



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

Council Agenda

6.00 pm, Thursday, 29 September 2022

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

Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.

1. Introductions / Attendance at Meeting.
2. Minutes - To approve the Minutes of the Meetings of this Council held on 14 July 2022 and 15 September 2022 (Pages 5 - 10)
3. Declarations of Interest.
4. Sealing.
5. Announcements.
6. Questions - To answer questions (where appropriate notice has been given from):-
 - (a) The Public;
 - (b) Members to Cabinet/Chairs;
7. Council Reports.
 - (a) The Independent Person –
Report of the Assistant Director, Law and Governance, Monitoring Officer
(Pages 11 - 14)
8. Cabinet Reports.

- (a) Overview Report of the Leader of the Council; (Pages 15 - 18)
 - (b) Overview Report of the Local Services Portfolio; (Pages 19 - 22)
 - (c) Overview Report of the Adults Portfolio; (Pages 23 - 26)
 - (d) Overview Report of the Children and Young People Portfolio; (Pages 27 - 32)
 - (e) Overview Report of the Economy Portfolio; (Pages 33 - 38)
 - (f) Overview Report of the Health and Housing Portfolio; (Pages 39 - 44)
 - (g) Overview Report of the Resources Portfolio; and (Pages 45 - 46)
 - (h) Overview Report of the Stronger Communities Portfolio; (Pages 47 - 50)
9. Scrutiny Reports - To consider Scrutiny Overview Reports:-
- (a) Adults Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 51 - 52)
 - (b) Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 53 - 56)
 - (c) Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 57 - 60)
 - (d) Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee; and (Pages 61 - 62)
 - (e) Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee. (Pages 63 - 66)
10. Membership Changes - To consider any membership changes to Committees, Subsidiary Bodies and Other Bodies.



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Wednesday, 21 September 2022

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Baldwin, Bartch, Bell, Boddy, Dr. Chou, Clarke, Cossins, Crudass, Crumby, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, Holroyd, C L B Hughes, L Hughes, Johnson, B Jones, Mrs D Jones, Keir, Laing, Layton, Lee, Lister,

Lucas, Marshall, McCollom, McEwan, Mills, Newall, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Paley, Preston, Renton, A J Scott, Mrs H Scott, Snedker, Sowerby, Tait, Tostevin, Wallis, Willis and Wright.

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

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COUNCIL

Thursday, 14 July 2022

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

APOLOGIES – Councillors Dr. Chou, Crudass, Layton, Lee, Lister, Paley and Preston.

ABSENT – Councillor Baldwin.

10 **MINUTES - TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS COUNCIL HELD ON 12 MAY 2022 AND 19 MAY 2022 (ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL)**

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Council held on 12 May 2022 and 19 May 2022.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meetings of this Council held on 12 May 2022 and 19 May 2022, be approved as correct records.

11 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

12 **SEALING.**

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

13 **ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

Death in Service – The Mayor reported on the Death in Service of Donna Ward on 1st July 2022. The Mayor advised Members that Donna was employed as a Support Worker in Day Services, was a valued member of the team within Provider Services, and referred to her years of local government service.

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

Commissioning of a Portrait of the Queen – The Mayor announced that, in recognition of the Jubilee commemorations, the Council had commissioned a new portrait of the Queen, which was now located in the Council Chamber.

The Queen's Baton Relay – The Mayor announced that she had been pleased to welcome The Queen's Baton to Darlington earlier that day, as it was carried through the town as part of the country-wide relay.

The Mayor advised that the Baton, containing the Queen's message to the Commonwealth, would continue to tour the country before it ended its journey in Birmingham marking the start of the Commonwealth Games.

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

(1) THE PUBLIC; AND

There were no questions, with notice, from Members of the Public.

(2) MEMBERS TO CABINET/CHAIRS.

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

15 COUNCIL REPORTS.

(1) INTERIM REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

The Group Director of Operations submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to conducting an interim review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations ahead of the Local Government (Borough) Elections in 2023.

The submitted report stated that the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA 1983), as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, required local authorities to conduct reviews of the Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations within their local authority area, and that the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 subsequently outlined the timing of such compulsory reviews, with the next compulsory review due to commence within the sixteen-month period beginning on 1st October 2023. It was reported that a local authority may, however, conduct an interim review at any time, although it would still have to conduct a full review during the compulsory timeframe.

The submitted report outlined that number of previously approved Polling Places were no longer available to the local authority at the elections held in 2021, and that there were a number of new provisions contained within the Elections Act 2022.

It was therefore considered prudent to conduct an interim review of the Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations during the Summer/Autumn of 2022, ahead of the Local Government (Borough) Elections in 2023, to ensure that suitable Polling Places are available, that all remain fit for purpose and can adapt to any provisions brought forward from within the Elections Act 2022.

RESOLVED - That an interim review of the Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations be conducted in accordance with the review process and timescales as outlined at Appendix 1 of the submitted report.

REASON - To ensure that suitable Polling Places and Polling Stations are available, fit for

purpose and are suitable for any of the provisions contained within the Elections Act 2022, ahead of the Local Government (Borough) Elections in May 2023.

16 CABINET REPORTS.

The Cabinet Members each gave a report (previously circulated) on the main areas of work undertaken under their relevant portfolio during the previous cycle of meetings. Cabinet Members answered questions on their portfolios.

17 SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPD) DESIGN CODE - BURTREE GARDEN VILLAGE

The Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) to advise that the finalised Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Design Code Greater Faverdale (Burtree Garden Village) Design Code, with a revised text after consultation, was now ready to be approved and adopted by Council as Council Planning Policy, following approval by Cabinet on 5 July 2022. Members were informed that this would form part of the Development Plan and be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The submitted report stated that, at its meeting on 8 March 2022, Cabinet had agreed that the Draft Greater Faverdale (Burtree Garden Village) Design Code SPD should be published for wider consultation. It was reported that the Draft SPD Greater Faverdale (Burtree Garden Village) Design Code had been produced for the Council by DesignNE in coherence with the National Planning Policy Framework changes in July 2021 and in particular the National Model Design Code.

The submitted report outlined that the consultation took place between 6 April 2022 and 6 May 2022, and returned ten separate responses, which were summarised in the table at Appendix 1 of the submitted report.

Based on the responses and validity of the comments, the Planning Policy team had changed the context of the SPD in several places and asked DesignNE to prepare a final version to be sent to Cabinet and Council for approval and adoption.

RESOLVED – (a) That the comments and changes of the Draft Burtree Garden Village Design Code, based on the consultation period, as appended at Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the SPD for Burtree Garden Village Design Code, as appended at Appendix 2 of the submitted report, be adopted as Council Planning Policy.

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

18 CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS

The Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members on the

progress towards the Council's net zero target.

The submitted report stated that following the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration in July 2019, a Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer had been appointed in late January 2020, a Climate Change Strategy had been adopted in July 2020 and an action plan had been produced and adopted in October 2021. It was reported that milestones had been developed and that these will be used by the newly appointed Climate Change Officer to monitor progress.

The submitted report highlighted that a trajectory of 30% reduction in the Council's emission every five years had been agreed by Cabinet in October 2021, that Council emissions for 2021/22 were 6,592 tonnes/CO₂, and provided an overview as to how emissions were reported.

It was reported that the Sustainable Darlington webpage and Sustainability and Climate Change intranet page had been updated and be used to share information with residents and staff.

RESOLVED – That the content of the report be noted.

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

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

19 SCRUTINY REPORTS - TO CONSIDER SCRUTINY OVERVIEW REPORTS:-

The Scrutiny Committee Chairs each submitted a report (previously circulated) on the main areas of work undertaken by their relevant Scrutiny Committee during the last cycle of Committee meetings, and responded to any questions thereon.

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

Consideration was given to membership changes of the Committees, Subsidiary Bodies and Other Bodies for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2022/23.

RESOLVED – (a) That Councillor Lee replace Councillor Brian Jones on the Combined Fire Authority Pension Board;

(b) That Councillor Bartch replace Councillor Keir as the named substitute for Councillor Durham on the Tees Valley Combined Authority Audit and Governance Committee; and

(c) That that Councillor McCollom replace Councillor Wallis as the Labour Group Representative on the Police and Crime Panel.

COUNCIL

Thursday, 15 September 2022

PRESENT – The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Bartch, Bell, Boddy, Dr. Chou, Clarke, Cossins, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Harker, Haszeldine, Holroyd, C L B Hughes, L Hughes, Johnson, B Jones, Mrs D Jones, Layton, Lee, Lucas, Marshall, McCollom, McEwan, Newall, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, A J Scott, Mrs H Scott, Snedker, Sowerby and Tait.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Crudass, Heslop, Laing, Lister, Renton, Tostevin, Wallis, Willis and Wright.

ABSENT – Councillors Baldwin, Keir, Mills, Paley and Preston.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

22 REQUEST FOR AN EXTENSION OF NON-ATTENDANCE - COUNCILLOR LISTER

The Group Director of Operations submitted a report (previously circulated) to consider an application on behalf of Councillor Lister for an extension to the six-month period of her non-attendance at meetings due to ill health.

The submitted report stated that Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 stated that if a Member of a Local Authority failed throughout a period of six consecutive months, from the date of his/her last attendance, to attend any meeting of the authority, he/she shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the Authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a Member of the Authority.

It was further reported that Councillor Lister had not attended any Council or Committee meeting since 16 March 2022, and would cease to be a Member of the Council from midnight on 15 September 2022, unless the Council approved the reason for the non-attendance.

RESOLVED – That the request for an extension of non-attendance by reason of ill-health until Councillor Lister's term of office has ended (May 2023), be agreed.

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**COUNCIL
29 SEPTEMBER 2022**

THE INDEPENDENT PERSON

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Scott Durham, Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Officer -
Luke Swinhoe, Assistant Director, Law and Governance
Monitoring Officer**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise members of the recently vacated Independent Person role and to invite members to approve appointments as set out in the recommendations.

Summary

2. The former Independent Person has been appointed as a circuit judge and accordingly has advised that she will no longer be able to discharge the Independent Person role.
3. This report gives further details of the role and sets out the recruitment process that has been undertaken.
4. The Council is required to have at least one Independent Person, but for reasons detailed in the report the recommendation is to make two appointments.

Recommendation

5. Members are asked to:
 - (a) Note the recruitment process that has been undertaken to fill the vacated Independent Person role;
 - (b) Agree the appointment of two Independent Persons on the terms of appointment as set out in the report;
 - (c) Approve the appointment of Beverley Boal and Julie Mathieson as Independent Persons from 30 September 2022;
 - (d) To give the thanks of the Council to the former Independent Person, Joanne Kidd for her service in the role and to congratulate her on her appointment as a circuit judge.

