current Approved Budoet	Sum of Project Expected Outturn Cost	Sum of Variance Value																		
Total													£3,664,541	£133,074,557	£53,296,258	£186,370,815	£186,911,307	£540,492																		

### 2022/23 Capital Resources Summary

Row Ref.		Approved Commitments £M	Virement of Resources £M	Variance £M	Total £M
1	<b>Capital Commitments</b>				
2	Brought forward from 2021/22	159.678			
3	2022/23 Capital Programme (released by Cabinet)	38.435			<b>198.113</b>
4	Projected (Under)/Over Spend				
5	<b>Total Commitments</b>	<b>198.113</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>198.113</b>
	<b>To Be Funded By:</b>				
	<b>External and Departmental Resources</b>				
6	External Funding and Departmental Supported Borrowing	2.676	-	-	<b>2.676</b>
7	Departmental Unsupported Borrowing	0.000	-	-	<b>(0.000)</b>
8	Capital Grants	74.431	-	-	<b>74.431</b>
9	Capital Contributions	1.815	-	-	<b>1.815</b>
10	Revenue Contributions	30.152	-	-	<b>30.152</b>
11	Capital Receipts - HRA	0.303	-	-	<b>0.303</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>109.377</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>109.377</b>
	<b>Corporate Resources</b>				
12	Capital Receipts (General Fund)/ Prudential Borrowing	88.736	-	-	<b>88.736</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>88.736</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>88.736</b>
13	<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>198.113</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>198.113</b>

### Corporate Resources Analysis

		£M
14	Required Resources to fund 2022/23 expenditure (see above)	88.736
15	<b>Total Planned Use of Corporate Resources</b>	88.736
16	Less: Total Projected net Capital Receipts 22/23 (as per Appendix 3)	(4.918)
17	Add: projects already released and included in the capital commitments above	4.110
18	<b>Corporate Resources required to fund capital programme</b>	<b>87.928</b>

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**Capital Receipts Utilisation - latest projection**

	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Projected Opening Balance as at 1 April	0.579	0.808	9.437
Projected net Capital Receipts	4.339	9.029	3.095
Total projected Capital Receipts	4.918	9.837	12.532
<b><u>Less (as per approved capital programme)</u></b>			
Capitalisation utilisation as per MTFP	(1.085)	0.000	0.000
Council funded schemes	(1.485)	(0.400)	(0.400)
Economic Growth Investment Fund	(0.897)	0.000	0.000
Slippage from previous years	(0.643)	0.000	0.000
Projected available Capital Receipts as at 31 March	0.808	9.437	12.132

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**CABINET  
6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**INVESTMENT FUND UPDATE**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Scott Durham,  
Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Elizabeth Davison,  
Group Director of Operations**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Cabinet on progress against the agreed investments being funded through the Investment Fund.

**Summary**

2. In November 2016 the Council established an Investment Fund to be used for innovative investment opportunities beyond the traditional Treasury Management Strategy in order to achieve greater returns given the low returns on investment.
3. The fund provision of £50m is being utilised as envisaged in the original reports to Council to include Joint Venture (JV) vehicles and economic regeneration initiatives. Returns on JV's are anticipated to be over £6m and three of the schemes have completed with the investment fully repaid and recycled back into the fund.
4. Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the joint venture schemes construction timescales, they are now back on track and sales are buoyant.
5. The Investment Fund is currently funding nine schemes as detailed in the report.

**Recommendation**

6. It is recommended that Cabinet note the use of the Investment Fund and the returns achieved through the joint venture vehicles.

**Reasons**

7. The recommendation is supported:-
  - (a) To keep Cabinet informed of progress made on opportunities undertaken and investment returns.

- (b) To increase development opportunities and ultimately income for the Council.

**Elizabeth Davison**  
**Group Director of Operations**

**Background Papers**

- (i) Council report – 24 November 2016 – Investment opportunities
- (ii) Council report – 29 November 2018 – Investment opportunities update and request to increase the fund.

