



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee Agenda

10.00 am

Thursday, 18 April 2024

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT

Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To approve the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee: –
 - (a) 22 February 2024 Meeting of the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee (Pages 3 - 6)
4. Tree and Woodland Strategy 2021 - 2031 – Report of the Group Director of Services (Pages 7 - 40)
5. CCTV Camera Replacement Programme – Report of the Group Director of Services (Pages 41 - 44)
6. Private Sector Housing – Report of the Group Director of Services (Pages 45 - 50)
7. Council Plan 2024 - 2027 – Report of the Chief Officers Executive (Pages 51 - 68)
8. Work Programme – Report of the Assistant Director Law and Governance (Pages 69 - 80)

9. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at the meeting.
10. Questions



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Wednesday, 10 April 2024

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

Councillors Cossins, Coe, Mrs Culley, Garner, Keir, Mahmud, McGill, M Nicholson, Snedker and Walters

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Olivia Hugill, Democratic Officer, Operations Group, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays
email: olivia.hugill@darlington.gov.uk or telephone 01325 405363

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 22 February 2024

PRESENT – Councillors McGill (Chair), Coe, Cossins, Mrs Culley, Keir, Mahmud, M Nicholson, Snedker and Walters.

APOLOGIES – Councillor Garner.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor McCollom.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Brian Graham (Head of Environmental Services), Seth Pearson (Partnership Director), Andrew Casey (Head of Highway Network Management), Gill Hutchinson (Transport Planning Manager), Paul Dalton (Democratic and Elections Officer) and Olivia Hugill (Democratic Officer).

CLS30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CLS31 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2024

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 11 January 2024.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 11 January 2024 be approved as a correct record.

CLS32 TO RECEIVE THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TEES VALLEY COMBINED AUTHORITY TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - TUESDAY 23 JANUARY 2024

Submitted – The Draft Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the Tees Valley Combined Authority Transport Committee held on 23 January 2024.

Members discussed the taxi replacement provided when the last bus had been cancelled and how costs can be reimbursed and how this had not been widely promoted.

RESOLVED – That the minutes be noted.

CLS33 PUBLIC SECTOR EXECUTIVES GROUP

The Partnerships Director submitted a report (previously circulated) which informed members about the work of the Public Sector Executive Group (PSEG).

It was reported that the PSEG was formed as one of the arrangements to replace the Darlington Partnership, following agreement by Council on 15 July; that the group included senior officers from key public sector bodies; and the key aims, and membership of the group was outlined.

Details were provided of recent activity of the group, including the announcement of the change in administration at the Council and that a new Council Plan is in development. At the same meeting the group considered the forthcoming Health and Wellbeing Plan, which will support the Council Plan and the Forward Plan of the Integrated Care Board.

Members entered discussion how the PSEG was funded; how members can understand whether PSEG was viable; and the partnership working of the group.

RESOLVED – That the report was noted.

CLS34 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

The Assistant Director – Transport and Capital Projects submitted a report (previously circulated) which provided members an annual update on the delivery of the Darlington Transport Plan which outlined delivery, performance, and public satisfaction in 2023/24 and will outline the 2024/25 programme, including the release of funding.

The submitted report stated that the Tees Valley Region had secured funding from the Government, which included £310m City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme and £6.851m Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which will deliver improvements to the bus services. The report stated that there had been good progress on the development and delivery of the Transport Capital Programme.

It was reported that in 2022/23 there was a new Transport Strategy for the borough; a Town Centre Transport Plan and Parking Strategy which were adopted by the Council where work continues. A progress report on the schemes delivered in 2023/24 and the proposed programme of schemes 2024/25 was detailed in the report.

Funding had been made available to ensure there is a balance between sustainable transport measures and options to support motorists. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) was still in progress with the completion of Phase 1 of the Faverdale/West Park to town centre cycle route.

Reference was made to the Tees Valley region which had been allocated funding of £978m for the second round of CRSTS which will cover the period of 2027/28 to 2031/32. In addition to the CRSTS2, government had announced an additional minimum £100.1m of highways maintenance for Tees Valley between 2023/24 – 2033/34.