Reasons

6. The reasons for the recommendations are:
 - (a) To make appointments to the role occasioned by former office holder vacating the role;
 - (b) To help in promoting the good conduct of Members in the Council and the Parish Councils;
 - (c) To comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director, Law and Governance
Monitoring Officer

Background Papers

The Localism Act 2011 [Localism Act 2011 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

Luke Swinhoe: Extension 5490

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no specific issues which relate to crime and disorder
Health and Wellbeing	There is no specific health and wellbeing impact
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There is no specific carbon impact
Diversity	There is no specific diversity impact
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally
Budget and Policy Framework	Changes to the Member Code of Conduct need to be agreed by Council and the Constitution amended.
Key Decision	This is not an executive decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	There is no specific relevance to the strategy beyond a reflection on the Council's ethical governance arrangements
Efficiency	There is no specific efficiency impact
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Background

7. In July 2022 the Independent Person, Joanne Kidd was appointed by Her Majesty the Queen on advice from the Lord Chancellor to become a circuit judge. This meant that she would no longer be able to continue as the Independent Person, a role she has discharged since 2012.
8. The Independent Person role was established by the Localism Act 2011 to enable an outside independent advisor (neither a member nor an officer of the council) to give their views when the council receives complaints about the conduct of members. Councils must appoint at least one Independent Person
9. While the member complaints function is the primary role, an addition function was added by subsequent legislation, requiring that they should be consulted if there is a proposal to dismiss one of the council's statutory officers (ie Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance Officer or the Monitoring Officer). In this capacity the Independent Person would sit as a member of the Human Resources Advisory Panel.
10. In order provide cover in the event non availability or conflicts, to share the workload and to help and to provide greater resilience in the event of a vacancy, it was decided to recruit 2 Independent Persons. The terms and conditions were also updated to reflect the slightly expanded functions, the annual allowance was slightly increased to £900 (from £802, which has not increased since 2012) and a 4 year term of office specified.

Recruitment process

11. The Localism Act 2011 requires a vacancy of the Independent Person role to be advertised in such a manner as the authority considers is likely to bring it to the attention of the public.
12. The role was advertised on the Councils website, and on the North East Jobs Website from 21 July 2022 to the closing date of 22 August 2022. A significant number of enquiries were made about the position and in the event 10 applications were received, of those 6 candidates were shortlisted for interview.
13. The Recruitment Panel was made up of the Chair of Audit Committee, Group Leaders and the Monitoring Officer. Interviews were held on the 9 September 2022.
14. The Recruitment Panel were in agreement about the candidates that they would like to be appointed. References were followed up for each of the preferred candidates and these support their appointment.
15. The Recruitment Panel unanimously recommend to Council that Beverley Boal and Julie Mathieson are offered the position of Independent Person.

Candidate information

16. Beverley Boal lives in Sunderland and is employed by the Care Quality Commission as an Inspection Manager. Beverley previously worked for Sunderland City Council from 1981 to 2015 in a number of roles including as the Complaints Manager.
17. Julie Mathieson lives in Darlington, is a solicitor and has been the Managing Director of DMA Law since 2011, a firm in which she has spent her whole professional life. Julie's responsibilities include complaints and compliance issues.

Consultation

18. Consultation has taken place with the Chair of Audit Committee and the Group Leaders about the recruitment process. Audit Committee received an update about this matter at their meeting on 28 September 2022.

Legal Implications

19. It is a legal requirement under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 for the Council to appoint at least one Independent Person. Further provisions regarding the role are set out in section 28.
20. Section 28(8) (c) (iii) of the Localism Act 2011 requires a decision to appoint a person to the Independent Person role to be approved by a majority of members of Council.

Financial Implications

21. The annual allowance of the Independent Person was set at £802 in 2012 and has not subsequently been increased. The proposal is to increase the annual allowance to £900. As well as the increase in the allowance Members ought also to be aware that appointing an additional Independent Person will increase the costs in this area by £900.

COUNCIL
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL OVERVIEW

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform and update Members on the Leader's Portfolio since the last meeting of Council. The following are some of the areas of work under the Leader's Portfolio.

The death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

2. We were all saddened on 8 September 2022 when Buckingham Palace announced the death of Her Majesty The Queen, and we entered a period of national mourning. Plans were quickly put in place to organise for people wishing to lay flowers and a book of condolence was set up in Civic Reception for people to sign.
3. I attended the Proclamation by the High Sheriff at Durham Town Hall on Sunday 11 September, followed by the Darlington Proclamation at the Market Cross, which was well attended by the people of Darlington. On Thursday 15 September a special Service of Prayer and Reflection for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was held at St Cuthbert's church.
4. The Mayor and I have sent a letter of condolence to King Charles III to express our deepest sympathies on behalf of the people of Darlington.
5. I travelled to London to pay my respects, to sign the book of condolence at Westminster Abbey and observe The Lying-in-State of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Strategic Transport

6. The Tees Valley Combined Authority £310m City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement Programme delivery plan for 2022/23 to 2026/27 has now been agreed with government. Investments include £86.5m on rail infrastructure projects, almost £48m in active travel schemes to encourage cycling and walking, over £46m investment in bus and almost £83m to be spent on highway maintenance and small-scale improvements across Tees Valley. The remainder is to be spent on digital transport projects, supporting decarbonisation, ensuring access to employment and education opportunities and multi-modal investments to support the Mayoral Development Corporations and regeneration of town centres.
7. The Full Business Case for the Darlington Station project was finalised and submitted by the Tees Valley Combined Authority to DfT in early August. This seeks a "decision to deliver," which would unlock the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline Funding to support the delivery of the scheme and complement the local investment commitment to the project. The scheme contributes to the delivery of the government's Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) and is a forerunner of a number of proposed investments to improve capacity on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) as well as improving performance and reliability and capacity for services between Darlington and other parts of Tees Valley.

8. The reliability of bus services continues to be an issue that is a high priority for this Council. The Council have been meeting with Arriva to work in partnership to try and improve the situation. A strategy was put in place by Arriva to reduce the frequency of services that would enable them to focus on an improvement of reliability with the resources they had available. This strategy was introduced in June with a view to re-building service frequency over time. We are working with Arriva to ensure their recruitment plans and the impact of roadworks is also considered as part of the recovery plans.
9. Monitoring information suggests that this strategy has not been as successful that had been hoped and there continues to be issues with buses not turning up when they are scheduled to, which is reflected in feedback from passengers. Therefore, I have met Arriva senior management to seek assurance around their reliability and recovery plans.
10. Although there is some positive news in terms of driver recruitment, with a number of drivers having successfully signed up recently, the training process is such that they are a number of months away from being able to drive. We therefore continue to press Arriva on this issue, with the aim of improving the reliability situation for passengers in the more immediate future.
11. Covid has significantly impacted bus patronage across the Country and operators still requiring financial support from Government to maintain services. The recovery of bus patronage in Darlington is not as strong as other parts of the Tees Valley. Recovery of patronage is important as the fares generated support the network and without fares there could be an impact on future sustainability of some parts of the network.
12. Government have recently announced that there will be a further 6 months of bus recovery funding from October 22 to March 23, in acknowledgement of the significant challenges still being faced by the bus industry, and in the context that the role bus services have in supporting people, businesses and the economy.

Climate Change

13. The Cross Party Climate Change Working Group met on 22 August, when they discussed the Tees Valley Net Zero Strategy and progress on climate change actions.
14. On Friday 16 September I met with Councillor Snedker, the chair of the cross party climate exchange working group, for an update on the progress the group have made and the current work they are looking at. I look forward to supporting the group moving forward and will attend on an ad-hoc basis.

Darlington Economic Campus

15. DEC currently have employed over 360 people, mostly from the local area and surrounding regions. More than 1,100 roles will be based at the Darlington Economic Campus by 2025, across teams from HM Treasury, the Department for International Trade, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the Office for National Statistics and the Competition and Markets Authority. In addition, the Department for Education already have a base in Darlington and will also be part of the Economic Campus.

The Government Property Agency continue to progress the development of the permanent site at Brunswick Street.

Northgate House

16. Progress continues to be made in relation to Northgate House, and the neighbouring buildings. The overall objective is to bring this site forward in future as a key development site and as such a meeting has been held with the current owners of the site on 15 August to better explore how this site can be taken forward.

Towns Fund

17. The Towns Fund Investment Plan continues to progress with work, design and engagement ongoing across all nine project interventions, in the town centre, Northgate and Victoria Road gateways.
18. In the town centre, design work is progressing at the Northern Echo building in relation to the proposed Adult Skills facility. Whilst in Skinnergate and The Yards, delivery and design work continues to provide improvement and enhancements to both the public realm and properties, in particular the improvements to the look of the entrances of Clark's and Buckton's Yards from High Row.
19. Also progressing just outside the town centre is the new T Levels facility at Darlington College, which has appointed a contractor to deliver the works.
20. In Northgate, engagement and design continues, with property acquisitions being progressed, alongside design work for the Garden Street/Weir Street area.
21. We now have the funding to enable progression of the programme, including the delivery of further enhancements for Victoria Road, and intend to progress this over the coming months.
2. Darlington's participation in the Southampton University "Feeling Towns Programme" aimed at developing an understanding of what "pride" means to different people, continues to progress well. The research team have reported progress to the Town Board.

Access to Opportunities for Young People

22. At its meeting in January 2022, Cabinet approved a programme of activity to improve the access to opportunities for Darlington's young people. Youth Employment UK have been commissioned to deliver this work. Youth Employment UK act as the secretariat for the All Party Parliamentary Group for Youth Employment and are recognised as national leaders in this field.
23. The goal is to develop a 'Youth Friendly Darlington'. This will include an on line portal which will help young people navigate the available support to gain employment and provide a route for businesses to engage with young people. In addition a 'Good Youth Employment' campaign will be launched where local employers sign up to a charter which recognises them as a high quality employer for young people.

24. Good progress has been made with both the online portal and campaign due to launch in the autumn.
25. A key aspect of the way the work is being developed is consulting with young people. A Youth Advisory Group has been formed made up of young people from Darlington which provides essential advice, guidance and support to the project taskforce.

Cost of Living

26. On 14th September Councillor Renton and I had a successful meeting with senior leaders of the voluntary and community sector in Darlington. Discussion focused on how the Council and the sector can collaborate effectively to best meet the needs of the people of Darlington. Further meetings are being scheduled to take this forward. An immediate focus will be on helping those most in need through the current rise in the cost of living.
27. The Government will shortly announce an extension to the Household Support Fund (HSF) as part of a number of measures to provide help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living.
28. The Council has already successfully delivered a package of measures in previous rounds of HSF helping people with the cost of food and energy. Officers are currently exploring options and we will again seek the support and advice of the voluntary and community sector.



Councillor Jonathan Dulston
Leader of the Council Portfolio

COUNCIL
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

OVERVIEW OF LOCAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

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

Darlington Transport Plan and Associated Documents

2. The consultation on the Darlington Transport Plan and associated Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan and the Parking Strategy commenced in August and closed on 2 September. Consultation responses will be considered, and any appropriate changes will be made to the plan prior to consideration by Cabinet in November.

