



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Cabinet Agenda

5.00 pm

Tuesday, 10 January 2023

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington DL1 5QT

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

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting.
2. Declarations of Interest.
3. To hear relevant representation (from Members and the General Public) on items on this Cabinet agenda.
4. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of this Cabinet held on :-
 - (a) Tuesday, 6 December 2022 (Pages 5 - 16)
 - (b) Tuesday, 13 December 2022 (Pages 17 - 20)
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) Disabled Facilities Grant Policy and Regulatory Reform Order Policy –
Report of the Group Director of People
(Pages 21 - 54)

- (b) Maintained Schools Capital Programme - Summer 2023 – Report of the Group Director of People.
(Pages 55 - 58)
- (c) East Street Office Development – Report of the Chief Executive.
(Pages 59 - 66)
- (d) Town Centre Parking Offer – Report of the Group Director of Services.
(Pages 67 - 72)
- 8. Council Plan 2020/23 Performance Report - Quarter 2 (2022/23) – Report of the Chief Officers Executive.
(Pages 73 - 136)
- 9. Future Development of Indoor Market – Report of the Chief Executive.
(Pages 137 - 150)
- 10. Climate Change Progress – Report of the Chief Executive.
(Pages 151 - 156)
- 11. Schedule of Transactions - January 2023 – Report of the Chief Executive.
(Pages 157 - 160)
- 12. Membership Changes - To consider any Membership Changes to Other Bodies to which Cabinet appoints.
- 13. 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.
- 14. Questions.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

- 15. 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PART III NOT FOR PUBLICATION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 30 December 2022

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

Councillors Bartch, Clarke, Dulston, Durham, Keir, 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 or telephone 01325 405803).

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**DECISIONS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE
MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2022**

CABINET

Tuesday, 6 December 2022

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

INVITEES – Councillors Curry, Harker, Snedker and Wright

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors Crudass and McCollom

C215 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

C216 TO HEAR RELEVANT REPRESENTATION (FROM MEMBERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC) ON ITEMS ON THIS CABINET AGENDA.

In respect of Minute C224 below, a written representation was made by a member of the public which was read out at the meeting.

C217 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS CABINET HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2022

Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Cabinet held on Tuesday 8 November 2022.

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

REASON – They represent an accurate record of the meeting.

C218 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET

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

C219 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY - CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY TASK AND FINISH REVIEW

The Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee introduced the report of the report of the Childcare Sufficiency Review Group (previously circulated) presenting the outcome of the Review Group established to gain a better understanding of childcare sufficiency and the general supply of childcare within the Borough and the barriers to provision.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee reported that the review group recognised that there were no immediate concerns around overall sufficiency, however, the Childcare Act 2006 placed a duty on Council's to provide support to secure, as far as reasonably practicable,

sufficient childcare to meet the requirements of parents in their area. This support could include financial support or could enable it to provide childcare itself if no other provider was willing to do so. From the information available, the Review Group felt that the Council was not doing everything reasonably practicable to provide childcare for a number of families around the Borough who required it.

RESOVLED – (a) That assistance in communicating the availability of jobs in the childcare sector, be provided, including the communication of jobs in Events Planning, Jobs Initiatives, Publications and Digital communication.

(b) That the local Members of Parliament be made aware of the concerns highlighted by Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with regard to the provision of sufficient childcare to meet the needs of families.

REASON - To ensure that the local authority is discharging its statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare to meet the requirements of parents in the area.

C220 KEY DECISION - PROCUREMENT PLAN UPDATE

Pursuant to Minute the Cabinet C123/Apr/22, the Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Chief Executive (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Annual Procurement Plan (also previously circulated); the assessment of contracts that are considered to be strategic or non-strategic; updating Members on the outcome of procurements that were previously designated as Strategic; and the decisions taken by the Procurement Board to waive the Contract Procedure Rules.

The submitted report stated that any contract award decision with a value below £100,000 was delegated to officers; the annual Procurement Plan detailed all the existing and new contracts that were over £100,000 which required a tender process; and that for those contracts which were over £100,000 and considered strategic, the final contract award decision would be approved by Procurement Board and reported to Cabinet. It was reported that one additional contract had been designated as strategic and included in the annual Procurement Plan (also previously circulated).

Particular reference was made at the meeting to the current position with regard to two contracts that were previously designated as strategic namely the supply of materials and products for the repair and maintenance to Council housing and buildings and to the Railway Heritage Quarter. A request was also made for more information on contracts where Contract Procedure Rules had been waived. The Cabinet Member with the Resource Portfolio responded thereon.

RESOLVED – (a) That the assessment of strategic and non-strategic contracts as presented in Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be approved, and it be agreed that:

- (i) further reports/ updates on the procurement process for those contracts designated as strategic (including decisions made by the Procurement Board) be brought to Cabinet;
- (ii) the contract award decisions for those contracts designated as non-

strategic, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be delegated to the appropriate Directorate; and

- (iii) the contract award decisions for those contracts designated as strategic, as detailed at Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be delegated to the Procurement Board to approve and report back to Cabinet.

(b) That the contents of the submitted report, in respect of the update of strategic procurements, Procurement Board waiver decisions, and Social Value, be noted.

REASONS – (a) In respect of strategic/non-strategic contracts, the recommendations are supported by the following reasons:-

- (i) the Contract Procedure Rules require Cabinet to approve the designation of contracts as strategic and non-strategic;
- (ii) contracts designated strategic are of high value and high significance in respect of the impact on residents, Health and Safety and public safety; and
- (iii) the contracts designated non-strategic are of a lower value and lower significance in respect of the impact on residents and public safety.

(b) In respect of Procurement Board waiver decisions, the recommendations are supported by the following reasons: -

- (i) in order to comply with the Contract Procedure Rules.
- (ii) to provide Cabinet with information about the decisions made by the Procurement Board.
- (iii) to supplement the reports that are taken to Cabinet about proposed spend over £100,000, that are set out in the Annual Procurement Plan and the in year update to that report.

C221 COMPLAINTS MADE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) providing 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 6 September 2022.

The submitted report set out in abbreviated form the decisions reached by the LGSCO and the HOS between 1 April 2022 and 30 September 2022 and outlined the actions taken as a result of those complaints.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That the amendments to the Council's Travel and Transport Assistance Policy and Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Travel Assistance Policy, as detailed in paragraph 24 of the submitted report, be noted.

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) To comply with the recommendation made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and ensure the Council's Travel and Transport Assistance Policy and SEND Travel Assistance Policy are consistent with government guidance.

(c) The contents of this report do not suggest that further action, other than detailed in the report, is required.

C222 HEALTH AND CARE INTEGRATION AND THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

The Cabinet Member with the Health and Housing Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of People (previously circulated) updating Cabinet on the suggested changes to the 'place based' leadership in relation to the changes implemented through the development of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Place based arrangements; requesting that consideration be given to the preferred option following discussion with partners across health, education, care and economic development; and highlighting potential changes to the role and function of the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) following the publication of draft guidance by the Government.

The submitted report stated that the Health and Care Act 2022 received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022; the Act included provisions to strengthen health and care integration which the Government set out in more detail in the Integration White Paper (February 2022); alongside other measures, the Integration White Paper offered five options for partnership working between health and social care at a place-based level; those options had been developed by NHS England with the Local Government Association; and that the Integration White Paper asked that health and care partners implement one of the five options by April 2023. The preference for Darlington was a Joint Committee to enable the North East and North Cumbria ICB to access additional benefits and opportunities for health and wellbeing outcomes for Darlington residents, with the it operating in 'shadow form' from January 2023 and to be fully operational by April 2023.

It was reported that the Act and Draft Guidance published in July 2022 gave an enhanced role to the HWBB; the Board's leadership of the health and care system was emphasised, new responsibilities were proposed including an oversight of any place-based governance arrangements such as a Joint Committee and working with the Integrated Care Partnership to deliver a strategy (or plan) which would effectively address population health and inequalities; and that the proposed changes were likely to mean that the HWBB would meet more frequently and have agendas which covered any Joint Committee and the shared duties with the Integrated Care Partnership.

Discussion ensued on the membership of the Joint Committee and the future role of the Health and Well Being Board.

RESOLVED – (a) That the potential changes to health and care integration, as set out in the Health and Care Act 2022 and the Integration White Paper (February 2022), and as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the preferred option for future health and care integration be a Joint Committee to :-

- (i) be co-produced with the Integrated Care Board;
- (ii) operate in 'shadow form' from January 2023; and
- (iii) be fully operational from April 2023.

(c) That it be noted that detailed discussion was needed with health and care partners and that, Government guidance may be published, which would have an impact on the preferred option.

(d) That further reports be presented following discussions with health and care partners with more detailed proposals for consideration.

(e) That the likely changes to the responsibilities of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the consequent changes to frequency of meetings and agendas, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

REASONS – (a) To promote the health and wellbeing of the population, reducing health inequalities, identifying needs, and securing investment to meet those needs are key responsibilities of the Council.

(b) To discharge those responsibilities effectively, the Council works in partnership with health and care organisations.

(c) To sustain progress and keep a strong focus on Darlington a Joint Committee is believed to be the best of the options available.

(d) To avoid duplication and ensure health and care partners are delivering on agreed priorities, the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board is likely to be extended and be enhanced.

C223 HOUSING SERVICES FIRE SAFETY POLICY

The Cabinet Member with the Health and Housing Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Housing Services Fire Safety Policy 2022/27 (also previously circulated).

The submitted report stated that this Council provided 355 homes for local residents in seven Sheltered Housing schemes and three Extra Care schemes and that the Housing Services Fire Safety Policy 2022/27 set out how the Council would provide staff, residents, visitors and partner organisations, in those Council owned schemes, with clear guidelines as to how to prevent fires and what action to take in the event of a fire, to protect themselves and others.

It was reported that the Tenants Panel and Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee had been consulted on the draft policy and it had received overwhelming support.

RESOLVED – That the Housing Services Fire Safety Policy 2022/27, as appended to the submitted report, be approved.

REASONS – (a) Darlington Borough Council has a duty to comply with fire safety legislation.

(b) The Social Housing Regulator’s Consumer Standards places a duty on social housing landlords to provide their tenants with quality, safe accommodation.

(c) The adoption of a formal Fire Safety Policy is one of the ways to demonstrate how we will achieve both compliance with the legislation and the Social Housing Regulator’s Consumer Standards.

C224 FIRST HOMES POLICY POSITION STATEMENT

The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio introduced the report of the Chief Executive (previously circulated) setting out the new Government policy on First Homes and requesting that consideration be given to the First Homes Policy Position Statement (also previously circulated) for publication.

The submitted report stated that in May 2021, the Government set out national planning policy for First Homes, a new affordable housing product; First Homes were a specific kind of Discount Market Sale Housing (DMSH), discounted by 30 percent of the market value for first time buyers; and that the new policy came into effect from 28 June 2021 and required that a minimum of 25 percent of all affordable housing units secured through planning obligations should be First Homes.

It was reported that due to transitional arrangements in the guidance the Council did not reflect First Homes in the recently adopted Local Plan (2022); following an analysis of the policy it was considered that it was a reasonable approach to seek the First Homes requirement from developers via a Policy Position Statement; First Homes was the Government’s preferred discount market tenure and that this was now adopted national policy; and it offered another option for local people to get on the housing ladder.

References were made at the meeting as to how the need for affordable housing would be met, to the percentage of new homes that could be bought through the First Homes policy; and to its enforcement of the policy. The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio and the Chief Executive responded thereon.

RESOLVED – (a) That the new Government policy on First Homes, be noted, and the First Homes Policy Position Statement, as appended to the submitted report, be approved, for publication.

(b) That delegated powers to make minor modifications to the First Homes Policy Position Statement, as appended to the submitted report, be given to the Assistant Director of Economic Growth in conjunction with the Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio.

REASONS – (a) First Homes are the Government’s preferred discount market tenure and are required by national policy.

(b) First Homes will assist in getting local people on the housing ladder.

C225 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 TO 2025/27

The Cabinet Member with the Health and Housing Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the proposals for the revenue budget, capital programme, rent levels and service charges for the Council’s Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the financial year 2023/24, in the context of the HRA Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2026/27 and the 30-year Business Plan.

The submitted report stated that the Council was the largest provider of social housing in the Borough, providing 5,291 homes to local residents; the homes were of a high standard of accommodation that met the Decent Homes Standard; as a result of the high quality of the homes and the services provided they were in high demand; to meet that demand the Council had an ambitious programme to build new homes in Darlington, funded through capital receipts from the right to buy sales, grant funding and borrowing of £11.7M; the proposed revenue budget expenditure of £26.557M included £5.539M to fund responsive repairs and maintenance and £12.609M contribution to the capital programme; and the proposed capital programme of £24.585M included funding for work to current properties and £15.673M to deliver the new build Council housing programme.

It was reported that the key decision to be made regarding the HRA each year was the balance between setting rent and service charge levels that were affordable to the Council’s tenants whilst ensuring there was sufficient resources to invest in housing stock, tackle climate change and maintain services; Local Authorities had the discretion to increase rents by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) plus one per cent; CPI for September 2022 was 10.1 per cent which meant that Members could decide to increase rents by up to 11.1 per cent; a decision was made by the Government to cap social housing rent increases at seven per cent; and that a number of options had been considered, taking into account the current economic pressures facing tenants and delivering ambitious capital and energy efficient programmes.

Particular reference was made to subsidence issues that were affecting some properties in the North Road Ward. The Cabinet Member with the Health and Housing Portfolio responded thereon.

RESOLVED - That the following recommendations be agreed for wider consultation, namely that :-

- (a) an average weekly rent increase of five per cent for 2023/24 be implemented giving an average social rent of £78.70 and affordable rent of £88.38;
- (b) garage rents and service charges be increased, as shown in Table 3 of the submitted report;
- (c) the revenue budget, as attached at Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be

approved;

- (d) the Housing Business Plan, at attached at Appendix 2 of the submitted report, be agreed; and
- (e) the capital programme, as attached at Appendix 3 of the submitted report, be agreed.

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

C226 MID-YEAR PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT 2022/23

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Resources (previously circulated) seeking approval of the revised Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators and providing a half yearly review of the Council's borrowing and investment activities.

It was reported that the mandatory Prudential Code, which governed the Council's borrowing, required Council approval of controls, called Prudential Indicators, which related to capital spending and borrowing. The indicators were set out in three statutory annual reports and the key objectives of those reports were set out in the submitted report, together with the key proposed revisions to the indicators which related to a reduction in the Operational Boundary to £156.699M and the Authorised Limit to £239.879M to allow for any additional cashflow requirements.

Particular reference was made to the investments of £30M in property funds, which were expected to increase the net return on investment by around £0.700M in future years.

RESOLVED - (a) That the revised prudential indicators and limits, as detailed within Tables 1 to 6, 8, 10 and 12 to 17 of the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the Treasury Management Budget (Financing Costs) projected outturn as shown in Table 11 of the submitted report, be noted.

(c) That the report be forwarded to Council in order for the updated prudential indicators to be approved.

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

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

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

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

C227 LAND AT FAVERDALE - BURTREE GARDEN VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio introduced the report of the Chief Executive (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to negotiating the necessary approvals and agreements required to facilitate the next stage of the delivery of the Burtree Garden Village.

The submitted report stated that at the time of writing the report Homes England were preparing the submission of a hybrid planning application for the delivery of phase 1 of the proposed Burtree Garden Village development; the hybrid planning application, which included circa 35 acres of Council owned land at High Faverdale Farm would be detailed for the spine/link road and outline for the remainder of Phase 1, as shown as AB on the plan (also previously circulated); work was being undertaken by Homes England on a number of issues including viability, Section 106, and Nutrient Neutrality; and stated that as a result the financial and development position, as far as the Council's land was affected, was subject to clarification.

It was reported that the fallback position for the Council was that before granting access onto the Council's land to build the road and the enabling infrastructure, terms would need to be agreed for an Infrastructure Development Agreement; the Council was endeavouring to agree a high-level Promoter Agreement with Homes England to agree the principles of the planning application; and that there were also independent proposals for a temporary Construction and Skills Hub on the Council's land, at cell CH on the plan (also previously circulated).

RESOLVED – (a) That Homes England's proposal to submit a hybrid planning application for Phase 1 of Burtree Garden Village to include Council owned land at High Faverdale Farm, as shown on the plan appended to the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That Delegated Authority be granted to the Assistant Director of Economic Growth in consultation with respective portfolio holders, to negotiate and agree the necessary approvals and agreements required to facilitate the work, as detailed in the submitted report.

(c) That the Assistant Director Law and Governance be authorised to complete any associated legal agreements.

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

(b) To establish the Council's position as landowner of part of the development site and to enable the necessary degree of control to benefit from a share of any capital receipt made from the development.

C228 LAND ASSEMBLY FOR DEVELOPMENT AT GLADSTONE STREET/KENDREW STREET INCLUDING NORTHGATE HOUSE DARLINGTON

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

land assembly for the development of a mixed-use residential and commercial site in the area highlighted on the plan (also previously circulated) through negotiated acquisitions with current landowners; the commencement of a Compulsory Purchase Order where a negotiated position cannot be achieved; and to the use of funding from Darlington's Town Fund Programme for officers to undertake preliminary surveys and to seek outline planning permission for the proposal.

It was reported that in accordance with the Town Centre Strategy and Darlington's Town Fund Programme the development of residential properties within and adjacent to the town centre was a clear priority to revitalise the town centre by addressing derelict buildings and vacant land. To date there had been several notable successes in the delivery of this ambition including the former sport direct site, which had been acquired and the redundant building on the site demolished to present a cleared site for future development, and the Northern Echo building, which had been acquired and work had commenced to transform this building into an Adult Training Hub on the ground floor and high-quality office space on the upper floors.

The submitted report stated that the site highlighted area included Kendrew Street car park which was within Council ownership; several privately owned buildings; and Northgate House, which had been empty for several years. Officers had been negotiating with the owners for the Council to acquire the building based on independent valuations, however those negotiations had been unsuccessful.

Commencement of the Town Fund Programme had enabled officers to commission some early design work, which considered possible development options for the area and the options considered included the creation of residential and mixed-use development with the inclusion of green spaces and active travel options. The designs were merely indicative of what could be achieved at this stage and it would continue to be developed resulting in a comprehensive design solution for the project area.

RESOLVED – (a) That officers commence land assembly for the development of a mixed-use residential and commercial site in the area as highlighted at Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

(b) That it be noted that the detailed design for the scheme would continue, producing a comprehensive preferred scheme.

(c) That the negotiated acquisitions of properties from current landowners, be approved, and the Chief Executive be authorised to negotiate full terms in consultation with the Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio and the terms be reported subsequently on the Schedule of Transactions.

(d) That officers be authorised to prepare a draft Compulsory Purchase Order and schedule of interests to be acquired for the acquisition of any properties which could not be acquired by agreement.

(e) That the Assistant Director of Economic Growth and Assistant Director Law and Governance be authorised to deal with any related matters and associated documents

accordingly.

REASON - To accelerate the building of new homes and the revitalisation of the town centre.

C229 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.

C230 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - TO CONSIDER ANY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO OTHER BODIES TO WHICH CABINET APPOINTS.

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.

**DECISIONS DATED –
FRIDAY 7 DECEMBER 2022**

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CABINET

Tuesday, 13 December 2022

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

INVITEES – Councillors Curry, Harker and Snedker

APOLOGIES – Councillor Bartch

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors Mrs Culley, Mrs H Scott and Wallis

C231 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

C232 TO HEAR RELEVANT REPRESENTATION (FROM MEMBERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC) ON ITEMS ON THIS CABINET AGENDA.

In respect of Minute C233 below, representations were made by members of the public in attendance at the meeting and in writing.

C233 SKERNINGHAM GARDEN VILLAGE DESIGN CODE

The Leader introduced the report of the Chief Executive (previously circulated) updating Members on the progress of Skerningham Garden Village Design Code Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and requesting that consideration be given to commencing an additional round of public consultation on the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code Draft SPD (also previously circulated).

The submitted report stated that it was a requirement of the adopted Darlington Local Plan 2016/36 to create and adopt SPD's based on a Design Code for Skerningham Garden Village; the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code Draft SPD had been formally consulted upon between 9 September and 17 October 2022; 87 comments from 75 contributing consultees had been received; given those extensive comments and observations it was requested that a refreshed document which demonstrated positively the differences that had been proposed in the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code be consulted up; and that DesignNE had carried out the refresh of the Design Code.

A number of questions were raised by members of the public on a number of issues including how the Council would address the biodiversity loss without resorting to 'net gain' scenarios; the timing of the public consultation over the Christmas and New Year period when the vast majority of people may not have the time to respond to the consultation; the reasoning for removing some of the principles from the Design Code; the route of the access road through the Skerningham plantation; and whether the Council had the exact location of the burial sites. Particular references were also made to the suitability of the site for housing; the demand for housing; the capacity of the A1150 to deal with the extra traffic generated by the development; and to the replacement of any trees that were lost as a result of the development. The Leader, Chief Executive and Assistant Director Economic Growth

responded thereon.

RESOLVED – (a) That the progress and content of the Skerningham Garden Village Design Code Supplementary Planning Documents, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the additional public consultation period on the revised Skerningham Garden Village Design Code Draft Supplementary Planning Document, from 9 December 2022 to 6 January 2023, be approved.

REASON - To ensure the various stakeholders are fully aware of the contents of the refreshed document and demonstrate that the Council has engaged positively with the residents and consultees.

C234 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - INVESTING IN AND DELIVERING SUCCESS FOR DARLINGTON

The Leader introduced the report of the Chief Officers Executive (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2023/24 to 2026/27 (also previously circulated) for consultation, including setting a budget and council tax increase for 2023/24.

The submitted report stated that the current economic climate presented significant challenges to the Council's budgets; rising inflation, interest rates and energy costs and post-Covid demand in social care were putting significant pressures on the Council's finances; and that unless further government funding was forthcoming the Council would need to undertake a fundamental review of its services over the course of 2023 to decide what and how services would be delivered in the coming years.

Reference was made to the fact that the Local Government Finance Settlement was not anticipated until the week commencing 19 December, the consequence of which was that the draft 2023/24 Budget and MTFP had an eye to future years but did not seek to presume what the future would look like.

It was reported that the Council would set a legal budget in 2023/24 and continue to provide the core offer level of services to the residents of Darlington; it would deliver a balanced position until 2024/25 utilising reserves as per the financial strategy; there was an annual budget deficit which was not sustainable and would need to be addressed; unless further funding was forthcoming the Council would need to both reduce expenditure and increase income to ensure a stable position moving forward; planning beyond the current year was extremely difficult, given the uncertainty around future funding; and that current planning suggested that reserves would be depleted in 2025/26 and there would be a budget deficit of approximately £10M.

Details of the projected expenditure and income, budget pressures and savings, schedule of fees and charges, assumptions used to prepare estimates, projected Revenue Outturn 2022/23 and proposed Capital Programme, were also appended to the submitted report.

Discussion ensued on the percentage of the budget spent on social care; to the high percentage of staffing costs and the implications of implementing the living wage; the

implications on the rise in Council Tax on those families who were already struggling; and to the way that the Council received funding from the government. The Leader and Group Director of Operations responded thereon.

RESOLVED - That the Revenue Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the Capital Programme, as set out in Appendices 6 and 7 respectively of the submitted report, be approved for consultation, including:-

- (a) a Council tax increase of 2.99 per cent plus a two per cent Adult Social Care Precept to fund social care for 2023/24; and
- (b) the Schedule of Charges, as set out in Appendix 3 of the submitted report.

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

- (b) To enable the Council to continue to plan services and finances over the medium term.
- (c) To ensure decisions can be made in a timely manner.
- (d) To ensure investment in the Council's assets is maintained.

**DECISIONS DATED –
FRIDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**CABINET
10 JANUARY 2023**

**DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT POLICY
& REGULATORY REFORM ORDER POLICY**

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Lorraine Tostevin,
Adult Social Care Portfolio**

Responsible Director - James Stroyan, Group Director of People

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to request that Cabinet approve the updated Disabled Facilities Grant Policy and Regulatory Reform Order Policy 2022-2025.

Summary

2. The Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a means tested statutory grant provided by the Government to undertake adaptations to homes such as walk in showers, stair lifts, ramps, or building extensions for disabled adults or children to enable them to live independently in their own homes.
3. Disabled Facilities Grants are governed by housing legislation and therefore have set guidance and eligibility criteria which govern how funding can be allocated. Historically these conditions have restricted the way in which funding could be released which resulted in year-on-year underspends on the budget.
4. The Government has also increased the DFG grant paid to local authorities nationally, this increase in allocated Government funding together with carry forward amounts has resulted in a DFG budget for 2022-2023 of approximately £2.6M.
5. A Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order gives local authorities permission to broaden the scope of how DFGs are used to support housing renewal and assist with the improving housing conditions.
6. The proposed updated Darlington DFG policy has therefore been developed in a way which will enable the Council to make use of the powers provided under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order and use the funding in an appropriate way, to the benefit of residents.
7. A summary of initiatives of new areas of expenditure facilitated by a revised DFG Policy including RRO Housing Assistance (2002) are given in paragraph 17 of the main report and full details are outlined in **Appendix 2**.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that Members approve the Disabled Facilities Grant policy (2022-2025) and the associated Housing Assistance Policy under the Regulatory Reform Order (2022).

Reasons

9. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) To enable the adaptations for those individuals who are eligible to receive a Disabled Facilities Grant for 2022- 2023 to proceed.
 - (b) The updated Disabled Facilities Grant Policy and Regulatory Reform Order Policy will allow the Council to create an environment of greater innovation and flexibility to maximise the benefit of DFG funding.

**James Stroyan,
Group Director of People**

Background Papers

- (i) Darlington Borough Council Disabled Facilities Grant Policy and Regulatory Reform Order Policy 2020-2023
- (ii) Foundations <https://booklets.foundations.uk.com/adaptationsforbehavioursthatchallenge>
- (iii) Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and Department of Health & Social Care [Disabled Facilities Grant \(DFG\) delivery: Guidance for Local Authorities in England \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94444/Disabled_Facilities_Grant_DFG_delivery_Guidance_for_Local_Authorities_in_England.pdf)

Sukhdev Dosanjh: Extension 5855

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	Adaptations funded by Disabled Facilities Grants will improve the health and well-being of residents of Darlington.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	Some of the adaptations funded by Disabled Facilities Grants will reduce energy usage and provide higher levels of thermal comfort for dwellings benefitting from these measures thus reducing carbon emissions.
Diversity	The adaptations provided via Disabled Facilities Grants will improve the accessibility of owner occupied, privately rented and social housing.
Wards Affected	All wards within the Borough of Darlington are affected.
Groups Affected	Disabled Facilities Grants are available to disabled applicants living in owner occupied, privately rented and social housing.
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	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this is not an urgent matter
Council Plan	<p>Positive impact across Adults and Children and Young people, contributing towards the following key actions Adults - Maximising Independence and reducing the demand on services.</p> <p>Children and Young People - Provide excellent services for children and young people with special educational needs and disability.</p>
Efficiency	Adaptations enable people to remain independent in their homes for longer and therefore reduce the need for larger packages of support or admission to residential care. They also can be effective in preventing hospital admissions.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Some of the adaptations funded by Disabled Facilities Grants will have a positive impact on some looked after children

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

10. The purpose of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) is to fund adaptations to owner-occupiers, tenants of private rented properties and Housing Association tenants to enable people with a disability to remain in their own home and live independently across the Borough.
11. DFGs are national mandatory grants, and the grants are available to adults and children with a disability, when works to their home are judged “necessary and appropriate” to meet their assessed needs, and when it is “reasonable and practicable” to carry them out having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling.
12. Works that are eligible for a DFG include:
 - (a) Facilitating access to and from and around the dwelling
 - (b) Access to a family room
 - (c) Access to a room for sleeping
 - (d) Access to a lavatory
 - (e) Access to a bath or shower
 - (f) Facilities for the preparation of food
 - (g) Improvements to heating systems.
13. The current DFG Policy has been in operation since November 2020 and closely follows the legislation and policy guidance that was current at the time of its implementation.
14. Durham County Council Home Improvement Agency provides support to individuals applying for a DFG under a contract. This service includes:
 - (a) The completion of the grant application
 - (b) The seeking of quotes for the necessary works
 - (c) Selection of a suitable contractor
 - (d) Oversight of the works up to completion
 - (e) Payment of the grant.
15. A revised DFG policy including a RRO (Housing Assistance) Order (2002) policy is attached at **Appendix 1**. In summary the RRO (2002) policy provides the Council with a power to broaden the scope of how DFGs are used; however, there is a legal requirement to publish this policy in order for the Council to exercise this power. A range of programmes and initiatives have been included in the revisions which have been based on best practice nationally and a review of local needs.
16. Adaptations to a person’s home can also reduce and/or delay the need for care and support and also prevent/delay the admission to residential care. In addition, a DFG can support a preventative approach by reducing risks within the home and assisting individuals to live and manage independently in a safe and accessible home environment.

17. Summary of initiatives of new areas of expenditure facilitated by a revised DFG Policy and RRO Housing Assistance (2002) Policy (2022-2025). A full list of the details and rationale can be found in Appendix 2:

- (a) Waive the means test for certain items and raise the recovery threshold
- (b) Additional costs to be charged to the DFG fund
- (c) Amendments to the Kinship Care contribution
- (d) Expand policy to widen the support that can be provided for Children and adults with autism/behaviours that challenge, including the provision of safe spaces
- (e) Dementia Grants & Smart Home kits
- (f) Home accident prevention or health and safety initiatives
- (g) Future items for use of DFG funding

Financial Implications

18. Historically there has been a growing cumulative underspend in the DFG budget. Whilst the expenditure has increased in 2021/22 by 76% to £1,298,519, the budget including carry forward amounts and Government top ups is approximately £2.6M on 1 April 2022. The average carry forward amount over the 4 years (2018/19 to 2021/22) is £1,631,811.

Table 1: DFG Capital Resources

<i>Year</i>	<i>Brought Forward £</i>	<i>In-year allocation £</i>	<i>Additional Allocation£</i>	<i>Total Available £</i>	<i>Expenditure £</i>	<i>Carry Forward £</i>
2017/2018	686,867	804,133	77,409	1,568,409	472,272	1,096,137
2018/2019	1,096,137	868,491	95,666	2,060,294	633,506	1,426,788
2019/2020	1,426,788	937,154		2,363,942	682,545	1,681,397
2020/2021	1,681,397	937,154	126,191	2,744,742	735,626	1,827,116
2021/2022	1,827,116	1,063,345	0	2,890,461	1,298,519	1,591,942
2022/2023	1,591,942	1,063,345	0	2,655,287	*541,959	2,113,329

*Confirmed actual spend as at 13/9/22

19. The fund is currently managed within the Children & Adults Commissioning team and is operated in conjunction with the Occupational Therapy team who undertake the needs assessments for all cases. Close budgetary oversight is already provided by the fund manager with finance oversight to ensure the fund is being spent in line with the guidance and spend remains in line with our allocation of funding going forward, focussing on presenting need and core purpose of the DFG.

Outcome of Consultation

20. The Council undertook a consultation exercise from 25 October until 28 November 2022.
21. The policy and summary of changes were published on the Council website, direct contact was made with the organisations listed below and consultation discussion took place with DAD, Age UK and Alzheimer's Society:
 - (a) DAD
 - (b) Age UK North Yorkshire and Darlington
 - (c) Alzheimer's Society
 - (d) Healthwatch
 - (e) Darlington Carers Support Service
 - (f) MIND
 - (g) Parent Carer Forum
22. The outcome of the consultation has been incorporated into the policy revisions.

Equalities Considerations

23. A group of officers carried out an initial Equalities Impact Assessment Screening (**Appendix 3**), and from this no negative impacts were identified. This is not surprising as the intention of the policy is to offer additional assistance and support to older and disabled people through a more flexible approach to funding adaptations. As a result of the consultation, the EIA and the policy have been amended to further clarify how any future pressure on funding will be managed.
24. While there is no negative impact identified, there are previous applicants who have had to contribute to their DFG. A number of these people could feel disadvantaged, they could argue that they would have been better off if we had made this change earlier, however we would not ordinarily look to make any change retrospective or backdating a policy.



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

**DISABLED FACILITIES
GRANT POLICY
AND
REGULATORY REFORM
(HOUSING ASSISTANCE)
ORDER POLICY**

2022-2025

Version	1.0
Date Approved	
Area	People Group
Last Revised	Last Revised 14/09/2022

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- 11. Regulatory Reform Order (2002)**

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy succeeds Darlington Borough Council's Disabled Facilities Grant Policy 2020-2023 and sets out guidance for Home Adaptations and Assistance 2023-2025. Darlington Borough Council recognises that improved housing is a key determinant of the health and wellbeing of its local communities. Good housing benefits people's mental and physical wellbeing. It enables informal carers' ability to care, and underpins older people's ability to live independently, safely wherever possible.

Whilst it is recognised that the main responsibility for maintaining and improving housing rests with the owner, it also acknowledges that there are occasions where it is necessary to intervene. This includes situations where vulnerable people are unable to afford to carry out works that are affecting health and safety, and to support people with disabilities to live independently in their own home, safely, in comfort for as long as possible.

This policy provides advice and guidance in respect of disabled facilities in accordance with the legislative framework. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are governed by Part 1 of Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002.

The Regulatory Reform Order 2002 introduced a new discretionary power to allow local authorities to provide a range of options to develop innovative forms of financial assistance to meet need. This has enabled councils to use the DFG for wider purposes and allowed the pooling of resources with other funding streams so that adaptations can be better arranged around people's lives.

The Regulatory Reform Order 2002 discretionary powers recognises that the DFG needs to evolve and develop for Councils to support as many adults and young people as possible. The DFG is a key part of services that the Council provides which help people live independently and reduce the need for more formal care such a residential and domiciliary care services.

- 1.2. In Darlington, the key issues that the policy is seeking to address are:

- (a) To meet statutory requirements and government guidance
- (b) To offer practical help for the people in Darlington so that they can live independently in their own homes, and this will include the provision of equipment and adaptations thereby preventing, delaying, or reducing the need for care and support.
- (c) Supporting disabled children, young people and their families.
- (d) Helping people to live in their own homes rather than in a care home.
- (e) Improving housing safety and security.

- (f) Reducing the risk of falls at home.

This policy is intended to explain how the Council will use its resources to assist those who need adaptations and how decisions will be made about the assistance it can give, the circumstances in which people may wait for assistance and how the Council will seek to make the best use of the resources available.

1.3. This policy will explain:

- (a) How the Council will use its money and staff to assist people who need adaptations.
- (b) Who can apply for a DFG
- (c) How DFGs are approved
- (d) What type of properties are eligible for the DFG
- (e) What is a DFG Financial Assessment
- (f) The type of adaptation work that is normally completed
- (g) The rules and conditions that apply to a DFG award
- (h) What happens after the DFG works are completed

2. Legislative Framework

2.1. The duties and responsibilities of local authorities to provide assistance to disabled people to enable them to move into and out of their homes, to utilise living and sleeping areas within the home and to access cooking, bathing and toilet facilities are contained in the legislation detailed below:

- (a) Housing Grant, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (HGCRA)
- (b) Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002
- (c) The Care Act (2014)
- (d) Carers (Recognition and services) Act 1995
- (e) Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000
- (f) Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- (g) Children's Act 1989
- (h) Equality Act 2010
- (i) The Community Care (Delayed Discharges etc.) Act 2003

2.2. The principle legal provisions are contained in Part 1 of the Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1996 (HGCRA) and regulations made under it. The following is a summary of the key legal provisions:

- (a) DFGs are mandatory grants and are available to disabled people when “**relevant works**” to adapt their home are judged necessary and appropriate to meet their assessed needs, and when it is “**reasonable and practicable**” to carry them out having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling or building. An Occupational Therapist employed by the Children and Adult Service Department would determine whether proposed adaptations were “**necessary and appropriate**”.
- (b) DFGs are also subject to a means-test- this is also sometimes known as a “test of resources” (**except in the case of children and young people aged 18 and younger**), which means that applicants' and partners income and savings must be assessed to determine the amount of any contribution they are required to make towards the cost of the required work, and hence the amount of grant available to them. The way

in which the means-test is carried out is set by regulations and the Council does not have any discretion in applying it. Applicants in receipt of certain specified benefits are however exempted.

- (c) Subject to all the eligibility criteria being met, the Council must 'determine' (i.e. approve) properly made applications 'as soon as reasonably practicable', but no later than 6 months from the application date.
- (d) The maximum DFG is currently set at £30,000 as determined by The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008. However, in certain circumstances to be determined by the Council under the Regulatory Reform Order (2002) Policy, the Council can decide to "top up" the Grant. In any event, the Council will consider a DFG application based on eligibility and need and not the cap. The cap will not be applied for DFG applications for Disabled Children.

3. Who can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant?

- 3.1. Eligibility for a Disabled Facility Grant is set by legislation (see Section 2). All owner-occupiers and tenants, licensees, or occupiers who can satisfy the criteria in sections 19-22 of the HGCR are eligible to apply for a disabled Facilities Grant.
- 3.2. Approval for a Disabled Facilities Grant is subject to the following criteria being met:
 - (a) The works are **necessary** and **appropriate**, and
 - (b) The works are **reasonable** and **practicable**

3.3. **Necessary and Appropriate**

To determine if adaptations are 'necessary and appropriate' an assessment of the clients' needs, and their home is required. This is usually carried out by a member of the Occupational Therapist (OT) team but may also involve other officers of the Council. The assessment focuses on the client's ability to continue living independently in a home of their own and to ensure best use of resources, all alternative solutions need to be identified and explored.

3.4. **Reasonable and Practicable**

There are times when it is simply not reasonable and/or practicable to adapt a property (e.g., if there are multiple or excessive changes in level, if space is limited or where moving existing services would be prohibitively expensive or due to the age or condition of the property). In cases where it is not possible to adapt a property to an appropriate standard, the Council may properly take the view that the works are not 'reasonable and practicable'.

There is no minimum age of a property which is the subject of a DFG application. However, the Council needs to have regard to several factors in deciding whether it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the relevant adaptation works. Each case will present its own problems which need to be resolved in reaching decisions, but the following are issues which commonly arise in the processing of grant applications:

- (a) The architectural and structural characteristics of the dwelling may render certain types of adaptation inappropriate.
 - (b) The practicalities of carrying out adaptations to properties with narrow doorways, halls, stairways and passages which might make wheelchair use in and around the dwelling difficult; or with difficult or limited access e.g. steep flights of steps making access for wheelchair use difficult and therefore making continued occupation of the dwelling open to question.
 - (c) Conservation considerations and planning constraints may prevent certain types of adaptation being carried out; and
 - (d) The impact on other occupants of proposed works which will reduce or limit the existing facilities or amenities in the dwelling
- 3.5. Landlords may also apply for a DFG on behalf of a disabled tenant but must also satisfy the requirements of the legislation. Housing Association tenants are eligible to apply for a DFG and are assessed for needs on the same basis as private owners and tenants and under the same means testing arrangements.
- 3.6. Clients who are refused a grant under any of the categories outlined above will be provided with full clear reasons and explanation from the Occupational Therapy Service.

4. What types of properties and adaptations are included in a Disabled Facilities Grant?

- 4.1 The purposes for which the mandatory DFG may be given are set out in section 23(1) of the HGCRA. They fall into several categories as follows:
- (a) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to and from the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or qualifying park home/caravan, or the building in which the dwelling or flat is situated.
 - (b) Making the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or qualifying park home, or the building, safe for the disabled occupant and other persons residing with them.
 - (c) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to a room used or usable as the principal family room.
 - (d) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room used or usable for sleeping.
 - (e) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a lavatory, or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility.
 - (f) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a bath or shower (or both), or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility.

- (g) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a wash-hand basin, or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility.
 - (h) Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled occupant.
 - (i) Improving any heating system in the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or qualifying park home to meet the needs of the disabled occupant or, if there is no existing heating system there or any such system is unsuitable for use by the disabled occupant, providing a heating system suitable to meet their needs.
 - (j) Facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of a source of power, light or heat by altering the position of one or more means of access to or control of that source or by providing additional means of control.
 - (k) Facilitating access and movement by the disabled occupant around the dwelling, qualifying houseboat, or qualifying park home to enable them to care for a person who is normally resident there and needs such care.
 - (l) Such other purposes as may be specified by order of the Secretary of State.
- 4.2. Works should not commence prior to written approval being received. If work is urgent this should be discussed with the Council at the earliest opportunity, and it may be possible to fast-track applications particularly where there is an urgent /extreme requirement to facilitate a hospital discharge or in respect of palliative care applicants.
- 4.3. Where the works are commenced but not completed before the application is determined, a local authority may approve an application where there were good reasons for commencing the work. This may include a variation to the application to exclude the original works.