Discussion took place around Electric Charging Vehicles and the parking spaces for them; Members highlighted the amount of electric charging spaces and the lack of disabled electric charging spaces.

Members discussed the health aspects around the plan and how it will provide Darlington residents with a reduction in air pollution and a cleaner environment. Members also discussed the new recyclable materials which have been used as alternative measures for roads.

Members scrutinised the 20mph limit in residential areas which are yet to occur, as mentioned in a previous Transport Plan. Members were provided with calm trafficked areas

of the town and how Durham Constabulary have reassessed the 20mph limit consideration.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CLS35 WORK PROGRAMME

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

RESOLVED - That the work programme be noted.

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**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY
18 APRIL 2024**

TREE AND WOODLAND STRATEGY 2021-2031

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide members with an update on delivery of the actions within the strategy, the proposed 2024/25 action plan and the revised approach to risk management and climate declaration.

Summary

2. Darlington has had a Tree and Woodland Strategy in place since 2000. The latest revision covers the period 2021-2031, which was adopted by Cabinet in December 2020 and is attached at **Appendix 1**.
3. The Strategy is in place to set out how the Council manage and enlarge the tree population across the Borough.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that Members note the content of the report and the proposed action plan for 2024/25.

**Dave Winstanley
Group Director of Services**

Background Papers

Tree and Woodland Strategy 2021-2031

Ian Thompson: Extension 6628

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| S17 Crime and Disorder | There is no impact as a result of this report. |
| Health and Wellbeing | Trees have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. |
| Carbon Impact and Climate Change | Trees can have a significant impact on mitigating or reducing carbon in the atmosphere. |
| Diversity | Trees benefit all individuals. |
| Wards Affected | All wards are affected. |
| Groups Affected | All groups benefit from trees. |

| | |
|--|---|
| Budget and Policy Framework | There is no impact as a result of this report. |
| Key Decision | No |
| Urgent Decision | No |
| Council Plan | The tree cover in Darlington contributes to the quality of the environment. |
| Efficiency | There is no impact on the Council's efficiency agenda. |
| Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers | This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers |

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. It is thanks to our Victorian forebears that Darlington has a living legacy of urban street trees, historic parks and wooded cemeteries that is the envy of many other towns. Darlington Borough Council has had in place a Tree Strategy for the past 20 years, which was initially developed with due regard to protecting the tree heritage in Darlington. The updated and revised versions of the strategy have continued with that theme at the core.
6. Since the initial strategy in 2000, the understanding and awareness of the impact humans are having on the environment has resulted in central and local government starting to address the balance, recognising the role trees play in carbon capture and carbon offset. The Woodland Trust estimates that a young mixed woodland can store 400+ tonnes of carbon per hectare, approximately 1,000 trees.
7. The aim of the Tree and Woodland Strategy is:
 - (a) To proactively manage and enlarge the tree population of the Borough of Darlington in order to protect our historical heritage of trees and provide a valued environmental amenity for future generations.
8. The strategy covers the following aspects:
 - (a) how the Council manage trees that they own;
 - (b) how the Council protect trees on private land;
 - (c) an action plan setting out what needs to be done over the next five years.
9. The policies within the strategy cover:
 - (a) **Street Trees** - these are trees planted in pavements and road verges;
 - (b) **Woodlands** - approximately 3% of the Borough is woodland;
 - (c) **Trees in Parks and Open Spaces** - generally these trees are the most significant and have a positive impact on use of these spaces;