Brett Nielsen : Extension 5403

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no anticipated impacts as a result of this report
Health and Wellbeing	There are no specific implications as a result of this report
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	As this report is providing an update on the financing of schemes there is no impact as a result of this report.
Diversity	There is no anticipated impact as a result of this report
Wards Affected	No anticipated impact on an individual area as a result of this report
Groups Affected	No anticipated impact on specific groups as a result of this report
Budget and Policy Framework	This does not represent a change to the budget or policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	The Investment Fund is being utilised to assist with the financial stability of the council by maximising investment returns. The fund is also enabling economic growth by facilitating development
Efficiency	The utilisation of the Investment Fund is likely to increase Council income
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Background

8. In November 2016 Council agreed to the establishment of a Capital Investment Fund and following the successful implementation agreed to increase the fund to £50m on 29 November 2018.
9. It has been agreed the fund is recyclable, so as the life of an investment comes to an end and repayment is made, it will be recycled back into the Investment Fund for further utilisation. Any future scheme would of course still require a full detailed business case report to Cabinet. The Economic Growth and Finance Teams continue to look for new opportunities to provide development and financial returns to the Council through the use of the Investment Fund.
10. Since the establishment of the fund, Cabinet have agreed to 14 uses, five of which have completed with the investment recycled back into the fund. One of the five completed investments has completed during the last year, Middleton St George JV, with all houses sold and the investment fully repaid. The remaining nine are summarised below:-

Investment	Cabinet Agreement Date	Agreed Amount £m's	Repaid	Balance £m's
Markets (MAMD Ltd)	20/09/17	1.80	0	1.80
Neasham Road – Relocation of Cattle Mart	06/03/18	3.14	0	3.14
JV - West Park	03/04/18	12.00	5.90	6.10
JV - ESH/BC North East	03/12/19	9.50	0	9.50
Land Acquisition – Faverdale	31/03/20	1.30	0	1.30
JV - Neasham Road	15/09/20	8.50	0	8.50
Burtree Lane Garden Village	05/10/21	0.73	0	0.73
Feethams House	11/01/22	1.71	0	1.71
Land at Blackwell	22/07/22	0.70	0	0.70
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>39.38</b>	<b>5.90</b>	<b>33.48</b>

11. The JV schemes are projected to provide a pre-tax return on investment of over £6 million once all houses have been sold. The three schemes that have already completed are estimated to provide a pre-tax return of over £1.9m once the accounts are finalised with £1.6m received to date (£1.345m after corporation tax).

### Investment update

12. The following paragraphs provide an update on the individual schemes committed against the Investment Fund since the last report to Cabinet in September 2021.

## **Market Asset Management**

13. In 2017 the Council entered into a lease with Market Asset Management Ltd (MAM) for the management and refurbishment of the Victorian Indoor Market and the management and improvement of Darlington's outdoor market.
14. As at the end of June 2022, MAM have drawn down £1.376m of the £1.8m loan which has been used to make physical improvements to the market building, including six new street food stalls, a new bar facility, new toilets, enhanced entrance areas, full mechanical and electrical improvements, the installation of a bio-mass boiler and repairs to the market roof. Further improvements planned to commence in August 2022 include ground floor enhancements, further improvements to entrances, café unit, basement bar and accessible, public and trader toilet improvements. Works are due to be completed by December 2022.

## **Neasham Road: Linked to Relocation of Cattle Mart**

15. In March 2018 Cabinet agreed to purchase the land at Neasham Road from the Darlington Farmers Auction Mart and others to help facilitate the move out of the town centre. The acquisition of the land at Neasham Road not only assisted with this priority but enables the Council to bring forward a significant additional development of affordable and social housing to meet an identified need within the borough
16. £3.14m was allocated from the investment fund being the balance of funding required for the move. The funding will be repaid from Section 106 receipts from affordable housing along with any capital receipts received from the site. This scheme is now progressing with the construction underway for 155 privately owned homes delivered by a JV company (see below) and construction of 150 Council owned affordable houses is due to commence in early August.

## **West Park Joint Venture**

17. The Council entered a JV company with our framework partners to build and sell houses at West Park and agreed funding of £12m to facilitate this. This scheme is part of the larger West Park Village and will be completed over a seven-year period. The Council is anticipated to receive a pre-tax profit on the venture of £2.1m, but it is anticipated returns will be higher than originally anticipated when the scheme is complete.
18. The site continues to see high levels of interest and has sold all but one of the properties available for sale in 2022 and reservations have been made against the 2023 releases.

## **Esh DBC JV Limited**

19. Cabinet approved the establishment of a JV company in December 2019 to provide the infrastructure, build and sell homes under an investment programme within the North East under the company name Esh DBC JV Limited.
20. This company takes a longer-term view and is not site specific which enables funds to be reinvested over a longer term. All sites are subject to qualifying investment criteria for

residential development and it is envisaged the sites would be outside the boundaries of Darlington but within the North East region.