Highway Improvement Schemes

Woodland Road (Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan - LCWIP)

3. The Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) with the Local Authorities have developed the Tees Valley Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP) which identifies priority corridors for investment in measures to encourage increased levels of cycling and walking.
4. The West Park/Faverdale to Darlington Town Centre Route is the first route being developed using the new national guidelines for cycle infrastructure design. New features have been introduced as part of this scheme and these new standards are required to be considered on all new schemes moving forward.
5. The work on Woodland Road Phase 1 is now complete. The delivery of this phase which is on Darlington's busiest arterial route has been complex and challenging in terms of the management of all modes of transport through the works. The Council will review the construction delivery to see if there are any improvements that can be adopted for subsequent phases of delivery.
6. The next phase of delivery will be the Duke Street section of the scheme that has been subject to public inquiry and separate Cabinet reports. This will commence Autumn 2022.
7. Consultation on proposed improvements to the A68 corridor has concluded and a consultation report has been produced. Engagement with the consultation was good, resulting in a number of changes being made to the proposals. Next steps include securing funding and planning permission for the proposals whilst continuing to engage with residents and businesses.

Highway Maintenance Programme

8. Over 50 schemes and locations are included in this highway maintenance programme updated, which will seek to improve over 14km of the road network. The progress on this programme is as follows:
9. Highway Maintenance schemes ongoing:
 - (a) B6280 Coniscliffe Road: Carriageway Resurfacing (0.290km)
 - (b) C55 Newton Lane: Carriageway Resurfacing (0.410km)
 - (c) C38a Neasham Road: Carriageway Resurfacing (0.380 km)
 - (d) A68 Swan House Roundabout: Carriageway Resurfacing (0.600km)
 - (e) C55 Prior Street: Footway Refurbishment (0.466km)
 - (f) Unc. Carriageway Micro Asphalt Contract (46 locations, 9.051km)
10. Highway Maintenance schemes due to start:
 - (a) Unc. Swaledale Avenue: Carriageway Reconstruction (0.252km)
 - (b) Unc. Faverdale: Carriageway Reconstruction (0.474km)
 - (c) Unc. Pierremont Crescent West Back Lane: Carriageway Reconstruction (0.117km)
11. Highway Maintenance Schemes completed:
 - (a) C40 Newbiggin Lane: Carriageway Recycling (2.250km)

West Cemetery Drainage

12. Cabinet have approved the release of £250K capital to carry out additional design and drainage works within West Cemetery to minimise the risk of flooding from the site to residential properties.
13. As part of the Crematorium and Cemetery works, underground storage tanks have been installed to manage the flow of surface water from the new development and land drains have also been installed along the boundary of properties on Salutation Road to address concerns regarding drainage of the site.

Climate Change

14. Newbiggin Lane is a recycling scheme using approximately 2000ton of planings taken from the previous year's maintenance programme which would normally have gone to landfill. This scheme along with six others are also being surfaced using a warm mix asphalt material which typically saves 10% in carbon emissions during manufacture which reduces harmful emissions at source.
15. Northumbria in Bloom judges visited Darlington on 20 July and enjoyed seeing the town in full bloom. Water butts are being installed to encourage rainwater usage for planters and perennial plants are being grown to create year-round colour and interest. The use of bark chippings is to help retain moisture in the planters and discourage weed growth.

Head of Steam

16. The museum had a very busy summer, with a wide range of activities and events enjoyed by families; including, a very successful 'Meet and Greet Paddington' event held on 17 July and attended by more than 2,000 visitors.
17. As we have just celebrated the 197th anniversary of the S+DR work is progressing well on the rail heritage quarter and Cabinet have just released the funding to restore the Replica of Locomotion No.1. Work has now commenced on the restoration which will be complete in Autumn 2024.

Libraries

18. During the ongoing works, Darlington Libraries offered a Summer Reading Challenge to all children aged 0 – 16 in a bid to prevent the reading dip children often experience after time away from education. Incentives included a Meta Quest 2 Virtual Reality Headset, a Nintendo Switch, a Kindle Fire, Lego and toys. To compliment the reading challenge, a large programme of events was arranged at both libraries, including illustration workshops and animal encounters.

Hippodrome

19. Darlington Hippodrome hosted the Conservative Hustings on 9 August as the regional venue for the North East. The talk show style event was featured on the main stage bringing with it the attention of national and regional media, and a full house of Conservative members from across the North East.

Creative Darlington

20. Two programmes supported through the Creative Darlington budget and Arts Council England project funding have been showcased at Darlington Hippodrome. TeesDance's 'Move UP' programme worked with eleven young people aged 12 – 19 showcasing their creations on Darlington Hippodrome's main stage on 5 June 2022.
21. 'Opening The Closet Doors' was screened at Darlington Hippodrome on 11 August 2022 as part of Darlington's Pride programme, with 100 attendees. The film was created by Sarah Li, alongside local LGBTQ+ people, following research exploring Darlington Hippodrome's archives.

Town Centre Partnership and Events

22. During the summer season, a large stage was installed in the Market Square to support the events programme by providing an opportunity to host smaller music events and activities with the aim of attracting people into Darlington and encouraging longer dwell times. The stage was sponsored by Northumbrian Water and was set-up with astroturf, picket fencing and deckchairs to offer visitors a park-like space in the town centre.

23. The town centre partnership team continues to engage with the businesses offering support and continued press coverage in publications like Darlington Today, Living magazine and online via social media. The team continue to develop new links, including sharing training opportunities with local businesses.

Environmental Services

24. Unfortunately, there have been some staff shortages in the street cleansing service due to sickness and this has resulted in a pressure on the service area. This resulted in an issue with litter and dog bins not being serviced as regularly as they should have been. Steps were taken to improve the situation and measures are being taken to mitigate the situation in the future if similar pressures are experienced. However, we appreciate the inconvenience this has caused for those responsible people wanting to dispose of rubbish considerately.

Councillor Andy Keir
Local Services Portfolio

COUNCIL
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

OVERVIEW OF ADULTS PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

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

Operational Services

2. Demand remains high for adult social care assessments and support. The flow of referrals, allocation to caseloads, safeguarding, crisis work, and hospital discharges is steady. There has been some covid related sickness and staff absence due to leave which has created further pressure on workload.
3. The RIACT (Responsive, Integrated Assessment care) team and Reablement team continue to work with CDDFT (County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust) to support the discharge flow from hospital with continued success. Since April, the percentage of clients who have completed a reablement package with an outcome of 'No Service Provided or Identified, Long Term Support Ended or Universal Services /Signposted' is 49.9%. In terms of actual numbers, out of the 415 clients who have completed a reablement package, 207 had no ongoing care needs. This is a slight increase from last year. There continues to be an increase in individuals receiving reablement packages who have a higher level of need e.g., individuals requiring MCA (Mental Capacity Assessments), best interest, MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team Meetings) and Safeguarding.
4. There has been a targeted recruitment campaign which has had some positive outcomes with most of the vacant Reablement posts filled (7 out of 8) as well 6 of the 8 vacancies within the Adult Contact team also successfully recruited too. Start dates are planned for Sept and October 2022.

Communications

5. The Ongoing Intervention and Assessment team (OIAT) are feature in this quarter's One-Darlington magazine. The goal of the service is to maximise a person's independence which often involves extensive work with occupational therapists, hospitals and doctors' surgeries, housing providers, and community based services. By working together with other necessary agencies, the support that is provided will not only help to develop the clients' personal strengths but also to expand the persons networks to prevent, delay or reduce the need for long term intervention.
6. The next publication will include a feature on the Mental Health Team.
7. A recruitment event was held during the Pride week. There were several roles advertised with significant interest.

Care reforms

8. The Government have published a set of mutually reinforcing reforms including the Health and Care Act 2022. The key elements of these reforms will include:
 - (a) The return of Care Quality Commission inspections of Adult Social Care Services.
 - (b) The implementation of the Integrated Care Boards (ICB) replacing the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).
 - (c) The review of payments to providers to ensure a fair and consistent methodology is applied (Fair cost of care).
 - (d) A cap on care cost.
9. Implementation of these reforms will be from April 2023.
10. A programme of actions has commenced to prepare for implementation of these reforms and a communications strategy is in development to ensure partners, stakeholders, Council Members and Adult Social Care teams are kept informed of the changes.
11. The Fair Cost of Care programme is progressing well in Darlington. The Council is on course to meet the deadline for submission to central government of the the Interim Market Sustainability Plan (MSP) by 14 October 2022. A key element of the Fair Cost of Care exercise is the submission of cost data by the care sector. All home care data has been returned by our main home care providers. In residential care, 90% of our care home providers have also submitted their cost data using the nationally prescribed tool. This represents a higher level of engagement as compared to other parts of the country. Work is continuing with care home providers to validate the submissions in readiness for the interim MSP.

Commissioning and Contracts

12. The Commissioning and Contracts Team has completed this year's quality standards assessment process for our older people's care homes. Again this year, the Covid

Pandemic Emergency has had a significant impact. Whilst outbreaks have continued across all Older Persons care homes, the impact on the residents has been significantly less than at the onset of the pandemic in 2020. This is due to the combined efforts of the vaccination programme and infection control. The results demonstrate that a high percentage have achieved an A grade, with 13/19, (68%) achieving the highest A Grade. A detailed report setting out the analysis and outcome of this year's quality standards assessment will be presented to the Adults Scrutiny Committee on 25 October 2022.

13. The Team is also working closely with Public Health and colleagues in the Health Service to coordinate the seasonal flu vaccination programme in care homes together with the Autumn Covid Booster programme. Support and guidance to care is continuing to be provided to the care sector to monitor the outbreaks in both residential and domiciliary care sectors.
14. The Council has agreed to a temporary increase in the homecare mileage rates for care staff that work in our domiciliary care services for people aged 65 and over. This is to support our key home care staff to help address the unprecedented rise in fuel costs. Home care services play a critical role in supporting as many people with care needs to live as independently as possible in their own homes. The scheme is being backdated to June and a payment mechanism has been designed with Finance to ensure that the increase in rates is not passed on to people receiving care services. No person receiving care will see any change to financial contributions to their care arrangements. The scheme is being closely monitored to track fuel costs in Darlington and to ensure that the additional fee increase is being passported direct to care staff to assist with their travel costs.

Climate Change

15. We continue to review and discuss across all teams ways to support energy efficiency, e.g., how to cut waste and encourage small changes such as use of energy-saving devices and unplugging electrical equipment.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

16. The Statutory Safeguarding Partners met in June and discussed the Modern Slavery Network, a joint group established to provide a coordinated response to modern slavery and human trafficking across County Durham and Darlington. The Statutory Partners were approached by the network to establish links with Darlington and to help understand where the governance for the group might sit. Partners agreed it should sit within the Safeguarding Partnership, however the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) also has a role to play. Partners agreed they should be sighted on any issues relating to modern slavery first hand to ensure an appropriate response is provided and they will liaise with the CSP as and when required. There are no further safeguarding updates to provide currently.