- (d) **Trees in Cemeteries and Disused Churchyards** - some of cemeteries and disused churchyards have significant tree cover, particularly West Cemetery;
 - (e) **Housing Area Trees** - generally found in communal areas or residents' gardens;
 - (f) **Privately Owned Trees** - there are a significant number of trees on private land and in private gardens.
10. Since the adoption of the strategy by Cabinet, work has been ongoing in delivering the action plan.
11. The key highlights of work completed to date are as follows.
- (a) Number of trees planted:
 - (i) 2022 11,614
 - (ii) 2023 9,610
 - (iii) 2024 (to date) 16,347
 - (iv) Total: 37,571
 - (b) Attached at **Appendix 2**, tree canopy cover was assessed as 8.28 % in Darlington Borough overall, of which within settlements is 23.67%, outside settlements 76.33%. The average canopy cover for England is 16% and the target is 17.5%. However, there is significant variability in tree canopy cover across England's towns and cities, ranging from 3% to 45% and significant variability in tree canopy cover within towns.
 - (c) Successful with eight funding applications (ranging from £300.00 to £232,813.88) from 2021 to date, totalling £533,975.94.
 - (i) Urban Tree Challenge Fund Round 2: £1,900 (includes three years' establishment) secured for 1000 feathers (saplings) on Wylam Avenue in 2021/22.
 - (ii) Urban Tree Challenge Fund Round 4: £232,813.88 (includes three years' establishment) secured for 556 standard trees for various locations across Darlington in 2023/24 and 2024/25.
 - (iii) Urban Tree Challenge Fund Round 5: £198,978.12 (includes three years' establishment) secured for 297 standard trees in various locations across Darlington in 2023/24 and 2024/25.
 - (iv) Local Authority Treescape Fund: £90,784.00 secured for 200 standard trees and 200 feathers across Darlington (100 of each per planting season) in 2023/24 and 2024/25.
 - (v) Trees for Cities Woodland Creation Fund: £4,702.50 secured for 2500 whips in 2022/23.
 - (vi) Trees for Cities Woodland Creation Fund: £4,009 secured for 2500 whips in 2023/24.
 - (vii) Trees on Tees: £300 received from a business via the Trees on Tees fund, which was used to purchase eight fruit trees, including wooden stakes and ties. The trees were planted in November 2023 in partnership with Friends of the Denes and EE.

(viii) Tree Council: in December 2023 the Friends of Fryers Field submitted a bid to the Tree Council and were successful in securing a grant of £488.44 to plant 12 fruit trees in Fryers Field. Trees planted in March 2024, in partnership with Council officers and ward members.

(d) The Council has worked with a wide range of residents, volunteers, students, Elected Members, Friends Groups and businesses to achieve our tree planting goals, including: Department for Education, Darlington Economic Campus, Learning and Skills, Education Village, Darlington College, EE, Cummins, Capita, ISG Construction, Handels Bank, Darlington Building Society, Redde Northgate, Street Champions, Darlington Forest Project, Darlington Cares, Darlington Scouts and Cubs, Ranger Team Volunteers, Signet House, Probation Service and Durham Constabulary.

12. Attached at **Appendix 3** is the proposed action plan for 2024/25.

Risk Management

13. Following a number of incidents at other Local Authorities in recent years, officers alongside the Council's insurance provider, Zurich, have reviewed and updated the Council's approach to risk management for Council owned trees.

14. Zurich Risk Assessment and Risk Improvement Team, in their review stated:

"The current risk management strategy has been graded overall as being 'Good'. However, if the risk improvement recommendations are acted upon, I am confident that DBC would be able to achieve an 'Excellent' score."

Risk Management Tree Inspections New Approach

15. Inspection of all trees on Council land will be undertaken by a competent arboriculturist, at defined intervals according to consistent methodology, incorporating a systematic and replicable risk assessment. Trees that do not meet the defined standard of safety will be identified, and remedial measures will be specified to mitigate unacceptable risks within the defined timeframe. These will be implemented as specified, which will be verified by a competent person. A record of all activity will be kept.

16. The Council will maintain an inventory of trees that contain records of tree condition, location, works recommendations and works completion. The inventory will be reviewed to ensure that it remains comprehensive and reliable.

17. The timescale for the completion of each works item following an inspection will be set in proportion to the level of risk presented by the tree.

18. The successful completion of risk management works will be confirmed by a competent person and recorded along with the date. Where a tree remains following works, an inspection will be made to update the record for that tree.

What are tree inspections

19. Tree inspections are the means of gathering reliable information about the current condition, and the context of the Council's trees. This strategy defines three kinds of inspection. Proactive tree inspections are planned inspections, undertaken by a competent arboriculturist, to a defined standard, at defined intervals. They are fundamental to tree risk management. Where this strategy refers to tree inspections, it means proactive tree inspections unless otherwise specified. The Council will undertake them as defined by this strategy.
20. Reactive tree inspections are the same as planned tree inspections, except that they are done in response to an event that gives reasonable grounds to doubt the reliability of the existing tree inspection record. For example, an enquiry or report relating to tree safety, a tree failure event, a change in the context of a tree, a completion of certain tree works, or a significant weather event could all indicate a change in the safety of a tree. The Council will undertake these as required.
21. Additional tree inspections are all other types of non-specialist observation of trees made by the Council. For example, these could include highway inspections, observations by park staff and development related surveys. They may be beneficial, but they are not required by this strategy.