21. The company is based on a 50:50 split between the Council and Esh Homes Ltd with the company delivering profits equally the two parties. The estimated average pre-tax profit share for the Council per annum is £1m, however cashflows will be recycled into new land and WIP until the fourth year of operation when the first dividend of £1m is anticipated.
22. The company is still in its infancy however one site has been purchased for the development of 75 houses in the Gateshead area. Good progress at this site, has all houses available for sale in 2022 sold, with further reservations made against the 2023 release.

#### **Land Purchase – Land at Faverdale**

23. The Council acquired 74 acres of land for employment use to the east of Faverdale East Business Park following approval in March 2020. Cabinet agreed in October 2021 to seek expressions of interest for a preferred developer of the site which has been marketed through informal tender requesting unconditional offers for the site. The closing date for the tender is 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2022, at which point submissions will be analysed before returning to Cabinet to consider options.

#### **Neasham Road Joint Venture**

24. Cabinet agreed to establishing a JV company with our framework partners to build and sell houses on the Neasham Road site. The company has been set up and infrastructure works are progressing well, with all the properties that will be available for sale in 2022 already sold and reservations made against the 2023 release. Pre-tax profits from the site are anticipated at £1.1m.

#### **Burtree Lane Garden Village**

25. The Council have engaged the services of ESH Homes Limited to help facilitate an early planning application for Council owned land at Faverdale. This forms part of the Burtree Lane Garden Village site, which subject to planning will provide approximately 188 new homes and provide a capital receipt to the Council as the site is developed. This receipt will be used to repay the investment from the Investment Fund.

#### **Feethams House**

26. Cabinet agreed to the repayment of £1.7m of European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) to the Government received for the construction of Feethams House, to facilitate the temporary use of the building by the Treasury and Other Government Departments. This repayment was required as the change in use no longer met the ERDF funding criteria to provide high quality office accommodation to small and medium enterprises. The grant is to be repaid over a three year term and will be reimbursed through rental income received from the Darlington Economic Campus occupants.

## **Land at Blackwell**

27. Cabinet agreed to the disposal of 5.2 hectares of land on the former Blackwell Grange golf course for housing development. It was also agreed to undertake feasibility works to develop a plan for parkland restoration surrounding the Blackwell Grange Hotel, funded from the Investment Fund and to be repaid from the capital receipt on sale of the land. The sale of the land will fund the wider restoration of the parkland and retain historic pleasure walks and landscaping features.

## **Summary**

28. The Investment Fund has been used for 14 schemes to date five of which have been recycled back into the fund.
29. The agreed Investment Fund of £50m has a commitment against it of £33.48m, leaving a balance of £16.52m uncommitted.
30. The JV schemes are anticipated to generate over £6m in pre-tax profit dividend to assist the Medium Term Financial Plan, along with a further surplus on loan repayments.
31. The Investment Fund is being utilised as envisaged facilitating wide economic benefits as well as a direct positive impact on the Councils financial position.

**CABINET**  
**6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**SCHEDULE OF TRANSACTIONS**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Scott Durham**  
**Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – Ian Williams**  
**Chief Executive**

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**SUMMARY REPORT****Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider and to seek approval of the terms negotiated in respect of the Schedule of Transactions as set out below.

<b>TRANSACTION</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF TRANSACTION</b>	<b>MINUTE REF</b>
Acquisition of 156 Northgate, Darlington	Purchase of freehold with vacant possession.	C25(c)/Jul/19

**Summary**

2. It is necessary for Cabinet to approve terms negotiated by the officers within the Chief Executive and Economic Growth Group on behalf of the Council to enable contractually binding contracts to be completed. The Part III **Appendix 1** details the terms negotiated for consideration and approval.

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that the schedule (Appendix 1) be approved, and the transactions completed on the terms and conditions detailed therein.

**Reasons**

4. Terms negotiated require approval by Cabinet before binding itself contractually to a transaction.

**Ian Williams**  
**Chief Executive**

**Background Papers**

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

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime & Disorder
Health and Wellbeing	There are no issues relating to Health & Wellbeing which this report needs to address
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no impacts
Diversity	There are no issues relating to Diversity which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Ward is considered to be minimal
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any Group is considered to be minimal
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	Growing the local Economy, encouraging new investment in the Borough and maximising employment opportunities
Efficiency	The terms set out in the Schedule of Transactions appended to this report are considered to be in the Council's best interest and ensure the Council's business is conducted efficiently
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	There are no issues in relation to Looked After Children and Care Leavers

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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