Councillor Lorraine Tostevin
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Adults

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COUNCIL
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

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

Early Intervention and Front Door

2. A Domestic Abuse Worker has been identified and will be joining the Front Door Service no later than mid-September. The new post that has been created to work across CIAT and Building Stronger Families and will strengthen our response to domestic abuse. A new Health representative has also been identified and is due to join the Front Door Service late August/beginning of September. Discussions are currently being held with the MASH Operational Group around an increase in multi-agency representation within the front door, this will promote a 'Think Family' approach and it is hoped this will include Adult Social Care, probation, mental health, housing and other agencies as we grow the service.
3. Training in relation to the Professor Thorpe approach used at the Front Door has been held for Building Stronger Families staff and another session has been scheduled for 29 September. This training provides Building Stronger Families staff with an overview of the model used in CIAT when gathering information, this helps ensure that the right decisions are made for children and families at the right time. BSF workers can also use the approach within their work with their children, young people and families. The new CIAT/BSF successful candidate will benefit from this training as part of their induction.
4. The newly formed MEG (Missing and Exploited Group) continues to develop well and is held fortnightly. The MEG is instrumental in engaging all professionals in considering Harm Away From Home in a joined up way and assists social workers in completion of the Child Exploitation Matrix, informing children's plans and agreeing specific actions to reduce episodes in relation to children and young people going missing and reducing risk from exploitation

Building Stronger Families Service

5. Targeted and universal groups are building back up, with the majority now operating across the town, including Inspire to support victims of domestic abuse, and parenting workshops across a range of ages. Our delivery of programmes is moving forwards to reflect our family hubs transformation, incorporating groups and support for children of all ages, reflecting our move towards a clear family hubs model.

6. Building Stronger Families managers sit on the Neurodevelopmental Pathway Panel, and those children who don't meet the criteria for the pathway are signposted to other services, including having an early help assessment and support with parenting and behaviour management. Staff have completed training with Daisy Chain to ensure that they have skills relating to working with families with Neurodevelopmental difficulties, delivering different strategies and resources to parents and carers.
7. Older children and teenagers are coming into the centre to take part in Being Me and I am Me, which are programmes designed to promote identity, safety, confidence, and self-esteem. We identified most of these young people were girls and so have now adapted a new group aimed at boys which will be ran from C:The Box, aimed to target young people lacking confidence and showing early signs of dangerous risk taking, leaving them more vulnerable to exploitation.
8. There is development of a new programme of universal and targeted group work in progress. This will be launched in September and will further expand our town wide delivery, utilising community centres and schools. Reducing Parental Conflict and CAPVA, as well as a range of targeted work for older children and drop in sessions for advice will be added to our programme, alongside Early Years groups with a focus on speech and language development and socialisation for children and parents to help with Covid recovery.

Young People's Engagement and Justice Service

9. Both Duke of Edinburgh cohorts have completed their expedition and working on the final part of their award and the presentation evening is being held on 18 August.
10. Darlington have been successful in the Safer Streets 4 bid and recruitment of an Intervention Worker is underway, this will allow for a focus on increasing capacity in the ASB Pathway and will increase school input.

Safeguarding Assessment and Care Planning including Children with Disabilities

- (a) 305 children supported through a Child in Need (CiN) plan as at the end of June 2022. This is an increase from the position in June 2021 when 285 children that were supported through a Child in Need plan.
- (b) 104 children were subject to a Child Protection plan at the end of June 2022. This is an increase on the 95 children who were subject to Child Protection Plan at the end of June 2021.
- (c) The reconfiguration of the Life Stages Service is now complete. The team has been split into a 0-17 Children's Team and an 18+ Adults Team, each aligned to the relevant service area. The Children's team is now much more closely aligned to the other Safeguarding, Assessment & Care Planning teams. Initial reports indicate that the new configuration of teams is allowing for more timely transfers to Adults Services.

Looked After and Care Leaver statistics

11. At the end of June 2022 there were:

- (a) 280 children were in care as of June 2022, 7 of which are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). This is an increase from the position at the end of May 2022 when there were 275 children in care, 6 of whom were UASC and an increase in the position at year end March 2022 when 273 children were in care, 3 of whom were UASC.
- (b) All 157 care leavers between 16 – 25 years have access to a personal advisor for support, advice, and guidance. The Looked After Through Care Service is in touch with all care leavers. 98.2 per cent of our care leavers aged 19-21 and 96.3 per cent of our care leavers aged 22-25 were in suitable accommodation at the end of June 2022. This was due to 1 young person (from each age bracket) being in custody.

Looked After Resources including Fostering, Residential, Family Group Conference and Keeping Families Together

- 12. Since our marketing activities centred on the annual Foster Care Fortnight in May 2022, we have continued with activities to support foster carer and supported lodgings provider recruitment. We held 2 recruitment events at the Dolphin Centre and have more scheduled in Darlington over the coming months. We attended the Darlington Pride event on 13 August to promote fostering as a career. We have a consistent presence on social media as part of our marketing and recruitment plan.
- 13. On 16 August, our annual Foster Carer Strawberry Tea which took place, bringing together foster carers, their children and cared for children, and members of the fostering team to enjoy activities and refreshments in celebration of fostering.

Residential Services

- 14. When Eldon Children's home re-locates, work will progress further to re-purpose the Eldon Street building into "Cedars" our short break and emergency care unit which will be funded for 2 years. One of the exiting residential managers has been recruited to the post of Registered Manager for Cedars, and we are in the process of recruiting a Registered Manager for Lancaster Close.
- 15. Gilling, Dunrobin and Eldon Street Children's homes all continue to have three young people in placement, so are at capacity. Harewood Hill Lodge, Short Breaks Unit provided care to 25 children in July, which represents 88% capacity, leaving scope for emergency situations should a child and their family require additional support. We had 3 young people leave in July as they turned 18 years of age.
- 16. Findings from recent OFSTED inspections of our Children's Homes have demonstrated that we are not consistently providing care to the high standards we aspire for and young people are not consistently achieving the outcomes we aspire for them. We have worked with OFSTED to put immediate actions in place where this has been needed and have developed a more detailed service improvement plan which recognises some of the wider

issues and challenges and actions as to how to address these and improve. The plans have been discussed and shared at Corporate Parenting Panel.

Family Group Conference (FGC)

17. At the end of July, there were 31 families open to the team who are now sitting alongside Assessment and Safeguarding colleagues which is aiding in a more joint up approach to ensuring timely referral for FGC and Emergency Family Network Meetings.

Keeping Families Together (KFT)

18. At the end of July, the team were supporting 6 families. The KFT social workers are currently supporting Assessment and Safeguarding colleagues, so the KFT service is being delivered by three support workers with assistance from the Team Manager. One of the team was successfully appointed to the Advanced Practitioner role, and commences in September 2022.

Education

School Term Dates

19. The school term date arrangements for Darlington maintained schools for the academic years 2024-2025 have been approved and will be published by the end of September 2022.
20. Darlington's Learning and Skills service was inspected by Ofsted on 21 to 24 June. Inspectors judged the service to be "Good" in all areas. Inspectors praised the "calm and welcoming learning environment" where learners feel valued and respected. The report noted that "Tutors successfully support and encourage adults to join learning programmes that help them to re-engage in education and gain the skills and attributes that they need for their next steps."

Youth Unemployment

21. The 18-24 claimant count continues to fall. It dropped from a high of 13.8 per cent (1,005) in March 2021 to 6.2 per cent (450) in May 2022, this is the lowest it has been since September 2016. Although still higher than North-East average (5.2 per cent) and National average (4.5 per cent) it is the lowest in the Tees Valley.
22. The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) continues to perform well. This year YEI have had 221 starts and 208 positive outcomes, giving a total of 1093 starts and 993 positive outcomes (mainly into work), for the contract to date for DBC. The contract is due to end in July 2023.
23. The service has started addressing the need for progression routes for young people with SEND and will continue to work closely with this client group in Autumn 2022.

Children's Commissioning and Contracts

24. In order to continue to diversify the range of commissioned support available, the Short Breaks framework contract for children and young people with disabilities was reopened

enabling new providers to join. Following the reopening, “We Care Support” were successfully appointed to Lot 6 for the provision of non-residential day care/short breaks operating from their Darlington base Henry’s House.

25. MHST Teams (Mental Health Support Teams) are supporting children in years 4 to 8 struggling with feelings of anxiety, fears or worries? This is delivered to Children and Families throughout Darlington in the summer holidays. The programme is an evidence-based intervention which will help parents learn some practical ways in which they can support their child.

Climate Change

26. We continue to review and discuss across all teams ways to support energy efficiency, e.g how to cut waste and encourage small changes such as use of energy-saving devices and unplugging electrical equipment.

Councillor Jon Clarke
Children and Young People Portfolio

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COUNCIL
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

OVERVIEW OF ECONOMY PORTFOLIO

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

Improvements to Coniscliffe Road

2. Cabinet have approved the allocation of £700k from the Tees Valley Indigenous Growth Fund for upgrading and improvement works in Coniscliffe Road and noted that a further £240k will be match funded through Darlington's Town Board Fund.
3. Cabinet supports the upgrading and improvement works to Coniscliffe Road to accommodate pavement café culture, strengthen green infrastructure, promote active travel, support local businesses and create a safe, attractive and working streetscape for the future.

Ingenium Parc – Proposal to Market and Dispose of Land for Development

4. Cabinet received a report seeking approval to market the land at Ingenium Parc and to seek preferred developers. The Council owned land, which amounts to 16.40 HA, is located within Darlington's Eastern Urban Fringe and is allocated for employment uses.
5. The land has an access road which was funded by the Tees Valley Combined Authority and the Council is now looking for developers with a view to attracting manufacturing and industrial units and to provide infrastructure and services so that the wider site is development ready in the future.
6. Cabinet have agreed to the disposal of plots on a direct sale and to market the land to seek Expressions of Interest if required. Cabinet also agreed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to negotiate provisional disposal terms and the final terms will be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet.

Central Park

7. On 26 August 2022 practical completion was achieved for Innovation Central - the new business incubation facility on Central Park. The £8.3m development will provide one floor of laboratory or "clean workspaces" with three upper floors being of varying sizes of mainly compact offices. The design offers flexibility in room sizes, but the initial layout provides for 5 labs and 39 offices.
8. The lease for the facility will be completed with NEBIC in September. The intention is that Innovation Central will provide complementary space to the Business Central building, which NEBIC currently manage on Central Park. We understand there is already

considerable interest in the new building and it is hoped that news of the first tenants is only a few weeks away.

9. The remainder of Central Park will now receive landscaping, branding. This will provide a much-improved developer-ready site of great interest to local and relocating/expanding businesses, especially on the back of the Economic Campus developments nearby.

Climate Change

10. The consultants working on the BEIS pilot study into designating heat network zones have submitted their report to BEIS. We are waiting to hear what the next stages of the process are.
11. We have created an 'introduction to climate change pack', for Parish Councils to use with their communities. We are grateful to Neasham Parish Council for acting as a critical friend in this process. Once they have given us feedback on what we hope is the final version, it will be available on the Council's website.
12. A Zero Waste Map showing where residents can reduce, reuse, recycle and repair has been added to the Sustainable Darlington section of the website.
13. We are looking at improving our engagement with all sectors, with improvements to the website, collaboration with other departments (such as business development and community safety) and utilising opportunities such as digital billboards as they arise.