Who will inspect the trees

22. Tree inspections will only be undertaken by individuals that are competent to do so. Competence will be defined in accordance with industry standards and will comprise a combination of training, qualifications and experience.

What will be recorded during a tree inspection

23. Tree inspections will include sufficient information to locate and identify the feature described by the inspection record i.e. the type of feature, the risk assessment, and the means to determine whether the risk associated with that feature is acceptable. For any feature does not meet the Council's tolerable level of the risk, the inspection will include a specification for the works and the timescale for completion. Every inspection record will include a date for the next inspection.

How often will trees be inspected

24. All trees in high-risk areas, for example, adjacent to highways and play areas, will be inspected to a minimum frequency of every 24 months. Trees in other locations, with the exception of woodlands/forests, will be inspected to a minimum of every 24 to 36 months. Trees in woodlands/forests will be inspected as required.
25. Reactive and additional tree inspections and their frequency cannot be defined.

Tree Works

26. Tree works that are specified for the purpose of risk management (i.e. where the risk assessment has identified that a tree exceeds the tolerable level of risk) will be completed within a defined period from the date of inspection.

Climate Declaration

27. In July 2023 the Council updated its commitment to the climate, bringing forward the target to be carbon neutral by 2040 from 2050. In addition, the tree planting target has been revised to plant 100,000 trees over the lifetime of the strategy. The following will be included in the revised strategy to replace the existing commitment.

“Darlington Borough Council in July 2019 declared a climate emergency with the aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2050. In July 2023, a motion was passed by members bringing the carbon neutral target forward to 2040.

We are also monitoring and tracking emissions across the Borough, doing everything we can to reduce the Council’s carbon emissions, however, there will inevitably be a residual amount that needs to be offset.

The Woodland Trust estimates a young mixed woodland can store 400 plus tonnes of carbon per hectare. Our Tree and Woodland Strategy forms one part of a solution to reach our carbon neutral target, with the planting of 100,000 trees over the lifetime of this strategy.

Alongside our carbon reduction ambitions, we also need to deal with the inevitable impacts that climate change brings. Trees can provide shade and cooling, and in an urban setting they could cool the air by several degrees. They also help prevent flooding by reducing surface water run-off, improving air and water quality, and keeping our soils full of nutrients.”

Monitoring

28. A report will be brought to Scrutiny each year, updating members on the progress of delivering the agreed actions and the number of trees planted against the target of 100,000 over the lifetime of the Strategy.

Tree and woodland strategy

2021-2031



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Foreword

Councillor Andy Keir,
Local Services Portfolio Holder

We know that people want to live in a pleasant environment that is clean, green and safe and this is why it is part of our vision for the future of Darlington.

Trees and woodland areas play a vital and integral part in achieving this by cleaning the air we breathe, providing a habitat for plants and animal species and creating an attractive environment for people to live in and to visit.

Trees are a unique component of the landscape, unlike man-made structures; they are living organisms subject to change, which are vulnerable to damage by vandalism, development, pest and diseases. Many trees are long-lived, offering enjoyment and a diversity of benefits to residents both today and in the future.

Trees provide us with important services such as reducing air pollution and helping reduce flooding by intercepting rainfall and therefore allowing it to disperse into the ground at a reduced rate to be absorbed by the soil.

Trees also contribute significantly to the reduction of carbon dioxide and are therefore integral to the well-being of the planet and link with the Council's Climate Change Declaration

To ensure the huge contribution of both Council owned and privately owned trees to our landscape continues, it is essential that their needs and requirements are understood and planned for and this strategy sets out how we will do this.