5. How is a Disabled Facilities Grant Application made and approved?

- 5.1. An initial application will be agreed between the client and a member of the Occupational Therapy Team when the needs have been identified. The date of this application will determine any future approval and delivery timescales.

FUNDING

- 5.2. If the household is in receipt of any means tested benefits, they are automatically 'passport' through the means testing process. Examples of means tested benefits include:
- (a) Income Support
 - (b) Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
 - (c) Guarantee Pension Credit
 - (d) Housing and/or Support Allowance
 - (e) Working/Child Tax Credit (if income for tax credits is below £15,050)
 - (f) Universal Credits

If you are in receipt of other means tested benefits, you will need to discuss this with the Council.

- 5.3. Where a tenant is an occupier of a Council owned property the Council will seek to fund the adaptations via the Housing Revenue Account.
- 5.4. Applications for a DFG can only be made to the Council in whose area the dwelling which is subject of the application is situated.
- 5.5. Any application for grant assistance will only be processed upon receipt of a referral/agreed application (paragraph 5.1) from a member of the Occupational Therapist (OT) team (or suitably qualified persons).
- 5.6. A member of the Occupational Therapist (OT) team, following an assessment of need for a client, will identify with that person, the adaptations required to meet their needs and are **necessary** and **appropriate**. An agreed initial application for an adaptation, including a preliminary test of resources of the client for the DFG is then sent to the Council.
- 5.7. Officers from the Council are responsible for deciding whether the requested works are **reasonable** and **practicable** having regard to the age and condition of any building that may need to be adapted. This may require visiting the property to enable a full assessment. The Council reserves the right to inspect the property for quality checks and assessment purposes.
- 5.8. All applications for ground floor extensions and garage conversions are subject to a means test and reviewed by the DFG Approval Panel taking into consideration the recommendations do not need Panel approval and can be approved by the OT Service.
- 5.9. Panel may recommend alternatives to the proposed DFG including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Urging the disabled occupant to seek other assistance (if available) for renovation or repair works to make the property fit following which the proposed adaptations can proceed.
 - (b) Considering whether alternative adaptations to the property, which would satisfy the needs of the disabled occupant and satisfy the practicality considerations, would be appropriate; and
 - (c) Considering with the disabled person re-housing and any support that may be required to other more suitably adapted accommodation in the locality especially if the disabled person expresses such a preference. This would make sense if major expenditure on adaptations could be avoided, and a suitably adapted property was available.
- 5.10. In some circumstances the Panel may seek alternatives to a DFG Grant.
- 5.11. If the number of clients waiting for a DFG far exceeds the limited budget available for the provision of adaptations, clients will be placed on a waiting list and prioritised in line with presenting need and the core purpose of the DFG. Clients must be approved or refused within 6 months of the application date. Where a case is approved, work

must be completed as outlined below.

- 5.12. The waiting list will be reviewed monthly to identify changing need by the Occupational Therapy Team. If a client feels their needs have become urgent, they can also approach a member of the Occupational Therapist (OT) team for review.
- 5.13. Where a client has an urgent need identified by the Occupational Therapy Team, their referral will be dealt with as a priority. A decision regarding this priority is only made after a detailed risk assessment is carried out by a member of the Occupational Therapist (OT) team.
- 5.14. Clients will receive written confirmation of the receipt of the referral from the Occupational Therapy Team and will also be kept informed of their progress on the waiting list by the Occupational Therapy Service.
- 5.15. Owner-occupiers are required to provide proof of ownership and sign a consent form. A Land Registry certificate will be obtained by the Council.

Where a property is not registered with the Land Registry, clients will be asked for the name and address of the appropriate organisation (e.g. Bank, Building Society or solicitor) holding their deeds, we will then write to them asking them to confirm proof of ownership.

- 5.16. Where an owner of the living accommodation does not reside at the property written consent will be obtained from them before works are undertaken.
- 5.17. For clients who do not have a mortgage on their property and the deeds to their home are held in safe keeping they will be requested to provide a certified copy of the deeds for inspection.
- 5.18. Clients are also informed throughout the grant enquiry process they can at any time make their own valid application for grant assistance.
- 5.19. All applications for grant assistance will be approved or refused by the Council within 6 months of receipt. The provider will notify the client of the decision and will set out in writing confirmation of the terms and conditions under which any assistance is being provided. Clients will then be asked to confirm in writing that they understand and are fully aware of these terms and conditions.
- 5.20. The Council may approve an application on the basis that the grant, or part of the grant, will not be paid before a specified date in the notification of their decision. The date specified must not be later than 12 months after the date of the application.
- 5.21. Some Disabled Facilities Grant work that the Council will carry out will be Zero rated VAT. This will be applied as per the current VAT Guidelines as stated in HMRC Reference: Notice 701/7 (August 2002).
- 5.22. In order for any of the works to qualify for zero-rating the contractor will be supplied with a form of declaration from the disabled person.

- 5.23. The Council shall on approving a grant application specify in writing to the client details of any specialist equipment and/or portable accommodation that may be recovered if no longer needed.
- 5.24. The Council will carry out each step of the process within the timescales.

6. What is a Disabled Facilities Grant Financial Assessment?

- 6.1. The maximum grant that can be paid is £30,000 per application. It is possible under certain circumstances to make successive applications.
- 6.2. The grant may be subject to a means test which considers the income and capital of the disabled person and their spouse or partner, collectively called the relevant person. Where the application is for a disabled child or young person under the age of nineteen there is no means test.
- 6.3. If the relevant person's resources are more than the means test assessment, then a contribution may be required from them towards the cost of the works.
- 6.4. If a contribution is required from the client this must be deducted from the amount of the grant which would otherwise have been paid. Therefore, if the cost of the works is above the maximum £30,000 limit, the grant will be that limit less the contribution. If the cost of works is less than the £30,000, the grant will be the cost of the works less the contribution.
- 6.5. Where works have been estimated to cost more than the maximum amount (Including ancillary fees), the Council will seek to address any shortfall by:
 - (a) Asking the client to fund any additional costs over £30k
 - (b) Ask the DFG Approval Panel to fund the additional costs over £30k in accordance with the RRO (2002) Policy.
 - (c) Subject to availability, providing the client (if eligible) with a **Council Equity Release Scheme loan up to a maximum of £30,000**. Loans cannot be used to fund a client's means tested contribution. The current position is outlined in the definitions section at the beginning of this policy.
 - (d) **Interest free unsecured loan** in partnership with Darlington Credit Union which is available to vulnerable homeowners who can afford to repay £5,000 over 5 years to carry out necessary repairs to their homes.
- 6.6. In all cases any means tested contribution towards the cost of works or contributions to fund any costs more than the £30,000 maximum DFG must be paid to the Council in full by the client before works can commence.

7. What are the Conditions?

- 7.1. The conditions relating to a DFG are contained within the HGCRA and are summarised as follows:

- (a) The eligible works shall be carried out within twelve months from the date of approval of the application. The Council may extend this period if appropriate particularly where it is satisfied that the eligible works cannot be, or could not have been, carried out without carrying out other works which could not have been reasonably foreseen when the application was made.
 - (b) The eligible works shall be carried out by one or more of the contractors or sub-contractors whose estimated accompanied the formal application for grant.
 - (c) The Council (DFG Panel) may relax this condition where they are satisfied that circumstances have arisen which could not reasonably have been foreseen at the time the application for grant was made, which have materially altered the ability of one or more of the contractors to carry out the eligible works within the time specified.
- 7.2. Works will be carried out in accordance with the specification of works accompanying the grant approval document.
- 7.3. The payment of a grant, or part of a grant, is conditional upon:
- (a) The eligible works being executed to the satisfaction of the Council, and inspections carried out by the provider
 - (b) The Council being provided with an acceptable invoice, demand, or receipt for payment for the works and any preliminary or ancillary services or charges in respect of which the grant or part of the grant is to be paid. (For this purpose, an invoice, demand, or receipt is acceptable if it satisfies the Council and is not given by the client or a member of their family).
- 7.4. The Council will issue payment direct to the contractor for works which have been carried out to the Council's satisfaction.
- 7.5. Unless otherwise stated, the "grant condition period" means the period of 5 years beginning with the "certified date".
- 7.6. The "certified date" means the date certified by the Council as the date on which the execution of the eligible works is completed to the satisfaction of the Council.
- 7.7. Unless otherwise stated, breach of any grant conditions may result in a demand for repayment by the Council for the full amount of grant paid, or any part therefore, together with compound interest on that amount as from the certified date, calculated at such reasonable rate as the Council may determine on an annual basis.
- 7.8. In the case of an owner's application, it is a condition of grant that they (if the disabled occupant) or the client intends that the disabled occupant will live in the dwelling or flat as their only or main residence throughout the grant condition period, or for such shorter period as the Council may allow having regard to their health or other relevant circumstances.

- 7.9. In the case of a tenants' application, it is a condition of grant that the applicant intends that they (if the disabled occupant) or the disabled occupant will live in the dwelling or flat as their only main residence throughout the grant condition period or for such shorter periods as the Council may allow having regard to their health or other relevant circumstances.
- 7.10. In the case of an occupier's application, it is a condition of grant that the disabled occupant will live in the qualifying houseboat or park home as their only main residence throughout the grant condition period or for such shorter period as their health or other relevant circumstances permit.
- 7.11. The Council may require the return of certain types of specialist equipment or portable accommodation for the disabled. The applicant shall notify the Council if and as soon as the equipment and/or portable accommodation is no longer needed.
- 7.12. Depending on the nature of the work carried out, the Council may seek to place a local land charge (up to a maximum of £10,000) against a property where the cost of the DFG provided exceeds £10,000 (including Agency and Ancillary fees). The charges will last a maximum of 10 years and will be binding on any persons who are for the time being the owner of the property. Applicants will be advised of the amount they will be expected to repay at the DFG approval stage. This means that if the property is sold before the 10-year period has expired the DFG will need to be repaid (up to £10,000).
- 7.13. When applying the local land charge, the Council will have regard to the details set out in HGCR 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008.

8. How are Disabled Facilities Grants works completed?

- 8.1. To ensure a high quality of work is achieved, close controls over the building process are in place.
- 8.2. Work in progress visits are made by the provider at regular intervals to check both the progression and quality of works being undertaken.
- 8.3. All contractors appointed by the Provider are from an approved contractors list (Unless a client makes their own application for assistance). This may include regular inspection from the Council, to ensure this is being maintained appropriately.
- 8.4. To ensure value for money a minimum of three competitive estimates are required.
- 8.5. A pre-start meeting between an officer of the Council, the contractor and client will take place before works commence. Where larger scale extension works are to be completed, a member of the OT team will also form part of the pre-start meeting. The meeting will determine work start and work completion dates. Both the client and contractor will be advised of their responsibilities and the works involved will be explained fully to the client. The client, or appropriate representative, will then be asked to sign their adaptation booklet to confirm they have fully understood what has been explained to them and agree to the works going ahead.
- 8.6. Any work for which assistance is being provided can only be varied:

- (a) Where alterations are required to the original recommendations provided by the OT Team, any variances to the specification need approval by the OT Team.
 - (b) Where amendments to the technical construction are required, the providers Technical Officer can authorise variations within the financial limits detailed within the specification.
- 8.7. Contractors will only be paid in full upon receipt of a satisfactory invoice when the DFG works are certified as complete, or part complete to the satisfaction of the Authority. Clients will also be asked to sign a letter of satisfaction to confirm they are satisfied with the completed works.
- It is recognised that in some circumstances interim payments are required to be made particularly where eligible works are large and complex.
- 8.8. Where a client is not satisfied with the completed works a senior officer from the Provider will determine whether remedial works are required or confirm if the contractor can be paid. This may also include officers from the Council. The DFG Panel reserves the right to make the final decision regarding remedial works.
- 8.9. Should there be any discrepancies with an invoice or the necessary certificates/guarantees have not been provided, the invoice will be disputed. The contractor will then be contacted by the Council to obtain the relevant certificates/guarantees.
- 8.10. Where a client has arranged their own works, the Council will pay the Contractor on production of a satisfactory invoice to the client, subject to satisfactory completion.
- 8.11. Where an applicant has provided false or misleading information in their grant application or in their request for payment, the grant approval will be withdrawn, and a demand will be made by the Council for repayment of any monies already paid.

9. Successive Applications

- 9.1. Chapter 1, Part 1 of the HGCR places no express restriction on successive applications for a DFG on the same property.
- 9.2. Clients (where appropriate) will be advised on the merits of pursuing an application through to completion even where it is clear the assessed contribution exceeds the cost of the present works and therefore the outcome will be that a 'nil' grant is approved.
- 9.3. If the client, then makes a successive application for a DFG any previously assessed contribution will be considered (or the amount equivalent to the original approved cost of works if this is lower) when determining any amount which the client may have to pay towards this successive application.
- 9.4. Successive applications for DFG will have their own grant conditions applied.

10. Post Completion of Works

10.1. Stairlifts

- (a) Where a stairlift has been installed under a DFG the lift provider will ensure the lifts are serviced on an annual basis and maintained as necessary.

10.2. Other Works

- (a) For all other types of work clients are notified that should any problems occur within 12 months of completion, details should be reported to the provider who will in turn ensure the contractor concerned rectifies any problems identified.
- (b) Where a problem occurs more than 12 months of completion, details should be reported to the contractor in line with any existing Guarantees or Warranty arrangements. Where a Guarantee or Warranty has expired, the client should contact their Occupational Therapist.

11. Housing Assistant Policy under the Regulatory Reform Order 2022.

1. Introduction

This document sets out Darlington Borough Council's (hereby referred to as 'the Council') policy of assistance pursuant to the Regulatory Reform Order (Housing Assistance) 2002. The Order provides local authorities with a general power to assist households with the improvement of living conditions. A local authority must adopt a policy to exercise the powers set out in the Order.

The Council believes that it is primarily the responsibility of property owners to maintain the housing they own to a satisfactory standard of repair. Nevertheless, the Council is aware that some property owners, including disabled or vulnerable people will have difficulty in doing so without assistance. This policy sets out the Council's response to this and the range of programmes and packages available to assist people in better maintaining housing they own and/or live in.

The Housing Assistance Policy has been developed to allow Darlington Borough Council to make best use of its Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding. This will enable the Council to meet its strategic priorities and work collaboratively with health and social care colleagues to provide better outcomes for residents.

The programme of assistance may include but is not exclusively limited to the following areas:

Specific Projects

- (a) Funding the additional cost of providing purpose-built adaptations to new or existing registered provider property for disabled people in need.
- (b) Recharge the cost of the Occupational Therapy Services (OT) for the time spent on **"necessary and appropriate"** assessments in respect of privately owned, privately rented and housing association properties.
- (c) Funding to be provided to facilitate kinship care arrangements. The level of funding provided is to be reviewed periodically and uplifted as required in line with presenting needs/demands and budgetary availability).
- (d) Funding for adaptations in line with DBC Occupational Therapist assessed needs of an adult, child or young person with autism/behaviours that challenge, including the provision of safe spaces.
- (e) Funding for provision of Dementia Grants & Smart Home kits.
- (f) Prevention, well-being and anticipation of future need. The DFG will be used to fund minor adaptations and repairs, security checks, deep clean and de-cluttering of premises.
- (g) Hospital Discharge Grants payable where NHS continuing healthcare funding is not available and the sole reason for a patient cannot return home is an adaptation or

heating repair to a property on an urgent, fast track basis.

- (h) Funding for specific projects or schemes in line with any updated guidance regarding the DFG or RRO, delegated decision making on the funding of these schemes to sit with DFG Policy lead (Commissioning) and associated Assistant Director.

Amendments to existing DFG Policy

The Council will, on a case-by-case basis, consider the payment of Disabled Facilities Grant to assist with securing alternative accessible accommodation for a disabled person. Such payments could include, amongst other costs, financial assistance towards purchasing new housing or relocation costs.

- (a) The introduction of a discretionary power which permits the Council to make addition grants / loans etc. pursuant to the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 to top up the maximum permissible grant. The relevant legislation regarding the maximum grant fund being £30,000 is the Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008 No. 1189, which limits the award of DFG to a maximum of £30,000 per application.
- (b) Removal of the means test for DFG applications unless the adaptation is for a ground floor extension or a garage conversion. In addition the council retains the ability to waive the means test or the client's financial contribution in circumstances which would cause undue financial hardship or where it is financially beneficial to the council to waive the client contribution.
- (c) Top slice the DFG allocation to pay the fees in respect of the works direct to the HIA - this would enable applicants to receive the full £30k as opposed to the net figure of £27,600.
- (d) Exercise discretion to impose a legal charge on adapted properties of owner occupiers. This applies where the adaptation is for a ground floor extension, or a garage conversion and the property is subsequently sold within 10 years. In such a circumstance, the Council can claim back the costs over the first £10,000 up to the limit of the maximum recovery of £10,000.
- (e) Relocation Assistance for owner occupiers of up to £10k where existing home is unsuitable for improvement, repair or adaptation and the person is eligible for a DFG to avoid the necessity of providing costly adaptations to their existing property.

Loans and Equity Release

The provision of loans, including equity release and interest free, to help vulnerable homeowners to improve their homes and to facilitate property owners bringing housing stock back into use.

- (a) Equity release scheme loan of up to £30k for the cost of eligible works that exceed

the mandatory DFG limit of £30k. The interest free loan can be registered as a charge against the property and then reclaimed by the Council when the property is sold. The Council will judge each case on its individual merits before recovering costs.

- (b) Interest free unsecured loan in partnership with Darlington Credit Union which is available to vulnerable homeowners who can afford to repay £5,000 over 5 years to carry out necessary repairs to their homes.

Eligibility for different programmes will be subject to meeting specific criteria. Exceptions will be considered by senior managers within Darlington Borough Council.

What to do if you are unhappy with the outcome of DFG application.

Our aim is to put you, the customer, first and provide you with the best possible service. It is important that you have the opportunity to tell us what you think about the services we provide. You can tell us when we get things right, make comments about the things we do and suggest new ways of doing things. You can also tell us when we get things wrong so we can put them right.

If you are not happy with any decisions or the way your Disabled Facilities Grant has been processed, in the first instance, you should try to:

- (a) Discuss with your worker who is member of the Occupational Therapy Team.
- (b) Following discussion with your worker, they should discuss your concerns with the OT team manager who may be able to resolve your concerns.
- (c) Should the team manager be unable to resolve this, the OT team manager will discuss the concerns with the DFG fund manager. Part of this joint process of dealing with your concerns may involve seeking a second opinion on your case.

If you are unable to resolve in this manner or do not feel you are able to follow those options, using the Council's complaints procedures is another way you can do this. The Complaints and Information Governance Team handles all complaints for the Council. How we deal with your complaint will depend on which service it is about.

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Detail of suggested amends to the Disabled Facilities Grant Policy & Regulatory Reform Order Policy

1. Waive the means test for certain items and raise the recovery threshold

- (a) To waive the means test and the need for the DFG approval panel for the following adaptations (and any combination):
 - (i) Stairlifts (Straight and Curved)
 - (ii) Ramps (semi-permanent)
 - (iii) Level Access Showers
 - (iv) Through Floor Lifts
 - (v) Wash Dry Toilets
- (b) Any complex adaptations above will still have oversight via the DFG approval panel.
- (c) The means test will remain for ground floor extensions and garage conversions; however, the revised policy recommends that the land charge limit be amended so that we only consider recovery of any adaptations over £10,000 rather than the £5,000 which is the current policy. The council will also retain the ability to waive the means test or the client contribution in cases where it is financially beneficial for the council to do so.

Rationale

- (d) Many of the above adaptation used to come in under the £5,000 threshold, but recent substantial rises in costs for items and works mean that the majority of these are now over the £5,000 threshold.
- (e) By removing the means test it will speed up the process by about 2 months, for these crucial items that promote independence. It will create efficiencies in the process along with the benefits for the individual in terms of prolonging independence and delaying or preventing care needs. The changes also have a positive impact on dignity and respect if individuals can shower and toilet without assistance and get to bed whenever they want without assistance. Two months is a big impact on the family and a family carer's ability to maintain their employment if they are having to take time off work to support a loved one while awaiting a decision.
- (f) The above changes are necessary as it causes disparity for service users. For example an individual needing a straight track stair lift would currently get it free of charge as it would currently come under the £5,000 threshold, however an individual with a curved of more complex staircase would be over the £5,000 threshold and require a means test, delaying the installation of the stairlift or having to go without as they cannot afford the contribution, leaving them at risk and ultimately the council with an increase care bill in the future.

2. Additional costs to be charged to the DFG fund

- (a) The recharge of the cost for the Occupational Therapy Services (OT) for the time spent on completing Disabled Facilities Grant is proposed to be increased in line with the increase in demand for DFGs. The policy proposes to remove a stated amount of money that is charged to the DFG. The discretion for future changes to this charge would lie with Commissioning as manager of the DFG fund.
- (b) To allocate costs for the handyman service to the DFG, this is already included in the policy under minor works and while external costs are charged to the DFG our internal costs for minor works are not currently charged to the DFG fund. The discretion for future changes to this charge would lie with Commissioning as manager of the DFG fund.

Rationale

- (c) By removing a stated amount of contribution, it allows flexibility to increase resource as appropriate to deal with demand without a change to the policy and Cabinet approval on each occasion, ensuring that we can respond to the demand more quickly and efficiently. There has been a substantial increase in the volume and the complexity of applications since 2020 and it is anticipated that due to some of the policy changes it could again increase the amount of DFG applications the team have to process, on top of the continued rising demand since the last amendment to the policy in 2020.

3. Amendments to the Kinship Care contribution

- (a) Remove the pre-stipulated £30,000 annual cap on funding for children's social care for housing assistance for Kinship Care.

Rationale

- (b) A notional annual budget of £30k was included in policy, however this budget is not for an individual child it is to cover support to all Kinship cases. The number of children in Kinship Care arrangements continues to grow significantly and therefore, subject to in year presenting need and risks additional funding over the annual notional allocation may be required.
- (c) By limiting the budget, we run the risk of not maximising proactive early intervention opportunities, resulting in an escalation of circumstance, a breakdown in care arrangements, carer and associated high placement costs for a looked after child, which would be hugely more expensive than any DFG costs.
- (d) For any additional funding request over the annual allocation an assessment of the cost avoidance benefit, placement stability risk and positive outcomes for the child will be undertaken on a case-by-case basis.

- (e) To date the Kinship Care housing assistance allocation has effectively supported the creation of additional living space for children with social and emotional needs and behaviours that challenge. This has been undertaken in a range of different ways from existing property adaptations and modifications to facilitating moves to alternative accommodation which can more appropriately meet the child/children's needs
- (f) The discretion for future changes to the amount used for Kinship care would lie with Commissioning as manager of the DFG fund.

4. Expand policy to widen the support that can be provided for Children and adults with autism/behaviours that challenge, including the provision of safe spaces

- (a) Funding for safe space adaptations, including gardens, in line with DBC Occupational Therapists assessed needs of a child, young person or adult with behaviours that challenge in line with the provisions of the Foundations best practice guide.
- (b) Where home adaptations are being considered to deal with behaviours that challenge, the family and carers of the disabled person should be highly involved in the assessment discussions and decision-making process. It is also good practice to consult with specialist colleagues to fully explore the correct balance between therapeutic interventions and adaptations. Where behaviours threaten the safety of others living within the household, the grant can be used to reduce the risks to their safety.
- (c) For instance, where siblings share a bedroom and there is the threat of harm during the night, then creating a separate bedroom can meet this purpose. Grant could also be used to create a 'safe space' for a person who is likely to injure themselves. This could, for example, include items such as upholstered and washable walls, soft flooring, radiator covers or a television enclosure or a secondary window.

or

Where there is a single bathroom and the child with challenging behaviours may physically assault a member of the family to access the bathroom but cannot because other are using it, the grant may be used to fund a second bathroom to reduce the stress and occasional violent confrontations which could lead to a breakdown of the caring arrangement and urgent accommodation from the Council being required.

Rationale

- (d) Challenging behaviours can frequently lead to a breakdown of the caring arrangements, particularly where the family do not feel safe or feel they cannot keep their child safe. These breakdowns of care result in residential care arrangements or supported living arrangements being sought for the child with challenging

behaviours which are much more costly than safe space adaptations funded through the DFG.

5. Dementia Grants & Smart Home kits

- (a) Dementia grants: small grants to fund modifications that would allow someone with a diagnosis of dementia to remain living safely in their home for longer. These are typically preventative in nature and allow for adaptations to be provided for individuals with a diagnosis of dementia and before the condition escalates to the point where a DFG would normally otherwise become necessary.

The extent and cost of the works are usually relatively small (often less than £1,000) and involve a streamlined application process. The most common types of modification are:

- (i) Labels and signs on doors and cupboards
- (ii) Task focussed lighting in bathrooms and kitchens
- (iii) Items of assistive technology, e.g. to provide reminders and to monitor activity
- (iv) Safer flooring
- (v) Decoration to improve contrast between walls and floors
- (vi) Installing coloured fixtures to create a contrast for items like toilet seats and grabrails

Smart Home Kits: such as a smart thermostat to control heating and hot water, video doorbell, smart switches, smart lightbulbs and an Alexa or Google Home for voice or other assistive technology grants

Rationale

- (b) These simple changes can help to keep someone living safely at home for longer, delaying the need for more costly care services or a move into residential care. They can also enable individuals to maintain their independence for as long as possible.

6. Home accident prevention or health and safety initiatives

- (a) The DFG will be used to fund minor adaptations and repairs, security checks, deep clean and de-cluttering of premises.

Rationale

- (b) To improve the living conditions for the individual for health and safety reasons or as a prevention of home accidents.

7. Future items for use of DFG funding

- (a) An additional paragraph has been added to the DFG/HA RRO policy to give greater flexibility to the use of the DFG as new guidance is issued in the future, without the need for issuing a revised policy that requires cabinet approval each time the guidance is updated.

Rationale

- (b) This paragraph will allow the manager of the DFG fund to respond more quickly to change by being able to add charges to the fund that while they are not specifically listed in the policy, they are allowed within the fund and are recommended by Foundations.
- (c) It will speed up the council's ability to respond to change as the policy will not need to be rewritten to specify every use possible which then needs Cabinet approval.
- (d) The fund is currently managed within Children & Adults Commissioning team and is operated in conjunction with the Occupational Therapy team who undertaken the needs assessments for all cases. Close budgetary oversight is already provided by fund manager with finance oversight to ensure the fund is being spent in line with the guidance and spend remains in line with our allocation of funding going forward, focussing on presenting need and core purpose of the DFG.

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Initial equality impact assessment screening form

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

Directorate:	People
Service Area:	Contracts, Commissioning and Brokerage
Activity being screened:	Updates to the current Disabled Facilities Grant Regulatory Reform Order Policies
Officer(s) carrying out the screening:	Lisa Holdsworth, Elaine Taylor, Sukhdev Dosanjh, Christine Thompson, Helen Watson, Geraldine Earley
What are you proposing to do?	Update the existing DFG and Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) Policies
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	To increase flexibility and maximise the use of the Disabled Facilities Grant
Does the activity involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details	There is an annual allocation of dedicated funding for Disabled Facilities Grants included within the Better Care Fund. Since 2017 this annual allocation of funding has increased, and a review of the existing DFG and Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) Policies is required to ensure that the use of the grant is maximised.

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

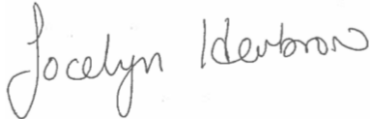
As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:

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

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

Protected characteristic	Yes	No	Don't know/ Info not available
Age		x	
Disability		x	
Sex (gender)		x	

Race		x	
Sexual Orientation		x	
Religion or belief		x	
Gender reassignment		x	
Pregnancy or maternity		x	
Marriage or civil partnership		x	
Other			
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		x	
Low Income		x	
Rural Location		x	
Does the activity relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	The updated policies will cover all areas of the Borough equally irrespective of known inequalities etc.		
Will the activity have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	The activity will not have a significant effect on how other organisations operate. However, there is the potential that by broadening the Council's ability to provide individuals with adaptations to their homes, this may reduce or delay the needs for services commissioned from Adult Social Care.		
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	x	Continue to full EIA:
Reason for Decision	<p>A full EIA is not required as the suggested amendments to the existing DFG and RRO Policies will not have any adverse effects on the above protected characteristics.</p> <p>The suggested updates seek to broaden access to support to eligible individuals, including: widening the support that can accessed via a DFG; waiving the existing means test in some instances to enable more equitable access to the same form of provision, eg stairlifts and also increasing the timeliness in which a DFG can be processed; raising the recovery threshold iro DFG funding. These changes will have a positive impact for all recipients and promote their independence.</p> <p>Feedback received during the consultation process from 25.10.22 – 28.11.22 identified positive impacts from the proposals made, although it was queried what would happen if there was insufficient funding to implement all the proposals? This is not an issue at present, as historically there has been a growing cumulative underspend in the DFG budget with an average carry forward amount of £1,631,811 over the last 4 years and DFG funds can only be spent on items identified in the DFG/RRO policies. It is possible that a reduction in funding levels in the future could impact the range of support that could be offered. This will be kept under review and officers will continue to monitor</p>		

	for any potential negative impacts and, if required, will undertake a full EIA.
Signed (Assistant Director)	
Date	2 December 2022

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**CABINET
10 JANUARY 2023**

MAINTAINED SCHOOLS CAPITAL PROGRAMME - SUMMER 2023

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

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Members' agreement to:
 - (a) Release the 2022/23 school condition allocation for the schools' summer works programme 2023.
 - (b) Release the 2022/23 devolved formula capital to the maintained schools.

Summary

2. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the release of the 2022/23 School Condition Allocation (SCA) funding of £159,235 to undertake a programme of works across the maintained schools in Darlington during summer 2023. Works will include condition, electrical and mechanical surveys, works identified as a priority and any urgent works arising.
3. The report also seeks the release of the 2022/23 Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) of £42,257. This funding is a formula-based grant provided to all maintained schools to help support their ongoing capital needs.
4. All projects will be managed in line with the Corporate Capital Process procedures.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Members :-
 - (a) Agree to formally release the 2022/23 School Condition Allocation of £159,235 to support the 2023 maintained schools' summer works programme.
 - (b) Agree to formally release the 2022/23 Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) of £42,257.

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported as the release of the School Condition Allocation and Devolved Formula Capital will enable capital investment to be undertaken in the areas identified with the greatest need, in terms of asset management priorities.

James Stroyan
Group Director of People

Background Papers

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

Paul Richardson: x6015

S17 Crime and Disorder	Capital investment to improve facilities and provide better building maintenance will contribute to the reduction of crime and disorder.
Health and Wellbeing	The capital strategy outlined in this report will continue the Council's drive to provide buildings that enhance children's life chances and opportunities to thrive.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	All work undertaken will be designed and constructed with sustainability in mind and aim to reduce the carbon footprint, and re-use energy and environmental resources.
Diversity	This programme has no specific impact on protected groups.
Wards Affected	Schools located in: Park East (Borough Road Nursery), Pierremont (George Dent Nursery), North Road (Rise Carr College), Red Hall & Lingfield (Red Hall Primary) and Whinfield (Whinfield Primary).
Groups Affected	Children and young people (Aged 2-16) in Darlington.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is an executive decision
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
Council Plan	The Capital Programme is consistent with the Council Plan providing high quality facilities that support modern approaches to education in schools and for lifelong learning.
Efficiency	Defective materials and plant will be replaced with more efficient products e.g. increasing 'u' value on windows, insulation and modern highly efficiency boilers.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The proposed projects have no specific impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

7. The Authority funds the capital maintenance and improvement of maintained schools from a variety of sources including capital allocations received from the Department for Education (DfE), bid based submissions for Central Government funding programmes (compiled and submitted by Officers or individual schools) and Section 106 agreements.

School Condition Allocation (SCA)

8. The Department for Education (DfE) has allocated the local authority £159,325 of School Condition funding for 2022/23 to address capital maintenance needs across the borough's five maintained schools. The Education and Inclusion Service within the People Group is responsible for ensuring all funding is targeted to meet strategic priorities and the highest priority needs across maintained schools and nurseries.
9. Once a school has converted to an Academy it is no longer eligible to be considered for capital maintenance funding allocated to the LA but can apply direct to the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for funding as required.
10. The annual summer works programme is compiled using the information from local authority commissioned surveys covering building condition and electrical and mechanical services. A list of the highest priority works that fits within the available funding envelope is developed in conjunction with Building Services. That list is then subject to consultation with the maintained schools.

Asset Management Costs

11. An amount equivalent to 27.5% of the SCA is set aside to cover survey and design fees as part of the asset management process. This will be monitored as the projects progress and, if possible, funding released for other schemes.

Contingency / Urgent Works

12. The summer works programme retains a 13.5% contingency within the estimated value of the works. This is used to cover any unexpected costs or emergency works. This will be monitored as the projects progress and, if possible, funding released for other schemes.

Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)

13. The Department for Education (DfE) has allocated £42,257 to Darlington maintained schools for 2022/23 on a formula led basis. Local authorities are required to distribute DFC to their schools in accordance with the DfE published allocations. Schools will be encouraged to manage spend in line with agreed priorities.

Financial Implications

14. The School Condition Allocation, Devolved Formula Capital and Basic Need monies are all grants from the Department for Education (DfE). There is no impact on Council funds.

15. All funds must be spent in accordance with the DfE's 'Condition grants spend guidance', the latest edition being from April 2021.

Consultation

16. Any capital works will be undertaken in consultation with the schools concerned and in line with the priorities identified as part of the school's surveys.

CABINET
10 JANUARY 2023

EAST STREET OFFICE DEVELOPMENT

Councillor Jamie Bartch, Economy Portfolio
Councillor Scott Durham, Resources Portfolio

Responsible Directors – Ian Williams, Chief Executive

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for release of funding to produce a detailed feasibility and business case for the development of a speculative Grade A office building on the former Sports Direct site on East Street Darlington, and to further discussions with TVCA regarding their contribution to the project including the intended use of the £4m allocated to Darlington as part of the TVCA investment plan.

Summary

2. Members will recall that the adopted Town Centre Strategy focuses upon the diversification of the town centre with an emphasis on developing both residential and commercial in former retail buildings.
3. In addition, since the adoption of the above strategy the landscape of the town centre has radically changed with the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and more positively the development of the Darlington Economic Campus (DEC).
4. The DEC is currently based in the Council owned Feethams House under a 5-year lease agreement, and it is considered probable that the Government Property Agency (GPA) will retain the building following the DEC's proposed permanent location at Brunswick Street. This will mean the only Grade A office building will not be available to accommodate the ongoing business enquiries many of which are related to the relocation of His Majesty's Treasury (HMT) and other Government departments.
5. Therefore, more than ever before, Darlington town centre must be competitive if it is to be vibrant, diverse and successful and to achieve this, it is considered vital that the Council assists in leading, facilitating and enabling the conditions for economic growth through direct intervention in economic development and regeneration in partnership with business and communities.
6. In 2020 the Council acquired the former Sports Direct site for £625,000 and subsequently demolished the derelict building to create a cleared site for development. Site plan attached in **Appendix 1**. The acquisition and clearance works were funded by the Tees

Valley Combined Authority Indigenous Growth Fund (IGF). It is proposed to develop a circa 25,000 sq. ft. grade A office building on the site to accommodate the ongoing investment enquiries. In order to commence this development a detailed business case will need to be produced to establish the construction costs, determine the viability and demand for office space within the town.

7. To produce the above detailed feasibility and business case for the development; it is requested that £150,000 from the Economic Growth Initiative Fund is allocated to this project.
8. It is assumed that TVCA funding of £4m will be released subject to due process but that an anticipated further £6m will be required from other funding sources that will include Council prudential borrowing. The detailing of funding proposed will form part of a subsequent cabinet report and drawdown request to TVCA.

Recommendations

9. It is recommended that:
 - (a) £0.150m for the detailed business case be funded from the Economic Growth Initiative Fund.
 - (b) Cabinet delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Economic Growth to enter into the grant funding agreements on the terms set out in this report.

Reasons

10. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) To attract more professional, business and office-based jobs to the centre of Darlington contributing to Town Centre vitality.
 - (b) To enable the project to advance in line with the desired timetable.

Delegations

11. The delegation sought is to enable the preliminary feasibility and business case to advance to ensure the necessary project timetable can be adhered to.

Ian Williams
Chief Executive

Background Papers

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

Mark Ladyman: ext. 6306

S17 Crime and Disorder	The report has no implications for crime and disorder
Health and Well Being	The report has no implications for health and well being
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	This report may result in the development of a new office building which will have a carbon impact. The building will be designed to BREEAM Excellent, easily accessible by sustainable transport modes which will help ensure the carbon footprint of the building is acceptable
Diversity	No implications
Wards Affected	Park East
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	The report does have implications for the immediate budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	Yes. This has been reported as a key decision. The resolution results in the Borough Council incurring expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function to which the decision relates and there will be significant effects on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the Borough.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Council Plan	Supports the Council Plan priority – Growing Darlington’s Economy.
Efficiency	The workload resulting from the recommendations in this report assumes resources at existing levels within the Programmes and Projects, Capital Projects and Corporate Landlord Sections. The financial implications are set out in detail in the report. The delivery of a new office building has significant potential for collaboration with other public sector bodies with the opportunity for savings for the Council.
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

12. In 2020 the Council completed the construction of Grade A office facilities at Feethams House. Given this development was completed at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic enquiries from potential tenants was extremely limited. However, in 2021 the then Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the creation of Darlington Economic Campus which included the relocation of significant elements of HMT and several other government departments. Following negotiations, the DEC signed a 5-year lease with the Council to occupy Feethams House. While this is a temporary arrangement until the permanent offices on Brunswick Street, it is considered likely that Feethams House will remain under agreement with the GPA. These discussions with GPA will run in parallel to the preparation of the feasibility and business case.
13. Given this long-term occupation of Feethams House the availability of Grade A office buildings in the town centre for future business enquires is extremely limited. Following the announcement of the development of DEC the Council has experienced a growth in enquiries from professional service organisations into available office space within the town centre. These enquiries often require a location within the town centre near the DEC and in high quality Grade A office facilities.
14. To establish an understanding of current market demand an office demand study was commissioned in late 2022. The study will examine the current office availability and the current and future office demand in the town centre. This report will form part of the future detailed feasibility study which will be tabled at a future Cabinet.
15. In 2020 the Council acquired the former Sports Direct site for £625,000 and subsequently demolished the derelict building to create a cleared site for development. The acquisition and clearance works were funded by the Tees Valley Combined Authority Indigenous Growth Fund (IGF). It is proposed to develop a circa 25,000 sq. ft. grade A office building on the site to accommodate the ongoing investment enquiries. In order to commence this development a detailed business case will need to be produced to establish the construction costs, viability and determine the demand for office space within the town.
16. Once the full business case is completed a further report will be presented to cabinet detailing these findings.

Legal and Procurement Implications

17. Pursuant to the Localism Act 2011 the Council has the powers to deliver the project under the General Power of Competence.

Financial and Funding Implications

18. £0.150m for the detailed business case be funded from the Economic Growth Initiative Fund.