Towns Funds

14. Confirmed acceptance from Government of submitted performance and governance returns in June 2022 has released further Towns Funding to Darlington in line with our agreed financial profile. All nine Town Fund projects now have capital funding availability to enable progression.
15. Towns Fund projects continue to be developed and delivered. In the Town Centre, design work is progressing at the Northern Echo building in relation to the proposed Adult Skills facility. Whilst in Skinnergate and The Yard's, delivery and design work providing improvement and enhancements to both the public realm and properties continues, in particular the improvements to the look of the entrances of Clark's and Buckton's Yards from High Row.
16. The new T Levels facility at Darlington College has now commenced onsite, with early groundwork completed and structural work planned to commence.
17. In Northgate, engagement and design continues, with property acquisitions being progressed, alongside design work for the Garden Street/Weir Street area.
18. Further enhancements for Victoria Road are planned and will be progressed over the coming months.

19. Darlington`s participation in the Southampton University `Feeling Towns Programme` aimed at developing an understanding of what `pride` means to different people, continues to progress well. The research team have reported progress to the Town Board.

Darlington Indoor Market

20. Phase 2 of the redevelopment of the Indoor Market commenced in August 2022. The works include the refurbishment of the entrances and trading area, new public toilets and toilets for traders, improved signage, and the conversion of an empty retail unit in the market vaults into a new bar area. It is anticipated that all work will be completed by December 2022.

Business Investment

21. Plans for Darlington Business Summit 2022 are now well underway, with a programme offering a series of free-to-attend activities over three days, dedicated to local businesses and jobseekers needs. The Business Submit runs from the 5 -7 October 2022 and includes the DL Expo (business-to-business exhibition), a Jobs Fair, with more than 60 employers register to attend, and a business support showcase, offering a range of information and advice for local businesses.
22. Business investment enquiries continue to increase, as business confidence returns. The main area of interest continues to be industrial development land availability and town centre retail/leisure space.
23. The Business and Intellectual Property Centre - Tees Valley has officially opened its doors at Cockerton Library. The service will support entrepreneurs as they start and grow their business thanks to free one-to-one support and access to industry leading business resources. The BIPC will help people from all walks of life to start and grow a small business with free business databases, market research, confidential 1-1 support, advice clinics and workshops.

Planning and Development Management

24. There have been 355 complaint cases recorded in 2021. 335 closed with justification from officers.
25. There have been 203 complaint cases recorded in 2022. 165 closed with justification. In addition to the 5 emergency complaints, 58 open cases are currently under investigation,
26. Since the beginning of August 2020, 1,390 applications have been received of which 53 are categorised as major. 1,101 decisions have been made in this period, including Committee Decisions, Chairs Delegated and Delegated Decisions.
27. Notices under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act [untidy land and buildings] have been served on a property in Skinnergate and Northgate House. Satisfactory conclusions have been arrived at, relating to both buildings, which will involve significant external appearance changes to the betterment of the Town Centre, supporting the work currently being undertaken under the Towns Fund.

28. Since the last overview report, progress has been made with colleagues across the Tees Valley to deal with this issue on a catchment area basis. Our Local MPs have also been briefed and have raised the issue at Westminster. Since the last report, further guidance has been issued by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, supported by a Ministerial Statement, which has clarified the position for all authorities within the catchment area, including Darlington. Essentially for the moment, new development involving overnight stays is paused until early next year, by which time Natural England will have in place a system for developers to purchase mitigation credits relating to nutrients, which will allow planning permissions for overnight stays including housing to be recommenced.

Environmental Health

29. The Environmental Health Section has responded to 1357 requests for service in Quarter 1 2022/2023. The main categories of these requests are:
- (a) Food – 133
 - (b) Licensing – 122
 - (c) Noise – 247
 - (d) Planning Enquiries – 77
 - (e) Refuse – 99
 - (f) Pest – 169
 - (g) Personal searches – 339
30. Officers from Environmental Health have been working with officers from Public Health with regard to the Darlington Healthy Weight Plan. The Healthy Early Years (HEY) Catering Award is just one small part of the Darlington Healthy Weight Plan. The aim is to use community led changes to environments in which children and young people live, play and socialise. To shift towards the healthy choice being the 'normal' choice – joined up community-based systems approach in nudging towards more healthy family behaviours. The Catering Award is designed to help achieve the aims of the Healthy Weight Plan. The award is open to nursery settings and childminders.
31. Darlington College Childcare Centre has recently applied and been successful in achieving the award. Officers from Environmental Health will promote the award during routine visit to early years settings.
32. Enforcement Action has been taken with regard to a cafe called Country Cuisine, 9b Brinkburn Road, Darlington. During a routine visit, an officer noted that the premises and equipment were extremely dirty and there was no supply of hot water at the time of inspection resulting in a voluntary closure. The premises was to be given a hygiene score of zero which is the lowest hygiene score possible.
33. Following a formal PACE interview, the proprietor agreed to accept a simple caution and, as the food business operator, he must undertake Food Hygiene Training to a minimum of level 3. This is to be completed within 3 months and pay a contribution of a £100 towards the investigation costs.

**Councillor Alan Marshall
Economy Portfolio**

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COUNCIL
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

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

COVID-19 autumn booster

2. This winter it is expected that many respiratory infections, including COVID-19 and flu may be circulating at high levels – this may put increasing pressure on hospitals and other health care services. For these reasons, people aged 50 years and over, those in care homes, and those aged 5 years and over in clinical risk groups are being offered an autumn booster of COVID-19 vaccine. Appointments will be available from the National Booking Service shortly.
3. A booster will also be offered to front-line health and social care staff, those who care for vulnerable individuals and families of individuals with weakened immune systems.
4. The autumn booster is being offered to those at high risk of the complications of COVID-19 infection, who may have not been boosted for a few months. As the number of COVID-19 infections increases over the winter, this booster should help to reduce your risk of being admitted to hospital with COVID-19.

Public Health

5. A Health and Wellbeing Board workshop was held on 13 July where key partners from partner organisations signed up to the Mental Health Prevention Concordat. It was agreed by partners that the Health and Wellbeing Board would oversee the application for recognition of the Concordat with the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities over the next eighteen months.
6. There is now detailed work underway with all partners and members of the Health and Wellbeing Board to draft and submit a local partnership action plan to support our application for recognition.
7. Following the positive feedback from last year the authority has once again commissioned a summer activity programme for young people aged 7 – 12 years living in Darlington focussing on the green spaces across the borough.
8. The authority worked with the provider to expand provision to 15 sites with on average 20-25 individual young people attending each session at each site.

9. This programme resulted in over 185,760 minutes of physical activity being undertaken by over 258 young people aged 7–12-year-olds during 1548 individual contacts over the summer break.
10. There has been lots of positive feedback from participants and their families on social media and provided directly to the provider about how much participants enjoyed their experience. This feedback and other data collected throughout the programme is being collated and analysed by Public Health as part of the evaluation and to identify learning for other interventions aimed at this group.

Darlington re-set event

11. In July I hosted a partnership event with health colleagues from across Darlington.
12. The event considered our shared health and care challenges, and we discussed the changes to the CCG and the development of the Integrated Care System. As a result of the event a join plan is being created to maximise opportunities to deliver better health outcomes for Darlington's residents considering the Integrated Care System changes.

Health and Wellbeing Board

13. The Health and Wellbeing Board met on 22 September 2022. The main discussion items included the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment and an update on Winter Planning.
14. The Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment describes the health needs of the population and the services delivered by community pharmacies. Producing and publishing a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment every three years is a statutory duty of the Health and Wellbeing Board.
15. Following a refresh and update of the information such as new housing and infrastructure developments and a period of consultation the new Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment has been signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board and is now published. This can be found on the Council's website.

Housing Services

Anti-Social Behaviour

16. I'm pleased to report that our Housing Tenancy Enforcement Team were recently successful in 3 cases to resolve ongoing and serious issues relating to anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Council accommodation.
17. Firstly, they obtained a Possession Order against a tenant living in a Council property in the Whinfield area and the tenant was subsequently evicted as a result. The tenant had subjected neighbours to various forms of ASB, which included significant noise nuisance, drug related ASB and disruption caused by visitors attending the address. Tenancy Enforcement Officers worked collaboratively with the Police and residents to secure this eviction.

18. In addition, Officers were also successful in obtaining a Possession Order and subsequent eviction of a tenant living in Council accommodation in the Firthmoor area. Officers worked with Police in relation to a cannabis farm found at the flat and a caravan illegally parked in front of the property.
19. The team were also successful in obtaining an ASB Closure Order for a property in the Branksome area after reports of suspected drug dealing, ASB and acts of violence and aggression. Peterlee Magistrates' Court granted the property closure order on the council owned flat after previous warnings had been ignored.
20. The property has now been closed for three months, meaning no one can enter the property for this period and anyone who breaches this order can be arrested. Housing Tenancy Enforcement Officers worked closely with Durham Constabulary to obtain this order.
21. These actions reinforce the terms and conditions of our new tenancy agreement that we will not tolerate ASB in our Council properties and that we will take swift action and firm action to ensure that our communities are a safe place to live.
22. The team has also taken part in ASB awareness week which ran from the 18 to 22 July. Housing Officers attended various community events in Darlington, supporting this national initiative, alongside the Police and our Community Safety partners.

Rent Collection

23. During quarter 1 of 2022-23, over £6.4 million of rent was collected by our Housing Income team and rent arrears figures have remained consistent. In addition, the team has been successful in securing £177,000 from the Northumbrian Water social tariff scheme for those tenants on low incomes and this has been applied to rent accounts.

Lifeline

24. To help cope with the hot weather over the summer, our Lifeline team carried out daily welfare phone calls to everyone in sheltered schemes and to other vulnerable Lifeline customers in their own homes. The calls involved checking on everyone's wellbeing and talking about keeping safe in the heat, staying hydrated and ventilation properties.
25. Where appropriate, officers contacted family members to ensure everyone was supported. In addition, Scheme Managers ensured communal areas in the Sheltered Schemes were well ventilated and residents received advice and support.

Afghan Refugees

26. Members will recall that Darlington pledged support under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme. 3 Afghan families, from armed forces backgrounds are now settled in Council housing in Darlington and are being supported by Housing Services.
27. Support has included:
 - (a) Help with obtaining the correct identity documentation and opening bank accounts.

- (b) Securing college placements and accessing English courses.
- (c) Securing work placements.
- (d) Help with utility companies and finding the best deals.
- (e) Registering with Doctors and schools.
- (f) Joining local social and sports clubs and integrating into the community.

Ukrainian Refugees

28. Housing Services has been successful in receiving 10 Bookmark Boxes for Ukraine children as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. 10 children who arrived in Darlington with their families as part of the scheme, received a box containing:
- (a) A tablet loaded with e-books, language and literacy apps
 - (b) Mobile data allowance on a sim card
 - (c) Books in Ukrainian and English
 - (d) A starting school stationary set
 - (e) Sensory games and story-telling aids
 - (f) Sticker books, activity booklets and colouring-in sheets
29. The box provides tools for children to adapt to life in the UK, provides comfort and healing and offers language support for the children to fully immerse and integrate. It will be their own precious treasure chest filled with items to make them feel welcomed and comfortable in their new surroundings, and to build their familiarity with the English Language.
30. I was delighted to join the team with delivering the Bookmark Boxes to Ukraine families in Darlington.

Door Replacement Programme

31. I am pleased to report that our door replacement programme for Council has now commenced, following the successful award of the contract to Anglian, who are also undertaking our window replacement programme at pace.
32. Over 1,500 homes are due to have their front door, rear door, or both doors replaced in 2022-23, with properties mainly in the Bank Top, Lascelles and Firthmoor areas.

New Build

33. Work has now commenced on the Neasham Road new build site, delivering 150 much needed affordable Council homes over the next 3 years. This is the biggest Council housing new build project for decades and will include:
- (a) 64 two bedroom apartments,
 - (b) 24 two bedroom houses,
 - (c) 42 three bedroom houses,
 - (d) 19 four bedroom houses, and
 - (e) 1 five bedroom children's home.

34. The site will also offer residents a rent-to-buy option as a first step to affordable home ownership. The first homes are due to be delivered in 2023.

Climate Change

35. Marshall and McCourt have now been appointed as contractor to deliver the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund energy improvement works to a number of Council homes. Improvements will include wall and loft insulation, new double glazed windows, solar panels and air source heat pumps. The work will not only reduce carbon emissions for these properties but will also reduce the energy bills for our tenants.
36. A tenant engagement event about the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund was recently held at Windsor Court with Housing staff, contractors and TVCA representatives in attendance, to discuss the works and share the benefits of the improvements with tenants, which was well received. Property surveys have started this month, with improvement works due to start in October.

Dolphin Centre Mechanical and Electrical Replacement

37. I'm pleased to report that Cabinet have agreed the release of £2.2m capital to carry out phase 3 of the replacement programme of the mechanical and electrical installations and equipment in the Dolphin Centre.
38. Cabinet also agreed the release of £325k capital to undertake localised repairs of the pool tank. Phase 3 is the final part of the overall Mechanical and Electrical replacement programme which will have a positive impact on energy usage due to old systems being replaced by modern energy efficient equipment.

Dolphin Centre

39. The Dolphin Centre swim teaching team visited 26 primary schools in July to deliver water safety talks to children prior to the summer holidays.
40. On Saturday 30 July, the Dolphin Centre launched its 40th birthday celebrations with a large event in the market square and a range of free sporting activities in the town centre, which was very well attended by families from across the town. The event was followed by a series of smaller events during the school holidays, including competitions and prize giveaways.
41. The Dolphin Centre team visited freshers' week at Darlington College in September to promote student memberships and the new addition of a student night in DC Bowl. The team used this opportunity to ask students what they would like to see in the Dolphin Centre and how we can better engage with them as a customer group. Work is currently underway to design an engagement programme with students in the town.

Holiday Activity Fund

42. Following the success of the DfE funded Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) programmes in 2021 and in Easter 2022, Darlington Move More team planned an exciting timetable of free activities and meals for children eligible for benefits related free school meals to access

over the summer holiday period.

43. A total of 70 events were arranged throughout the school summer holidays with over 2,000 places available. The activities, which all included a hot cooked meal for every participant at each event, took place at 16 different community venues across the town to ensure the programme had a broad range of venues that all children across the borough could access.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Nicholson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Councillor Kevin Nicholson
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Housing

COUNCIL
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

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

Council Tax Energy Rebates

2. The Council Tax Energy Rebate scheme was fully delivered by August 2022. A total of 50,274 payments were made to Darlington residents amounting to £6.98 million, which was a significant undertaking for the Council. The scheme was set up to help households with the rising cost of energy bills and I am pleased to report that Darlington has reacted swiftly to ensure that all eligible households received their payment well within the Government's timescales.

Property Asset Management

3. Site investigations at Blackwell have started in connection with the feasibility work relating to the proposed development of site 403 in the Local Plan and the parkland.

Capital Projects and Design Services Management

4. The Council's capital programme has a wide range of exciting projects being developed and delivered.
 - (a) Design work is progressing on a number of schemes.
 - (i) The Compulsory Purchase Order proposals for the Darlington Railway Station are progressing with all of the property and landed now vested with the Council. Preparations are now taking place for site clearance ahead of the main project commencing.
 - (ii) The Railway Heritage Quarter scheme commenced on site 3 May 2022 with steelwork on the new engineering shed on Bonomi Way now being erected.
 - (iii) Site works are nearing completion on the Hybrid Innovation Centre on Central Park, and
 - (iv) Works are ongoing at the Central Library, Crematorium and new Chapel development.
 - (v) The Neasham Road affordable housing site has commenced.
 - (vi) The demolition of the ex-Sports Direct and night club building is also almost complete.
 - (b) Business cases continue to be developed to secure additional projects from funding opportunities.
 - (c) There remains a risk of further inflation related effects on construction related costs.

Annual Canvass (Electoral Registration) 2022

5. This year's Annual Canvass commenced on 4 July 2022, the third Annual Canvass under the new reformed process. As reported at the previous meeting, an initial data match with national and local data sets was undertaken prior to the Canvass commencing, and this suggested that a significant number of properties had no changes in terms of the household composition. As such, the residents within these properties were only required to respond to the Annual Canvass Form where there was a change.
6. This allowed Officers to concentrate their approach on those non-responding properties where the data match suggests that there could be a potential change to the composition of the household.
7. Annual Canvass Reminder Forms for those properties from which a response was required, however had yet to be received, were issued on 15 August 2022, and further action, including household visits, will continue until the end of November 2022 to encourage the completion of outstanding forms.

Neighbourhood Planning Referendum

8. Officers from the Elections Team facilitated a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum for Middleton St George on Thursday, 11 August 2022, with residents voting overwhelmingly in favour of accepting the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Scott Durham
Cabinet Member with Resources Portfolio

COUNCIL
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

OVERVIEW OF STRONGER COMMUNITIES PORTFOLIO

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

Community Safety

Safer Streets Programmes

2. The Safer Streets 3 programme continues to progress. The multi-agency safe place, 'number 40', in Skinnergate has been secured and launched on 1 September 2022, opening as a safe place from Friday 2 September 2022.
3. The joint bid with Durham City and Darlington Town Centre for Safer Streets 4 has been successful to continue with projects already underway as part of Safer Streets 3 (Violence Against Women and Girls) with a few additions; it is hoped this bid will also enable the safe place in Skinnergate to remain open for three years.
4. A second Safer Streets 4 bid has been successful for anti-social behaviour (ASB), with workstreams to address the issue in Darlington.
 - (a) Future Pathways, multi-activity sessions provided by Martin Gray Academy.
 - (b) Theatre in Education programme in secondary schools focussed on ASB issues.
 - (c) Bespoke ASB education programme for smaller targeted groups in secondary schools.
 - (d) Recruitment of a reparation worker to deliver an ASB pathway and early intervention programme.
 - (e) Delivery of a family support programme for 10 families.
 - (f) Completion of a digital ASB training package by all Civic Enforcement Officers and Police Community Support Officers.

Civic Enforcement Service

Anti-Social Behaviour

5. Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Week took place from 18 - 23 July: a national campaign to raise public awareness around anti-social behaviour, community confidence and reporting. Throughout the week, civic enforcement officers in partnership with police, Durham Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, Members and DBC communications team held several community roadshows. These events were hugely successful, engaging over 80 people throughout the week.

CCTV

6. Funding has been successfully secured to replace/upgrade CCTV provision in Darlington. Over the coming months, a project group will be responsible for overseeing and planning this programme of work.

Trading Standards

7. A letter of warning was sent by Trading Standards to an individual in Darlington, following the seizure of a quantity of illegal tobacco products by Immigration Enforcement Officers and investigations by Trading Standards.
8. The sale and supply of illegal vaping products, as well as the sale and supply of vaping products to under-age children, are priorities for enforcement action in 2022-23 by Trading Standards, working in partnership with other law enforcement agencies. As a result, four Darlington retailers have been inspected and quantities of illegal vaping products have been seized. Investigations are ongoing and enforcement action will continue with unannounced inspections, seizure of illegal products, targeted warnings and social media communications, along with any further actions as required.

Private Sector Housing

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

9. The Private Sector Housing Team have continued to support Refugee Support Officers by carrying out accommodation inspections to confirm that properties are suitable for guests being welcomed into Darlington by sponsors. These initial checks have included ensuring that each property proposed is available for at least six months, is free from serious health and safety hazards and suitable for the number of people to be accommodated. As of 16 August 2022, 42 inspections have been carried out.

Cost of Living

10. Private Sector Housing have been working with Northern PowerGrid and the Green Doctor Team to deliver energy awareness sessions at various hubs around Darlington. A second set of sessions commenced in September 2022 in preparation for the rise in energy costs in October 2022, to advise residents in relation to how they can reduce their energy bills, make their homes warmer by being more energy efficient, maximise their income and potentially access grants and other support.

PREVENT

11. Prior to the end of the year, a bid will be submitted of up to £30k to the Home Office's Preventing Radicalisation Fund. The bid will fund specific training for designated safeguarding leads in schools and colleges to enable them to recognise when male students are vulnerable to radicalisation (particularly those with Autism Spectrum Disorder, similar conditions and mental health issues) and know what actions to take. If successful, the training will be delivered during February/March 2023. The bid is in response to the current local threat, which is predominantly young men/teenage boys being targeted for extreme right-wing radicalisation.
12. Four information sessions held via Microsoft Teams were offered to staff interested in becoming facilitators for the 'Eyes and Ears' community engagement programme, to support empowering people in communities to look out for signs that people may need help and the steps they can take to assist. In addition to the online sessions, an in-person event was held in the Town Hall foyer for Members and staff. Attendees commented very positively about the programme and Members offered support to publicise the launch in their wards. The pilot of the programme commenced in September 2022 following delays due to Covid restrictions.

Licensing

Taxis

13. Public consultation for proposed changes to the taxi policy with an interim review has now closed and a report was presented at the Licensing Committee on the 6 September seeking approval for the changes to be authorised by Full Council.
14. A new automated license application system has been introduced and went live on 1 September 2022. This system will make it easier for drivers to apply. A communication plan will be used to promote the trade and the easier application process.
15. The main taxi operator in Darlington, 1AB, has recently been taken over by a company called Take Me, who are based in Leicestershire. Officers will work with the new company to understand their plans going forward and provide further updates.
16. Funding has been obtained from Safer Streets 4 to keep taxi marshals on Friday and Saturday nights in Grange Road for a further 12 months.

Crime and Disorder

17.

Darlington	YTD JULY 2021	YTD JULY 2022	% Increase/decrease
Crime	3698	3640	-2%
Incidents	10391	10617	+2%
ASB	1224	1264	+3%

18.