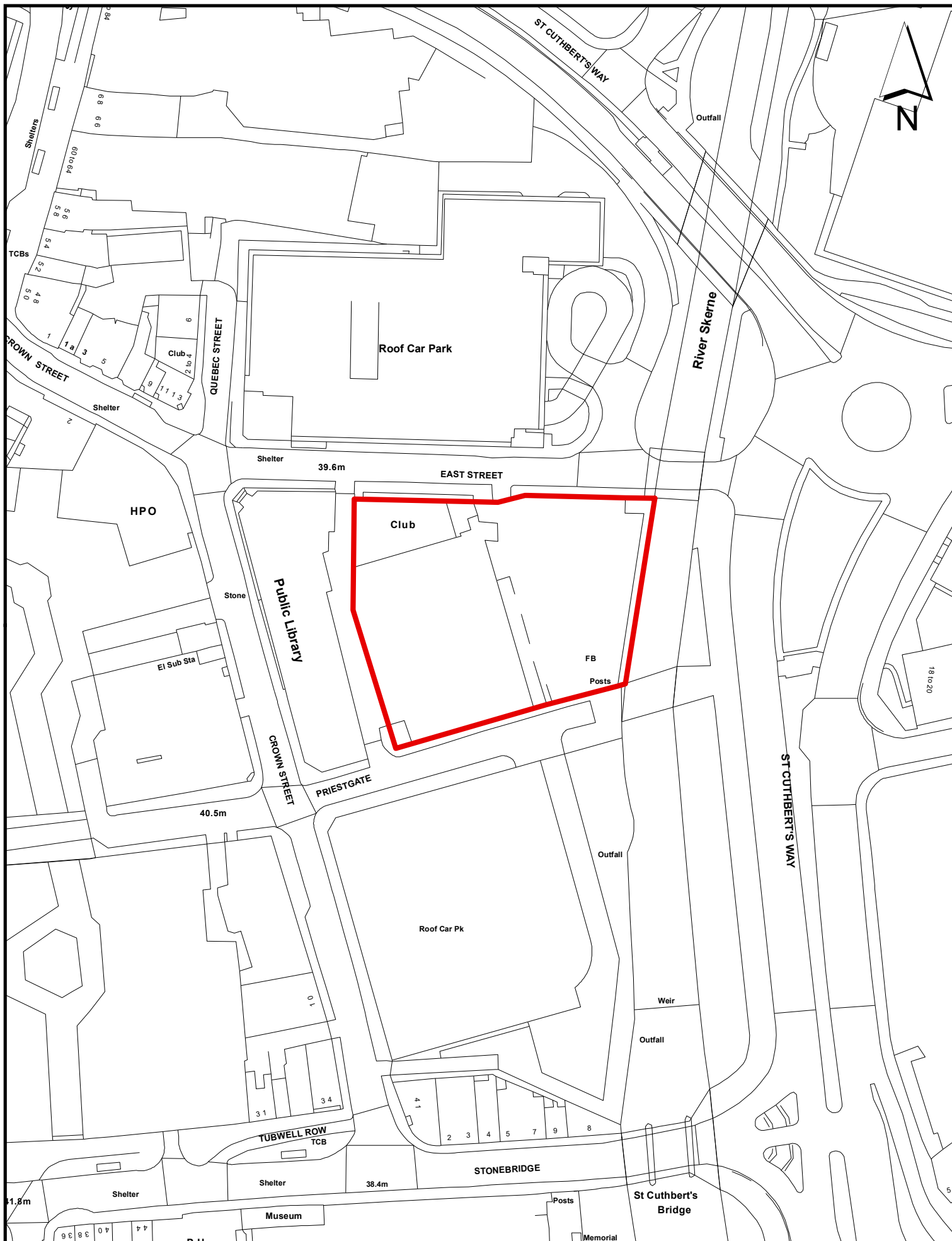
Risks

19. The objective of the project is to provide Grade A offices within Darlington. The biggest risk is insufficient tenants at market rents to re-pay borrowing and this is explored elsewhere in the report.

Equalities Considerations

20. It is considered that this project has no specific implications for groups with protected characteristics. Equalities implications will be considered during the formulation of the design to ensure the building is compliant with the Equalities Act 2010.

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DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL ECONOMIC GROWTH GROUP ESTATES AND PROPERTY TOWN HALL, FEETHAMS, DARLINGTON, Co. DURHAM, DL1 5QT	Project Title: FORMER SPORTS DIRECT, EAST STREET, DL1 1PN	Scale: 1 : 1250	Ref: AT A4
	Drawing Title: LAND BETWEEN PRIESTGATE AND EAST STREET	Date: 30/01/20	Area:
		Drawn: RMH	1.02 Acres

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**CABINET
10 JANUARY 2023**

TOWN CENTRE PARKING OFFER

**Responsible Cabinet Member
Councillor Andy Keir, Local Services Portfolio
Councillor Jamie Bartch, Economy Portfolio**

Responsible Director - Dave Winstanley, Group Director of Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides an update on the town centre car parking offer.

Summary

2. Parking offers have been in place in various pay and display locations to support the town centre since June 2018. Since January 2021 the Tees Valley Combined Authority have provided the funding to support parking offers across the Tees Valley for a two-year period. In November 2022 Cabinet agreed to fund an extension of the parking offer from January 2023 until the end of March 2023.
3. The sustainability of the town centre is an immediate priority for Members, and it is the strong desire of the administration that the council should continue to support the town centre and encourage use of the town centre by considering a further short-term extension of parking offers until the end of June 2023.
4. The funding of this offer is covered in the financial implications section of this report. Funding a further parking offer would exceed Cabinet's delegated authority limit to vary the budget and as such a report would be required to Council for approval and release of the funding.

Recommendations

5. It is recommended that Cabinet:-
 - (a) Agree the extension of the parking offer for a further 3 months from the 1 April 2023 to the end of June 2023 and at that point parking charges are reintroduced on 1 July 2023.
 - (b) Agree for a report to go forward to Council for approval to vary the budget and release £387k to cover the costs of extending the parking offer for a further 3 months.

Reasons

- 6. The recommendations support the ongoing recovery of the town centre.

Dave Winstanley
Group Director of Services

Background Papers

- Town Centre Car Parking Cabinet Report June 2018
- Town Centre Car Parking Cabinet Report October 2019
- Town Centre Car Parking Cabinet Report September 2020
- Town Centre Parking Cabinet Report December 2020.
- Town Centre Parking Offer Report November 2022

S17 Crime and Disorder	Whilst anti-social behaviour and crime does on occasions take place in car parks, there is no impact on crime and disorder as a result of this report
Health and Wellbeing	Parking offers can potentially conflict with some other Council and Government policy objectives such as promotion of sustainable transport and climate change that have a positive impact on health and well-being. However, this is a short-term extension to ensure recovery post Covid is established
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	Parking strategy and controls are a method of encouraging more sustainable travel choices and impacting positively on climate change. If the offer is extended there may be an impact on carbon emissions as a result of encouraging car journeys into the town centre
Diversity	An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken on the offer introduced in January 2021. The offer remains the same and therefore the assessment undertaken at the time remains in place.
Wards Affected	Car parks are located in Park East and Northgate, however residents from across the Borough and beyond will utilise them
Groups Affected	No group is affected any differently to any other
Budget and Policy Framework	This is a Council decision and is a variation to the MTFP.
Key Decision	This is a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	The proposals contained in this report have impacts on aspects of the Council Plan. The proposal seeks to provide a further period of support for the town centre recovery
Efficiency	There is no impact
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. The Council has funded a variety of Town Centre Parking initiatives to support the Town Centre Economy since June 2018. The Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet of 27 November 2020 approved funding to support parking offers across the Tees Valley for a two-year period. This funding ceases at the end of December 2022 and Cabinet agreed in November 2022 to fund an extension of the parking offer the end of March 2023.
8. The November 2022 Cabinet report identified that parking numbers in car parks had returned to pre-Covid numbers. However, it recognised that the post-Christmas period is a tough trading period, and a further offer was agreed by Cabinet. This approval extended the car parking offer until the end of March 2023.
9. The cost-of-living challenges will continue throughout the winter and beyond, and it is acknowledged this will be a tough period for both residents and business.
10. The vibrancy and sustainability of the town centre is an immediate priority for Members, and it is the strong desire of the administration that the council should continue to support the town centre traders with a further extension of the parking offer through the winter and into the summer. However, the Council is not immune to the cost-of-living challenges; inflation, energy cost rises and the post-Covid impacts are placing considerable pressures on Council resources and as such the Council is not able to sustain free parking offers indefinitely.
11. It is acknowledged that if the parking offer is extended it temporarily prioritises town centre recovery over other policy objectives, specifically the promotion of sustainable transport and climate change impacts. However, the Sustainable Transport and Climate change agenda and outcomes continue to be extremely important and high priorities for the Council.
12. The parking offer is only one factor in a range of activity being delivered by the council and businesses to support the town centre. Therefore, it is always difficult to isolate and quantify the benefits any such offer has made.
13. As previously reported, there are many factors that influence the success of a town centre, the businesses and what they offer in the town centre is a huge factor, markets and events also draw people into the town and many other factors.
14. It is also difficult to compare data as there have been several different parking offers in place since June 2018. Similarly, comparisons with pre-covid visitor numbers are difficult because consumer behaviour has undoubtedly been changed with the acceleration of internet shopping habits and online banking resulting in less frequent visits and homeworking changing patterns and behaviours.
15. Some of the metrics of the town centre have been reviewed and are presented below. Members consider a further extension of the parking offer through the winter and into the summer would enable the traders the best opportunity to succeed following the traditionally more challenging winter period:

- (a) There is no doubt that the response to the initial three-month parking offer extension has been positive from town centre businesses and visitors, with feedback suggesting a further offer will help. This feedback in itself is not unexpected, but what cannot be quantified is whether visitors would continue to use the town centre if a parking charge was in place, or they would make other choices.
- (b) In general car parking ticket numbers have been gradually increasing in Darlington since 2017 (other than during periods of national lockdowns). Prior to the lockdowns in 2020 car parking ticket numbers had reached around 100k per month from around 80k in 2017. The current parking offer has seen a recovery (post covid lockdowns) to levels of around 116k per month over the last 6 months. This equates to about 192,000 additional tickets per year.
- (c) In terms of the off street car parks, where offers have been in place during 2021/22 these have seen an additional 261k tickets issued compared to 2019/20 (circa 21k per month). Around 140k of these were from visits to Feethams MSCP (circa 12k per month). The fact that there has been a significant increase in use of the offer car parks compared to the overall increase in ticket numbers suggest some displacement from car parks where charges exist to car parks where there is a free offer.
- (d) In terms of the on-street parking bays the parking machines were installed in 2005 and there is no back-office system to analyse ticket data. However, some analysis has been done manually to gauge the use of the spaces. In Grange Road and Northumberland Street comparing ticket numbers pre-offer and during the offer there have been around 280 more tickets per month issued in Northumberland Street and 540 more tickets per month issued in Grange Road. It is estimated the overall numbers of people parking in the on-street bays has remained the same but there has been a change in pattern on where people park on-street, with people favouring the free-offer bays or free car parks. The scope to increase additional visits to the on-street bays was limited given the high occupancy levels that existed in some locations.
- (e) Footfall figures in the town centre are analysed but the council moved to the springboard counter system in April 2020, so it is not an exact like for like comparison. The monthly average before Covid is still slightly higher than numbers today, but this is based on data from two different systems and recording points. Over the last 2 years footfall numbers have increased and the average this year so far is 1.25million per month. Pre-covid and on the old system it was 1.37million per month on average.
- (f) There have been issues with the performance of bus services post-Covid and bus patronage has not recovered to pre-covid levels. As such people boarding and alighting in the town centre is less. This could be for numerous reasons, more people working from home, the performance issues of bus services and the parking offer could mean more people are using the car to visit the town.
- (g) In terms of occupied units in the town centre the monthly average occupancy levels in retail areas of town have seen occupancy increase in 3 areas but decrease in three areas. Hospitality has seen a slight decline in the number of Cafes, Pubs and nightclubs.

Location	Average 2021/22 Monthly Occupancy	Average 2022/23 Monthly Occupancy	Trend
Retail			
Duke Street (68 Units)	97%	100%	↑
High Row (22 Units)	88%	91%	↑
Post House Wynd (27 Units)	88%	91%	↑
Grange Road (28 units)	97%	94%	↓
Skinnergate (59 units)	87%	86%	↓
Cornmill (55 units)	87%	85%	↓
Hospitality			
Pubs/Night (39)	92%	90%	↓
Restaurants (28)	86%	86%	↔
Cafes (26)	86%	85%	↓

Financial Implications

16. Council funding has been released by drawing down funds from the TVCA Indigenous Growth Fund (IGF). The Rail Heritage Quarter has drawn down further funding of £496k and a further drawdown of £150k is being sought for the purchase of Loco No.1 replica. A drawdown of £216k is also being sought from the IGF for the Crown Street Library restoration and refurbishment. These projects contribute to the aim and the targets of the IGF Programme to:
- Remediate/regenerate vacant and derelict land and property
 - Revitalise town centres and urban core and stimulate investment
 - Enhance culture and tourism physical infrastructure
17. The drawdown of these funds from the TVCA IGF programme displaces an aggregated total of £862k of council funding. Members will note the November 2022 Cabinet report released £475k to support a further 3 months parking offer. Correspondingly, we believe that with the approval and release of a further £387k, the funds released would be sufficient to cover the extension of the parking offer through until the end of June 2023. This assumption is based on the historical profiles of income through these traditionally lower parking income months.
18. The extension of the offer will reduce the available Indigenous Growth Fund by the amount indicated in the report.

Legal Implications

19. Members must take into consideration that the parking offers for Council operated car parks are likely to have adverse impacts on providers of private car parks. The proposals set out in the report have been reviewed from the perspective of subsidy control and anti-competition law and it is considered that the proposals are lawful.

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**CABINET
10 JANUARY 2023**

COUNCIL PLAN 2020-23 PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 2 (2022-23)

**Responsible Cabinet Member –
Councillor Jonathan Dulston, Leader and all Cabinet Members**

**Responsible Director -
Chief Officers Executive**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To present an overview of progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the Council Plan 2020-23 – Delivering Success for Darlington.
2. The report covers performance in and to the end of the first two quarters of the current financial year, from April 2022 to September 2022.

Summary

3. Delivering Success for Darlington is the Council Plan and it sets out the vision for the borough: *“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.”* The Plan is structured around the following priorities:
 - (a) Growing Darlington’s Economy
 - (b) Maximising the Potential of our Young People
 - (c) Working with Communities to Maximise their Potential
 - (d) Supporting the Most Vulnerable in the Borough
 - (e) A dedicated workforce who are proud to serve the borough and an accessible, effective and engaged council
4. The appended performance report outlines council performance up to the end of the second quarter of the 2022/23 financial year and is structured around the Council Plan, with:
 - (a) A high-level update on overall progress, across all portfolios, towards the overarching vision and priorities highlighted above.
 - (b) An update on each Cabinet portfolio area, highlighting progress against key actions and relevant key performance indicators

5. While some impacts from COVID continue to pose challenges for the council, emerging national and global issues such as increasing energy and supply chain costs, and the war in Ukraine are having significant impacts on many residents, businesses and the council. Much is being done to support people who are most affected, as outlined throughout this report, but this does put increasing pressure on the delivery of council services.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Cabinet notes the progress against the Council Plan 2020-23, as set out in the performance report in **Appendix 1**.

Reasons

7. The recommendation is supported as the purpose of the report is to update Cabinet on the progress in implementing the Council Plan priorities.

Chief Officers Executive

Background Papers

The Council Plan 2020-23 - Delivering Success for Darlington

Neil Bowerbank: Extension 6052

S17 Crime and Disorder	A number of performance indicators and key actions relating to crime and disorder are monitored as part of Council Plan performance reporting
Health and Well Being	The Council Plan outlines a number of key actions and priorities relating to improving the health and wellbeing of local residents, and so the performance report includes updates on how the Council has continued to support this over the first half of 2022/23.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	Progress towards the Council's climate change plan is outlined in the Council plan performance report.
Diversity	Equality measures are monitored as part of the Council Plan performance monitoring process
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	This report outlines progress against the Council Plan and is intended to be used to help inform strategic priorities going forward.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
Council Plan	This report outlines progress against the Council Plan.
Efficiency	The report highlights staff an organisational effectiveness in terms of meeting the key actions and priorities laid out in the Council Plan.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	As Looked After Children and Care Leavers are highlighted as corporate priorities in the Council Plan,

	the performance report includes updates on how the Council has continued to support these groups over the first half of 2022/23.
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MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. The majority of measures in this performance report demonstrate progress towards achieving the council's strategic priorities, with the remaining measures demonstrating progress towards specific key actions aligned with individual portfolios as defined in the Council Plan 2020-23.
9. In most cases, progress against priorities relies on action and support from services spanning multiple portfolios. The following sections of this report highlight some of the key updates contained within the appendix across the thematic and portfolio areas.

Growing Darlington's Economy

10. Despite the ongoing challenges presented by the covid pandemic, the number of new additional employment opportunities continued to increase in 2021. The long-term trend shows the number of employees in Darlington continues to grow, and in early 2022, recorded more than 45,000 employees in the Borough as post covid confidence returns and demand for goods and services increased.
11. Throughout 2022, the monthly unemployed claimant count has steadily decreased up to July 2022 - a trend which is mirrored in both regional and national statistics. These decreases have reduced the claimant count to a level similar to pre-pandemic rates.
12. Darlington resident median weekly incomes increased by 7% between 2020 and 2021, higher than the North-East rate (4.5%) and the England rate (5%). The long term trend for this measure projects year-on-year increases. Median weekly full-time employee based earnings have also increased over the same period, Darlington (15.5%), North East (6%), and England (5%).
13. The characteristics of the Borough contribute to creating the right conditions to attract more people to work, live and enjoy the Borough:
 - (a) Work continues to take place on the back lanes project to reduce the amount of side waste left out in back lanes. The introduction of an additional back lane crew has made a significant difference to the time fly tips are collected with the majority being collected in under 5 days with a significant number of those in under 2 days.
 - (b) Performance of street cleansing teams remains very high with an average of 97.36% of small and 93.24% of large fly tips removed within their target time.
 - (c) The cleanliness of the town centre has continued to remain at a very high standard during the first half of 2022/23.

- (d) The community safety team continue to work closely with the town centre team and wider town centre partners to tackle crime and Anti-Social Behaviour within the town centre, and the renewed public space protection order (PSPO) for the town centre came into effect in July. The Hub (No. 40) on Skinnergate which provides a place of safety, primarily for women and girls but also for vulnerable people opened in September.
 - (e) The rate of reported antisocial behaviour incidents across the borough has decreased by 6% compared to the same period last year. However, the Council continues to be proactive in addressing issues.
 - (f) We continue to invest in road safety education and through our Local Transport Plan, we continue to invest in speed management and casualty reduction schemes. We are seeing a sustained reduction in the number of people slightly injured in road traffic accidents based on the years prior to COVID19.
14. The percentage of the A-road network which needs to be considered for maintenance is 1.47%, and remains significantly below the national and the North East averages. We continue to invest in B & C class roads and this has seen a slight improvement in the quality of the network, and is an improvement on the previous year and better than the national average.

Maximising the Potential of our Young People

15. The Ofsted profile of Darlington schools has continued to improve in this period. 82.9% of pupils now attend a Good or Outstanding school. The percentage of Good or Outstanding schools in Darlington now stands at 86.2% for primary and 75% for secondary.
16. The percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2-2½ years, defined as the proportion of children who received a review who were at or above the expected level in all five domains, remains statistically better than the England and the North East averages, at 93.9% in 2020/21. The national average for this measure is 82.9%
17. The number of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System in Darlington remains comparable to comparator areas in both 2019/20 and 2020/21. This continued positive performance reflects the good work of Council services and partners in early identification of young people in need of support, as well as impressive engagement levels with the Council's Young Peoples Engagement and Justice Service (YPEAJS) team.
18. The council's Young People's Engagement & Justice Service (YPE&JS) had 31 young people referred to their service for diversionary disposals i.e. Pre Caution Disposals and Restorative Justice Disposals in the first 6 months of 2022/23. Over the same period, the team has achieved a 97% success rate in terms of those young people not going on to reoffend following engagement with the service.

Working with Communities to Maximise their Potential

19. The Council has launched a plan to complement the national Levelling Up programme, ensuring that national investment generates the greatest prosperity for the people of Darlington. The focus is on ensuring that residents of Darlington, no matter where in the

borough they live, have the same access to opportunities to make the best of their talents and live a healthy and happy life, as in any other part of the UK.

20. The Council is leading a multi-agency programme in Northgate which is acting as a testbed for how focused activity can help residents access opportunities. The Towns Fund presents an opportunity to create an adult learning facility to improve skills for work. In addition, the Council is conferring with partner agencies to consider how all young people in Darlington can be supported to maximise their employment potential.
21. The number of street champions continues to rise steadily. There are 486 active street champions, the Big spring clean 2022 campaign was a success again and saw more volunteers sign up off the back of an organised litter pick. The scheme has also encouraged other groups to set up a regular litter picking event to improve with mental health/ wellbeing for individuals who became self-isolated during lock downs.

Supporting the Most Vulnerable in the Borough

22. The Council has a well-established group, the Public Sector Executive Group which brings together the chief officers of the major public sector agencies operating in Darlington. This group is currently focused on how agencies contribute to the Levelling Up Darlington Plan. Furthermore, strong working relationships are currently being forged with voluntary sector organisations who will advise on the use of £200k support from the Household Support Fund. This is in addition to the 7,945 households who benefitted from the previous Household Support Fund (£909,160) that was distributed during Q1 and Q2.
23. Supporting the Government scheme, council tax rebates totalling £7 million were swiftly distributed to over 50k households during Q1 and Q2 helping people cope with rising energy and living costs. Furthermore, money advice was collated and published on the council's website which included information from both the council and local organisations.
24. We continue to perform well and remain on a downward trajectory of people entering long term residential care. The services are continuing to work with providers, families and people to actively reduce the number of people needing long term care and enable individuals to return to homes with appropriate support.
25. As of the end of September 2022, 96.2% of 768 clients using social care were receiving self-directed support. Darlington typically exceeds both the national and regional averages for this measure, reflecting the strong ethos of the Council's Adult Social Care team of taking a strengths-based approach to support residents in need.

A dedicated workforce who are proud to serve the borough and an accessible, effective and engaged council

26. Employing over 2,000 people across a vast range of services, we have a proud and dedicated workforce, a large percentage of who live in Darlington. The workforce strategy and plan was rolled out last year. Priorities within the plan that have been delivered so far include the continued roll out of the management programme, the start of a formal pilot for agile working arrangements, and activities to promote a safe and healthy workforce.

Adults Portfolio

27. Darlington has a very low number of people (48) with mental health needs requiring paid support. The Mental Health team within Adult Social Care work closely with the local Trusts and the Primary care Network/GPs to prevent escalation or reduce the need for intervention.
28. Since April 2021, 187 (74.8%) Assistive Technology Tool kit Referrals assigned to Lifeline resulted in equipment being provided, and work continues to between Lifeline and the Adult Social Care Team to promote assistive technology.
29. As of the end of September 2022, 100% of 88 carers using social care received self-directed support. Darlington exceeds both the national and regional average for this metric, and reflects how all carers, who are in receipt of a commissioned service, now have a personal budget. This enables them to maximise their independence and choice, to support their wellbeing and ensure they are able to access the support that best suits their needs.
30. Of the 228 individuals who completed a reablement package since April 2022, 124 had no ongoing care needs. This current performance of 54.4% is an improvement from the same period in 2021/22 (53.5%).

Children and Young People Portfolio

31. Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) have continued to receive excellent services throughout 2022. Increasingly more children with SEND are attending Darlington mainstream schools, and the proportion of Darlington pupils with and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) attending mainstream school settings in the borough has risen from 32.8% in 2018 to 38.4% in 2022.
32. During the past 6 months, 90% of the families the Strengthening Families KFT team worked with have engaged in the interventions and continued successfully to stay together safely as a family unit.
33. 53 children and young people ceased to be in care between April and September 2022, an increase of 2 on the same reporting period last year. The majority of Darlington children in care at the end of September 2022 were in foster placements (47.9%). Kinship care with relatives was 18.9%, 13.3% were placed with a parent, 15.7% were living in supported residential accommodation, and 4.2% were placed for adoption.
34. There are currently 58 approved foster care families and we have recruited a further 4 foster care families during the year. We have 19 kinship connected carers approved with a further 17 families that have temporary approval with children in place. 5 families are going through the mainstream assessments to become approved foster carers to support Darlington's children in care. Nationally, there are difficulties with recruitment. Work continues to raise the foster caring profile in Darlington via our website, social media, and on TV.
35. 22.2% of our care leavers are engaged in further education and 51.9% of the young people are in employment. There is an excellent relationship with our Learning and Skills officers

to understand all school leavers destinations to promote and encourage further learning, training, and/or employment opportunities.

36. Darlington's Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme was further extended for Summer 2022, delivering in communities throughout the Borough. More than 800 children engaged with 62 different programmes at 18 sites across Darlington during the 6 week summer school holiday. Total number of attendances exceeded 1,000 with over 10% of children with SEND.
37. Young people using the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) service have continued to see positive progression in education, employment or training over the past 12 months, exceeding our expected target. Sustained outcomes are an important indicator that highlights the determination the young people and YEI service have and is showcased by the year-on-year increase in sustained education, employment or training.

Economy Portfolio

38. Darlington has continued to welcome a number of new independent retailers to the town centre and the continued works programme with the Towns Fund is improving shop fronts within the Skinnergate and Yards areas. The new Street Food section of the market continues to be successful with 3 new vendors ensuring the offer remains new, fresh and interesting.
39. The Council has received some strong enquiries in relation to land at Ingenium Park, and officers will continue to work with these businesses to bring forward investment. Furthermore, planning approval is due to be granted for 300,000 sq. ft of commercial space along Tornado Way adjacent to Lingfield Point, and officers are working closely with landowners and investors for the development of a commercial site at Faverdale Business Park. Work is progressing at Central Park to deliver improved landscaping and accessibility to plots with the remaining works to complete by end of March 2023.
40. The Council continues to work closely with the Government Property Agency (GPA) with the delivery of the permanent DEC location on Brunswick Street. Several meetings on the proposed design for the new building have been held between the developers and the Council's planning officers. It is anticipated that the building will be completed in late 2025.
41. The Town Fund has acquired additional properties in the town, including 156 Northgate which will be refurbished and transformed into office space. A procurement exercise to identify a partner to design, build and manage the three upper floors as high quality office space has commenced.

Health and Housing Portfolio

42. The Public Health team has continued to progress with a number of priorities such as distribution of information and offer of support to those affected by suicide across the borough, the implementation and evaluation of a Weight Management programme designed for adults with a Learning Disability, roll out the Making Every Contact Count (MECC) training to a range of different internal and external services, and delivery of the Healthy Lifestyle Survey to 8,400 local pupils, across a number of primary and secondary

Darlington schools.

43. Dolphin Centre visitor numbers for quarter 2 (22-23) have increased significantly by 51,443, compared to the same quarter in 21- 22. Visits in July (84,000) were the highest monthly total since reopening following lockdown.
44. All of Darlington Borough Council's social housing stock meets 100% of the decent homes standard. This demonstrates the Council's ongoing commitment to provide excellent quality social housing and reflecting the good work of the Housing and Building Services teams.
45. The remaining actions in the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy are now complete. Despite increasing challenges of finding alternative accommodation, the Housing Options team managed to secure 236 positive outcomes for clients in Q2. This is an increase of 47%.
46. The Lifeline service continues to record consistent take up of new customers, with a slight increase in overall numbers in quarter 2 of 2022-23 compared to the previous year. Feedback amongst service users remains positive and the service provides excellent value for money, with over 4,500 emergency response call-outs to elderly and vulnerable customers in the first 2 quarters of 2022-23.

Local Services Portfolio

47. 2022 has seen an exceptional programme of events starting with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. The reaction from visitors has been excellent and offering these large scale free events has attracted thousands of visitors to Darlington town centre, leading to a notable year on year increase in town centre footfall.
48. Work has continued with partners to develop the 2025 celebrations programme, built around 6 core elements; Live steam and motive power, Exhibitions of early steam locomotives, Education and school projects, Knowledge sharing and conferences, Community events, Large-scale outdoor arts and street theatre. Furthermore, in May, work started on site for phase 1 of the new rail shed (part of the Rail Heritage Quarter) which the A 1 Steam Locomotive Trust will relocate to from the carriage works once complete.
49. Our central library is going through major restoration works. We have opened a temporary library location point at The Dolphin Centre and offered access to additional services via telephone, email, and at our branch library in Cockerton, striving to meet the needs of our customers as best we can during this time. Cockerton Library remains popular, and during opening hours sees a mix of ages visiting to borrow, enjoy a school visit, a story, craft, or Lego activity, or take part in our group specifically for older people.
50. The Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan has now been agreed and a prospectus was submitted to Government which has secured £310m in transport investment in the next 5 years from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). This funding will see the biggest investment in sustainable transport ever seen in the Tees Valley and will assist in delivering climate change objectives across the region.

Resources Portfolio

51. The Council has invested in six joint ventures for house building to date, with all sites progressing well and on target to provide profits as expected. Three of the projects, at Eastbourne, Heighington and Middleton St George, are completed with the investment repaid and dividends received.
52. The West Park and Neasham Road joint ventures are progressing well with all of the properties available in 2022 either sold or reserved, with reservations made against the 2023 release. The Council's out-of borough joint venture with Esh Group is still in its infancy; however, the majority of properties available for sale in 2022 are sold or reserved, with reservations made against the 2023 release.
53. The percentage of Business Rates collected exceeded the target for quarter 2, with 62.5% of Business Rates collected. The overall amount collected by quarter 2 was £16.9 million compared to £16.8 million by quarter 2 of 2021-22.
54. The spend with Darlington-based suppliers has increased from the last financial year, in the first two quarters by 4% (£3m) to 43%. This reflects the continued engagement with the local supply chain, advertising opportunities via the Councils website and social media.
55. There has been a modest increase in the daily visits to our website since the last reporting period (4.8k to 5.1 k) taking us to our highest reported 3 month average to date. Work continues to convert the site's content into plain English with approximately 60% of the web pages now complete.
56. There has been a net increase (+19) of transactional functions available across the corporate website since the previous reporting period. There are currently 195 transactional functions available, all of which need to be managed and maintained.

Stronger Communities Portfolio

57. Darlington Cares rapidly recovered from the limitations faced through Covid. The existing programme continued to reboot whilst the Board explored other areas it could focus on. In particular, it is exploring how it can join forces with the Council and other agencies to help planting trees and other biodiversity action. A well-attended networking event, celebrating 10 years of Darlington Cares, was held on 24th March. From that and increased awareness of Darlington Cares, four new members have been recruited, including Amazon.
58. The Bread & Butter thing has continued to support families across Darlington in making life more affordable especially at a time when families need it most. 8 hubs currently serve the town with plans for the ninth hub to be fully operation by the end of 2022. Since the 1st April 2022 TBBT have given out 16,431 bags of food which equates to 145,066kg of food. Not only supporting families but preventing good food from being wasted or placed into landfill.
59. The Hub on Skinnergate which provides a place of safety, primarily for women and girls but also for vulnerable people opened in September and is proving to be a well used valuable resource to support the late night economy.

60. The total number of current staff who have attended a half day equality and diversity training session is 1,259 people. An additional 185 people have attended more than one session. Over 150 people who have now left the organisation also received the training.



Darlington Borough Council

Council Plan Performance Management Report

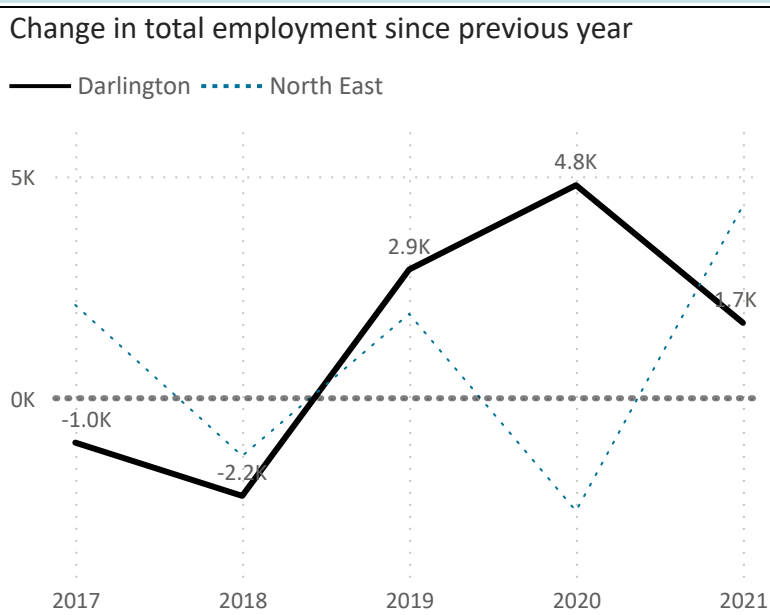
2022/23 Quarter 2

This report outlines council performance up to the end of the second quarter of the 2022/23 financial year.

The performance report is structured around the Council Plan, with:

- A high-level update on progress towards the overarching corporate priorities outlined in the beginning of the Council Plan document to highlight areas of strategic significance:
 - Growing Darlington's Economy (pages [2-14](#))
 - Maximising the Potential of our Young People (pages [15-17](#))
 - Working with Communities to Maximise their Potential (pages [18-19](#))
 - Supporting the Most Vulnerable in the Borough (pages [20-22](#))
 - Supported by a Dedicated Workforce (page [23](#))
- Sections on each Cabinet portfolio area highlighting progress against key actions and relevant key performance indicators:
 - Adults (pages [24-26](#))
 - Children and Young People (pages [27-33](#))
 - Economy (pages [34-36](#))
 - Health and Housing (pages [37-42](#))
 - Local Services (pages [43-45](#))
 - Resources (pages [46-49](#))
 - Stronger Communities (pages [50-54](#))

1.1 Delivering - More sustainable well-paid jobs



This measure shows the difference in total employment (both Public and Private) compared to the same point 12 months previously, in order to show the number of jobs created in Darlington within the last year. Despite the on-going challenges presented by the covid pandemic, the number of new additional employment opportunities continued to increase in 2021, although at a slower rate than the regional rate. The rate in Darlington has remained consistently positive for the last 4 years, demonstrating a level of resilience in the local economy

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

Number of people employed including self-employed

Year	Month	Darlington
2019	December	48,700
2020	March	48,800
	June	48,400
	September	48,700
	December	49,100
2021	March	48,100
	June	49,800
	September	49,400
	December	50,100
2022	March	50,200
	June	49,800

The number of people employed (including self-employed) now stands at 49,800 (a slight reduction on the previous quarter). However, the overall trend is showing a gradual increase, as the economy grows from the challenges of the pandemic. This growth is not as rapid as the number of employees indicator, as new firm formation levels and therefore numbers of self employed are not growing at a similar rate to the stand alone number of employees.

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

Number of employees

Year	Month	Darlington
2019	December	42,300
2020	March	43,300
	June	43,300
	September	43,400
	December	44,100
2021	March	43,000
	June	44,300
	September	44,200
	December	44,900
2022	March	45,200
	June	44,800

The long-term trend shows the number of employees in Darlington continues to grow, and in early 2022, recorded more than 45,000 employees in the Borough as post covid confidence returns and demand for goods and services increased.. During Covid, the levels fluctuated in response to the various national restrictions that were in place at different times. The latest figure for June 2022 show a slight reduction to 44,800. This decline could be linked to the wider economic climate.

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

1.1 Delivering - More sustainable well-paid jobs

Median weekly all residence based earnings

Year	Darlington	England	North East
2012	348	412	374
2013	382	421	382
2014	387	422	387
2015	402	429	395
2016	437	442	405
2017	416	454	416
2018	415	466	420
2019	440	483	438
2020	428	484	439
2021	459	510	459

Darlington resident median weekly incomes increased in 2021. The rate of increase in Darlington between 2020 and 2021 was 7%, higher than the North-East rate (4.5%) and the England rate (5%). This increase reverses the impact of the covid pandemic, where median weekly incomes fell in 2020. The long term trend for this measure projects year-on-year increases.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

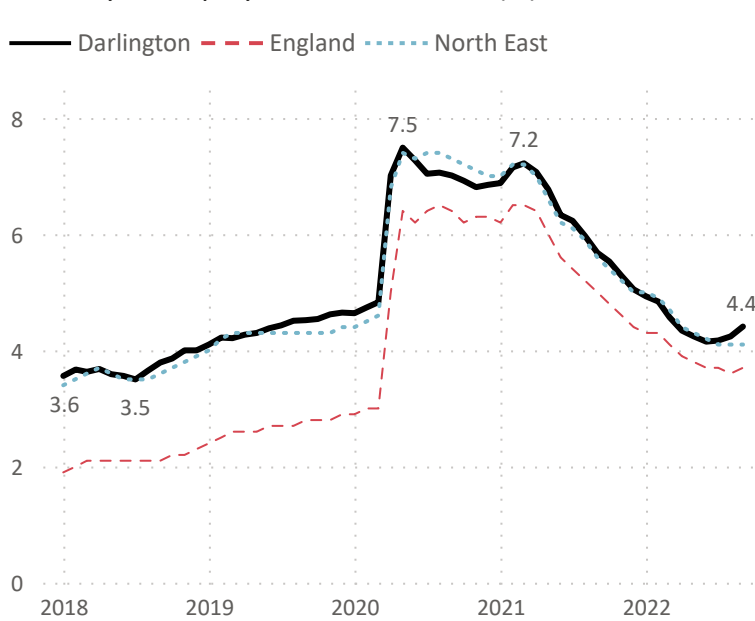
Median weekly full-time employee based earnings

Year	Darlington	England	North East
2012	366	412	372
2013	330	421	379
2014	422	422	390
2015	437	429	395
2016	435	442	403
2017	423	451	417
2018	433	466	418
2019	454	483	438
2020	435	485	436
2021	502	510	464

Darlington employee median weekly incomes increased from £435 in 2020 to £502 in 2021. The rate of increase in Darlington between 2020 and 2021 was 15.5%, higher than the North-East rate (6%) and the England rate (5%). This demonstrates a significant improvement from 2020, and shows how employee earnings are recovering from the impact of the pandemic. In addition, this improvement reduces the gap between the Darlington and England rates. Darlington employee median weekly incomes are now 98.5% of the England rate, compared to the North East rate of 91%.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

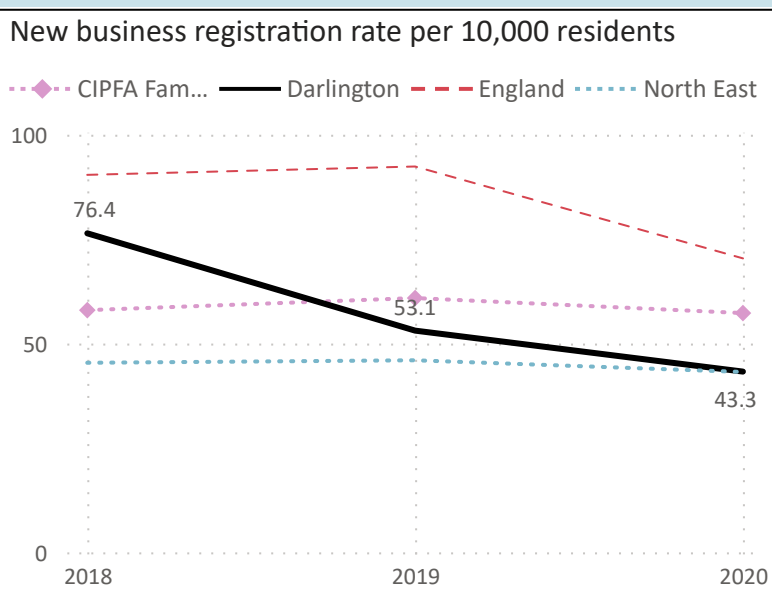
Monthly unemployed claimant count (%)



Throughout 2022, the monthly unemployed claimant count has steadily decreased up to July 2022 – a trend which is mirrored in both regional and national statistics. These decreases have reduced the claimant count to a level similar to pre-pandemic rates. Since July 2022, consecutive increases have been recorded, with the claimant count in September 2022 now standing at 4.4%. The claimant count rate will be impacted by the current business environment, where rising costs and low business confidence mean that many businesses are generally stagnating on growth plans, reviewing operating costs and suspending recruitment and taking on new staff.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

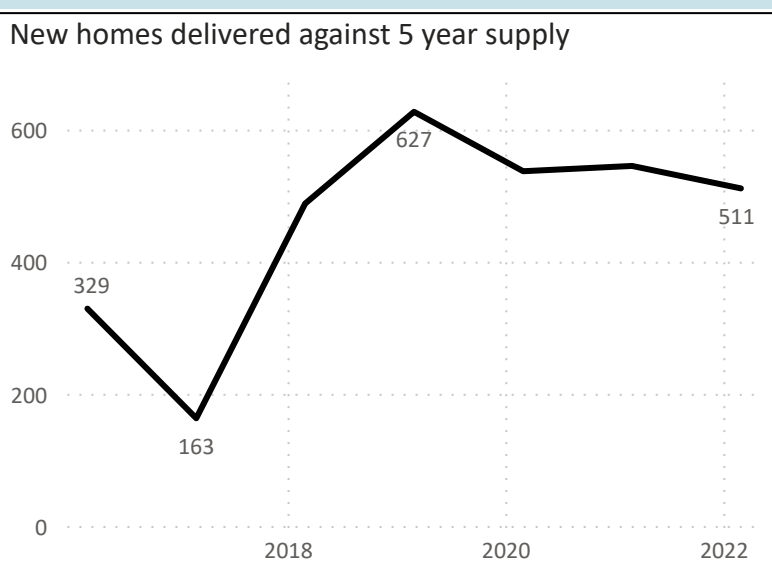
1.2 Delivering - More businesses



New business formation rates have fallen in Darlington since 2018, a trend mirrored by the rate for England. The data shows figures up to 2020. There are mix of local and national reasons for this decline. Nationally, the UK's withdrawal from the EU, political uncertainty, and changing start-up support structures have all had an impact. Locally, the continued growth in alternative employment opportunities will impact the motivation for many new business start-ups. These figures do not take account of the impacts of the pandemic and the rising costs of living.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1.3 Delivering - More homes