DARLINGTON TOWN CENTRE	YTD JULY 2021	YTD JULY 2022	% Increase/decrease
Crime	403	490	+22%
Incidents	772	894	+16%
ASB	98	102	+4%

Climate Change

ECO4

19. The Energy Company Obligation (ECO), is a government energy efficiency scheme, administered by Ofgem. ECO4 is a four-year scheme and is intended to run to 31 March 2026. The main objective of ECO4 is to improve the least energy efficient housing stock occupied by low income and vulnerable households.
20. The Private Sector Housing Team are currently encouraging participation in ECO4 through energy companies. Householders are encouraged to use the Simple Energy Advice website to find energy companies who are carrying out ECO works at low or no cost, such as cavity wall insulation, loft installation and the replacement of faulty or broken boilers. 7,783 energy efficient measures have been installed in Darlington through ECO funding since the scheme started.

Information Sharing

21. The Community Resilience Officer met with the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer to discuss different methods of disseminating climate information to the public; including, attending the next Darlington UNITY Group meeting to deliver a presentation.

Councillor Mike Renton
Stronger Communities Portfolio

COUNCIL
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

OVERVIEW OF ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Adult Social Care Reform Programme and Fair Cost of Care Exercises

2. We were pleased to receive an informative presentation on the Adult Social Care Reform Programme and the Fair Cost of Care Exercises from the Assistant Director Adult Services.
3. In doing so, the Assistant Director Adults Services highlighted the key points of the Health and Care Act 2022, including the Return of CQC assessment of Adults Services provided by local authorities, the Secretary of State default powers in relation to Adult Social Care, the introduction of Integrated Care Boards and Integrated Care Partnerships, the provision of Mandatory Learning Disability and Autism training, and greater professional regulation.
4. The Assistant Director Adults Services outlined the impact from an Adult Social Care perspective, which included charging reform requirements, fair cost of care – market capacity and sustainability, the CQC Assurance Framework and involvement with the Integrated Care Partnerships.
5. Members were keen to explore the comparison between the fees paid by the Council and those paid by a self-funder, and the scope of payments, and sought reassurance that service providers were in a position to adapt to the new regulation. We were also keen to understand the preparedness of our own Adult Social Care teams for inspection. Further discussion ensued on whether the national funding for the reforms would cover the additional costs.
6. We recognised that there will be challenges, and were pleased to learn that working in partnership would be at the core of planning. We were eager to understand the linkages between staff retention and the rate of pay, and the influence local authorities could have to provide more attractive pay arrangements.

Performance Indicators End of Year Report 2021-22

7. The Committee received a report to provide Members with performance data against Key Performance Indicators for 2021/22 at Quarter 4. The submitted report outlined performance information in line with an indicator set and Scrutiny Committee distribution agreed by the Monitoring and Coordination Group on 4 June 2018, and are aligned with key priorities. Twelve indicators are reported to this Committee, ten on a six monthly basis and two annually.
8. It was reported that, of the ten indicators reported at six months, two of the indicators showed performance better than at this time last year, four indicators showed

performance which had slightly reduced from this time last year, yet was still continuing to be monitored and managed, one indicator showed performance that was the same as at this time last year, and that three indicators were not comparable (being reviewed at a point in time). No surveys were completed in relation to the two indicators reported on an annual basis due to the ongoing Covid pandemic.

9. Members entered into discussion on the report including the rise in residential numbers following Covid and the impact of Covid on other indicators, and expressed a desire to scrutinise budgets.

Work Programme

10. Members gave consideration to the Work Programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/23 and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.

Councillor Bob Donoghue
Chair of Adults Scrutiny Committee

COUNCIL
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Designated Officer Annual Report 2021/22

2. Members Annually receive a report on the progress and performance of the Designated Officer for the period April 2021 to March 2022 and the action plan for the period April 2021 to March 2022.
3. The role of the Designated Officer, based with the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Business Unit, is to ensure that advice and guidance is provided to partner agencies and staff where an allegation is made against a person who works with children in a paid or voluntary capacity and to facilitate and oversee this process.
4. It is a requirement of all organisations working with children in Darlington to have policies and procedures in place on what their organisation should do when an allegation is made against an employee/volunteer who has contact with children.
5. In 2021/22 the Designated Officer service received a total of 237 contacts in respect of allegations representing an 24 per cent increase in the number of contacts received in 2020/21; and of the total number of contacts received 59 allegations progressed to an Initial Evaluation Meeting (IEM). However, the increase in the number of Initial Evaluation Meetings was mainly a consequence of the introduction of meetings held remotely via Microsoft Teams during the Covid-19 pandemic and meetings held in this way proved very popular with practitioners and greatly improved attendance at meetings.
6. Members noted that of the contacts made in 2021/22 the main category for referral was allegations of physical abuse, which represented an increase of 9 per cent on last year's figures within this category. Other categories of allegation were emotional, sexual abuse, neglect and other incidents occurred in private lives of individuals.
7. Although there is no requirement in legislation for enquiries to meet timescales, local targets are set in Darlington and we were pleased to note that 80 per cent of allegations were resolved within one month and 90 per cent within three months, consistent with previous year's performance.
8. We were particular interested to learn what processes were in place for the Designated Officer to be notified about any referrals from education settings and if Officers were confident that there were sufficient procedures in place within schools to report incidents.
9. The Assistant Director of Education and Inclusion confirmed that he was confident that there were sufficient policies and procedures in place as to what organisations should do

when an allegation is made and specifically in relation to schools, he advised that the service proactively briefs them on any legislative changes.

10. We also requested further information on non-substantiated cases and how those were dealt with and the reasons for these cases not reducing.

Children and Young People Public Health Overview

11. We received an annual update of the Children and Young People Public Health interventions and programs.
12. The Healthy Lifestyles Survey has been delivered for the past 12 years with a total of up to 8,624 pupils across 33 primary and secondary schools completing the survey annually; the survey of 2021 was the first full survey completed following the pandemic and included some specific topics and questions that had been developed and agreed by young people, schools and other professionals to reflect the impact of the pandemic on young people
13. The Child Health Profile is produced annually by Public Health England (now Office of Health Improvement and Disparities OHID) for every local authority area in England and the profile for Darlington this year when compared to the England averages showed that the health and wellbeing of children in Darlington was mixed.
14. Some key indicators such as breastfeeding, smoking in pregnancy and obesity were worse compared to England; however, other indicators such as vaccination uptake, admission to hospital for common health conditions being better or similar when compared to England.
15. The 0-19 Service, provided by Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust, continues to perform well, achieving well against the statutory and contract performance targets and the service continues to receive positive feedback from parents and carers and other users of the service.
16. The Service has also continued innovative work in relation to infant feeding and introduced new interventions and continued work with schools including a new 'drop in' offer to schools post pandemic as well as close working and liaison with specialist mental health teams in Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Mental Health Trust.
17. Our questions to the Public Health Specialist related in particular to smoking and vaping among our young people; increasing obesity rates locally compared to the national average; and how Public Health comment on future use in terms of planning applications for takeaways within Darlington; and how the Healthy Lifestyles Survey is completed within schools to ensure that the survey was representative of all schools within the borough.
18. In response the Public Health Specialist advised Members that the function of Public Health was to advise on all policies although in relation to planning there were limitations on the Director of Public Health intervention by national legislation.

19. The Chair and Members offered their thanks to Public Health for all their efforts to tackle these issues and appreciate it is a struggle but something that must be done if we are to make a difference to the health of your young people.

Self-Assessment Overview

20. Members received the Annual Self- Assessment for Children’s Services to enable challenge to and drive improvement in public services.
21. Children’s Services update each quarter an assessment of social work practice, inclusive of Early Help, based on changes in performance data. To bring the information into a stand-alone easy read document an annual self-assessment overview document is completed.
22. The aim of the self-evaluation is to answer three questions: What do we know about the quality and impact of social work practice in our local authority; How do we know it; and What are our plans for the next 12 months to maintain or improve practice. The self-assessment is used as part of Ofsted’s ILACS Annual Engagement Meeting and plays an important role in their understanding of local authorities and how they work.
23. Members questioned how progress on quality is measured; how the voice of the Social Workers working with children is captured; and how the authority plan to deal with the future effect of fuel costs on Care Centres and Foster Carers.
24. The Assistant Director Children’s Services acknowledged that this may have an impact on Foster Carers considering their current position and advised that there was work on going with existing carers also for potential barriers due to the economic uncertainty and also as a result of the recent pandemic.
25. We will continue to examine the Self-Assessment Overview on an annual basis and will also continue to monitor performance throughout the year in the quarterly performance reports to Scrutiny.

Work Programme

26. Members gave consideration to the Work Programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during 2021/22, and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.
27. We plan to re-examine the recommendations made following the review on the Effects of the Pandemic on our Children and Young People and examine the current situation.

Councillor Paul Crudass
Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

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COUNCIL
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Stronger Communities Board and Sub Groups - Update

2. The Stronger Communities Portfolio Holder provided an update to Scrutiny on the Stronger Communities Board and Sub Groups.
3. Scrutiny were informed that a Public Sector Executives Group (PSEG) had been put in place for Senior Officer engagement with public sector agencies and it was proposed that a 'Stronger Communities Board' be established, bringing together civic leaders from the different sectors in town and including representation from governing bodies.
4. The Stronger Communities Board is scheduled to be launched in November 2022 and seeks to unite behind common goals and foster collaboration, providing a strong mandate for groups such as the Public Sector Executives Group.

Restoration of Locomotion No 1 Replica

5. Scrutiny welcomed a verbal update from the Assistant Director Community Services on the Restoration of Locomotion No 1 Replica. We noted the acquisition of Locomotion No. 1 Replica from Beamish Museum, and that an assessment of the condition and the work required to bring Locomotion No. 1 Replica back into full operational order in time for the 2025 bicentenary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, has been completed.
6. Members were informed of the intention for Locomotion No. 1 Replica to be operating under steam as part of the overall celebrations for the 2025 bicentenary for the Stockton and Darlington Railway, together with the construction of a number of chaldron waggons and coaches for people to ride in. We were also advised of the proposed development of a solution to allow Locomotion No1 Replica to operate under greener technologies.
7. Scrutiny were assured that the requested capital funding of £496,000 would be sufficient to complete the required works.
8. Scrutiny awaits a full report on this item which will also include detail around greener technologies.

Darlington Transport Plans and Parking Strategy

9. Scrutiny received a report seeking Members' consideration of the draft Darlington Transport Plan, Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan and Darlington Parking Strategy.