The Local Plan was adopted in February. It was hoped this would result in a number of planning applications to promote economic growth. The Government announced in March 2022 that Darlington was part of the Nutrient Neutrality catchment area of the River Tees. The impact of this is that no new permissions for housing developments can be granted until it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of Natural England that any development would not increase the release of nutrients (Nitrates) into the River Tees or its tributaries. This is continuing to delay the granting of planning permissions which ultimately will impact on housing delivery.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1.4 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Clean

Percentage of complaints about refuse on private land investigated and completed within 42 days (except where there is non-compliance with enforcement action taken)

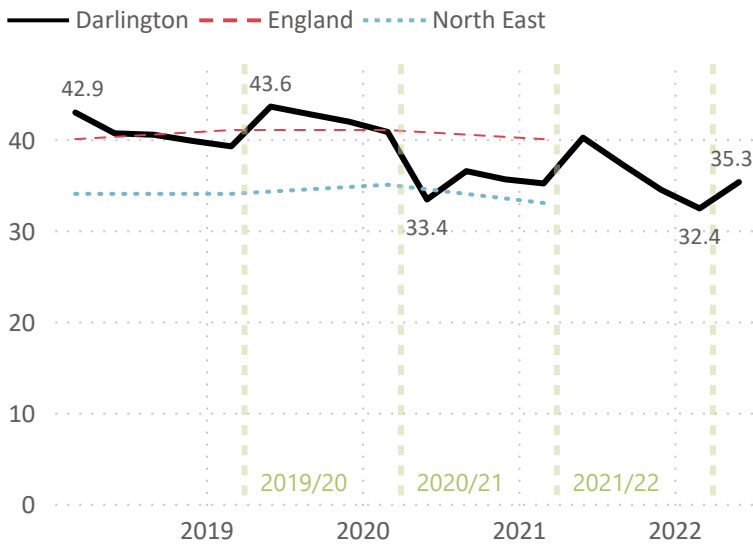
Year	Month	Darlington
2021	June	91.2%
	September	89.5%
	December	90.0%
2022	March	90.2%
	June	91.8%
	September	89.9%

Environmental Health in Q1, Q2 and Q3 2022 investigated 256 complaints of accumulations of refuse on private land. In the first instance, for the majority of cases involving refuse accumulations in yards / gardens, a Community Protection Warning is issued requiring disposal of the refuse in a proper manner and these have proved to be successful. For those cases where the refuse has not been removed enforcement action is considered prioritising refuse which is causing a public health nuisance e.g. household refuse.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1.4 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Clean

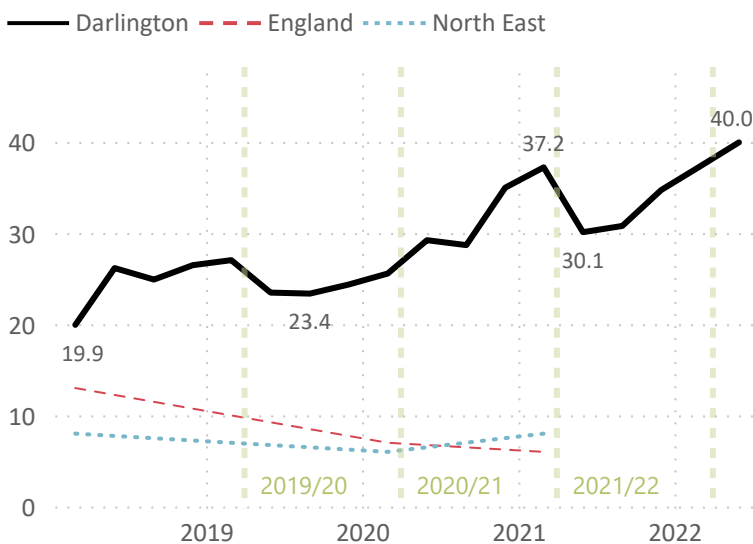
Percentage of household waste that is collected that is either reused, recycled or composted



Data for the proportion of local household waste reused, recycled or composted is only available up Quarter 1 of this year, as the information is reported through a national system which has a lag as data is verified. The Quarter 1 is lower than previous year due to some previous errors in reporting that have been picked up as part of the audit process. Significant work continues to be undertaken by the Street Scene and Communications teams to increase recycling rates and reduce contamination by raising residents' awareness of what can be recycled through a variety of channels.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Percentage of overall waste that is collected by the Council that is landfilled

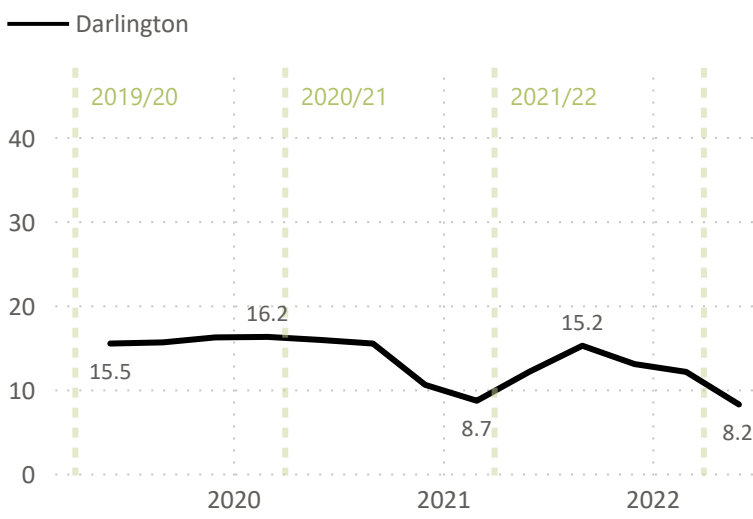


Data is only available until Quarter 31 due to the lag in data verification through the national system. The percentage of household waste landfilled in the first quarter was 40%

There are fluctuations over the years as there is a relationship with levels of recycling and waste sent to energy recovery. The upward trend in landfill since Covid-19 is a result of available markets to send waste to energy recovery therefore remaining residual waste after recycling and composting has to be landfilled.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Percentage of overall waste that is collected by the Council that is used for energy recovery

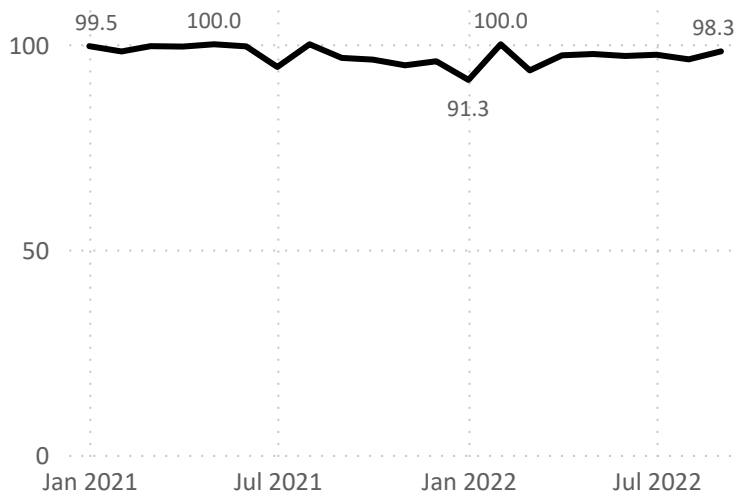


Data is only available until Quarter 1 to due to the lag in the verification process. The percentage of household waste sent to energy recovery in Quarter 1 was 8.2%. This figure will always vary depend on the availability in the markets to send waste to energy recovery post treatment. In Q1 the amount of waste going to energy recovery has reduced significantly due to available capacity at the plant.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

1.4 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Clean

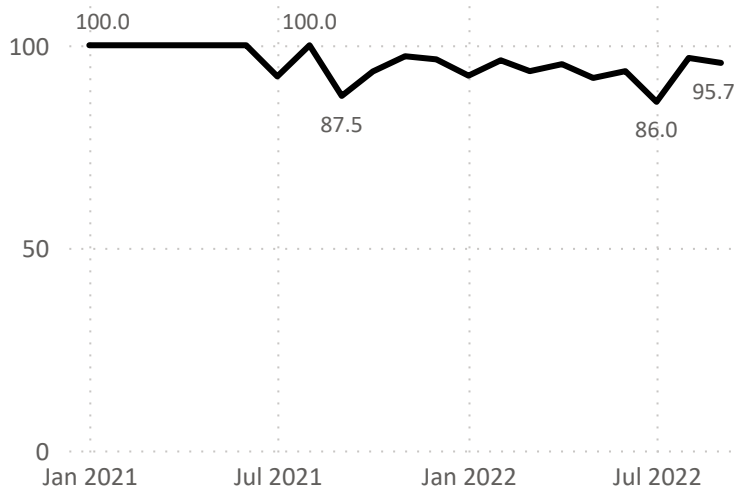
Percentage of small fly tips removed within target time (reported monthly)



The performance of street cleansing teams remains very high with an average since April 2022 of 97.36% of small fly tips removed within their target time. The introduction of an additional back lane crew has made a significant difference to the time fly tips are collected with the majority being collected in under 5 days with a significant number of those in under 2 days.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

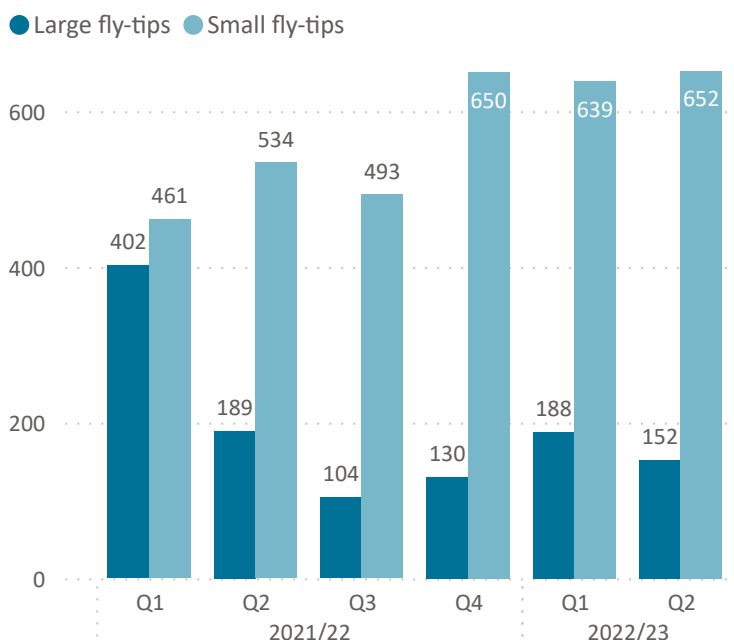
Percentage of large fly tips removed within target time (reported monthly)



The performance of street cleansing teams remains very high with an average of 93.24% of large fly tips removed within their target time. The introduction of an additional back lane crew has made a significant difference to the time fly tips are collected with the majority being collected in under 5 days with a significant number of those in under 2 days.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

Number of fly-tips reported in quarter



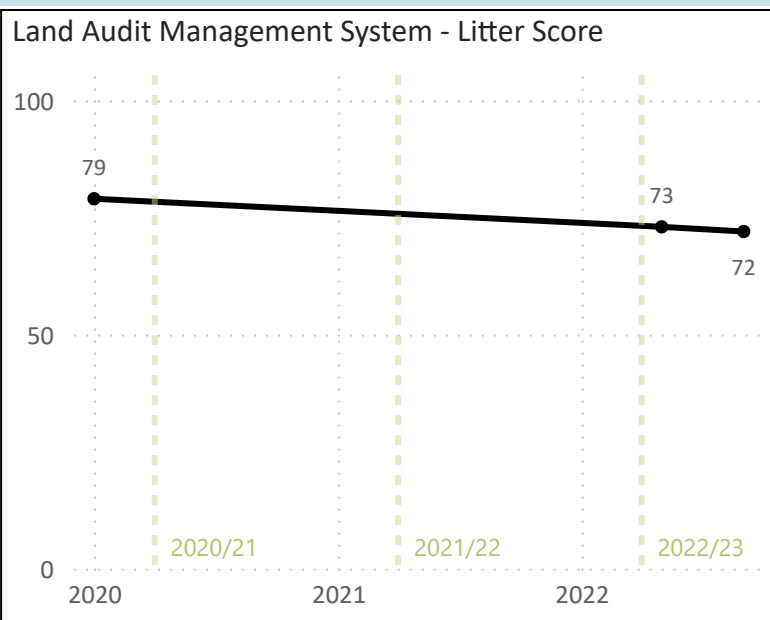
In comparison to Quarter 2 period for 2021/22 the combined number of large and small fly-tips has increased by 11%. The number of large has dropped by 19.6% where as the number of small has risen by 22%. For both quarters in 2022/23 the total number of fly-tips has been above 800 with the number of large fly-tips falling and small fly-tips rising in Quarter 2.

The categories of fly-tips were amended from April 2021 to match those in Fly-capture, a statutory recording system in which DBC reports the number and type of fly-tips to DEFRA and a new recording system was introduced.

Work continues to take place on the back lanes project to reduce the amount of side waste left out in back lanes.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

1.4 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Clean

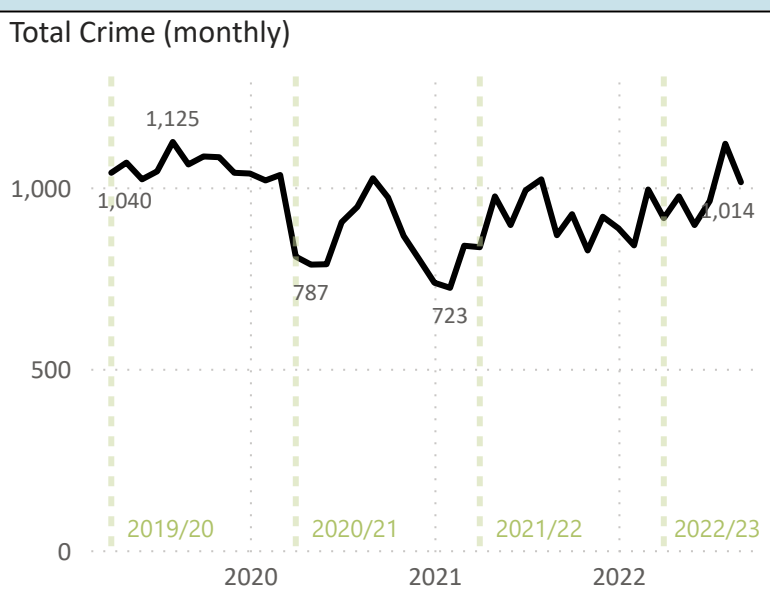


This is a rolling average percentage score of the 40 transects inspected for litter every other month, as defined by the APSE's Land Audit Management System grading system and covering all wards of the borough.

After a several month break due to Covid the Inspections were able to resume in August 2021. The overall average has remained consistent over the first two quarters of 2022/23. Street Scene has continued to assist with the Civic Enforcement back lane project which incorporates litter picking of the front street as well as the back lane.

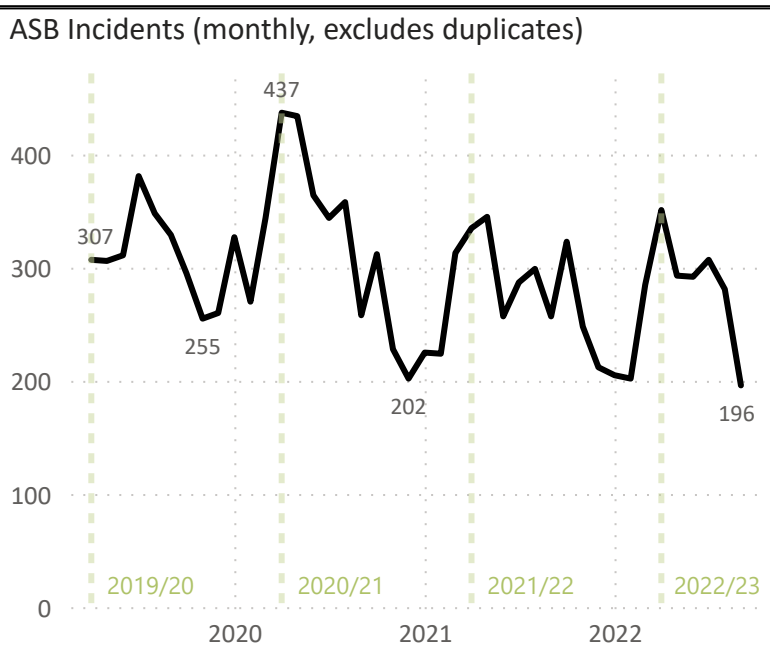
Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

1.5 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Safe



Recorded crime for 2022/23 increased 3% from the same period last year. However, it was still 10% lower than the same period pre-pandemic, in 2019/20. The types of reported crime showing increases can be attributed to Theft and Burglary (residential and business). The Council are working with Durham Constabulary and other partners to help address these issues and continue monitoring crime rates.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

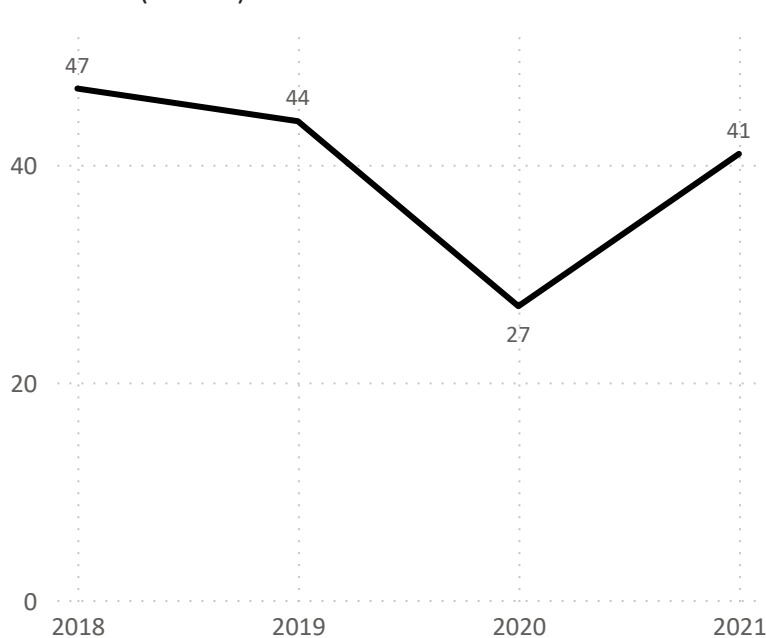


The rate of reported antisocial behaviour (ASB) incidents across the borough has decreased by 6% compared to the same period last year. However, the Council continues to be proactive in addressing issues. Over the past quarter, for example, incidents of youths causing antisocial behaviour, by way of throwing objects at passing vehicles or properties, in areas to the east of Darlington has been the priority for the Community Safety team. Civic Enforcement officers have increased patrols in identified 'hot spot' areas and several youths have been identified. The Civic Enforcement team have issued warnings and if appropriate ABAs (Acceptable Behaviour Agreements) to individuals.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

1.5 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Safe

Number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents (annual)



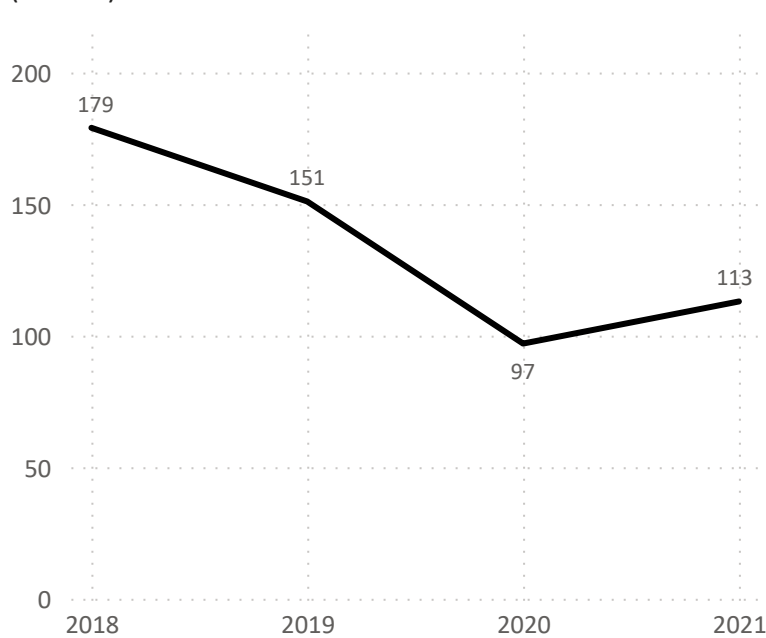
Casualties are monitored annually over a calendar year. The casualty indicators use a five-year average (2010/2014) for their baseline. For killed or seriously injured (KSI), this is 34.2.

2021 shows an increase over 2020. However, 2020 is a statistical outlier due to the impact of Covid-19 on traffic levels (15% of normal traffic levels at its lowest). Based on the years prior to Covid-19, we are still seeing a reduction, however there is still work to do as the level is above the baseline.

Of the 41 Killed or seriously injured on our roads in 2021, there were 0 fatalities.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

Number of people slightly injured in road traffic accidents (annual)



Casualties are monitored annually over a calendar year. The casualty indicators use a five-year average (2010/2014) for their baseline. For slightly injured, this is 297.2.

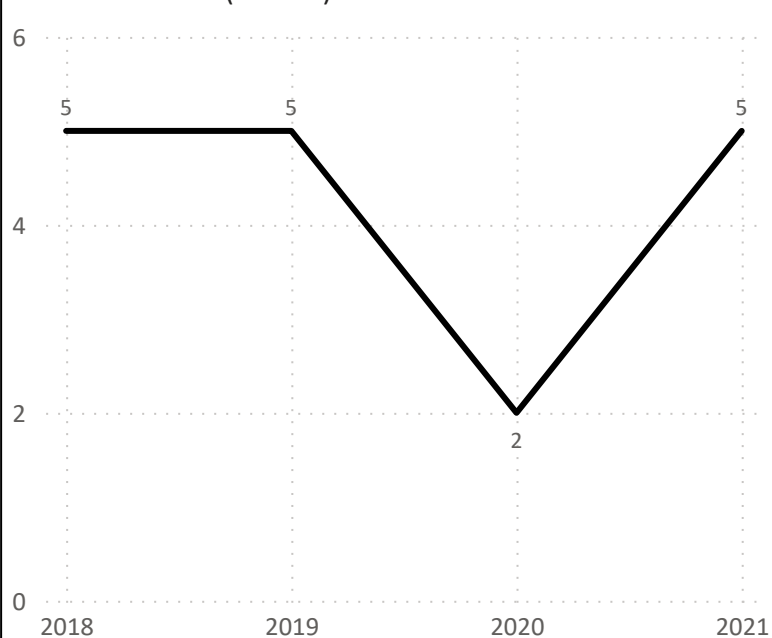
2021 shows an increase over 2020. However, 2020 is a statistical outlier due to the impact of Covid-19 on traffic levels (15% of normal traffic levels at its lowest). Based on the years prior to Covid-19, we are still seeing a substantial reduction which has been sustained over time, and this level is significantly below the baseline.

We continue to invest in road safety education and through our Local Transport Plan, we continue to invest in speed management and casualty reduction schemes.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

1.5 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Safe

Number of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents (annual)



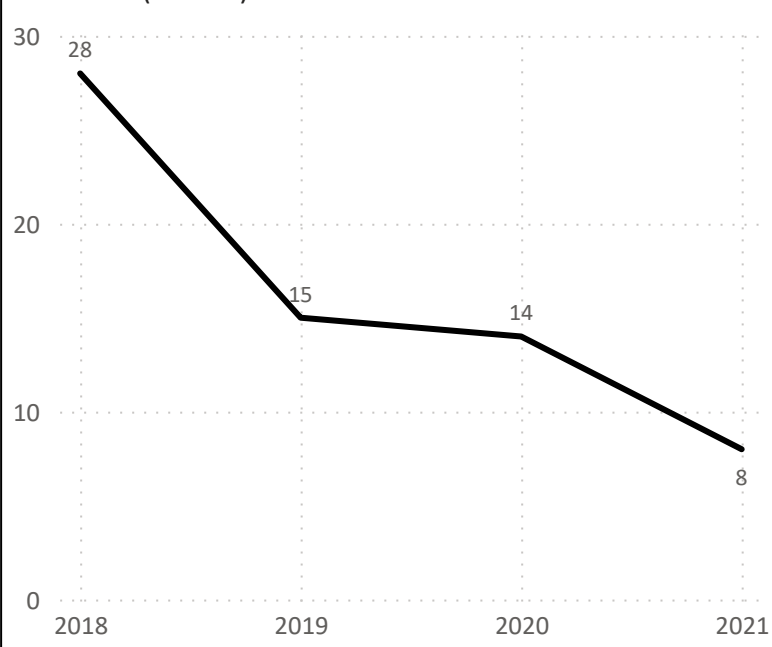
Casualties are monitored annually over a calendar year. The casualty indicators use a five-year average (2010/2014) for their baseline. For children killed or seriously injured (KSI), this is 3.6.

2021 shows an increase over 2020. However, 2020 is a statistical outlier due to the impact of Covid-19 on traffic levels (15% of normal traffic levels at its lowest). Based on the years prior to Covid-19, we are at the same level which remains above the baseline. However, there have been no child fatalities since 2013.

Through our Local Transport Plan, we continue to invest in speed management and casualty reduction schemes.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

Number of children slightly injured in road traffic accidents (annual)



Casualties are monitored annually over a calendar year. The casualty indicators use a five-year average (2010/2014) for their baseline. For child slight casualties, this is 34.2.

2021 shows a decrease over 2020 and continues the trend of reduction over the longer term. At 8, this is significantly below the baseline and a sustained downward trend.

We continue to invest in road safety education, publicity and training in partnership with organisations such as the police and fire service. Through our Local Transport Plan, we continue to invest in speed management and casualty reduction schemes.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

1.6 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Healthy

Male healthy life expectancy at birth

Year	Darlington	England	North East
2014	62.2	63.4	59.6
2015	61.8	63.4	59.6
2016	61.1	63.3	59.6
2017	60.7	63.4	59.5
2018	60.3	63.4	59.4
2019	58.1	63.4	59.4
2020	59.5	63.1	59.1

There is a two-year lag on this metric. However, the latest data, for 2018-20, shows Darlington's value of 59.5 years is statistically similar to the North East average of 59.1 years, but statistically worse than the England average of 63.1 years, and falling at a faster rate than elsewhere since 2015-17. This indicator is considered an important summary measure of mortality and morbidity, by showing the years a person can expect to live in good health, rather than with a disability or in poor health. The measure is calculated using contemporary mortality rates and the prevalence of self-reported good health in local areas.

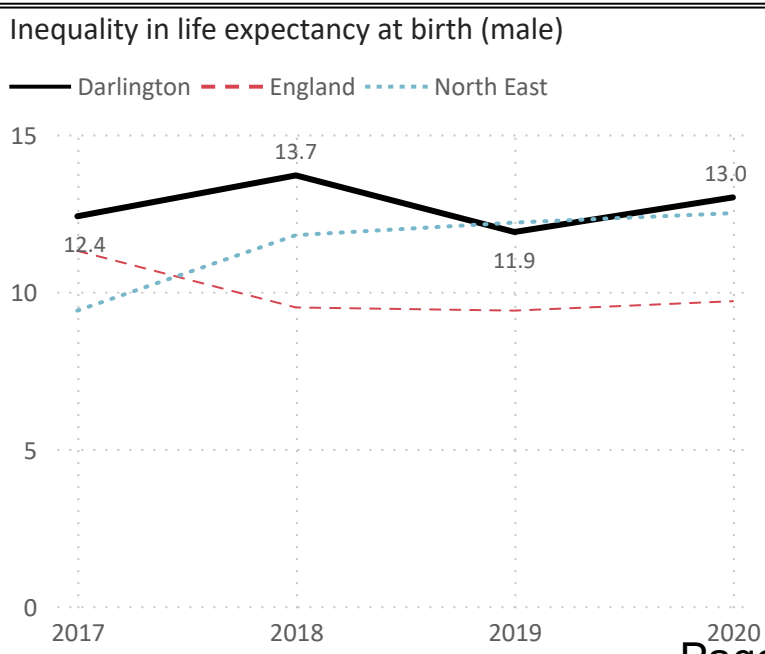
Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

Female healthy life expectancy at birth

Year	Darlington	England	North East
2014	61.7	63.9	59.9
2015	61.4	64.1	60.1
2016	63.4	63.8	60.5
2017	64.3	63.8	60.4
2018	63.3	63.9	59.7
2019	62.2	63.5	59.0
2020	60.6	63.9	59.7

There is a two-year lag on this metric. However, the latest data, for 2018-20, shows Darlington's value of 60.6 years is statistically similar to the North East average of 59.7 years, but statistically worse than the England average of 63.9 years, and falling at a faster rate than elsewhere since 2015-17. This indicator is considered an important summary measure of mortality and morbidity, by showing the years a person can expect to live in good health, rather than with a disability or in poor health. The measure is calculated using contemporary mortality rates and the prevalence of self-reported good health in local areas.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

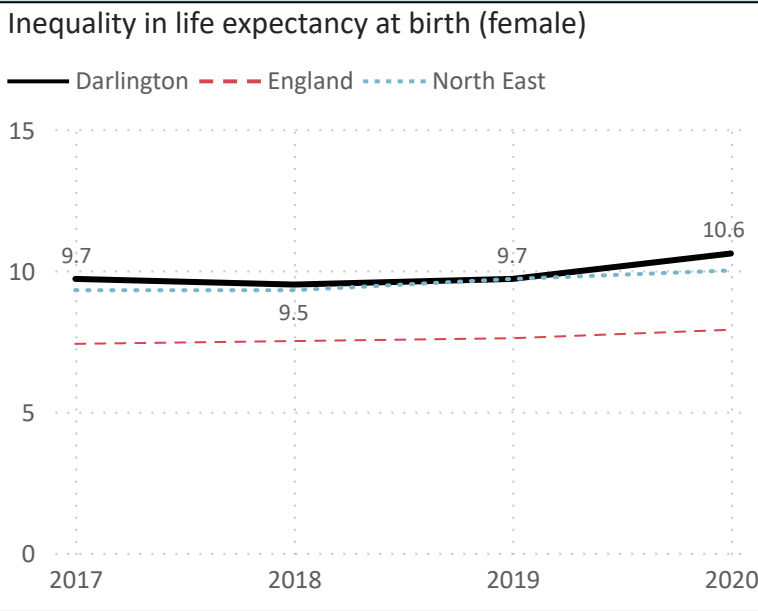


Inequality in life expectancy at birth for males in Darlington has widened in 2020, from 11.9 (2019) to 13.0 years, and is worse than the England. Compared to the North East region Darlington is statistically similar in line with the North East average.

Life expectancy at birth is a measure of the average number of years a person would expect to live based on contemporary mortality rates. This graph shows that a baby boy born in the most deprived area on average can expect to live 13 years less than a girl born into the least deprived area of Darlington. For England this would be a difference of 9.7 years.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

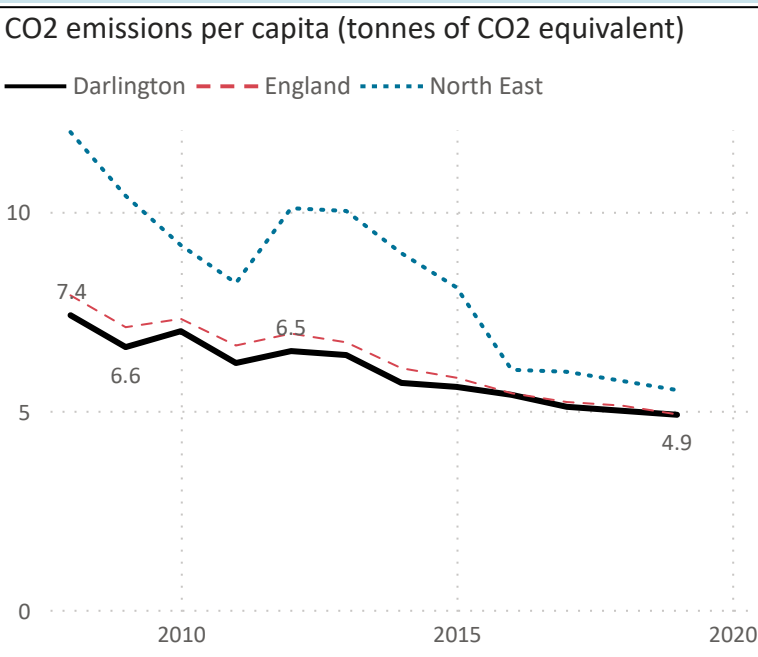
1.6 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Healthy



Inequality in life expectancy at birth for females in Darlington widened in 2020, from 9.7 (2019) to 10.6 years, and is worse than the England. Compared to the North East region Darlington is statistically similar in line with the North East average. Life expectancy at birth is a measure of the average number of years a person would expect to live based on contemporary mortality rates. This graph shows that a baby girl born in the most deprived area on average can expect to live 10.6 years less than a girl born into the least deprived area of Darlington. For England this would be a difference of 7.9 years.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

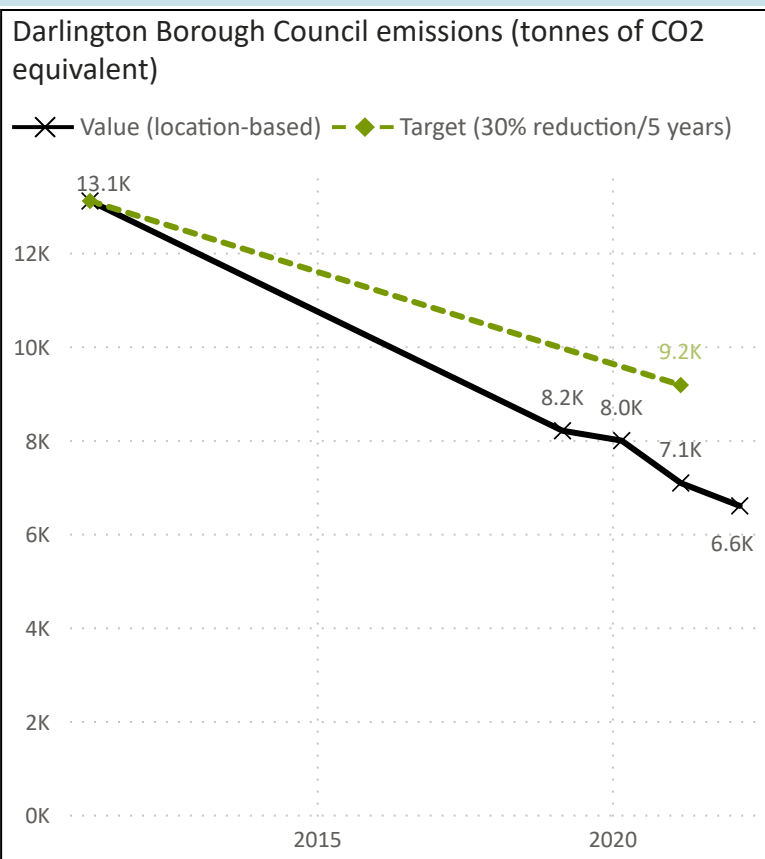
1.7 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Sustainable



The graph shows emissions per capita. For Darlington, this is slightly below both the national average and the average for the North East. Emissions for the whole of Darlington, in 2019 were 486,000 tonnes. We continue to work with businesses and are developing the information and advice available to residents. An event will be held in the Town Centre in mid-2023, with events for families, information for residents and advice for businesses. A young people's page has been added to the Sustainable Darlington page on the Council's website. This will enable schools to share what they are doing to encourage others and involve pupils in developing age-appropriate messaging.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

1.7 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Sustainable



The graph shows our progress against our target trajectory. We report electricity emissions using both location-based and market-based reporting as is considered good practice. The location-based method reflects the average emissions intensity of the electricity grid. A market-based method reflects that we have chosen a zero-carbon tariff.

Progress is measured against action milestones; the majority of actions in quarter one were on target. We are examining ways of improving our reporting to ease visibility of progress.

Work continues to improve the efficiency of both corporate and residential buildings. Improvements to our council house stock are ongoing.

We have begun developing our adaptation plans, ensuring that the council is future proofed against the impacts of climate change.

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

1.8 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - Well planned

Officers continue to work with Natural England to determine a way forward in which the Council can support developers to meet their Neutral Neutrality obligations.

The required Design Codes have been completed for both Burtree Garden Village (adopted Q2 2022) and Skertingham Garden Village to be presented to Council in February 2023.

The development of a new Housing Strategy has commenced. This strategy will support the ambitions of the adopted Local Plan and set out the types and tenure of housing required in the various agreed development sites within the borough. It will also encompass the need for specialist housing to meet the needs of all communities within the authority.

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

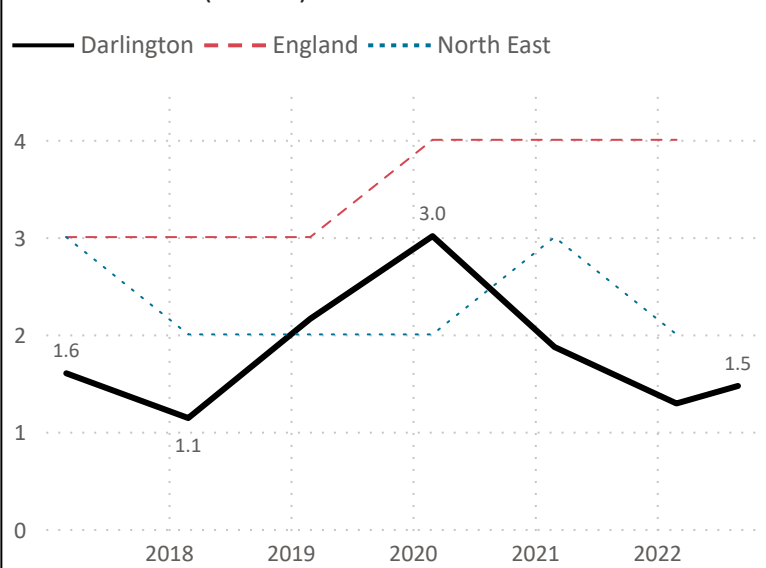
1.9 And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough - On the move

The Council continues to work in partnership with TVCA and the other Tees Valley local authorities to deliver the joint Strategic Transport Plan. This work is crucial in supporting the council plan's principal ambition of economic growth and work has continued on Darlington Station improvements, bus improvement corridors and the establishment of the Bus Enhanced Partnership, development of Demand Responsive Transport, travel behaviour programmes, upgraded Urban Traffic Management and Control System, Wheels to Work, Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan investment and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

We participate in the National Highways Transportation Survey each year, and the results of this, along with evidence from investigations, statutory testing and surveys, asset management planning, other data sources and Government and local policies inform our investment decisions in our transport infrastructure.

Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects

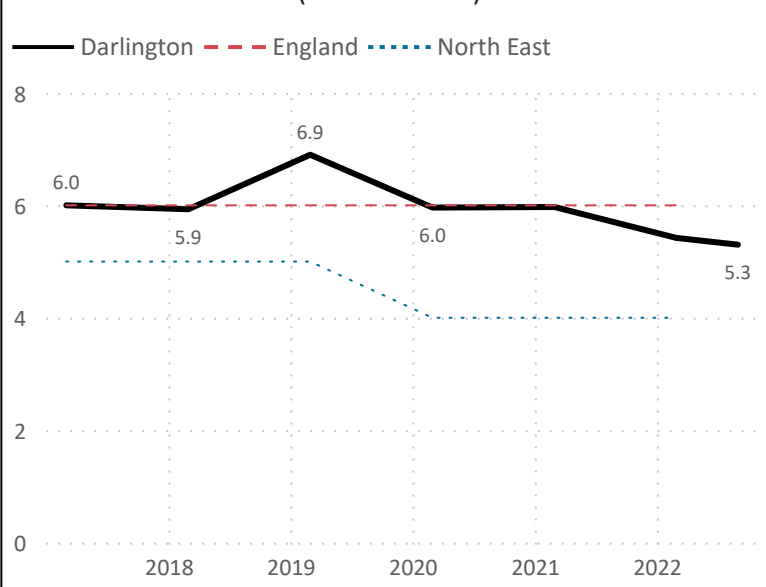
Percentage of principal roads where maintenance should be considered (A class)



We have continued with our investment in road maintenance however this year has seen a slight fall in the condition of the A-road network, with the percentage of the A-road network which needs to be considered for maintenance now being 1.47%, from 1.3% the previous year which however this is still significantly below the national and the North East averages.

Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects

Percentage of non-principal roads where maintenance should be considered (B and C class)

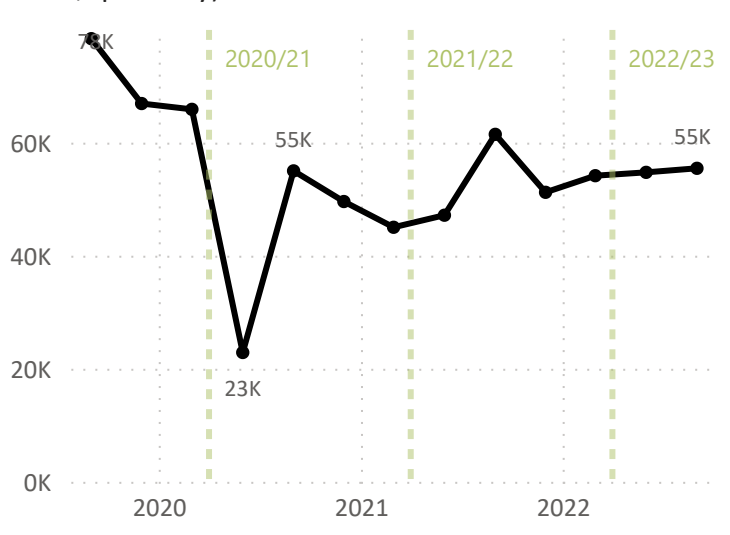


We continue to invest in B & C class roads and this has seen a slight improvement in the quality of the network. The percentage of B & C class roads where maintenance should be considered has improved and is now at 5.3%. This is an improvement on the previous year and is better than the national average. However, this remains above the north east average.

Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects

1.10 Whilst - Valuing our heritage and culture

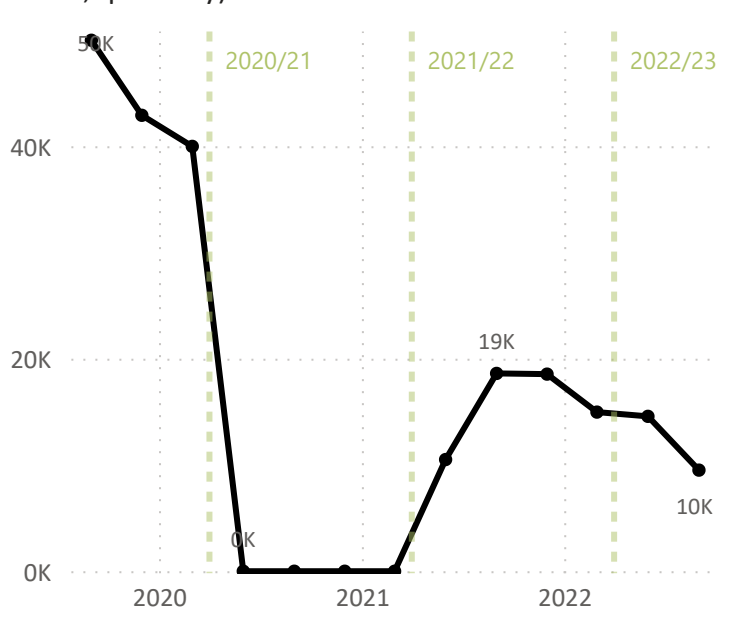
Library items borrowed (including physical and digital stock, quarterly)



The figures follow a similar level to during the pandemic, however as we would expect whilst our central library has limited access, the data tells us that more borrowing has taken place at Cockerton Library, and less at Darlington. Borrowing remains steady in part due to strategies including the Home Delivery Service, our offer to schools and nurseries, and Select and Collect.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

Number of physical visits to Darlington Library (door count, quarterly)



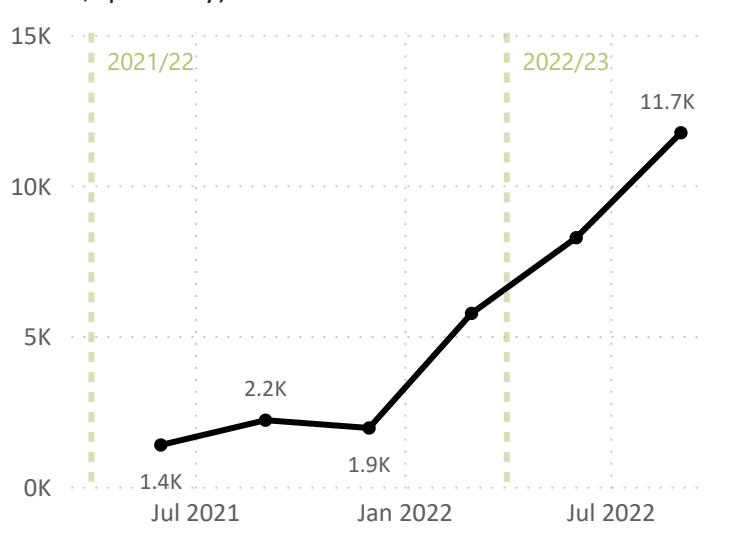
Our central library is going through major restoration works including mechanical and electrical improvements throughout the building, works to the full roof, and redecoration throughout which has included much work to restoring functional and decorative plaster to walls and ceilings.

During a period of extreme wet weather, it became unviable to continue with open access for members of the public.

Whilst staff remain working between the branch at Cockerton and the town library where resources are stored, we have opened a temporary library location point at The Dolphin Centre and offered access to additional services via telephone, email, and at our branch library in Cockerton, striving to meet the needs of our customers as best we can during this time.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

Number of physical visits to Cockerton Library (door count, quarterly)



Cockerton Library remains popular, and during opening hours sees a mix of ages visiting to borrow, enjoy a school visit, a story, craft, or Lego activity, or take part in our group specifically for older people. Whilst closed, we make use of the space by offering a host of speech and language activities for young children, a watercolour group for adults, and whilst the town library is inaccessible, our Centre for Local Studies customers can visit for help with research and study. It is almost a year since we refurbished here and customers regularly report on the pleasant welcome and environment experienced at our branch.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

2. MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE BY

2.1 Working with partners to maximise educational achievement

The Ofsted profile of Darlington schools has continued to improve in this period. 82.9% of pupils now attend a Good or Outstanding school. The percentage of Good or Outstanding schools in Darlington now stands at 86.2% for primary and 75% for secondary.

2021-22 saw a return to formal assessment in primary schools and external examinations and accreditation in secondary school. Partnership activity has continued this year. The Education Partnerships team facilitates communication across the sector, promotes the sharing of good practice, manages partnerships and networks across a wide range of aspects and initiates and delivers specific projects to support the quality of education. Of particular note this year has been the work to support transition between primary and secondary education through curriculum development in English and Science. In Early Years, the team was selected by DfE to deliver a pilot 'Experts and Mentors' training programme for providers.

Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

2.2 Working to remove barriers to young people reaching their potential

Child development: percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2-2½ years

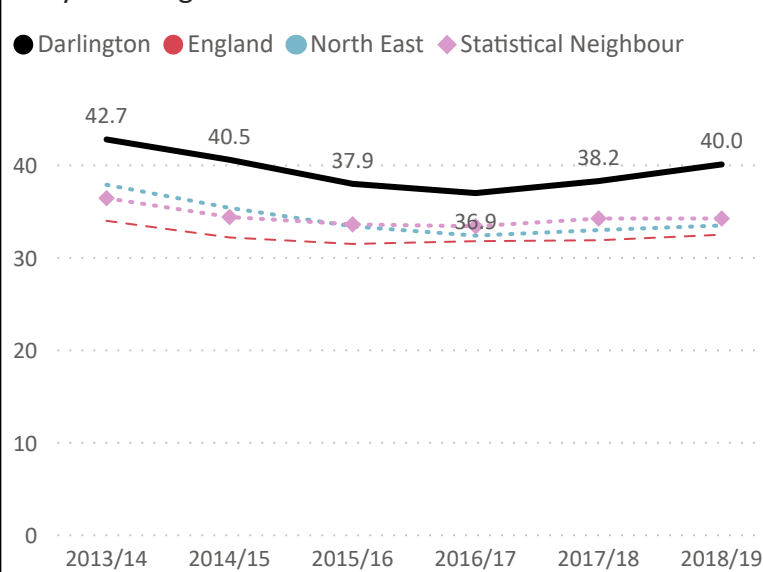
School year	Darlington	England	North East
2017/18	80.9	83.3	85.6
2018/19	91.8	84.1	87.6
2019/20	93.9	83.3	87.4
2020/21	93.9	82.9	87.2

The percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2-2½ years, defined as the proportion of children who received a review who were at or above the expected level in all five domains, remains statistically better than the England and the North East averages, at 93.9% in 2020/21. The national average for this measure is 82.9%

The Health Visiting service provides surveillance and monitors develop of children with their families during the mandated visits from birth. The service will also provide extra support and/or referral for any child who is perceived to be missing key developmental goals.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

Percentage inequality gap in achievement across all the Early Learning Goals



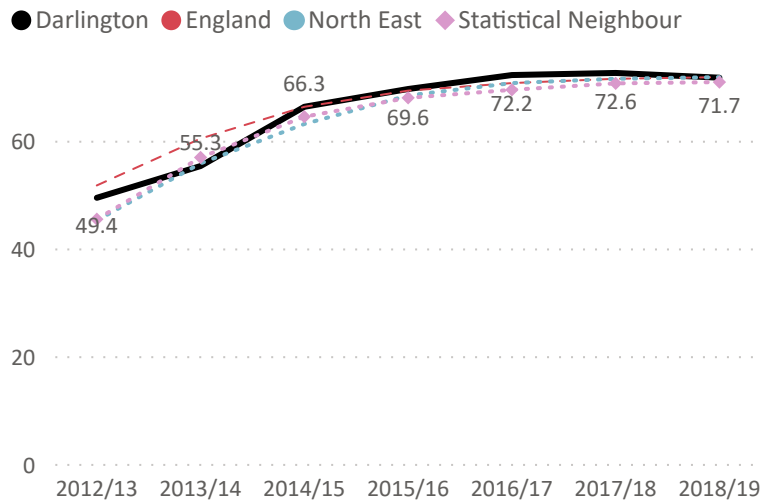
The percentage of children in Darlington schools achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception has been stable for the last 3 years reported (2017-2019), at around 72%. This is in line with comparators. The percentage of children who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and achieving a good level of development has been the same or higher than national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators since 2014/15. In the latest available data (2018/19), the difference in percentage points between FSM and non-FSM children achieving a good level of development in Darlington (13) was narrower than regional (18), national (17) and statistical neighbour (21.7) comparators.

Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

2. MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE BY

2.2 Working to remove barriers to young people reaching their potential

School Readiness: all children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception as a percentage of all eligible children (Early Years Foundation Stage profile)



The key stage attainment data collections were cancelled for 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to the pandemic, resulting in 2018/19 being the last academic year where data is available. The 2018/19 results show that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has increased significantly since 2013/14 and, at 71.7%, remains in line with the national average (71.8%), those of statistical neighbours (70.9%) and North East local authorities (71.8%).

Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

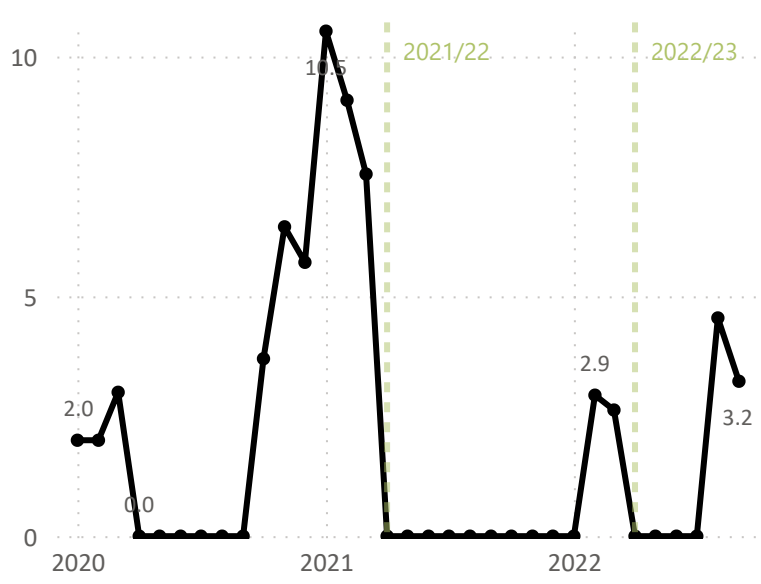
Number of First Time entrants to the Youth Justice System (quarterly)



The number of first-time entrants to the Youth Justice System in Darlington remains comparable to comparator areas in both 2019/20 and 2020/21. This continued positive performance reflects the good work of Council services and partners in early identification of young people in need of support, as well as impressive engagement levels with the Council's Young Peoples Engagement and Justice Service (YPEAJS) team.

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

Percentage of reoffending rate of clients receiving a PCD

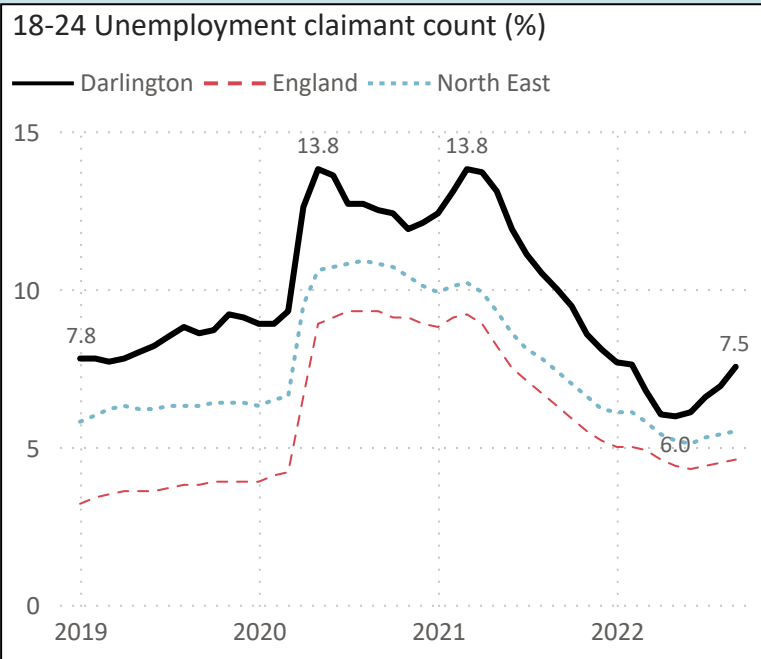


The council's Young People's Engagement & Justice Service (YPE&JS) had 31 young people referred to their service for diversionary disposals i.e. Pre Caution Disposals and Restorative Justice Disposals in the first 6 months of 2022/23. Over the same period, the team has achieved a 97% success rate in terms of those young people not going on to reoffend following engagement with the service.

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

2. MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE BY

2.3 Working at a Tees Valley level to match jobs with skills and training



The 18-24 Claimant Count now stands at 7.54%, slightly higher than 12 months ago. Throughout the early months of 2022, this claimant count continued to fall, but with recent increasing business costs such as energy, businesses have had to find ways in reducing operating costs, and this has typically been labour costs. This has had a significant impact on the 18-24 workforce, hence the recent increase.

Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

3. WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO MAXIMISE THEIR POTENTIAL

3.1 Maximising the benefits of a growing economy for all communities

Percentage of workers earning the real living wage			
Year	Darlington	England	North East
2016	81.1	79.5	76.1
2017	77.7	80.5	77.1
2018	78.0	79.9	75.8
2019	77.3	82.4	78.1
2020	75.8	82.8	79.2
2021	80.3	85.2	81.3

The proportion of in-work Darlington residents earning the real living wage, calculated by the Resolution Foundation as being £9.50 an hour in 2021, increased to 80.3% but remained below the regional average of 81.3% and England average of 85.2%. The overall trend shows gradual improvements in the percentage of workers earning the real living wage or above. In Darlington, 1 in 5 workers are now earning less than the Real Living wage.

Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth

3.2 Targeting services where most needed

The Household Support Fund benefitted 7,945 households during this reporting period, to a value of £909,160. 4,285 households who qualify for free school meals received food vouchers worth £135 each over the school holiday periods (£578,530). 123 care leavers received food vouchers worth £100 each (£12,300). 3,537 pensioners on low incomes and receiving Council Tax Support received a payment of £90 each to help with utilities (£318,330).

Supporting the Government scheme, council tax rebates totaling £7 million were swiftly distributed to over 50k households during Q1 and Q2 helping people cope with rising energy and living costs. Furthermore, money advice was collated and published on the council's website (www.darlington.gov.uk/moneyadvice) which included information from both the council and local organisations.

Pre-established initiatives to support local people such as The Bread and Butter Thing, the School Uniform Shop, the benefits advice collaboration with CAB, and 'Let's do digital' continued to be delivered. Some of the initiatives launched during this reporting period include a youth employment project, a summer activities programme for young people, and provision of nutritious meals for eligible children. The community also came together on a number of occasions to celebrate what Darlington has to offer with three notable examples being winning numerous Northumbria in Bloom awards, very successful pride events celebrating inclusion and diversity, and numerous Jubilee celebrations.

Initiatives planned for Q3 include a jobs and careers fair and a winter pressures advice event.

Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications

3.3 Working with partners

The Council has a well established group, the Public Sector Executive Group which brings together the chief officers of the major public sector agencies operating in Darlington. This group is currently focused on how agencies contribute to the Levelling Up Darlington Plan

Strong working relationships are currently being forged with the voluntary sector. A third sector liaison group has been established. To date it has provided advice on the Levelling Up Darlington plan and will be the mechanism through which a plan to deliver the priority of the Council Plan, 'Supporting the Most Vulnerable' will be co-written. Of practical importance, the group has fostered a collaboration of voluntary sector organisations which will be delivering a programme of a value of £200,000 as part of the Household Support Fund.

The Stronger Communities Board is to be launched on November 16th. Led by the Council, it will bring together civic leaders from across public, private and voluntary sectors to address the opportunities and challenges facing Darlington. The Board will also launch the Levelling Up Darlington Plan.

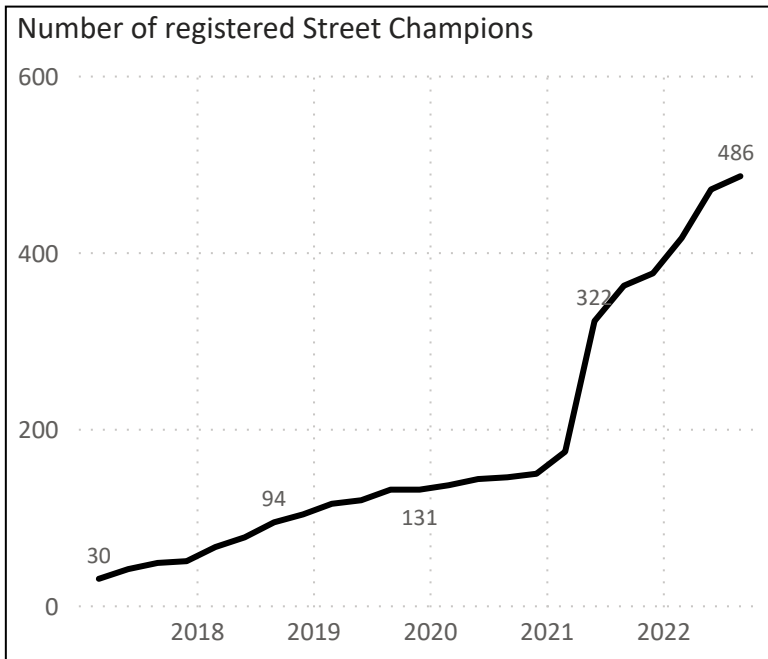
3. WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO MAXIMISE THEIR POTENTIAL

3.4 Working with communities

The Council has launched a plan to complement the national Levelling Up programme, ensuring that national investment generates the greatest prosperity for the people of Darlington. The focus is on ensuring that residents of Darlington, no matter where in the borough they live, have the same access to opportunities to make the best of their talents and live a healthy and happy life, as in any other part of the UK. In-depth engagement with local communities will be a core principle of activity. The Levelling Up Darlington Plan is to be launched at the inaugural meeting of the Stronger Communities Board on November 16th.

The Council is leading a multi-agency programme in Northgate which is acting as a testbed for how focused activity can help residents access opportunities. The Towns Fund presents an opportunity to create an adult learning facility to improve skills for work. In addition, the Council is conferring with partner agencies to consider how all young people in Darlington can be supported to maximise their employment potential.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership



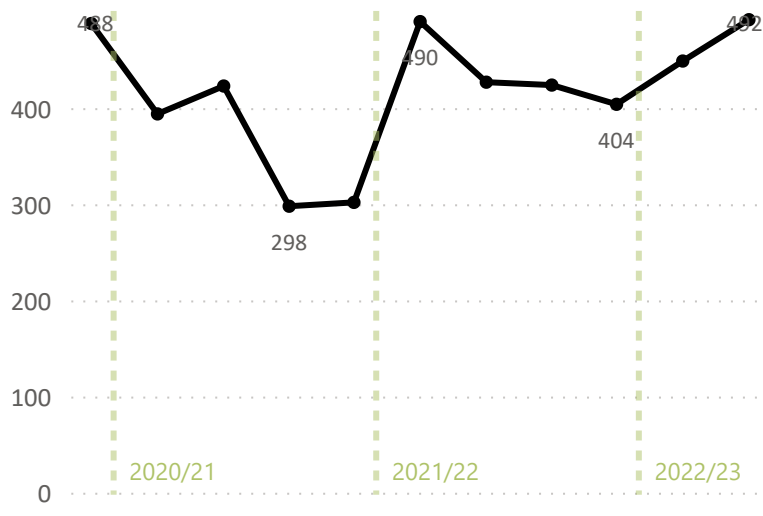
The number of street champions continues to rise steadily. There are 486 active street champions, the Big spring clean 2022 campaign was a success again and saw more volunteers sign up off the back of an organised litter pick. The scheme has also encouraged other groups to set up a regular litter picking event to improve with mental health/ wellbeing for individuals who became self-isolated during lock downs.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

4. SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN THE BOROUGH

4.1 Providing care and support when needed

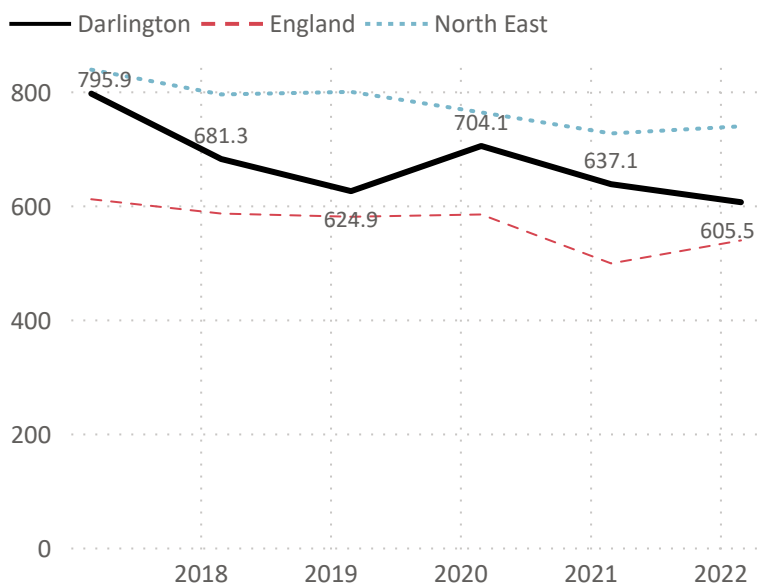
Number of people presented to Darlington Council's Homeless service



In Q2, there were 43 more clients that presented as homeless than in Q1. This is a 10% increase. There has been a rise in private landlords selling their properties and individuals being unable to afford their accommodation, resulting in becoming homeless. This is continuing to put our Housing Options service under significant pressure.

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues

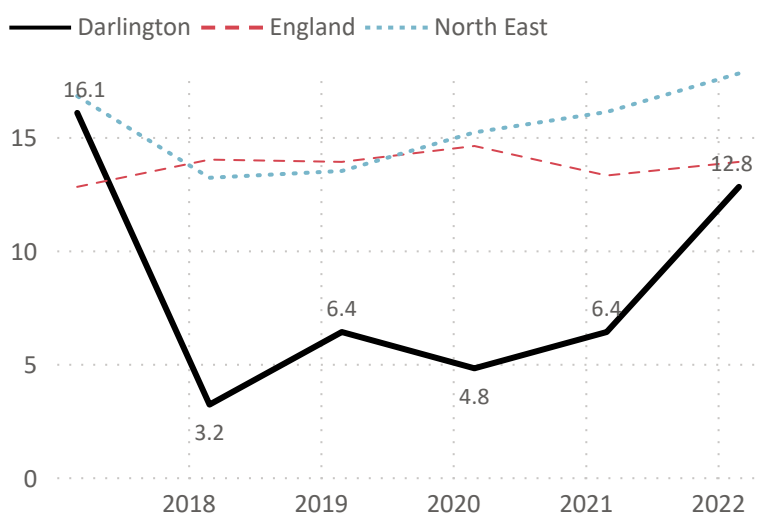
Older people admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care, per 100,000 of the 65+ population



Since April 2022, the number of older people admitted to residential, or nursing care was 77 (347.9 per 100,000 population). The number of permanent admissions during the same period last year was 73 (328.9 per 100,000 population), and for 2020-21 the number was 61 (245.5 per 100,000 population). Out of the 77 older people placed into permanent residential or nursing care, 71 came from short breaks stays, this is 92% of the total number. This is an increase from the same period last year where the figure was 79%. However we are still performing well across the North East and remain on a downward trajectory of people entering long term residential care. The services are continuing to work with providers, families and people to actively reduce the number of people needing long term care and enable individuals to return to homes with appropriate support.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Adults aged 18 - 64 admitted on a permanent basis to residential or nursing care homes, per 100,000 population

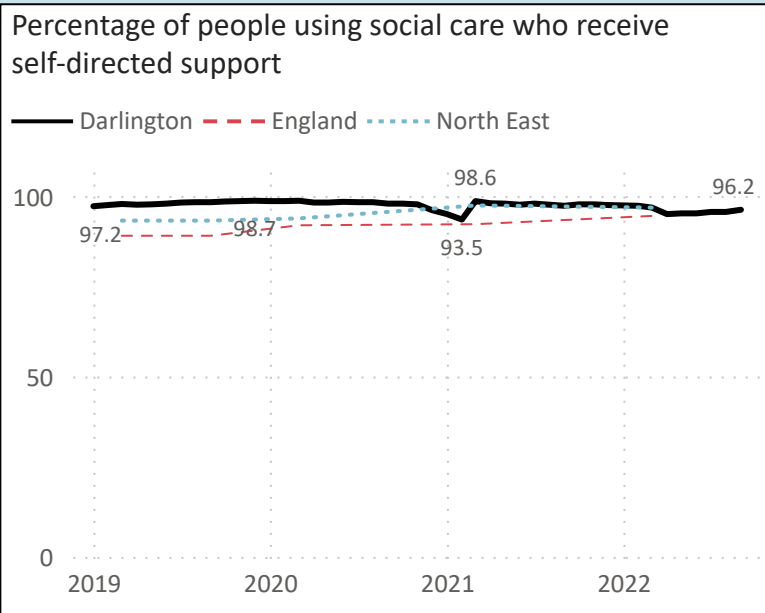


Since April 2022, one working aged individual (1.6 per 100,000 population) has been admitted permanently into residential or nursing care homes. A robust assurance process continues to be undertaken by Team Managers and the Council's Validation Panel to ensure that clients of working age only enter permanent care, when deemed necessary, with clients helped to live independently with support wherever this is possible.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

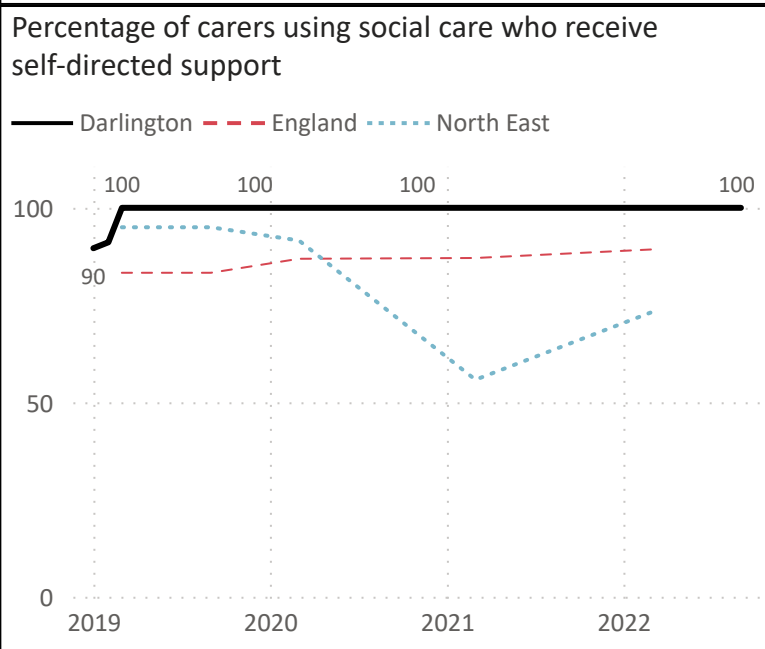
4. SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN THE BOROUGH

4.1 Providing care and support when needed



As of the end of September 2022, 96.2% of 768 clients using social care were receiving self-directed support. Darlington typically exceeds both the national and regional averages for this measure, reflecting the strong ethos of the Council's Adult Social Care team of taking a strengths-based approach to support residents in need. We maximise service users' choice and control over the services they receive, to ensure these best suit peoples' particular needs and preferences.

[Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care](#)



As of the end of September 2022, 100% of 88 carers using social care received self-directed support. Since September 2021, 6 individuals stopped receiving self-directed support as they were no longer carers. This data, which shows Darlington exceeds both the national and regional average for this metric, reflects how all carers, who are in receipt of a commissioned service, now have a personal budget. This enables them to maximise their independence and choice, to support their wellbeing and ensure they can access the support that best suits their needs.

[Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care](#)

4.2 Working with people to build on their strengths to maximise their potential

We continue to deliver care and support to the most vulnerable adults in the community.

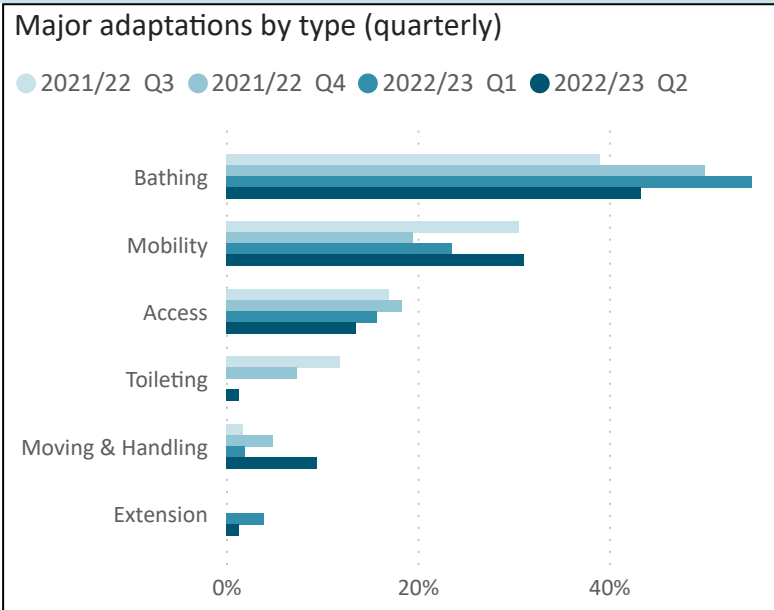
As a service we take a 'Strength Based' approach to practice and assessment. This means that we support people to become more resilient in meeting their care needs by developing their networks and personal strengths. We take this approach because it is the right thing to do and it is also consistent with our duty to 'prevent, delay or reduce' the need for formal support. Support plans focus on the abilities of the person, what resources and support they currently have and what they can access in their local community. The teams will encourage the use of aids and adaptations to ensure people remain as independent as possible for as long as possible.

We work closely with partners, providers including the NHS to promote and support independence. We are also aiming to strengthen our online offer through the opportunity for people to use self assessments and on line financial calculations to understand what support is available to them. We are also strengthening our links to social prescribing - to support health, well being and support when managing long term conditions

[Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care](#)

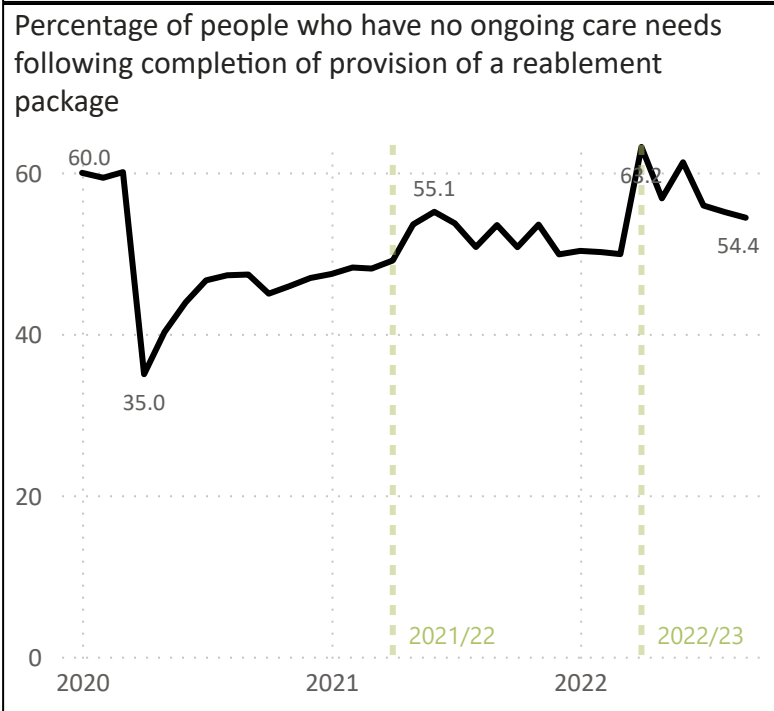
4. SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE IN THE BOROUGH

4.2 Working with people to build on their strengths to maximise their potential



This graph indicates the types of major adaptations provided via our disabled grant funding. There was a significant increase in the percentage of individuals receiving moving and handling adaptations during Quarter 2, 2022/23. This increase was due to the lifting of Covid restrictions, improving the availability of contractors and materials which had previously caused a backlog of cases.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care



Of the 228 individuals who completed a reablement package since April 2022, 124 had no ongoing care needs.

This current performance of 54.4% is an improvement from the same period in 2021/22 (53.5%).

The team work closely with the County Durham and Darlington Foundation trust and local providers to deliver a responsive service both within the hospital (we have social workers on site) and on discharge. Demand is increasing as we enter the winter period and we continue to support more people to regain their independence and confidence to remain at home for longer periods after a period of reablement. We will encourage the use of technology in their home, including the lifeline and telecare options and continue to explore and deliver adaptations in people's homes.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

4.3 Working with partners

Strong working relationships are currently being further developed with the voluntary sector with a third sector liaison group having been established. To date the group has provided advice on the Levelling Up Darlington plan and will act as the mechanism through which a plan to deliver the priority of the Council Plan, 'Supporting the Most Vulnerable' priority will be co-written. More recently the group has also pulled together a collaboration of voluntary and community sector organisations which will be delivering a specific programme of support for vulnerable people and families utilising an allocation of £200,000 from the Household Support Fund.

Christine Shields: Assistant Director - Commissioning, Performance & Transformation

5. SUPPORTED BY

5.1 A dedicated workforce who are proud to serve the borough and an accessible, effective and engaged council

Darlington Borough Council's workforce is committed to delivering success for Darlington. We have a proud and dedicated workforce, a large percentage of who live in Darlington and who want the borough to flourish and grow. We employ over 2,000 people across a vast range of services. It is important that we ensure that all staff are motivated, have the right skills and are flexible and customer focused. The workforce strategy and plan, 'Working Together to Deliver Success' was rolled out last year and outlines how the Council will develop, support and motivate our staff to meet our business and community priorities. Priorities within the plan that have been delivered to align to our core values include, the management programme, the agile working processes and supporting staff's wellbeing, to promote and maintain a safe and healthy workforce. The first annual update of the strategy was provided in the summer and monitoring continues. To support implementation and embedding of the strategy and Council values, we will continue to monitor progress through the 2023 employee survey, the agile working pilot review, development of staff communication, wellbeing statistics, customer feedback and workforce performance.

[Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources](#)

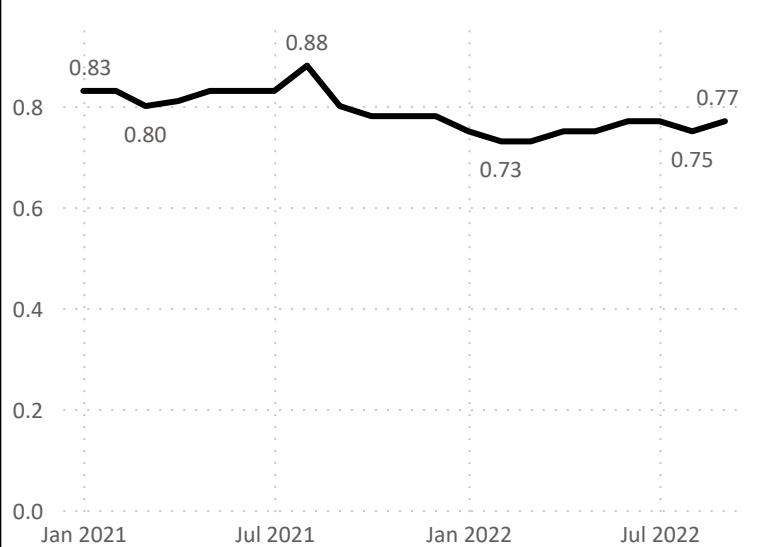
A1. Continue to implement initiatives that tackle social isolation

In 2019, a voluntary and community sector partnership group, coordinated by Inclusion North, was responsible for commissioning and monitoring a number of pilot projects across the borough with a focus on prevention of social isolation and supporting vulnerable families with children. Outcomes from these projects have been very positive and work continues with partners to secure future funding to enable these initiatives to continue. The group's scope and priorities are currently being reviewed and will be reset in light of the new local health & well-being priorities agreed by the Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB). A specific piece of work has also been initiated aimed at supporting vulnerable individuals and families who are struggling as a result of cost of living pressures.

Christine Shields: Assistant Director - Commissioning, Performance & Transformation

A2. Work with individuals to maximise independence and reduce demand on services

Adults with mental health needs helped to live at home in receipt of paid support, per 1000 population (monthly)

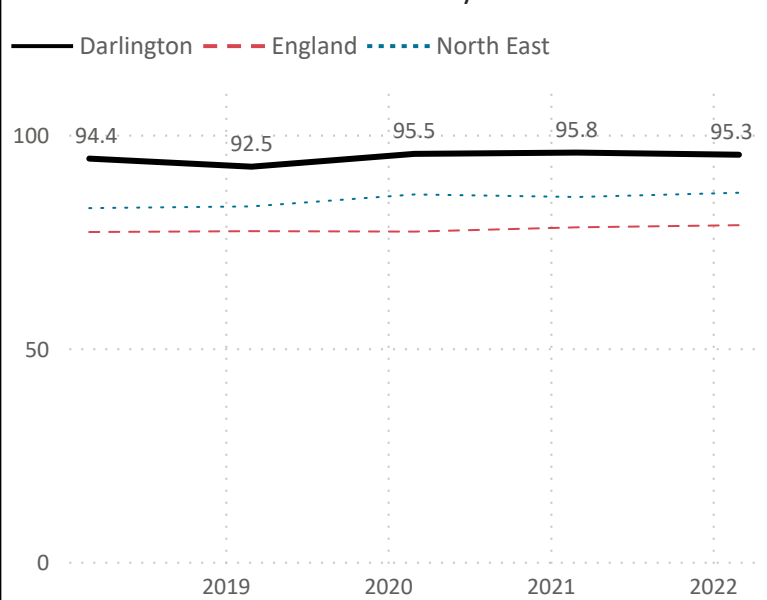


This indicator is primarily focused on supporting adults with mental health needs to remain independent and living in their own home.

The Mental Health team, within Adult Social Care, work closely with the local Trusts and the Primary care Network/GPs to prevent escalation or reduce the need for intervention. They support people, minimise escalation and maintain high levels of wellbeing and support to delay or prevent admission into hospital. We also have several support workers who support rehabilitation, reablement and recovery. This successful working relationship and support system is illustrated in the low number of people (48) with mental health needs requiring long term paid support.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

Percentage of adults with a learning disability who live in their own home or with their family



This is an annually recorded indicator so the narrative is taken from 2021/22 performance. The 2021/22 figure is significantly above national and regional averages. Darlington has one of the highest figures in the North East for individuals living in their own home.