10. The Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan (STP) 2020-2030, which was published in 2020, sets out the strategic direction for transport in the Tees Valley and was developed to deliver three broad objectives; social opportunity, economic growth and carbon reduction and environment. The Darlington Transport Strategy sets out how the priorities detailed in the STP will be delivered in Darlington, taking into account local priorities, and sets a delivery framework to ensure the priorities are delivered.
11. The Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan supports the Town Centre Strategy 2019-2030 and the Towns Fund Investment Plan, setting out how transport can help deliver the new focus set out in the Town Centre Plan and the Darlington Parking Strategy sets out a framework for the provision and control of parking within the borough in order to meet the aspirations of the Darlington Transport Strategy and the Darlington Town Centre Transport Plan.
12. We discussed in particular the need for increased support for the bus companies. We noted that many of the issues highlighted were related to a lack of driver availability and recruitment and that there has been recent improvements in this area. We were informed that improvements in real-time information on the web application were forthcoming.
13. Members are keen to see an increased amount, and a more flexible approach to delivery, in terms of cycling training, both amongst adults and younger people and a number of suggestions were advanced for Officers to consider especially around an advertising and communication plan to gain a further reach and awareness. Members also suggested times for cycling training in schools are looked at to have a more flexible approach, after hours when school clubs are on as it was felt this may have a better take up.
14. Scrutiny noted that the Darlington Transport Plan does not reference e-scooters, and we discussed the national position in relation to e-scooters and the legislation governing the use. We also discussed the taxing and insuring of those riding bicycles on the public highway. Members discussed that E-scooters were seen as a cleaner/greener mode of transport and did not want Darlington to be left behind as other areas progress with them. It was also noted that data would be readily available from areas who have them in use in regards to accidents and fines.
15. Discussion ensued on the balance within the plans in terms of national requirements and local discretion, and whether the plans reflected local priorities. Members are also interested to ascertain how many off-street car parks do not meet 'Park Mark' standards, and what the cost of work would be to bring them to the required standard. We were pleased to note that cycle parking was being reviewed and revised as part of the Darlington Parking Strategy, however were disappointed to note a lack of residential parking for new town centre accommodation. Members were also interested in the positioning of payments points in relation to on-street parking, particularly in the west of the town centre, and the use of residential parking permits in parking zones.
16. We also discussed the method of consultation and the lack of engagement with local businesses.

Performance Indicators – Quarter 4 2021/2022

17. Scrutiny Committee received an update on Quarter 4 performance against key

performance indicators for 2021/2022 which are within the remit of our Scrutiny.

18. We gave consideration to the performance position in relation to the 35 indicators, noting that 12 were showing performance better than the same period last year or from when last reported, two indicators were showing performance the same, whilst nine indicators were showing performance not as good as the same period last year or from when last reported; and that 12 indicators did not have comparative information from last year.
19. We did discuss in particular communications and social media output in relation to the lack of emptying of litter and dog bins, which had arisen due to staff absenteeism and sickness. Members suggested the use of the 'What Three Word' app to identify litter and dog bins, the provision of additional bins, an increase in the capacity of bins, additional signage requesting that residents take their litter home with them if bins are full, and an additional option to report full bins on the Darlington app. Officers advised that there was a resource issue that was impacting the service with bins being full which was also impacted by the weather – with it being hotter for longer. Members discussed extreme weather conditions and felt that this was something the Council would be required to manage due to climate change and we queried the provisions that would be made for this. Members continue to have concerns regarding bins being left full across the town, particularly during hot weather.
20. Scrutiny also expressed concern over the disposal of single use vapes and the lack of prosecutions for fly-tipping and we noted that prosecutions were now resuming following the pandemic period. Members discussed single use vapes, which are now a very common item to find discarded on the streets, and the lack of instruction for disposal of these items, particularly as they include a battery often built into the device which is not removable. Officers advised that these items could not be placed into household waste due to the fire hazard. It was noted that the Council have only had one fire in a bin wagon recently which was in the Eastbourne ward, but others have occurred across the TVCA which resulted in communication going out to remind households how to correctly dispose of batteries.
21. As Chair of this Scrutiny Committee, I have started the conversation regarding single use vapes with officers and the cabinet member on 22 August – with input from street scene, environmental health and trading standards. An advertising/communications campaign is being planned to inform the public about the correct way to dispose of these items safely and correctly.

Work Programme 2022/23

22. We have given consideration to this Scrutiny Committee's work programme for the Municipal Year 2022/23 and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.

Councillor Steven Tait
Chair of Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee

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COUNCIL
29 September 2022

OVERVIEW OF ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring Quarter 1 2022/23

2. We received the quarter 1 information in relation to the capital resource and commitment position of the Council's capital programme. The Council Project Position Statement currently has 48 live projects being managed with an overall projected outturn value of £186.911 million.
3. The majority of the Council's projects are running to time, cost and quality expectations and, following questions by Members, we were reassured that regular monitoring was being undertaken given the current financial pressures and that both fixed cost option contracts and inflation indices were used when estimating contracts to provide an element of security.
4. We were provided with information on those contracts which were showing a variance, together with the reasons for those variances and the action being taken.

Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual Reports 2021/22

5. We considered the Annual report which was also considered by Cabinet in relation to the number of complaints, compliments and comments which had been received by the Authority during 2021/22.
6. The Council constantly strives to ensure an organisational structure in which complaints and accepted, owned and resolved as quickly as possible and one in which learning from complaints is used to improve services. There is also a statutory requirement for the Council to produce annual reports in respect of representations received under the Adult Social Care, the Children's Social Care and the Public Health Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedures.
7. We were advised that, during 2021/22, 739 complaints had been received, an increase from 628 in 2020/21, 217 compliments had been received, again a decrease from the previous year and that there had been a decrease in the number of comments which had been received from 178 to 127.
8. It is important for the Authority to analyse the complaints to determine whether there are any concerns in any particular areas and we were given some examples of where organisational learning resulting from complaints had been implemented.
9. Although the number of complaints has increased slightly over the last year, the increase is minimal given the pressures the Authority and its services faced during the pandemic and

we had no further comments thereon to make to Cabinet.

Review of Outcome of Complaints Made to Ombudsman

10. We have also considered a report which was considered by Cabinet outlining the outcome of cases which have been determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) during 2021/22, together with the LGSCO's Annual Review Letter 2022, which contains information on the Council's performance in relation to complaints.
11. During the period 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, 16 cases were the subject of decision by the LGSCO and two cases were the subject of decision by the HOS.

Investment Fund Update

12. Scrutiny considered a report, again which was considered by Cabinet in relation to the progress against the agreed investments being funded through the Investment Fund.
13. As Members will be aware, the Investment Fund was established by the Council in November 2016 to use for innovative investment opportunities beyond the traditional Treasury Management Strategy, in order to achieve greater returns given the low returns on investments. The original investment was increased to £50 million in November 2018.
14. We were advised that the £50 million was being used as envisaged to include Joint Venture (JV) vehicles and economic regeneration initiatives, with pre tax returns on the JV's anticipated to be over £6 million. Three of the JV schemes have now been completed and the investment fund fully repaid to the Council.
15. Although the pandemic did have an impact on the schemes construction timescales, they are now all back on track and sales are buoyant.
16. The agreed investment fund has a commitment against it of £33.48 million, leaving a balance of £16.52 million uncommitted. Officers are actively looking at schemes which could be agreed, subject to approval, to utilise the fund to for wider economic benefits.

Work Programme

17. We considered our work programme for the remainder of this Municipal Year and asked for an update on how the current financial pressures may impact on both residents and Council budgets. It is important that, as a Scrutiny Committee, we closely monitor this and consider what the Council can do to support and signpost communities to financial advice and assistance.
18. We have also asked for information to be provided on the administrative processes around the payment of the Government's Council Tax energy rebate which was administered by the Council and the resource implications in administering that scheme at short notice.

Councillor Heather Scott
Chair Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

COUNCIL
29 SEPTEMBER 2022

OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

Update on NHS Dentistry

2. We welcomed a presentation from the Senior Care Manager (Dental Commissioning Lead – North East and North Cumbria), NHS England and NHS Improvement – North East and North Yorkshire and the Chair of Durham and Darlington and Tees Local Dental Network on NHS Dentistry in Darlington.
3. Scrutiny were provided background on NHS dentistry and we were informed of the commissioned capacity as of August 2022 for general dental services. The current pressures and challenges on NHS dentistry were outlined and included Covid-19 impacts, workforce recruitment and retention and NHS dental contract.
4. Members were provided with details of the package of initial reforms to the NHS dental contract, which were published by NHS England in July 2022 and that engagement to inform the next stages of the reform programme has commenced.
5. We acknowledged the local measures and actions taken to date, including incentives for all NHS dental practices to prioritise patients that had not been seen in the practice within the previous 24 months (adults) and 12 months (children) who require urgent dental care, increased investment into the new Dental Out of Hours Service contract and additional funding made available to practices who are able to offer additional clinical capacity above their contracted levels, of which take up in Darlington has been limited to only one practice that delivered additional 15 sessions during February and March 2022.
6. Scrutiny were advised of the next steps to improve access to dental services and we discussed the overall picture of dental practices in Darlington and the reasons why residents are having problems accessing dentists. We have requested information on patients attending Accident and Emergency at the hospital to access care.
7. Members felt that more information and simple messages could be provided to residents to explain the reasons why access to dental practices was a problem and to explain that residents are able to contact any dental practice and that they are not specifically assigned to one. We also expressed our concerns that the NHS Choices website is not kept up to date.
8. We also discussed how NHS England are planning to encourage new NHS practices, what planning is being undertaken to allow for the infrastructure required within the Local Plan and further housing development and what changes the authority can expect to see within the next six months. We were assured that NHS England's priority is to increase capacity

for urgent care, source improved clinical capacity and progress procurement, support existing practices to deliver the current level of commissioned capacity, prioritise areas where greatest improvement needs to be addressed and incentivise new providers.

9. Members have requested a further update from NHS England on NHS Dentistry in six months' time.

Better Care Fund

10. Scrutiny welcomed an update report on the progress of the submission of the Darlington Better Care Fund Plan for the 2022/23 programme.
11. The Better Care Fund (BCF) is a programme spanning the NHS and Local Government which seeks to join up health and care services and integrated care boards (ICBs) and local government are required to agree a joint plan which is owned by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
12. We noted that the plan for Darlington is being drafted and that a service review is underway across all funded schemes and is due to be completed by the end of September 2022.
13. We have agreed to give further consideration to the Better Care Fund Plan at a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.

Customer Engagement Strategy 2021-2024 Update

14. We welcomed a presentation from the Assistant Director Housing and Revenues, updating Members on the Customer Engagement Strategy 2021-2024.
15. Scrutiny were provided with details of the increased customer engagement following the success of engagement events in 2021. We noted that regular events are being held in new locations and Estate walkabouts have been reintroduced in high profile areas.
16. Reference was made to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures that are due to come into place in April 2023, we noted that surveys will be sent to tenants and will cover Repairs, Building Safety, Complaints, Customer Engagement and Neighbourhoods.
17. Members acknowledged the good work of the Tenants Panel within the community and noted the progress that had been made and that the service was more customer friendly with the use of DocuSign, a new signature portal.

Work Programme

18. We have given consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/23 and possible review topics. The work programme is a rolling programme and items can be added as necessary.
19. We have agreed that a visit be arranged to the Drug and Alcohol Service (We are With You) and to examine potential improvements in waiting times within the CAMHS service at a future meeting.

Councillor Ian Bell
Chair of the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee

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