This measure relates to working age individuals with a primary need of learning disability, which equates to 298 of Darlington residents. Of these, 284 (95.3%) were living either in their own home or with family at the end of 2021/22, down from 95.8% the year before. This is due to several individuals needing to go into short break stays whilst their provision of care was being amended

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

A3. Continue to deliver modern transformed Adult Social Care that results in positive outcomes

The teams continue to provide care and support delivered through a strength based approach supporting people to maintain, retain or regain their independence as much as possible.

We are currently exploring how to develop the digital offer to ensure people can self assess where they want too. we are working closely with Social Prescribers and developing an offer through health and well being coaches.

We continue to have positive outcomes through all our teams and in particular through the Reablement and discharge from hospital offer.

We aim to learn from people who use our services by developing our feedback mechanisms, including listening sessions, participation in the learning Impairment group and building stronger relationships with carers.

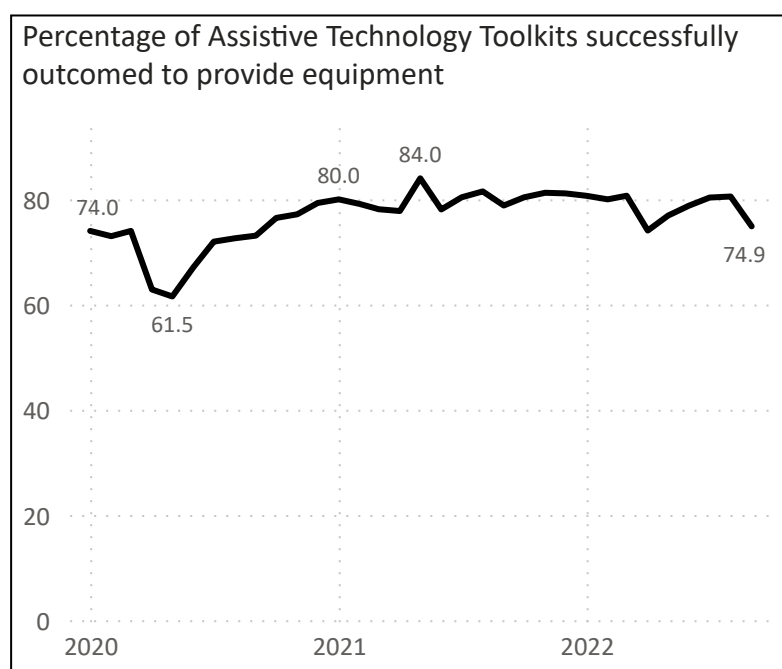
Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

A4. Promote and increase the use of assistive technology

We continue to ensure that through conversations and support planning we offer assistive technology as an offer. We are currently exploring how we can build the knowledge and understanding of our teams in relation to new technology that is available. We are looking at participating in a project called the Virtual House; this is an interactive tour showing examples of Occupational Therapy, Assistive Technology and Sensory aids, equipment and solutions that may be helpful to people or a family member to do daily activities around the home. Teams will undergo training on the Virtual House over the next few months.

We will also be undertaking a review of the impact of the funding provided to care homes and Care services in Darlington for interactive equipment.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care



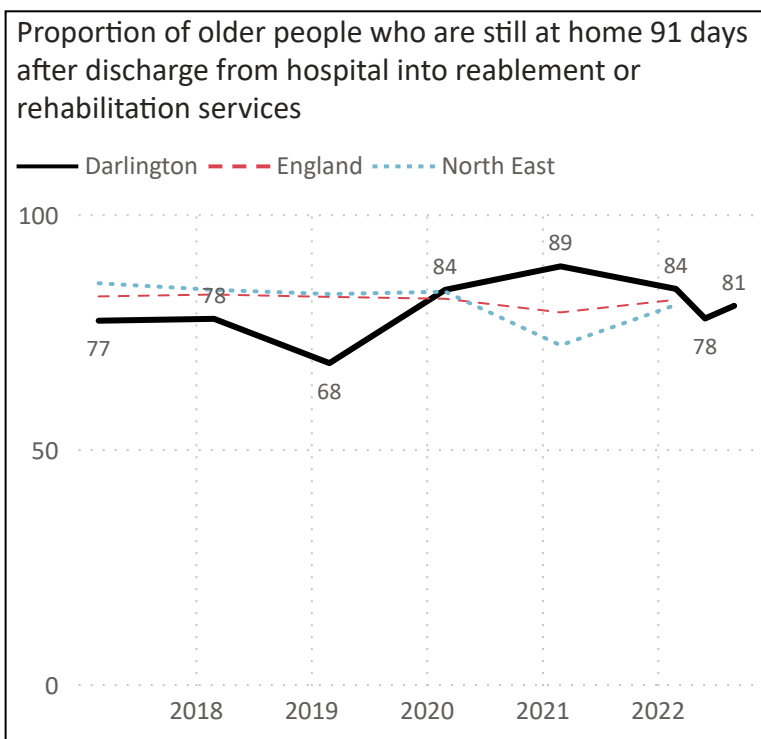
Since April 2022, 140 out of 187 (74.8%) Assistive Technology Toolkit Referrals assigned to Lifeline resulted in equipment being provided. This is below the equivalent figures for last year, but higher than 2020/21 figure (78.8% in 2021/22 and 73.1% during 2020/21). Lifeline continues to work closely with the Adults Social Care Team and promotes assistive technology, through attending regular team meetings as well as providing training during the induction of new Adult Social Care staff.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

A5. Maintain significant and strong relationships with the voluntary sector, foundation trust and community nursing to support and promote admission avoidance, discharges from hospital and homecare where required

We continue to build strong and positive relationships with the voluntary sector, partners and providers. The Head of Practice and Quality attends the learning impairment group meetings and has feedback suggestions on how to develop further our easy read offer to support communication with people. We hold regular meetings with Age UK exploring how to strengthen our working together. The Adult Contact Team are working with the Social prescribers through the Living Well Team to explore how together we can provide advice, signposting and support to people with long term conditions. The RIACT and Reablement team continue to support hospital discharges working alongside hospital staff in Darlington Memorial Hospital.

Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care



The adult social care teams work with the the NHS to support people to return home following discharge from hospital, through assessment, support planning and short term reablement offer.

This graph illustrates that at the end of September 2022, the proportion of older people who are still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services was 81%. Recent ASCOF figures (2021-22) show our current performance is comparable to the regional average (80.7%) and slightly lower than the national average (81.8%).

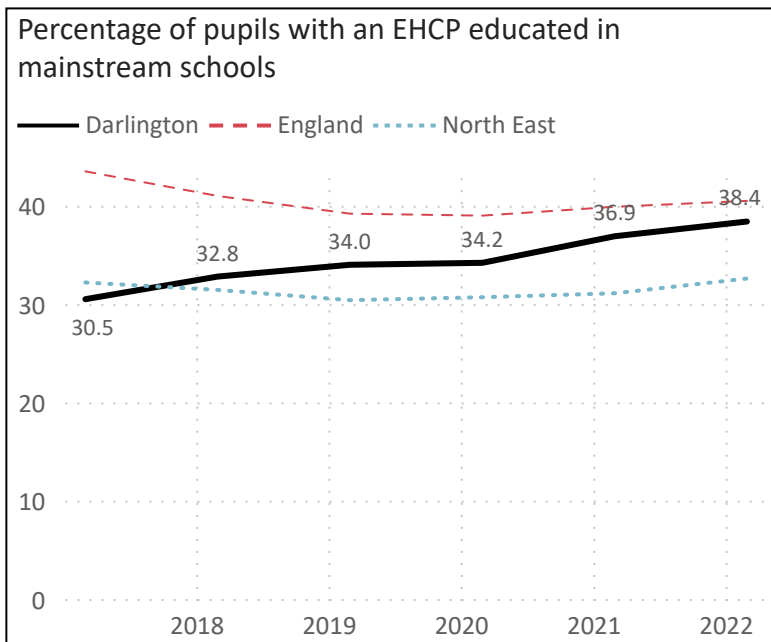
Joss Harbron: Assistant Director - Adult Social Care

C1. Provide excellent services for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) - implement a new SEND strategy, increase the number of SEND places in schools and work to raise SEND funding levels from central government

Compliance with the statutory timeline for Education, Health and Care Plans assessment continues to be a strength in Darlington. The rate of EHC plans, excluding exceptions, issued within the 20-week statutory timeline in Darlington is was 92.9% above regional and national comparators.

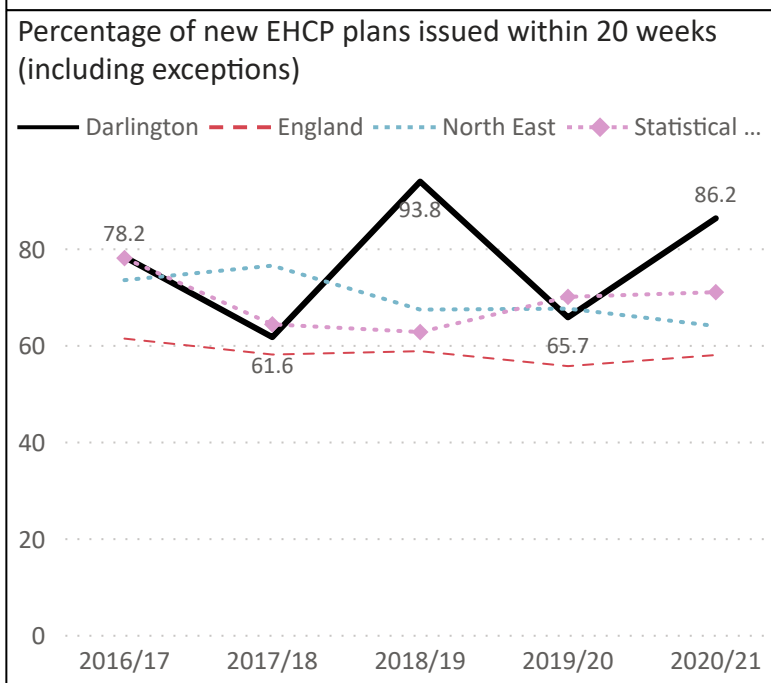
The council continues to apply robust and transparent decision making processes and regular attendance at the Multi agency placement panel (MAPP) by school colleagues ensures an understanding of the thresholds and information to support a request for assessment. Procedures for the annual review of EHC plans have been strengthened with the SEND service now consistently issuing LA decision letters, following an annual review in line with statutory obligations.

[Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion](#)



The Darlington local area SEND Strategy emphasises that children and young people with SEND should, where possible, be educated in their local community with the right support that they need. The data shows increasingly more children with SEND are attending Darlington mainstream schools. The proportion of Darlington pupils with and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) attending mainstream school settings in the borough has risen from 32.8% in 2018 to 38.4% in 2022. The proportion is now above the regional average of 32.5% but below the national average of 40.5%. A large proportion of pupils with an EHCP attend Beaumont Hill and Marchbank school, which are our special schools in Darlington.

[Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion](#)

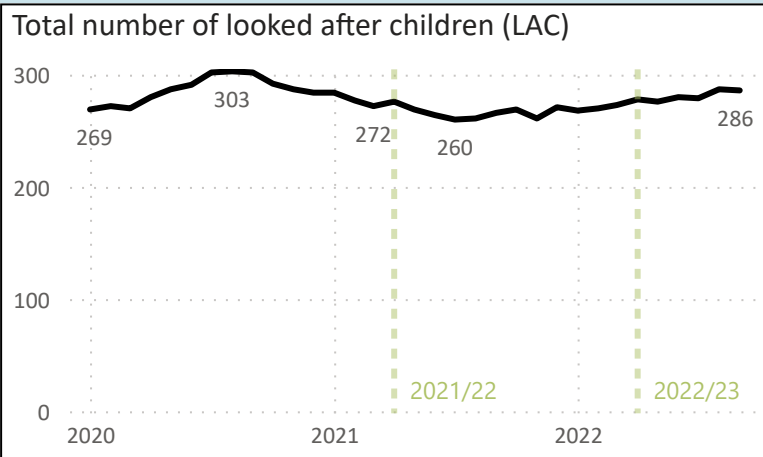


The percentage of new Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) issued by Darlington within 20 weeks (including exceptions) has consistently been above the national average since 2015. It was 86.2% in 2021, compared to regional, statistical neighbour and national averages of 63.9%, 70.9% and 57.9% respectively.

In 2021, the percentage of EHCPs issued by Darlington within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions) was 92.1%. This was above the regional, statistical neighbour and national averages of 71.8%, 78.4% and 59.9% respectively.

[Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion](#)

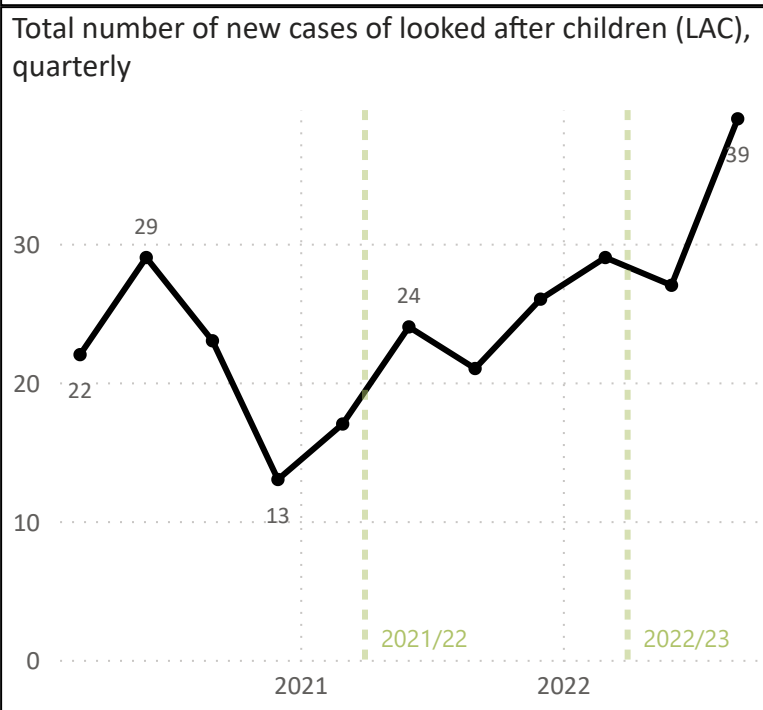
C2. Reduce the need for looked after children placements through effective implementation of the Darlington Strengthening Families programme



286 children were in care at the end of September 2022, 4.5% of which have come into our care after being accepted by the Home Office as UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child).

The rate of children coming into our care, per 10,000 population, is just above that at the end of September 2021 and September 2020 but significantly lower than pre pandemic at the end of September 2019 and September 2018.

[Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services](#)

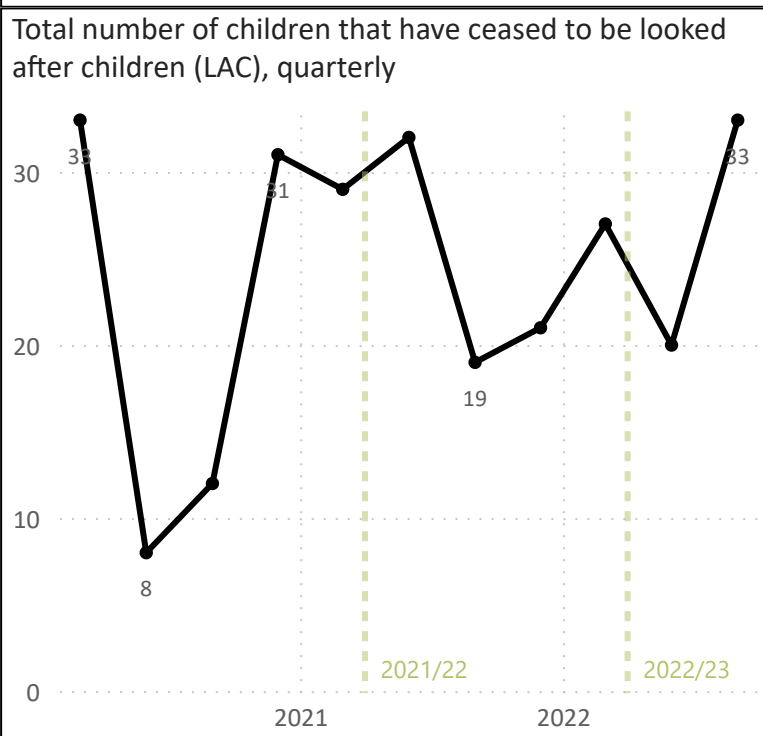


66 children and young people came into care between April and September 2022, 15.2% of which were young people coming into care after being accepted by the Home Office as UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child).

The Strengthening Families KFT team works with families across Darlington Borough Council's Children's Services. The team utilise relational practice to ensure timely interventions, which support families to stay together and reduce the need for children to come into care.

During the past 6 months, 90% of the families the team worked with have engaged in the interventions and continued successfully to stay together safely as a family unit.

[Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services](#)



53 children and young people ceased to be in care between April and September 2022. This is an increase when compared with the 51 children who ceased to be in care between April and September 2021 and 20 children between April and September 2020.

Of the children and young people who did cease to be in care:

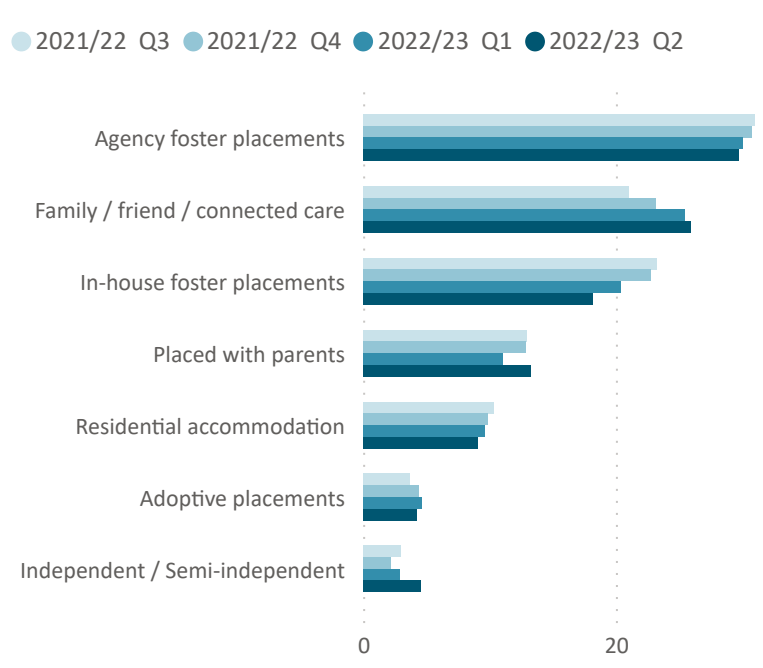
- 34.0% had a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) / Child Arrangement Order (CAO) granted to a relative.
- 20.8% returned home to their parent.
- 22.6% due to turning 18 and becoming a care leaver and supported by that service.
- 20.8% were adopted.
- 1.8% for other reasons.

The proportion of children who returned home to their parent is similar to that in September 2021.

[Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services](#)

C2. Reduce the need for looked after children placements through effective implementation of the Darlington Strengthening Families programme

Percentage of looked after children by placement type



A large proportion of Darlington children in care were in a foster placement (47.9%) at the end of September 2022. 18.9% of children were placed in kinship care with relatives, 13.3% were placed with a parent, 15.7% were living in forms of supported residential accommodation and 4.2% were placed for adoption.

All placements are confirmed as appropriate for the child, enabling them to have the best support either with family links or specialised care. The proportion of children placed with a parent or kinship carer has been advancing.

[Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services](#)

C3. Continue to increase the number of in-house foster carers to reduce the need for independent placements

Total number of approved foster carers

Date	Number
March 2022	56
April 2022	57
May 2022	57
June 2022	57
July 2022	57
August 2022	57
September 2022	58

Currently we have 58 approved foster care families, a further 4 families have been recruited during the year. We have 19 kinship connected carers approved with a further 17 families that have temporary approval with children in place.

9 families are going through assessments that were requested within court proceedings, 5 families are going through the mainstream assessments to become approved foster carers to support Darlington's children in care.

Nationally, there are difficulties with recruitment. The impact of Covid-19 has meant fewer people being available due to health reasons. Work continues to raise the foster caring profile in Darlington via our website, social media, and on TV.

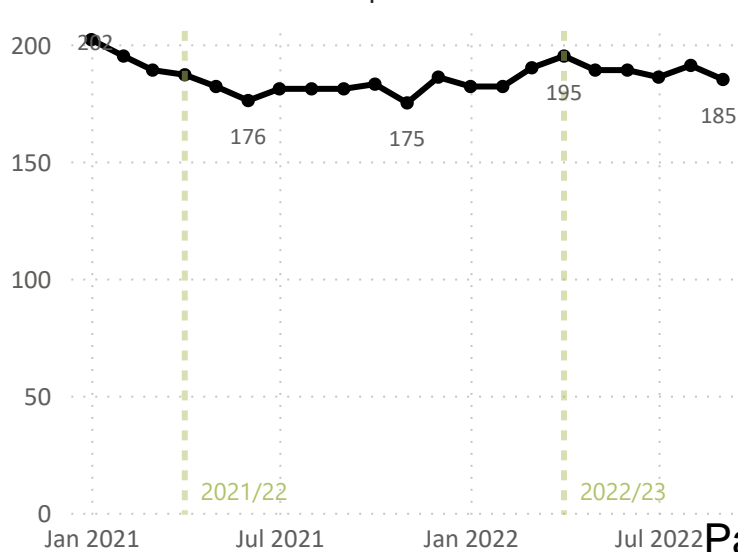
[Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services](#)

At the end of September 2022, 185 children and young people were placed with a foster care family. 29.7% of the children were with an agency foster carer, 18.2% were with an in-house foster carer and 18.9% were with a kinship connected carer. Almost half (43.8%) of all foster placements were long-term.

Encouragingly we have seen an increase with children being able to be placed with a parent whilst being supported by our care team.

[Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services](#)

Total number of foster care placements



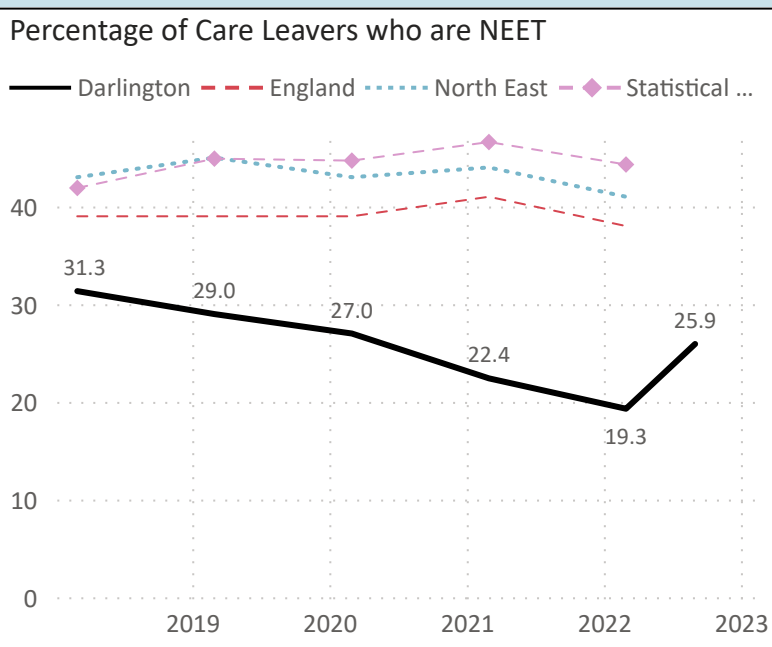
C4. Review in-house residential care and consider the council's place in providing services

The re-purposing of our existing children's homes remains ongoing, with the keys having been accepted for the new property which will facilitate a move for our Young People to a new property. Furnishing of the home is taking place in readiness for Young People to move in. OFSTED registration is required for the home to operate, an application for this has been lodged and is with OFSTED currently and a planned move will be actioned once OFSTED registration is provided.

Once the home move happens the planned re-purpose of the existing Childrens Home will take place to provide earlier targeted support and so avoid escalating pressures and support needs. This service will support young people and work with the whole family in a relational way to address emerging needs and pressures and so reduce the risk of family breakdown.

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

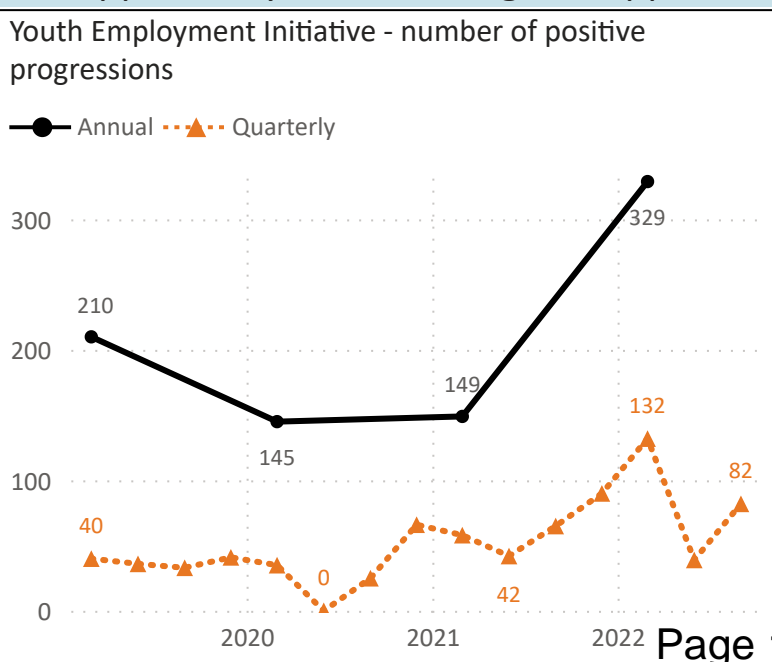
C5. Improve employment opportunities for looked after children and care leavers



The proportion of Darlington care leavers Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) at the end of September 2022 was 25.9%, which outperformed the most recently available published national and regional averages. This low number of NEET care leavers is particularly inspiring given the impact of Covid-19, which has generally led to increases in NEETs nationally, and reflects the considerable work undertaken by the Care Leavers service to increase opportunities. 22.2% of our care leavers are engaged in further education and 51.9% of the young people are in employment. There is an excellent relationship with our Learning and Skills officers to understand all school leavers destinations to promote and encourage further learning, training, and/or employment opportunities.

Chris Bell: Assistant Director - Children's Services

C6. Work with partners to reduce youth and long-term unemployment, by increasing the opportunity for retraining and apprenticeships leading to gainful employment

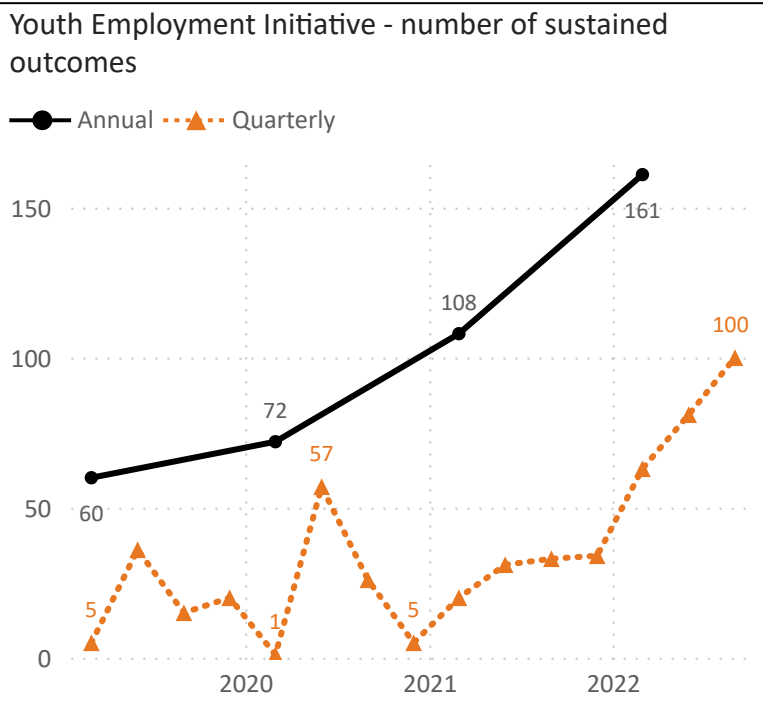


Youth Employment Initiative - Number of Positive Progressions:

Referrals to the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) have continued to grow, month on month during 2021/22 with young people continuing to move into education, employment, and training. Having an embedded Jobcentre Plus Youth Adviser within the service is working well, helping increase client numbers over the period with local employment opportunities also rising.

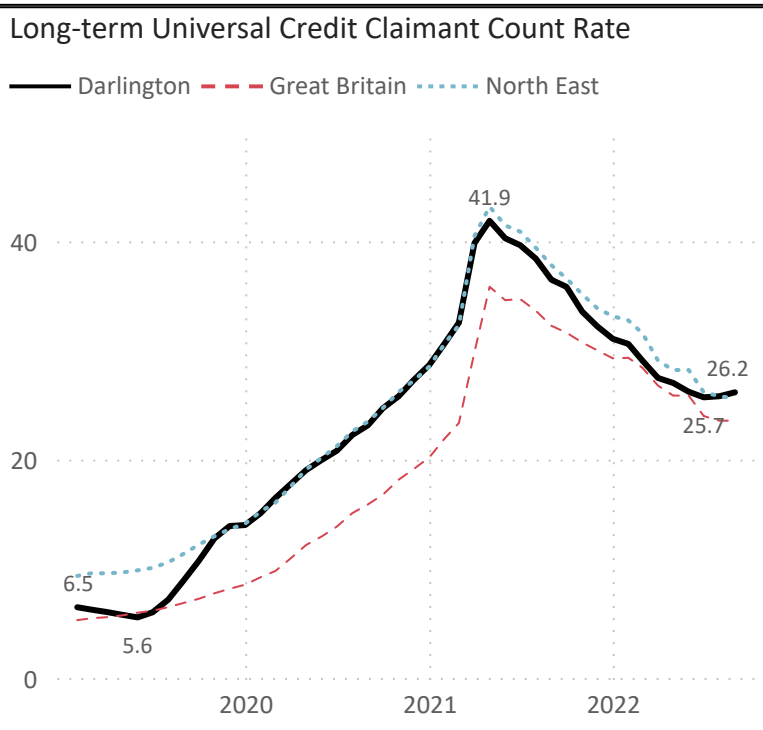
Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

C6. Work with partners to reduce youth and long-term unemployment, by increasing the opportunity for retraining and apprenticeships leading to gainful employment



Young people using the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) service have continued to see positive progression in education, employment or training over the past 12 months, exceeding our expected target. Sustained outcomes are an important indicator that highlights the determination the young people and YEI service have and is showcased by the year-on-year increase in sustained education, employment or training. At times we are unable to contact some young people at the six-month sustained point or obtain timely evidence from employers, so the true number achieving sustained employment is considered likely to be higher than recorded.

Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion



The long-term Universal Credit claimant count in Darlington continues to fall. However, in recent months, the trend has stagnated, and in September 2022 recording a slight increase since May 2021. This change will be influenced by the recent increases in business operating costs, particularly energy costs. Many businesses have had to find ways in reducing operating costs, and in many cases, this has been focussed on labour costs, with businesses delaying growth and recruitment.

Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion

C7. Work with schools and the Regional Schools Commissioner to increase educational achievement across the borough and, in particular, for young people from deprived backgrounds

Percentage of schools judged good or outstanding by Ofsted (of schools inspected)

September 2022

80.6%

Inspection outcome	Number of schools
Outstanding	2
Good	27
Requires Improvement	6
No Ofsted rating	6

Percentage of schools judged good or outstanding by Ofsted :

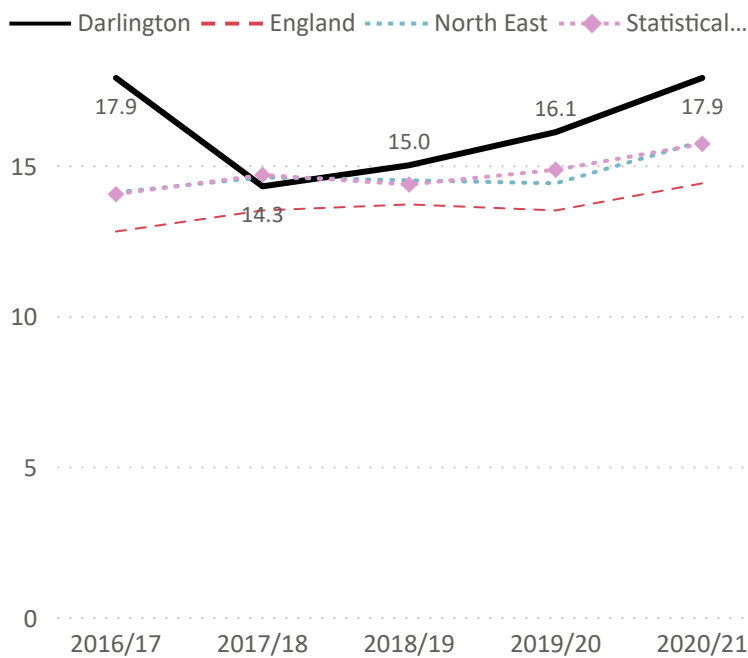
At the end of September 2022, 80.6% (29) of schools in Darlington with an Ofsted rating are rated Good or Outstanding.

69.0% of inspected primary schools (20/29) and 57.1% (4/7) of inspected secondary schools are now rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.

As at 31st December 2021, Eighty-seven per cent of all schools nationally are rated as good or outstanding.

[Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion](#)

Inequality gap between the average Attainment 8 score of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at KS4



Attainment 8 is a measure of a pupil's average grade across a set of eight subjects. The inequality gap between KS4 Attainment 8 average scores for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils has widened from 15.0 in 2018/19 to 17.9 in 2020/21, which is wider than the gap for national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators. However, Darlington's average score per pupil has been higher than national, regional and statistical neighbour comparators for the last 3 years, increasing from 46.6 in 2018/19 to 50.7 in 2020/21. This trend is mirrored in the average scores for non-disadvantaged pupils, which have risen from 51.0 in 2018/19 to 55.9 in 2020/21.

[Tony Murphy: Assistant Director - Education & Inclusion](#)

C8. Deliver and review the In2 Project to support disadvantaged children to participate in Arts, Leisure and Culture to maximise their potential

During the summer term (April - July) the pupils took part in a project about self-identity. They worked with writers, poets, theatre producers, and an illustrator to create written and visual self-portraits, which were turned into yearbooks. They also worked with a songwriter and musician to write the music and turn some of the written work into lyrics for four news songs, which were filmed as 'pop videos'. The yearbooks and videos were shared at a celebration event at the end of term with the rest of the school and parents.

A new cohort of 130 Year 6 pupils joined the programme at the start of the September term. They started with a trip to the Hippodrome to see a performance of the Demon Dentist and then had two sessions with Zest Theatre to discuss their thoughts and concerns about their immediate family and community, as well as global issues, which were turned into giant artworks and have been shared on the railings outside the schools. One of the schools also produced 'Ted Talks' from their discussions.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

C9. Look for innovative ways to try and deliver school homework clubs and holiday enrichment activities

Darlington's HAF programme was further extended for Summer 2022, delivering in communities throughout the Borough. More than 800 children engaged with 62 different programmes at 18 sites across Darlington during the 6 week summer school holiday. Total number of attendances exceeded 1000 with over 10% of children with SEND. The programme is incredibly diverse in content with Sports, Arts, Cookery, Life skills, adventure play and much more plus a hot meal for all children each session.

There is now an established referral into the programme by Social Workers and new partners include Parent Carer Forum, Age UK and Forum Music centre.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

E1. Work with Market Asset Management to deliver a refurbished and vibrant covered market and successful outdoor market

The new Street Food section of the market continues to be successful with 3 new vendors ensuring the offer remains new, fresh and interesting. This part of the market hall has become a popular venue for local performances and various events including specialist markets.

In Q2 phase 2 of the refurbishment development programme commenced and will be complete by the end of November 2022. This phase includes the development of a new hospitality venue in the vaults area of the market. A new entrance to the traditional trading area of the market hall and extensive improvements to the outside area with new signage and decoration, in addition to new public toilets. These improvements will ensure the market hall is an attractive venue to shop and visit.

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

E2. Deliver the Town Centre Strategy leading to a diversified and successful town centre

The officials from Darlington Economic Campus are now occupying Feethams House. The Council continues to work closely with the Government Property Agency (GPA) with the delivery of the permanent DEC location on Brunswick Street. Several meetings on the proposed design for the new building have been held between the developers and the Council's planning officers. It is anticipated that the building will be completed in late 2025.

The Town Fund has acquired additional properties in the town, including 156 Northgate which will be refurbished and transformed into office space. A procurement exercise to identify a partner to design, build and manage the three upper floors as high quality office space has commenced. It is anticipated that this process will be finished in early 2023 with the building refurbishment completed by September 2024.

Negotiations with the owners of Northgate House have continued. A reasonable offer has been made to the owners which has been rejected. If a negotiated agreement for the building cannot be achieved the Council will commence compulsory purchase process.

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

E3. Develop key economic sites to be investor ready at Central Park, Ingenium Park and Faverdale

Progress against this action continues to be strong.

Work is progressing at Central Park to deliver improved landscaping and accessibility to plots with the remaining works to complete by end of March 2023. Innovation Central was completed and opened in October 2022 offering 45 Grade A offices and five labs, all designed as flexible spaces where businesses can grow.

On Ingenium Park, the last phase of major drainage related enabling works to the site will be complete by end of December 2022. This supplements a substantial length of access road which is already in place.

Faverdale Business Park has now been actively advertised to the market.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

E4. Encourage new investment in the Borough and maximise employment opportunities for Darlington residents

The tendering and marketing exercise of land at Faverdale has proved unsuccessful mainly due to the impact of the changes in the money market experienced in September 2022. It is planned to await to see if the market changes over the forthcoming months. The Council has received some strong enquiries in relation to land at Ingenium Park. Officers will continue to work with these businesses to bring forward investment.

Planning approval is due to be granted for 300,000 sq. ft of commercial space along Tornado Way adjacent to Lingfield Point. Officers are working closely with landowners and investors for the development of a commercial site at Faverdale Business Park. In the adjacent site the new Lidl supermarket is nearing completion.

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

E5. Work with indigenous companies to identify and attract further job creating investment

Hundreds of businesses and local job seekers took advantage of the first ever Darlington Business Summit held at the Dolphin Centre from Wednesday 5 until Friday 7 October.

Organised by Darlington Borough Council, and in conjunction with Darlington Business Club, the three-day event gave local business people, and those who are thinking of starting a business, the chance to network with others and to find out more about the help and support available across the borough and the wider Tees Valley.

Darlington Business Summit kicked off with DL Expo 2022, Darlington Business Club's flagship networking event, providing an opportunity to celebrate the diverse business base in Darlington. The event offered a showcase for businesses, large and small, and presented an opportunity for local businesses to connect with the local community. DL Expo 2022 provided a platform for exhibitors and delegates to network, promote their businesses and make those all-important new connections. Hosted by Darlington Business Club, DL Expo featured a wide-range of businesses exhibiting their products and services whilst attendees were able to access a wealth of information on local businesses

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

E6. Successful adoption of the Local Plan

The Local Plan was successfully adopted in February 2022. Our new Local Plan sets out what the opportunities are for development in the area, and what types of development will and will not be permitted and in which locations. Officers continue to monitor the delivery of sites identified in the Local Plan. In addition the necessary changes to SPDs will be carried out including Design/Conservation, Planning Obligations, Garden Village SPDs. These changes will be fully consulted upon as part of the statutory requirements.

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

E7. Create the conditions to deliver hundreds of new homes each year, ensuring sufficiency of affordable homes

The Council are still working closely with the promoters of Burtree Garden Village and Skerningham Garden Village to be in a position where an application can be submitted and determined.

It is anticipated that the planning application for 750 homes on phase one of Burtree Garden Village will be submitted by the end of the calendar year.

The Council has recorded 119 starts for Q2 of 2022-23, over 33 active sites. At the same point last year we had recorded 125 starts, so fairly balanced in comparison. Cumulatively, at this point last year we had 318 starts, compared to 293 this year.

The Council has recorded 140 completions for Q2 of 2022-23. This figure is just higher than last years Q2 completion figure of 132, again showing a balanced comparison to last year. Looking cumulatively again, at this point last year we had 277 cumulative completions, compared to 339 this year. This is quite a notable comparison, due to stronger Q1 completion figures in 2022-23.

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

E8. Develop the council's response to the agreed Climate Change Emergency and begin delivery of the agreed plan

Milestones for actions in the current time period have been developed and are being reported against. The majority are on target. We are working on next year's milestones and ensuring timescales for actions are still appropriate. We are also looking at using the corporate plan reporting program for our climate change actions. This will make it easier to report and clearer for Senior Officers and Members to monitor progress.

Corporate Plan action ECI701 demonstrates our progress to date. We are below the emissions trajectory we have set ourselves and are developing an offsetting strategy to close the gap between where our actions will take us and carbon neutral.

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

E9. Develop the Darlington Station project and regeneration opportunities for the surrounding areas including Victoria Road, the cattle market and Neasham Road areas

Darlington Borough Council continue to work in partnership with Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), the Department for Transport (DfT), Network Rail and train operators to drive this project forward.

Planning permission has been gained for both the Station East (Neasham Rd) and Station West Gateway (Victoria Rd and Cattlemarket) schemes. A number of properties to demolish have been acquired by agreement and demolition works have commenced on the Eastern side. Works to Victoria Road are also subject to demolition work which has been tendered and awarded to a contractor.

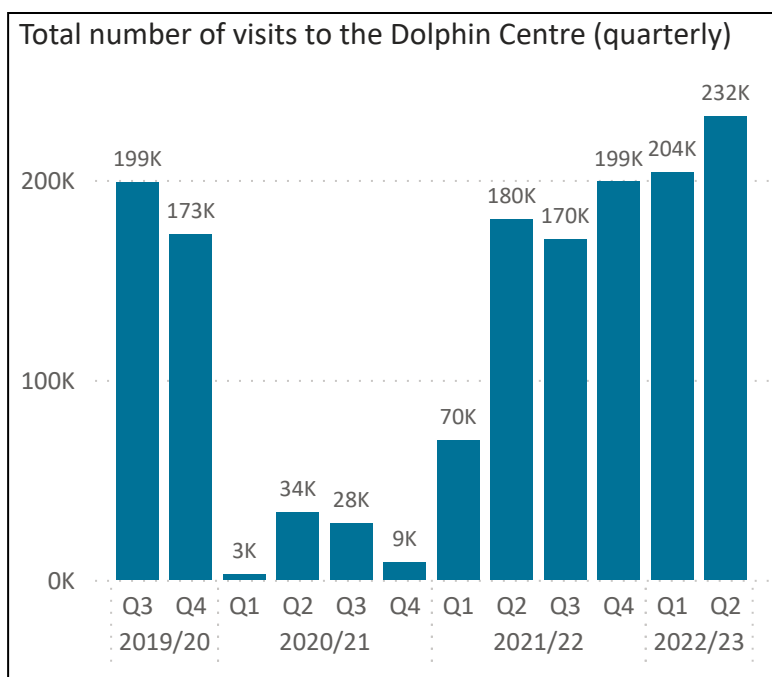
On the Cattlemarket site, work to provide a temporary car park has commenced and will continue in to 2023.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

H1. Review the vacant space within the Dolphin Centre to improve the leisure offer and so maximise income

Business levels at the Dolphin Centre continue to be very positive. Following the recent refurbishment of the Dolphin Centre gym, membership numbers have now returned to pre covid levels and are demonstrating a pattern of further growth engaging more residents in keeping active and healthy. Soft play and bowling are performing very well and contributing to the overall hospitality budget. Catering performance has been at a record high with greater numbers using the facilities including South Park which even moving towards the winter months is celebrating excellent visitor number. Water education capacities are around 90% of the programme demonstrating a real commitment from resident’s to support their children and give them the best start to their water education journey. The winter events season is vibrant with additional demand to expand Christmas programmes from residents wanting to attend. Various options around underutilised space is currently being investigated to maximise income potentials and on site partners.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services



Visitor numbers for quarter 2 (22-23) have increased significantly by 51,443, compared to the same quarter in 21-22. Visitors in July were the highest monthly total since reopening following lockdown, with 84,000 visits. The centre had lots of visitors over the summer holidays with additional events and activities put on to celebrate 40 years of The Dolphin Centre being open.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

H2. Work to, and continue to review the Local Outbreak Plan for Coronavirus

The Local Outbreak Plan was initially developed in June 2020 and a review was undertaken in February 2021. The Health Protection Board no longer meets regularly, with the removal of restrictions and the reductions in cases rates. The local Outbreak Control meetings continue to operate as required to continue to deliver the Local Outbreak Plan. All actions including contact tracing and testing has now been withdrawn and stood down. Support remains to monitor local case numbers and provide support to the most vulnerable sectors, including schools and care home settings.

The Director of Public Health is working with stakeholders to develop a new plan to manage future public health risks and outbreaks in Darlington.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

H3. Continue to build new council houses and ensure the existing council housing stock is maintained to a high standard and environmentally friendly

Housing Condition - Percentage of Council properties meeting the decent homes standard

March 2021

100%

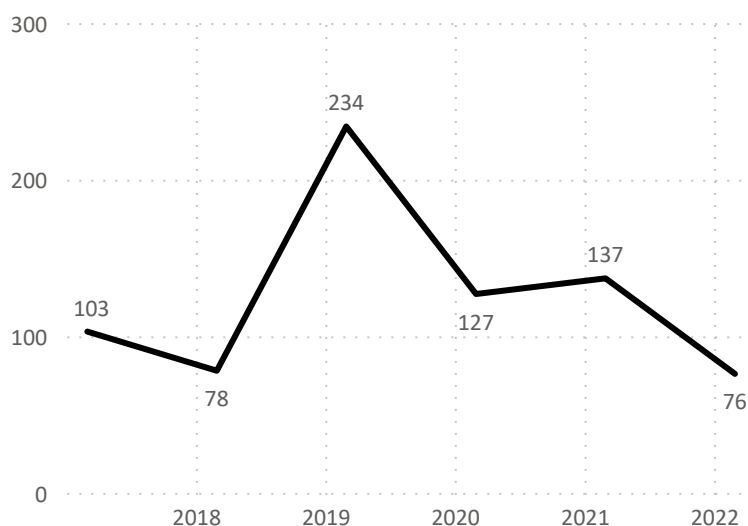
March 2022

100%

All of Darlington Borough Council's social housing stock meets 100% of the decent homes standard. We are currently updating our stock condition data and improving data capture to ensure a proactive approach should properties fall below the standard within the year. This demonstrates the Council's ongoing commitment to provide excellent quality social housing and reflecting the good work of the Housing and Building Services teams.

[Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues](#)

Additional Affordable Housing Supply - Completions



The Council's Housing new build programme was significantly disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, with very few properties completed in 2021/22 (Data is not yet available for 2022/23). However, work has concluded on Allington Way phase 3 site, which will deliver 56 Council properties in 2022/23. In addition, work commenced on the Sherborne Close phase 3 site, which will deliver 13 properties. Work has commenced on Neasham Road (150 properties in total) some of which may complete in 2022/23.

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

H4. Maximise rental and service charge income from council tenants to ensure we are able to provide them with a comprehensive range of good quality housing management and support services

Rent collected as a proportion of rents owed on HRA dwellings

Year	Quarter	Value
2020/21	Q3	97.1%
	Q4	101.6%
2021/22	Q1	98.1%
	Q2	97.4%
	Q3	96.3%
	Q4	97.5%
2022/23	Q1	96.2%
	Q2	97.3%

Collection rates have increased in Q2 compared to Q1 levels and are similar to year end collection rates for 2021-22 standing at 97.29% in Q2, compared to 96.24% in Q1.

Over 1,880 Council tenants are now in receipt of some element of Universal Credit (UC) and have the 5 week wait prior to first payments being received, however average arrears for UC customers remains under 5 weeks average rent.

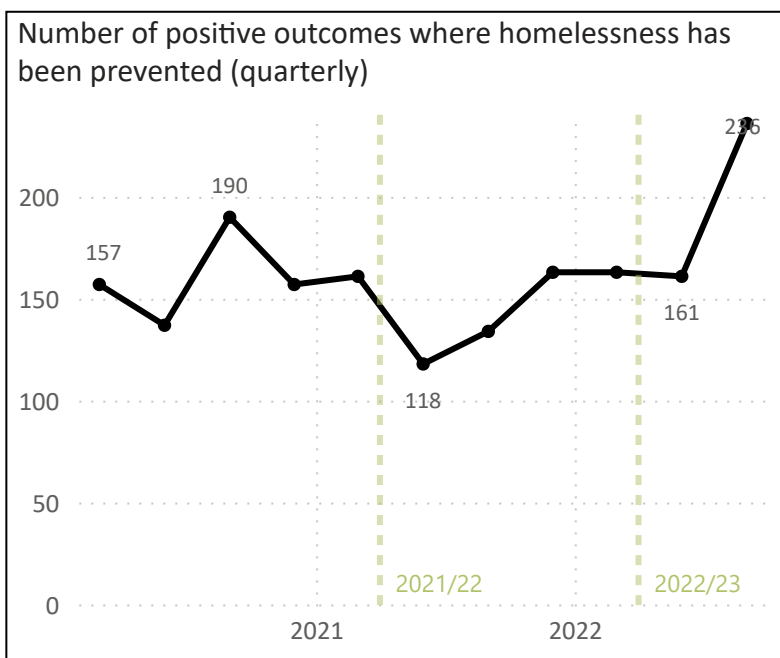
The Housing Income team continue to promote help and guidance and making affordable repayment plans with customers throughout their tenancy.

[Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues](#)

H5. Review the Darlington Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

The outstanding actions in the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy are now complete, although pressures on the Housing Options service are ongoing due to the increase in homeless presentations. However, despite these challenges the Council has increased the number of positive outcomes for clients by 47%. In addition, officers have also successfully bid for additional Government funding to recruit additional staff to deliver a range of support and advice services to homeless people, including specialist mental health and domestic abuse Housing Options Officers. The Government has also recently published a new strategy to "end rough sleeping for good" and in light of this, our Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will be refreshed for 2023-24.

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues



Despite the increasing challenges of finding alternative accommodation, the Housing Options team managed to secure 236 positive outcomes for clients in Q2. This is an increase of 47%. The Housing Options team are working extremely hard in building up relationships with new landlords coming into the housing market as well as maintaining the existing relationships with landlords in the town

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues

H6. Maintain oversight and offer challenge to health and care services that support individuals to achieve good mental, physical and emotional health as identified in a wide range of partnership plans such as Best Start in life, autism awareness, alcohol plan, suicide prevention, healthy workforce, and ageing well

The Director of Public Health continues to work with partners and stakeholders on specific programmes and projects including :

- Implementing with the NHS and voluntary sector the 'Postvention' programme with the distribution of information and offer of support to those affected by suicide across the borough.

- Working with local partners and service users in the implementation and evaluation of a Weight Management programme designed for adults with a Learning Disability

- Continue to expand and roll out the Making Every Contact Count (MECC) training to a range of different internal and external services and partners across the borough, using a train the trainer approach, and developing a range of toolbox talks to support delivery

- Undertaking the delivery, analysis and reporting of the Healthy Lifestyle Survey to 8,400 local pupils, across a number of primary and secondary Darlington schools,

- Have agreed a long term plan with Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust to secure the development of the 0-19 Service which includes the Health Visiting and School Nursing teams

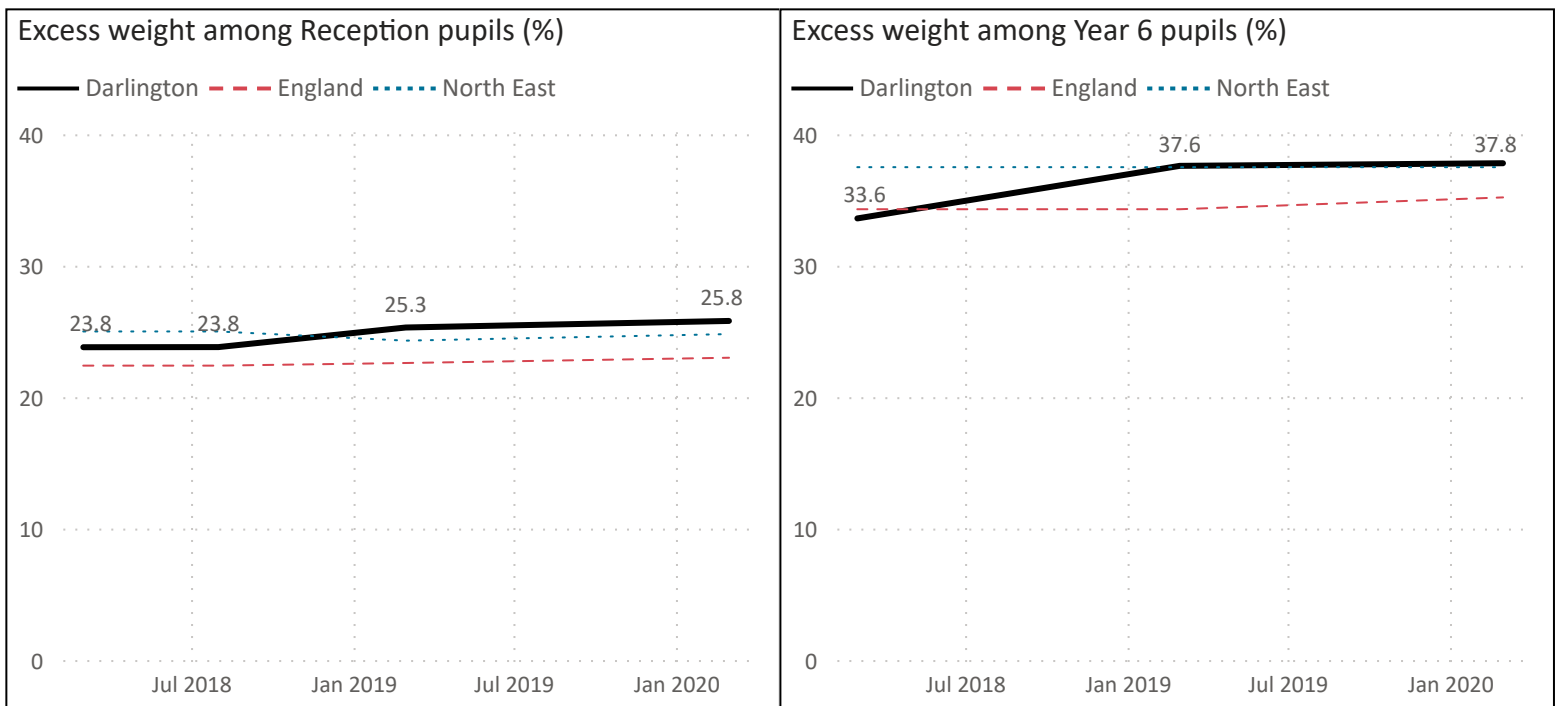
- Implementing the agreed partnership plans (SSMTR) to expand the number of treatment places for substance misuse for both adults and young people.

H7. Implement the Darlington Child Healthy Weight Plan with partners

The Darlington Child Healthy Weight Plan has begun to deliver on a number of its objectives, including:

- o Implementing the Healthy Families catering award
- o Delivered a healthy schools meal standard and training
- o Encouraging utilisation of green spaces by supporting health campaigns and signage and delivering a town centre treasure hunt
- o Produced a children’s home food policy, guidance and workable menus, and training children’s home staff using a young people’s nutrition toolkit
- o Produced a new Healthy Early Years Toolkit with three nursery settings and childminders
- o Developed, with the Learning and Skills team, an online Darlington School Food Award module to support individual schools to achieve school food standards.
- o Working in partnership with the Cornmill Centre to display ‘Change4life’ weaning and healthy lifestyle messages in the form of posters and vinyls, and to implement a ‘Play on the way’ initiative with the use of a colourful hopscotch to share simple messages on why physical activity is good for children

[Penny Spring: Director of Public Health](#)



The prevalence of overweight (including obesity) amongst Reception pupils rose slightly in Darlington in 2020. The rise is not statistically significant and Darlington is in line with the regional average for these measures.

The Darlington Childhood Healthy Weight Plan has identified a number of evidence-based interventions that are now being delivered with partners address some of the underlying causes of obesity in children and young people. Recent work includes activity with schools and local commercial food premises to develop a healthy catering standard to ensure a consistent and healthy food offer for children and their families across the borough.

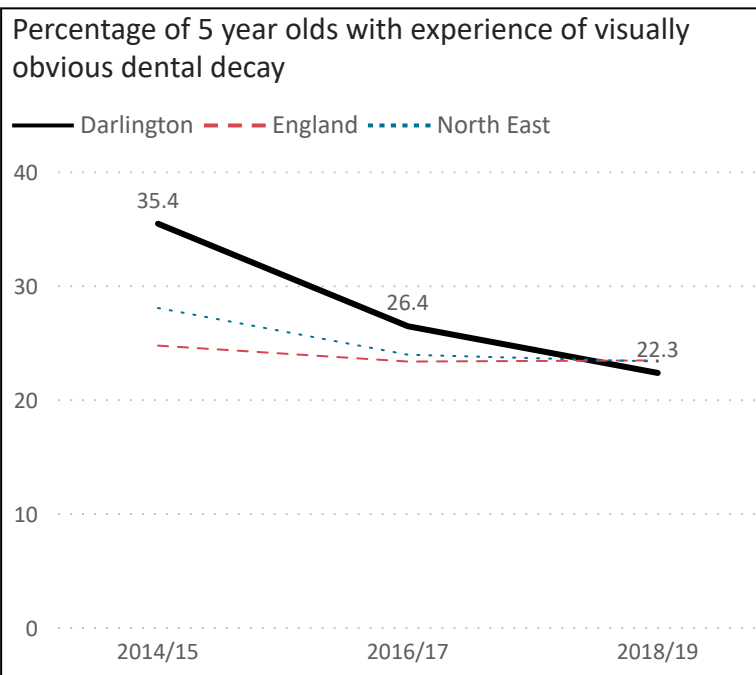
[Penny Spring: Director of Public Health](#)

H8. Implement the Darlington Oral Health Plan 2017-2022 with partners

The Darlington Oral Health Plan is to be refreshed by Council's Public Health team to capture the impact on oral health from the pandemic and recent changes to legislation and will be, subject to consultation and agreement by Members, in place by the end of 2022. The Director of Public Health continues to work to implement the current recommendations of the plan with recent work includes:

- o Re-establishment of the toothbrushing scheme to support children and staff to improve habits in cleaning teeth in targeted reception and primary schools
- o Commissioned of a joint oral health needs assessment, in conjunction with neighbouring Tees Valley local authorities

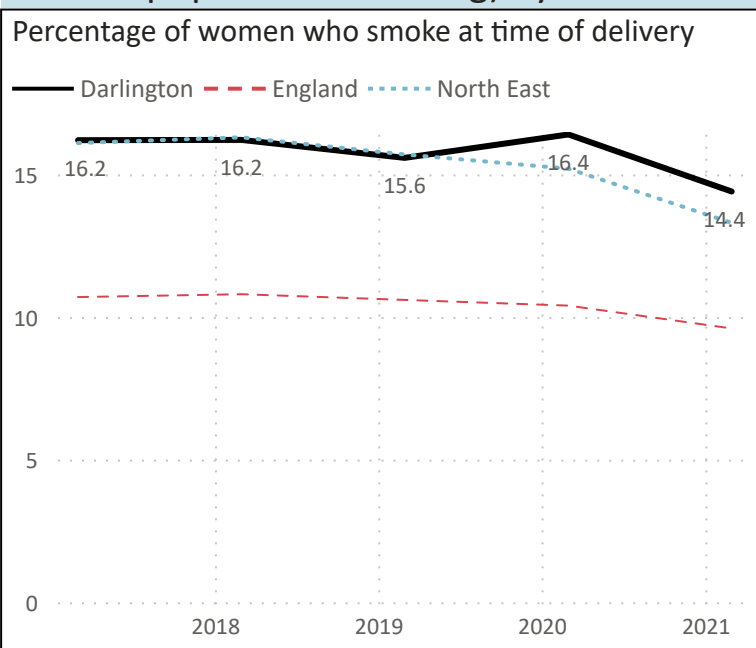
Penny Spring: Director of Public Health



The percentage of Darlington 5-year-olds with experience of visually obvious dental decay is statistically similar to both the England and North East averages, at 22.3% in 2018/19, and the proportion has been reducing for the past 3 years of data. The Childhood Healthy Weight Plan for Darlington includes actions such as reducing sugar and fizzy drinks in settings such as schools, working with families in healthy weaning for babies to help reduce dietary sources of sugar.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

H9. Continue the reduction in smoking to achieve a smoke free Darlington (i.e. just 5% of total population smoking) by 2030

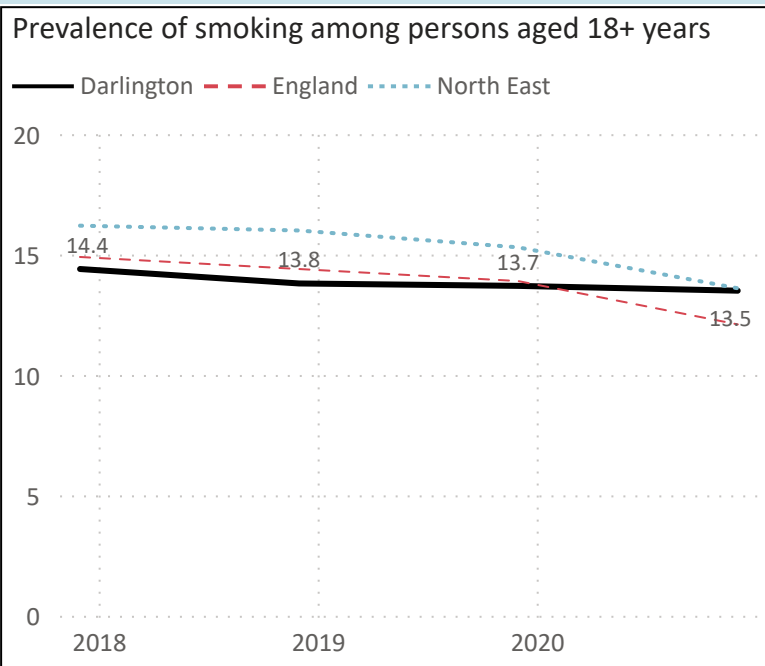


The proportion of Darlington women smoking at the time of delivery of their baby fell by two percentage points in 2020/21, from 16.4% to 14.4%.

Darlington remains statistically similar to our neighbouring North East authorities for this measure, and work continues with local maternity services, midwives and health visitors through the Council's commissioned Stop Smoking Service to continue supporting and encouraging residents, including pregnant mothers, to quit smoking at every opportunity.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

H9. Continue the reduction in smoking to achieve a smoke free Darlington (i.e. just 5% of total population smoking) by 2030



The prevalence of smoking among persons aged 18 years and over is slightly above the England average of 12.1% (2020) and slightly below the North East average of 13.6% (2020) averages, at 13.5% (2020).

The trend is also continuing to reduce in line with elsewhere, and it is anticipated that further falls may be recorded going forward due to the ongoing impact of measures to reduce smoking in the community such as increased prices and smoke free places. The NHS is also now offering stop smoking interventions for those people currently receiving hospital treatment.

Penny Spring: Director of Public Health

H10. Continue to deliver the Lifeline services and increase promotion and take up

Number of clients receiving a Lifeline service

Year	Quarter	Darlington
2020/21	Q3	3,363
	Q4	3,326
2021/22	Q1	3,369
	Q2	3,404
	Q3	3,365
	Q4	3,340
2022/23	Q1	3,367
	Q2	3,388

The Lifeline service continues to record consistent take up of new customers, with a slight decrease in overall numbers in quarter 2 of 2022-23 compared to the previous year. Due to the nature of the service, the total numbers of service users tends to stay fairly steady as the growth in new clients requesting support is counteracted by other users not requiring the service anymore, due to moving into a care environment or passing away.

Feedback amongst service users remains positive and the service provides excellent value for money, with over 4,500 emergency response call-outs to elderly and vulnerable customers in the first 2 quarters of 2022-23.

Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues

L1. With the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), plan the 2025 celebrations for the Stockton and Darlington Passenger Railway

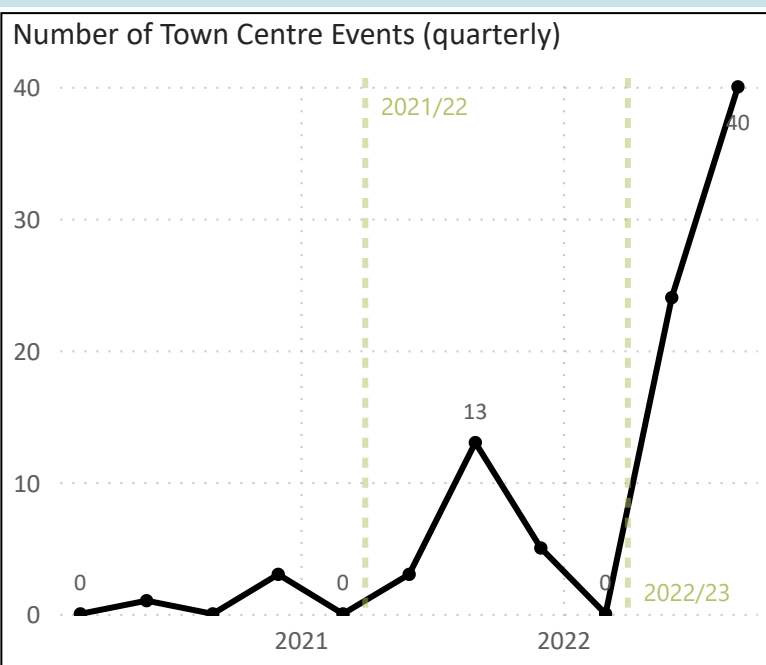
Work has continued with partners to develop the 2025 celebrations programme. The partnership is seeking to deliver a core programme for 2025, built around the following core elements:

- o Live steam and motive power
- o Exhibitions of early steam locomotives
- o Education and school projects
- o Knowledge sharing and conferences
- o Community events
- o Large-scale outdoor arts and street theatre

Locomotion No1 replica is currently being restored and will be completed in Autumn 2024. DBC are working with Beamish on the production of Chaldron wagons and a directors coach which will be used as part of the celebrations and on site post 2025 as part of the event programme.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

L2. Ensure the town centre is clean, animated, and vibrant with an extensive range of events and festivals



2022 has been an exceptional programme of events starting with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. The reaction from visitors has been excellent and offering these large scale free events has attracted thousands of visitors to Darlington town centre. The Events programme caters for all people, is fully accessible and free for everyone to enjoy. We continue to develop existing events like Darlington by the Sea and Darlington 10K plus extra new events and pop up entertainment have also proved popular. The team are adapting and refreshing to create exciting experiences for our visitors, with plenty of free activities for people to learn and enjoy. Some footfall figures for the town centre at key event dates shows how these events attract extra footfall into Darlington. Footfall Data from Springboard - the figure represents footfall in the whole town centre on the event date.

Emergency Services Day 70,808, GOLD Tea Dance (midweek) 53,525, Vintage Vehicle Rally 75,565, Darlington 10K 51,238, Pride 79,310, Dinosaur Day (midweek) 58,623.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Overall, the cleanliness of the Town Centre in relation to litter, has continued to remain at a very high standard during the period from March to September 2022. For the vast majority of months, a 100% pass rate was achieved and where this was not the case, other than on one occurrence in June, a score of greater than 90% pass rate was accomplished.

Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services

Town Centre cleaning - % pass rate of the 33 transects inspected for litter across the Town Centre

Year	Month	Darlington
2021	March	100%
	June	100%
	September	100%
	December	97%
2022	March	100%
	June	82%
	September	97%

L3. Finalise plans for the Rail Heritage Quarter and initiate implementation of the plans together with partners

Work started on site in May on phase 1 for the new build rail shed which the A 1 Steam Locomotive Trust will relocate to from the carriage works once complete, work also started in October on the 1861 rail shed which Darlington Railway Preservation Society and North East Locomotive Preservation Group will relocate to as well as storage for Locomotion No1 replica.

Phase 2 works will commence in January 2023 with building work initially starting in the Goods Shed and the Head of Steam then rolling out later in the year to the carriage works, Lime Cells, play area and outdoor spaces.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

L4. Deliver the refurbishment and modernisation of the Crown Street Library service

Work continues on the refurbishment of the library, which will include repairs to the roof and structure of the building, upgrading the mechanical and electrical installations, as well as restoration of the interior of the library. It is anticipated that the refurbishment will be completed by July 2023.

The outcome will be a refurbished and restored library, undertaken in a sympathetic way to reflect its heritage, but also bring new technology and improvements to the service and building.

Whilst the building is closed due to the refurbishment work the library service is being provided as follows:

- An alternative town centre location for customers to visit at the Dolphin Centre where customers can borrow and return books, select, and order titles for collection
- Cockerton Library,
- Home Delivery Scheme. for residents who are unable to access library services.
- Support to schools and nurseries with regular deliveries of books for enjoyment and education.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

L5. Review and deliver a revised car parking strategy

Following the adoption of the Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan and the subsequent approval of the Darlington Transport Plan framework by Cabinet in March 2021, officers have worked to develop the Darlington Transport Plan, Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan and the Darlington Parking Strategy. These plans and strategies were consulted on throughout the summer of 2022 and have now been approved by both Cabinet and Council at meetings in November of 2022. Work will now progress on implementing the measures identified in the plan.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

L6. Work with TVCA to deliver improved transport links within Darlington and the Tees Valley

The Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan has now been agreed and a prospectus was submitted to Government which has secured £310m in transport investment in the next 5 years from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). This funding will see the biggest investment in sustainable transport ever seen in the Tees Valley and will assist in delivering climate change objectives across the region. There is strong governance and partnership working in place between Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), the local authorities and the national agencies to deliver the programme of improvements.

Key updates of the programme are:

- o Continued lobbying and development of key road projects including the Darlington Northern Link Road.
- o Development and delivery of Darlington station project
- o An Enhanced Partnership with bus operators to aim to secure improved services and customer experience across the region has been entered into.
- o Further development of walking and cycling schemes with work complete on Woodlands Road Phase 1 and underway on Duke Street.
- o Installation of electric vehicle charging points in car parks throughout Darlington.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

L7. Modernise Darlington's crematorium service

Work has continued to modernise Darlington's crematorium service. The new cremators have both now been operating since December and the building completed and handed over to the bereavement in July who now operate the bereavement service from west cemetery.

Following delays experienced due to evidence of newts on adjacent allotment sites, the Chapel and burial ground extension is due to be completed by December 2022 with the new Chapel opening in February 2023.

The outcome will be a new modern chapel facility that can facilitate larger gatherings and a crematorium that meets current environmental requirements. The project will also create capacity for further burials in West Cemetery.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

L8. Work with TVCA to develop a sustainable Teesside International Airport

Teesside Airport has applied to the Food Standards Agency to become a Border Control Post (BCP). In short this is required to allow the importation of food from Third Countries eg the Africa continent. Officers from the Council have worked closely with staff from the airport to ensure that they can meet the statutory requirements of a BCP.

The Council has received a planning application for the expansion of aviation related engineering works at the airport. Planning officers have worked closely with the applicant to develop the application. It is anticipated that this expansion and investment could create circa. 200 high calibre jobs in the aviation industry.

[Mark Ladyman: Assistant Director - Economic Growth](#)

R1. Deliver a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and a positive Value for Money (VFM) outcome

The MTFP for 2022-26 was approved by Council in February 2022 and provided a balanced budget for the life of the plan. The projected in year position at the end of quarter 2 is a decline in the original estimated position for 2022-23 by £1.351 million, which has resulted from a combination of demand pressures in children's social care, utility price increases, a larger than estimated pay award and other inflationary pressures in line with the current national economic picture. The decline in financial position is currently funded by unused reserves, however officers are working through a number of initiatives to bring down the estimated in year deficit position.

The MTFP for 2023-27 is currently being put together and will follow the usual approval process, before being considered by Council in February 2023.

The Council's accounts are scrutinised by our auditors Ernst and Young and have consistently delivered a positive Value for Money outcome.

[Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources](#)

R2. Oversee the successful completion of existing house building joint venture companies

The Council has invested in six joint ventures for house building to date, with all sites progressing well and on target to provide profits as expected. Three of the projects, at Eastbourne, Heighington and Middleton St George, are completed with the investment repaid and dividends received.

The West Park joint venture, which is part of a larger scheme and will be completed over a seven year period, is progressing well with sales buoyant and all of the properties available in 2022 either sold or reserved, with reservations made against the 2023 release. The Neasham Road joint venture has commenced with all properties available for sale in 2022 sold or reserved, and reservations made against the 2023 release. The Council's out-of-borough joint venture with Esh Group is still in its infancy; however, the majority of properties available for sale in 2022 are sold or reserved, with reservations made against the 2023 release.

[Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources](#)

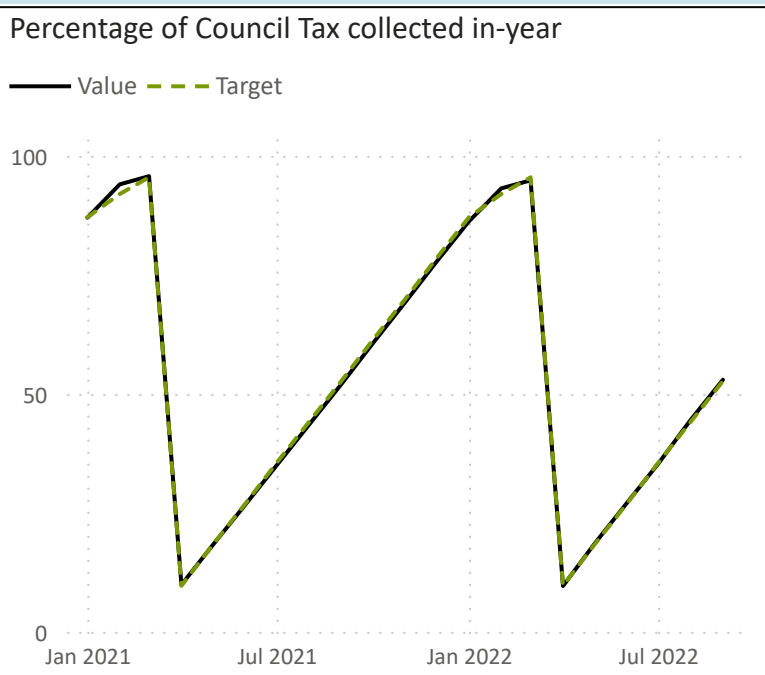
R3. Maximise the council's income from the council's Investment Fund, including further joint venture housing companies

The Investment Fund provision of £50m is being utilised for Joint Venture (JV) and economic regeneration initiatives. Returns on JVs are anticipated to be over £6m and three of the schemes have completed with the investment fully repaid and recycled back into the fund.

The agreed Investment Fund of £50m has a number of regeneration and joint venture commitments against it totalling £33.48m, leaving a balance of £16.52m uncommitted and available for further schemes. Officers are actively looking at schemes which, subject to approval, could utilise the fund to provide returns to the Council and wider economic benefits to the borough.

[Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources](#)

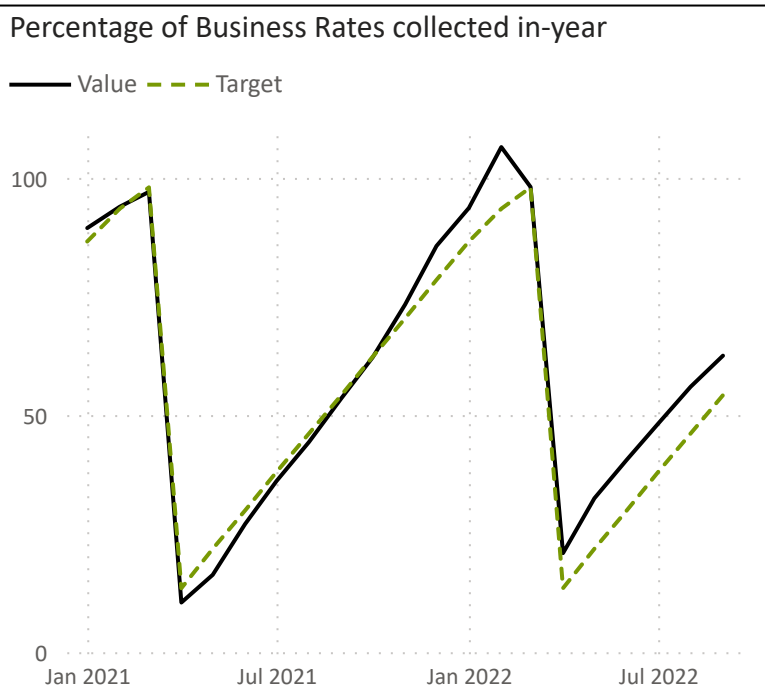
R4. Maximise council tax and business rate income through robust income collection processes



The percentage of Council Tax collected is slightly above the target for quarter 2, with 53.0% of Council Tax collected. The overall amount collected by Revenues and Benefits Officers by quarter 2 was £39.1 million compared to £36.4 million by quarter 2 in 2021-22, an increase of £2.7 million or 7.4%. The overall collection rate of 99% is still on course to be met.

Year	Darlington	England
2018/19	96.0	97.0
2019/20	96.2	96.8
2020/21	95.8	95.7
2021/22	94.9	95.9

[Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues](#)



The percentage of Business Rates collected exceeded the target for quarter 2, with 62.5% of Business Rates collected, compared to 53.5% in quarter 2 of 2021-22. The main reason for this increase in performance was due to the continuing award of Covid Additional Relief being awarded in quarter 1, significantly reducing the amount of Business Rates to pay. The overall amount collected by quarter 2 was £16.9 million compared to £16.8 million by quarter 2 of 2021-22.

Year	Darlington	England
2018/19	97.7	98.3
2019/20	99.4	98.0
2020/21	97.1	93.0
2021/22	98.1	95.5

[Anthony Sandys: Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues](#)

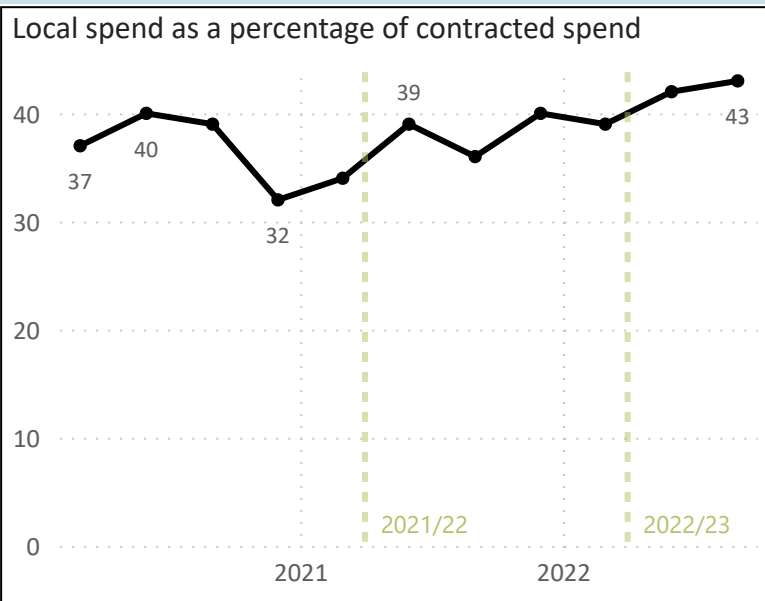
R5. Adopt a local wealth building approach to council procurement and work with the wider public sector in Darlington to do the same

The Public Sector Executives Group continues to be well attended and acts as a useful forum for public sector agencies to share information and collaborate. Information contained in the Darlington Profile Report was considered by the group and welcomed by other agencies who found it a valuable resource. The group also provided views on the Levelling Up Darlington Plan and endorsed the emerging priorities.

The group is also considering the implications of the rising cost of living, sharing impacts that are being seen on individual organisations and agreeing how collaboration could avert risks and support particularly the most vulnerable residents of Darlington

[Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership](#)

R5. Adopt a local wealth building approach to council procurement and work with the wider public sector in Darlington to do the same



The spend with Darlington-based suppliers has increased from the last financial year, in the first two quarters by 4%.

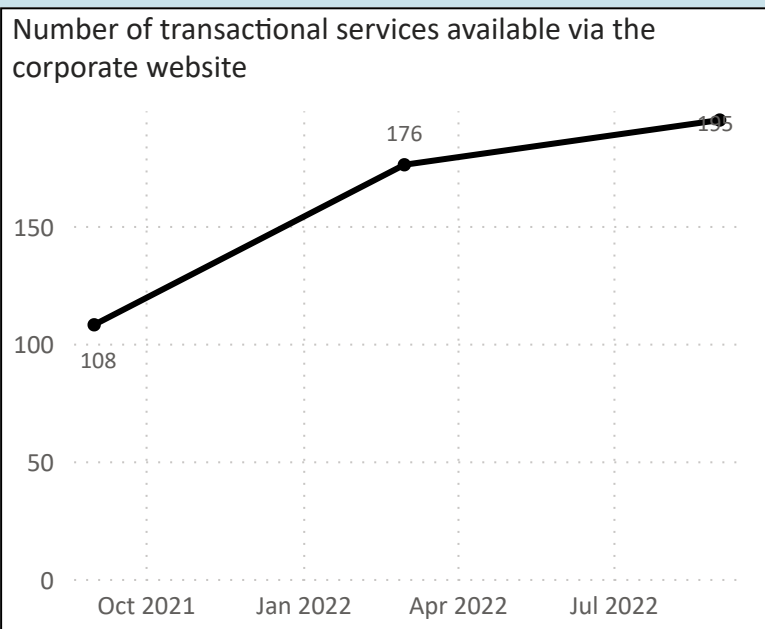
Compared to 2021/22, the figure has risen from 39% - 43%.

The spend in this period has risen by £3m, from the same period for 21/22.

This reflects the continued engagement with the local supply chain, advertising opportunities via the Councils website and social media.

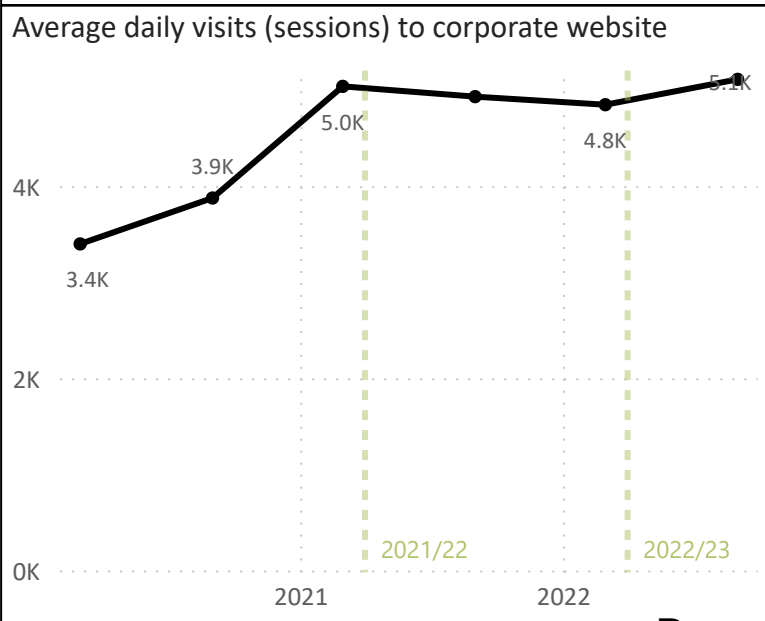
Luke Swinhoe: Assistant Director - Law & Governance

R6. Increasing the availability of council services online



There has been a net increase (+19) of transactional functions since the previous reporting period. Several forms such as expired consultation feedback forms have been removed, and some of the new features including contact forms, customer services appointment bookings, and trading standards report it forms have been made available. There are currently 195 of transactional functions available via the council's websites, all of which need to be managed and maintained.

Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications



There has been a modest increase in the daily visits to our website since the last reporting period (4.8k to 5.1k) taking us to our highest reported 3 month average to date. It is difficult to determine the precise reason(s) for the increase but there was a 2 week period at the end of June when revenue and benefits pages had some spikes in traffic that were mainly due to the council tax energy rebate.

Work continues to convert the site's content into plain English with approximately 60% of the web pages now complete.

Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications

R7. Review and refresh the council's workforce strategy

The Council's new Workforce Strategy and Plan was agreed in July 2021, with rollout commencing in October 2021. Briefings have taken place to ensure that the strategy is promoted and that the core values are embedded into everyday working practices. Promotional activities, including a video, are to be launched to all staff, with further developments planned regarding the communication of the strategy in recruitment and corporate induction. Monitoring and evaluation of the success of the strategy have commenced with some early positive signs coming through staff feedback and the 2021 employee survey. The Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) and chief officers have received an update on the impact of the strategy following the one-year anniversary of its launch and will receive further updates annually. To support implementation and embedding of the strategy and Council values, we will continue to monitor progress through the 2023 employee survey, the agile working pilot review, development of staff communication, wellbeing statistics, customer feedback and workforce performance.

[Brett Nielsen: Assistant Director - Resources](#)

S1. Utilise the skills and resources of businesses to increase volunteering and corporate social responsibility primarily through Darlington Cares

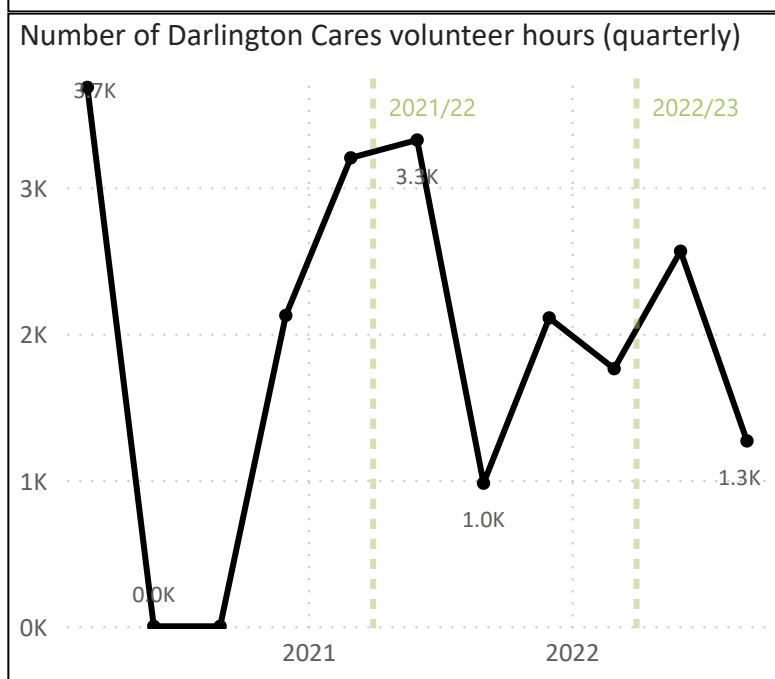
Darlington Cares rapidly recovered from the limitations faced through Covid. The existing programme continued to reboot whilst the Board explored other areas it could focus on. In particular, it is exploring how it can join forces with the Council and other agencies to help planting trees and other biodiversity action. A well-attended networking event, celebrating 10 years of Darlington Cares, was held on 24th March. From that and increased awareness of Darlington Cares, four new members have been recruited, including Amazon. A further successful networking event was held on October 27th. Plans are being developed to re-run in 2023 a successful initiative, 'The Great Park Auction' held in 2018. The last scheme delivered 3,600 hours of volunteering in Darlington's parks.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership

Year	Month	Value
2020	September	24
	December	24
2021	March	24
	June	26
	September	26
2022	March	30
	June	30
	September	30

Whilst in and out of lockdown, Darlington Cares members were unable to allow their staff to volunteer due to the restrictions and health and safety concerns. This resulted in new membership stalling. However, as all restrictions have now been lifted, we were able to arrange a networking event for new members and have face to face meetings with potential members. This has resulted in a huge increase in membership and the biggest increase we have seen since the programme began. Notable recent joiners are Amazon, Redde Northgate and Carvers estate agents

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership



Since all restrictions have been lifted, all members have now been able to release their staff which has seen a steady increase in the amount of volunteer hours undertaken. We have slowly been able to get all previous projects back up and running and even have plans for new ones. Darlington Cares is supporting the Council with its tree planting ambition. In addition a further round of 'The Great Park Auction' is planned for 2023

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership

S2. Produce, deliver and appraise a pilot for a local neighbourhood renewal scheme including reviewing the approach to private sector landlord operations to ensure residents are best supported and protected

In January 2022 the Steering Group agreed to set up a Data Dashboard to help analyse the impact of the Northgate Initiative and to identify any gaps where work needed to be increased or new actions be implemented to improve life of the Northgate residents. As a direct result of the implementation of the dashboard the focus and targets have changed slightly within each workstream to reflect the real needs of the area. This 'real-time' tool of analysing progression will create greater impact on the success of the initiative longer term.

A persistent issue in Northgate is, whilst there are a wide range of support available for residents, take up of these services is low. To raise awareness and improve access a 'Family Hub' has been established at Corporation Road school which will host a range of support services available to parents and other members of the community on a rota.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership

S3. Work with partners to address food instability

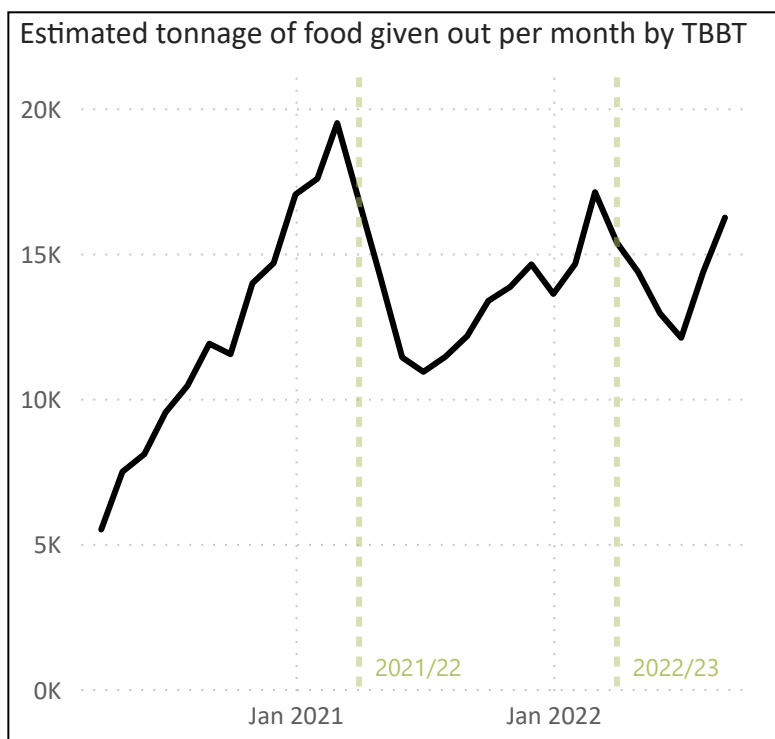
The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT) continues to deliver effectively across Darlington with each of its hubs at, or nearing, capacity. This is an ever more important resource as the cost of living rises.

Work is underway to make the service available in the Albert Hill area.

Meanwhile TBBT are working with the community venues they operate from to create warm spaces during their service.

TBBT are also one of the agencies helping deliver the Household Support Fund. Having developed a clear and simple process for people to access them, they will be providing 3,600 fuel vouchers to Darlington resident. DBC will help them target those most in need and voluntary sector organisations in Darlington will also make referrals.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership



The Bread & Butter thing has continued to support families across Darlington in making life more affordable especially at a time when families need it most. 8 hubs currently serve the town with plans for the ninth hub to be fully operation by the end of 2022.

Since the 1st April 2022 TBBT have given out 16,431 bags of food which equates to 145,066kg of food. Not only supporting families but preventing good food from being wasted or placed into landfill.

Seth Pearson: Chief Exec Darlington Partnership

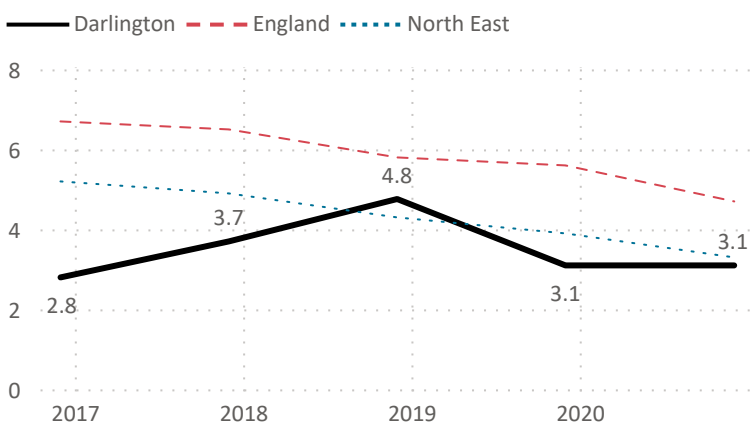
S4. Embed the new Community Safety service and review its effectiveness and priorities

A review of the Civic Enforcement team's priorities and work was carried out at the beginning of 2021, to inform a refreshed service plan. Ongoing management of the service's resources versus priorities is being kept under review with the portfolio holder. Following the review, the Civic Enforcement team continues to focus on three key areas of work: anti-social behaviour, environmental crime and parking enforcement working in partnership with other agencies as required. Resources are allocated to the three areas based on priorities at the time and the intelligence available to help maximise the effectiveness of the team and partner resources.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

S5. Work with Durham Constabulary and other key partners to improve our collective response to dealing with drug and alcohol issues

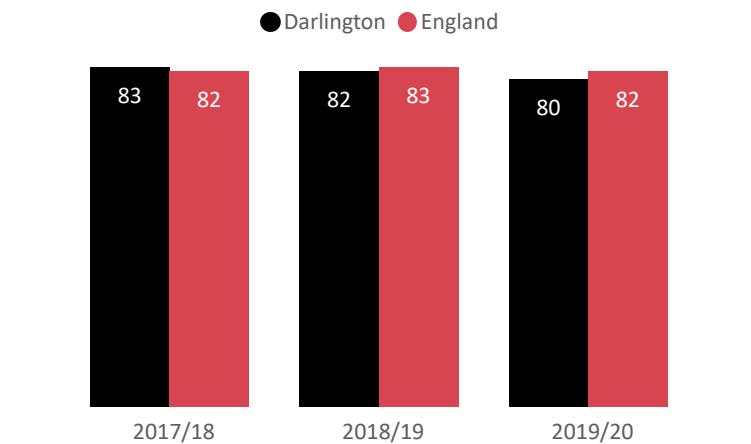
Percentage of opiate users successfully completing their treatment



Darlington remains statistically similar to our neighbouring North East authorities for the proportion of opiate users successfully completing drug treatment, This rise reflects the work that the provider of substance misuse services in Darlington has been undertaking to increase access to treatment and improve the numbers who are in treatment. They are also implementing evidence based interventions such as optimising prescribing to ensure that treatment is optimised and effective.

[Penny Spring: Director of Public Health](#)

Estimated unmet need for alcohol treatment (%)

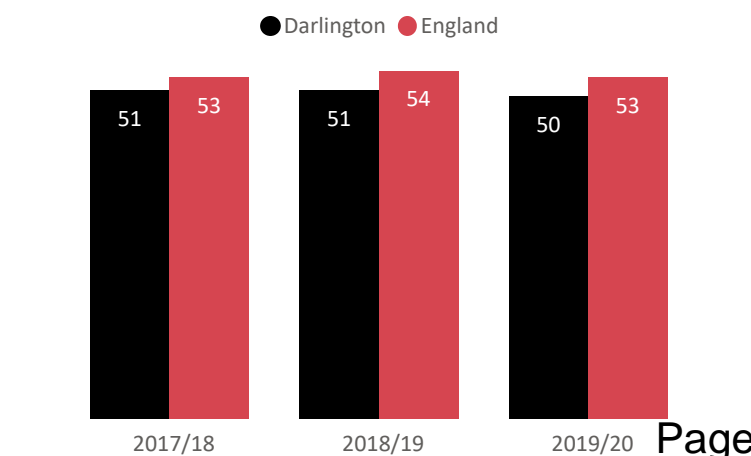


The estimated proportions of adults in need of alcohol treatment that are estimated not to be in treatment. It is lower in Darlington than the England averages and have been reducing.

Numbers of people seeking treatment has increased in STRIDE the local treatment service and work is underway to work with partners including the A&E at DMH and local GPs to increase early identification and referral of hazardous drinkers.

[Penny Spring: Director of Public Health](#)

Estimated unmet need for drug treatment (%)



The proportion of estimated unmet need for drug treatment in Darlington is lower than the England average. This proportion has remained stable for the last 4 years.

Work is underway using the recent SSMTRG funding from the home office to make services more accessible and reach those using substances who are not in treatment to give them the support they need to get into treatment.

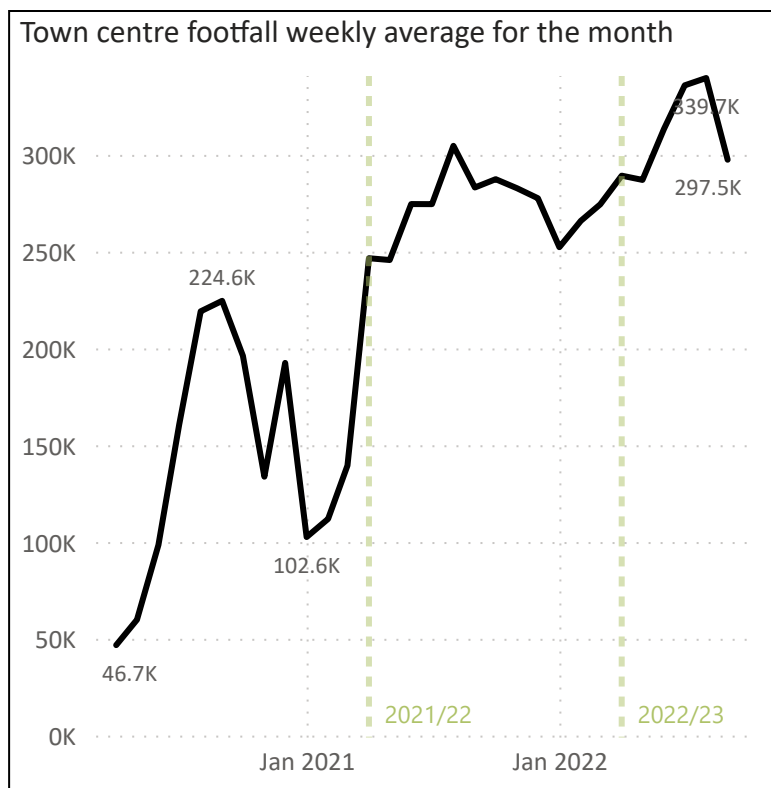
S6. Support the development of the town centre economy by putting appropriate measures in place and demonstrating it is a safe place to visit

Purple flag interim assessment was submitted in October with the outcome in December which will demonstrate that Darlington Town centre is safe and vibrant, with a well-managed and supported night-time economy. Both crime and Anti-Social Behaviour within the town centre are on the increase on last year however for a significant period in 2021 Covid restrictions were still in place. The community safety team continues to work closely with the town centre team and wider town centre partners.

The renewed public space protection order (PSPO) for the town centre came into effect in July.

The Hub on Skinnergate which provides a place of safety, primarily for women and girls but also for vulnerable people opened in September and is proving to be a well used valuable resource to support the late night economy.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)



Footfall has continued to increase year on year in Darlington since 2020.

The programming of events throughout 2022 continues to attract new visitors to Darlington with some fantastic feedback.

Darlington has continued to welcome a number of new independent retailers to the town centre and the continued works programme with the Towns Fund is improving shop fronts within the Skinnergate and Yards areas.

Darlington has been part of the High Street Task Force initiative and awaiting reports and feedback for further development opportunities to enhance and continue to look at methods to improve the town centre and attract more businesses, residents and visitors to Darlington.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

S7. Review our approach to the use of CCTV in supporting community safety and work with partners to enhance the service further

One of the outcomes of the initial work carried out was to review the public space CCTV cameras and transmission system. The work was completed at the end of 2021 resulting in a proposal to replace the remaining 74 older analogue cameras, where the quality is poor and the images are a lot softer than the newer cameras available today. The review also recommended introducing a wireless network to replace the leased fibre circuits.

Cabinet approved the replacement programme and work will commence later this year early next on installing the new CCTV cameras. The police and crime commissioner has also supported the replacement programme by contributing £25,000 annually.

[Ian Thompson: Assistant Director - Community Services](#)

S8. Oversee the implementation of the council's equality policy

Percentage of staff who have completed equality and diversity training

September 2022

71.5%

The total number of current staff who have attended a half day session of training is 1259 people. An additional 185 people have attended more than one session. Over 150 people who have now left the organisation also received the training.

There is an ongoing programme of in person sessions being delivered at Allington Way to reach operational staff who do not have access to teams. This programme will be delivered into February 2023 to meet the needs of the service. Work has been undertaken with PAs to identify areas where low numbers of staff have attended training to either get individuals booked onto sessions, or offer bespoke training where that is required in the service area.

[Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications](#)

Percentage of elected members who have completed equality and diversity training

September 2022

76.0%

This indicator includes members who have completed at least one of two distinct training sessions on equality and diversity on offer. The next sessions booked in for members are after the local elections in May and will be offered to all members. Sessions are offered at a variety of times, both during the day and in the evening, to meet the scheduling needs of members. In addition to the training, individual members are provided with equality, diversity, and inclusion advice throughout the year.

[Neil Bowerbank: Head of Strategy, Performance & Communications](#)

S9. Work with partners to assess flood risk for Darlington and develop solutions

Strong partnership and project teams are in place, developing two studies that will inform and assist future planning, investment and bidding opportunities. Operational meetings occur on a regular basis between the Environment Agency and council officers. The two studies that are taking place are:

- The Darlington Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership (NIDP) study. This is assessing all areas across the north and south Darlington catchments to determine risks and issues in relation to flood for the Environment Agency (EA), Northumbrian Water Limited (NWL) and the Council. The outcome will be evidence for a plan of interventions for the highest priority locations to inform bids to secure funding.
- Flood Asset Risk Study. This is looking at the risks and impact associated with the possible failure or blockage of key assets such as bridges and culverts to determine investment and maintenance strategies to minimise the risk of flooding. The outcome of the study will be evidence to inform bids to secure funding or re-prioritise existing resources.

In addition we are also working with local land owners to reduce the risk of flooding in Killerby.

[Anthony Hewitt: Assistant Director - Highways & Capital Projects](#)

**CABINET
10 JANUARY 2023**

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF INDOOR MARKET

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Jamie Bartch, Economy Portfolio**

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To gain Cabinet approval for the release of capital funds for further development of the traditional trading area located in the Victorian Indoor Market.

Summary

2. In 2017 the Council entered a lease/partnership agreement with Market Asset Management Ltd (MAM) for the management, refurbishment of the Victorian Indoor Market and the management and improvement of Darlington's outdoor market.
3. Following a period of tenancy negotiations with various traders within the indoor market and the impact of Covid 19 restrictions the refurbishment of the market commenced in 2021. The first phase of development included the construction of six street food stalls, new toilets, enhanced entrance areas, a new bar facility, full mechanical and electrical improvements, the installation of a bio-mass boiler and repairs to the market roof. Phase two of the redevelopment commenced in August 2022 and includes additional new toilets improvements to the entrance area to the traditional trading area, general enhancement of the market and a new bar facility in the vaults area of the market. It is anticipated that this work will be complete in December 2022.
4. Notwithstanding that all the above works have made the indoor market more attractive both for residents, visitors, and traders there are several ongoing challenges for Darlington's indoor market which is being experienced across the country.
5. While all market halls and covered markets have their own distinctive characteristics and mix of traders several general factors appear to be combining to pose a threat to their commercial wellbeing and in some cases their very existence. Changes in living and working behaviour have been affecting markets for some time, the increasing popularity of supermarket shopping in easily accessible and economically competitive stores, the general demographic profile of both market shoppers and traders and the general dieback of retail in town centres are all ongoing challenges which are gravely affecting the future sustainability of the traditional indoor market.

6. The Council has acknowledged the above challenges and has developed a proposed plan for further development of the traditional trading area of the indoor market. Co-produced by the Council and MAM and shared with the current market traders the proposals set out in **Appendix 1** outlines the approach to address these challenges and make the market fit for the future. If approved these proposals will form part of a comprehensive consultation and engagement programme with current traders, market users and potential traders which have been identified over recent months.
7. The overall objective of this next phase of improvements is to establish a long-term sustainable tenant mix to achieve a range of desired outcomes. The focus has been on a new tenant mix strategy, which seeks to achieve a consistent service and quality offer throughout the market, to develop 'customer hot spots', which specialises in promotions, introduces new offers, including speciality food, quality fashion accessories, art and crafts and modern services into the market to ensure that the public perceives change, to promote an environment of self-improvement and diversification of the existing and new traders and to create opportunities to promote the market via specialist offers and events.
8. It is estimated that these improvements will be in the region of £800,000 which will be funded through the Tees Valley Combined Authority Indigenous Growth Fund. Market Asset Management will take the project lead for this redevelopment and works will be reimbursed via grant agreement.

Recommendations

9. It is recommended that:
 - (a) That members approve the proposals set out in this report for the improvements to the Victorian Indoor Market.
 - (b) That members approve the release of £800,000 from the Tees Valley Combined Authority Indigenous Growth Fund.

Reasons

10. The recommendations are supported in order to contribute to the ongoing commitment to the full refurbishment of the Victorian Indoor Market which will have a positive impact upon the economic wellbeing and vitality of the Town Centre.

Ian Williams
Chief Executive

Background Papers

- (i) MAM – Indoor Market Proposals

Mark Ladyman: Extension 6306

S17 Crime and Disorder	This paper supports and complements the actions detailed in the Darlington Town Centre Footfall Strategy to reduce ASB in the Town Centre.
Health and Well Being	No direct impacts
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	No direct impacts
Diversity	No direct impacts
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework. Any works highlighted in the report will be met through agreed capital budgets.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Council Plan	Growing Darlington's Economy by delivering more businesses
Efficiency	The report aims to utilise the Councils and partner resources in a collective more efficient manner.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The report does not have an impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

11. Darlington's Victorian Indoor Market plays an important anchor for the town centre going forward. In terms of a unique proposition the market acts as an attractor for many people to come to the town and the street food hall, installed in 2021, has proven a popular venue for many residents and visitors. The traditional trading area of the market hosts several excellent fresh food stalls which have maintained a loyal customer base for many years however, the remaining area of the traditional trading element of the market building is continuing to underperform and is not fulfilling its potential. The Council has recognised the need for further investment and in conjunction with MAM has produced proposals to address this under performance and place the market in a stronger position for the future.
12. The current refurbishment programme, due to be complete in December 2022, which includes additional new toilets improvements to the entrance area to the traditional trading area, general enhancement of the market and a new bar facility in the vaults area of the market are a welcomed and positive step forward. However, these capital works only partially address an ongoing challenge being faced by Darlington's many traditional indoor markets across the UK.
13. A recent study by the Joseph Rowntree Association found the following essential attributes for a successful indoor market:

- (a) A diverse range of products that made a good 'fit' with local community needs and 'tastes'
 - (b) A sense of surprise or the unexpected to provide interest
 - (c) Opportunities to linger – café(s) or stalls within the market
 - (d) Informal seating areas
 - (e) Good access to the site – public transport is key but opportunities to come by car and access to parking were also important for some visitors
 - (f) An active and engaged community of traders – both to provide the retail offer but also to provide part of the social life of the site itself
14. Therefore, in addition future capital refurbishment programmes the indoor market needs to change in the manner it operates and needs to attract new customers from various sectors of society that have never or rarely used the market in the past. The new programme aims to create an attractive market hall which is an inclusive, successful, and sustainable part of our town centre offer, where independent retailers can innovate and thrive. An attractive, safe and welcoming destination where our investment secures the unique offer for future generation and a place for everyone, where people can experience its unique surroundings, quality products and its heritage and culture.
15. Co-produced by the Council and MAM and which will be shared with the current market traders the proposals set out in Appendix 1 outlines the approach to address these challenges and make the market fit for the future. The success of the next phase of the redevelopment can only be achieved with the support and co-operation of the existing traders and therefore these proposals will form part of a comprehensive consultation and engagement programme with current traders, market users and potential traders which will be carried out over the forthcoming months.
16. The proposals aim to re-position the retail offer within Darlington Market to attract a younger and wider demographic. Replace the current ten empty units with new contemporary outlets designed to attract a new generation of trader. The units will be finished to a certain level and then incoming traders will have the ability to choose their own finishes and operating style. The redesigned market will acknowledge the important role e-commerce now plays in retail with the inclusion of a pack and despatch area to support those traders who benefit from online sales. The market will still retain its traditional thriving food offer and will be well supported by a balanced range of goods and services, all offered by customer focussed traders
17. Continuous promotion and marketing of the indoor market is crucial to its success. Therefore, alongside the local media profile the market and individual traders will have a strong social media presence which will be so important in attracting new customers to the market. Promotion of the market will be a key activity as a driver to attracting footfall and as social media has become the digital word of mouth, the market and its traders will have a unified voice to showcase the market as a special place to shop, it will highlight that

the market is more than a simple retail experience. Above all it will still be a special place for residents of Darlington with a special resonance across all sectors of the community.

18. If agreed, it is anticipated that the work can commence in summer 2023 and will take approximately four months to complete.

Financial Considerations

19. It is estimated that the improvements will cost in the region of £800,000, which will be funded through the Tees Valley Combined Authority Indigenous Growth Fund.

Legal Implications

20. Independent advice has been sought by both the Council and MAM to ensure that the proposal is compliant from a subsidy control perspective.

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DARLINGTON RETAIL POSITIONING

MAM Darlington Ltd | December 2022

**DARLINGTON
MARKETS**



Present Offerings



Retail Positioning

To create a relevant retailing environment within Darlington

The retailing element of Darlington Market and its quality is contracting, as the older generation trader base is servicing a diminishing customer base.





Objective

To re-position the retail offer within Darlington Market to attract a younger and wider demographic.

New retail offers could include:

Eco-Shop - refill containers with food stuffs, cleaning products etc.

Deli/Grocer- a wider European offering
Bottle Shop

USA Sweet Shop

Makers such as shoes, luggage etc.

Service Industries - hairdressers, cosmetics, nail bar etc.

This list is certainly not exhaustive.



Objective

The new retail businesses to be further supported with a dedicated pack and despatch room to support their online businesses, after all, their turnover may be as much as 80% online sales.

Tangible Change

The current 10 empty units to be removed and replaced with new contemporary outlets designed to attract a new generation of trader.

The units will be finished to a certain level and then incoming traders will have the ability to choose their own finishes and operating style.

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Operating Methodology

Incoming traders will be offered leases as per the standard Darlington Market agreements and they will be able to choose from either fixed rents or turnover rents.



THANK YOU

MAM Darlington Ltd | June 2022

**DARLINGTON
MARKETS**

**CABINET
10 JANUARY 2023**

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Jamie Bartch, Economy Portfolio**

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Council on progress towards the Council's net zero target.

Summary

2. Following the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration in July 2019, a Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer was appointed in late January 2020.
3. The Climate Change Strategy was adopted in July 2020 and working with lead officers across the Council, an action plan was produced and adopted in October 2021. A trajectory of 30% reduction in the Council's emission every five years was agreed at Cabinet in October 2021. Our emissions data is collected annually, so the next update will be reported in the July 2023 report to Cabinet and Council.
4. Milestones have been developed and are being used by the Climate Change Officer to monitor progress. The Climate Change Officer will be working with lead officers to develop the milestones for 2023/24.
5. Work has begun on an adaptation plan to sit alongside the carbon reduction plans. This will ensure continuing resilience to climate change. Work also continues on the development of a strategy for how the Council intends to offset residual emissions. This will be presented to Cabinet in September 2023.
6. The Council continues to communicate externally with residents and businesses and internally with staff. Each issue of One Darlington carries a sustainability article. A new section for young people has been added to the Sustainable Darlington section of the website. The Sustainability and Climate Change intranet pages have been revamped. A series of staff drop-in sessions have been introduced.
7. A sustainability event is in the planning stages. It will be held over two days on 2/3 June 2023.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that Cabinet notes the report.

Reasons

9. The recommendation is supported because with increasing public awareness and desire to take action on climate change, the Council needs to deliver on its own Declaration.

Ian Williams
Chief Executive

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Margaret Enstone : Extension 6229

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no expected impact on Crime and Disorder in Darlington.
Health and Wellbeing	According to the WHO, climate change is the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century. This report is a progress report of our journey to becoming a carbon neutral council.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	The Council has recognised the need to consider the carbon impact of the decisions it makes. This report is a progress report of our journey to reducing our carbon emissions and adapting our services to the unavoidable effects of climate change.
Diversity	Climate change affects everyone, but it has a disproportionate impact on areas of deprivation. This report demonstrates how we are addressing our own carbon emissions and resilience, giving us the ability to demonstrate through good practice what other people can do themselves
Wards Affected	This report covers how the Council is addressing its own carbon emissions and resilience. It will not affect any particular ward.
Groups Affected	This report covers how the Council is addressing its own carbon emissions and resilience. It will not affect any particular group.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
Council Plan	This report has no particular implications for the Council Plan
Efficiency	Our approach to reducing emissions will mean that resources are used more efficiently
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

- Following the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration in July 2019, a Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer was appointed in late January 2020. The Climate Change Strategy was adopted in July 2020 and working with lead officers across the Council, an action plan was produced and adopted in October 2021. An independent benchmark review in 2021 scored us well above the national average. A trajectory of 30% reduction in the Council's emission every five years was agreed at Cabinet in October 2021.

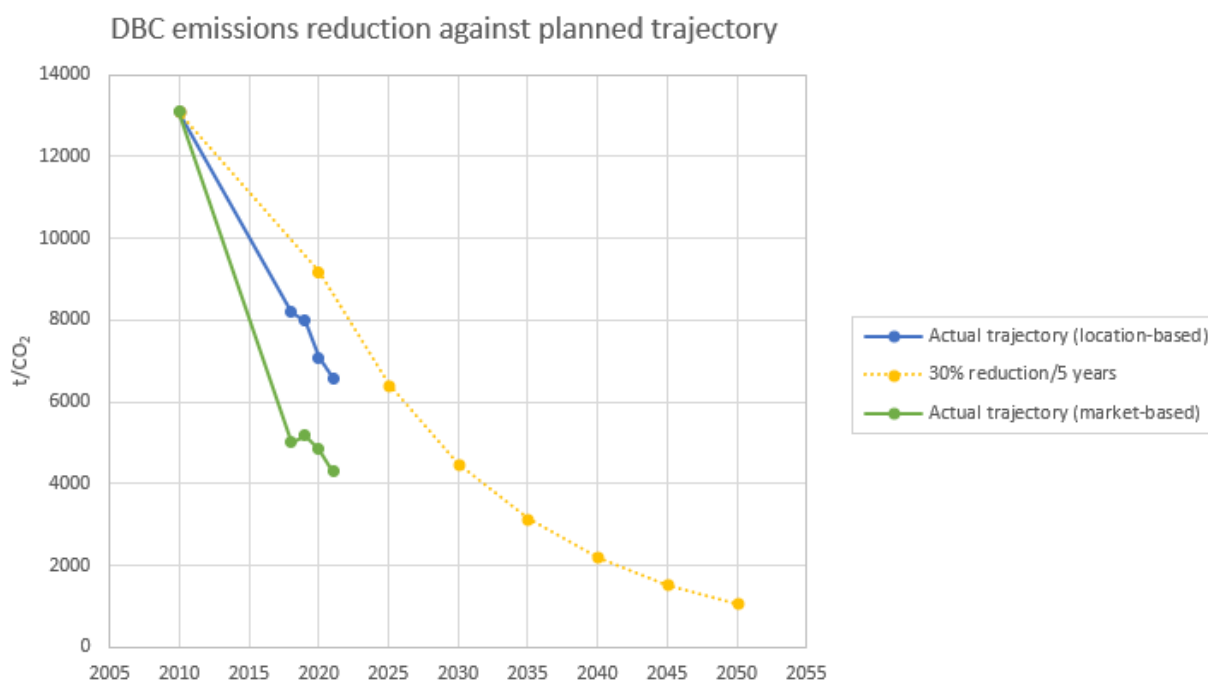
11. Our emissions data is collected annually, so the next update will be reported in the July 2023 report to Cabinet.

	2010/11	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂
Streetlighting	3,487	759	596	515	458
Corporate Estate	7564	5,928	5,907	5,014	4864
Business Travel	2,050	1,509	1,482	1,426	1270
Total	13,101	8,196	7,985	6,955	6,592
Total estimated working from home emissions/tCO ₂ e				125	

Electricity generation from the solar panels on the roof of the Town Hall:

	2010/11	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	Generation	Generation	Generation	Generation	Generation
	kWh	kWh*	kWh	kWh	kWh
Total		1,008	7,846	7,362	9,440

12. Trajectory:



13. Milestones have been developed and are being used by the Climate Change Officer to monitor progress. 113 actions are to be completed by the end of March 2023.

14. At end Q2 (2022/23) the end of year projection for these is:

- (a) 26 complete
- (b) 70 on target
- (c) 5 not on target but progress being made
- (d) 4 unlikely to hit target
 - (i) 2 x staff capacity issues, expected completion 2023/24
 - (ii) 1 x work outsourced, expected completion July 2023

(iii) 1 x external partner withdrawn from project

15. The remaining 8 actions are due to be taken forward in later quarters.
16. The Climate Change Officer will be working with lead officers to develop the milestones for 2023/24 and is working with the Corporate Strategy and Performance Team to explore whether the same reporting system as the corporate targets can be utilised. It is anticipated that this would make it easier for officers to complete their reports and for senior managers and members to see progress.

Adaptation

17. Most of our activity to date has been focused on reducing our emissions, in line with the declaration made in 2019. The Council need, though, to ensure that it is positioned to withstand the impacts of climate change that are currently being experienced.
18. Work is ongoing with teams to determine what activity is already being undertaken to ensure that the Council can continue to deliver services under extreme weather conditions and what still needs to be put in place. From these discussions, an adaptation action plan will be put together to sit alongside the carbon neutral action plan.

Offsetting Plan

19. The Council will do everything it can to reduce our emissions, but there will inevitably be a gap between where our actions can take us and where the authority need to be. Currently a strategy is being developed on how the Council intends to offset our residual emissions. This plan will be brought to Cabinet in September 2023.

Climate Change Fund

20. £100k was allocated in the Medium-Term Financial Plan to help fund projects that will help us meet our target.
21. Just short of £18,000 has been spent so far. In addition to the three projects reported on previously the following has been agreed:
 - (a) Provided funding for six videos about recycling to be shown on Freeview TV and social media.
 - (b) Funded a consultant to look at the carbon emissions associated with our supply chain.
 - (c) Pending bid for school's competition to design a sustainable & climate resilient flower bed

Communications

22. Climate change activities continue to have a presence on social media and in One Darlington. A new section for young people has been added to the Sustainable Darlington section of the website. This includes activities to do at school and at home, learning resources, online recycling or reselling sites and a blog area. Officers are still trying to encourage schools to get their pupils to write for this area. The aim is that these pages will

be youth led.

23. The sustainability and climate change intranet page has been updated to include opportunities for volunteering, guides and information and an update area. A series of drop-in sessions have been arranged for staff to be able to ask the team questions and learn about a different topic each time.
24. In addition, the team are working with the Event Management Team on a sustainability event for the weekend of 2/3 June 2023. The event will include interactive learning and experiences, entertainment, information, opportunities for local businesses to showcase themselves, business advice and a ticket talks programme.

Financial Implications

25. Chief Officers Board has recently approved the creation of a Green Initiative Reserve which will help to capture and ring-fence savings arising as a result of the implementation of green initiatives.
26. A system to report on and monitor expected savings is planned for development.

Legal Implications

27. There are no legal implications.

HR Implications

28. The report does not affect the terms and conditions of any staff or change their duties.

Estates & Property Advice

29. The report does not affect the Council's land holdings or involve a lease, or license or any transfer or purchase of land.

Procurement Advice

30. The report does not involve any purchase over £100k

Equalities Considerations

31. Climate change affects everyone, but it has a disproportionate impact on areas of deprivation. By ensuring that the Council is resilient to the effects of climate change, the Council continues to ensure that it will be able to continue providing services to all residents.

Consultation

32. This report is a progress report for the Council's commitment to reducing its carbon emissions and increasing its resilience to the impacts of climate change. No public consultation has been carried out.

CABINET
10 JANUARY 2023

SCHEDULE OF TRANSACTIONS

Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Scott Durham
Resources Portfolio

Responsible Director – Ian Williams
Chief Executive

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.

TRANSACTION	PURPOSE OF TRANSACTION	MINUTE REF
Leases		
Gas Governor House, Neasham Road. Extension to existing lease area of 135sqm of land.	To allow site to be accessed in safety by Northern Gas Networks engineers without parking on Neasham Road.	
Blackwell Meadows, surrender and renewal of football pitches including extra land with recently created pitches total 14.98 acres and existing car park area of 3.42 acres.	To allow Darlington Rugby Football Club to manage pitches for Community Use and apply for Football Foundation/FA funding to maintain and improve for grass roots sport and community sports use.	
George Dent Nursery School – Lease-in.	Surrender of existing lease with 2 years remaining and renewal for 5 years.	

Disposals		
Beck House, Faverdale.	Extension of option to purchase to tie in with timescale for determining planning application.	Cab/C90/Dec/18

Summary

- 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

- It is recommended that the schedule (Appendix 1) be approved, and the transactions completed on the terms and conditions detailed therein.

Reasons

- 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.

Guy Metcalfe : Extension 6725

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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