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Introduction

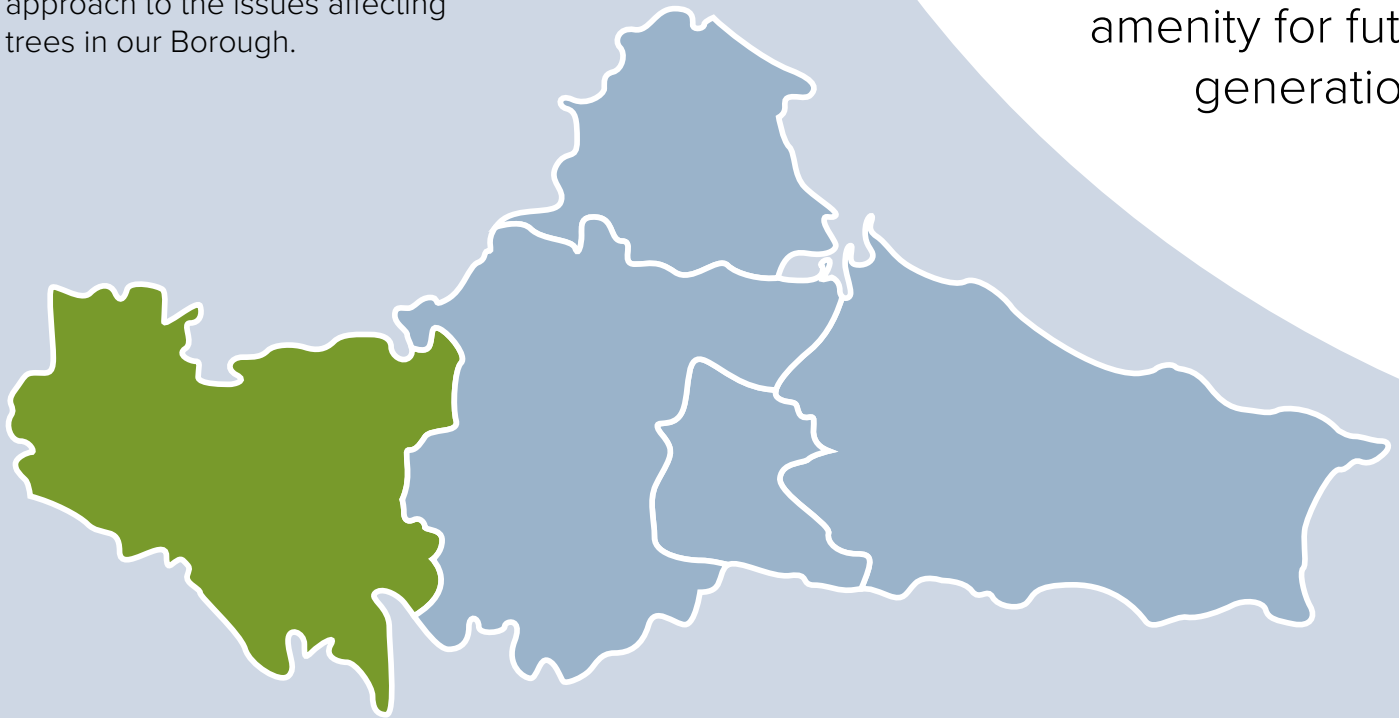
Darlington Borough Council adopted the first Tree Strategy for Darlington in 2000. However, since 2000 things have moved on. People are beginning to place a higher priority on the environment in which they live, which in turn has increased public awareness of the benefits provided by trees.

It is therefore essential that a framework is created through which the trees of Darlington can be both protected and enhanced for future generations.

This strategy is intended to act as a point of reference for the public, councillors, officers and professionally interested people to enable informed discussion and to establish a clearer, consistent and more structured approach to the issues affecting trees in our Borough.

The aim of this strategy

‘To proactively manage and enlarge the tree population of the Borough of Darlington in order to protect our historical heritage of trees and provide a valued environmental amenity for future generations.’



The Borough of Darlington

The Borough of Darlington covers an area of almost 200 square kilometres and has a population 106,000 of which approximately 90% live within the town of Darlington. The area outside the town is dominated by a rural landscape, with agriculture being both the historic and current primary industry.

The town however, became one of the focal points of the industrial revolution, being the ‘birthplace of the modern passenger railway’. This brought to Darlington both prosperity and a sudden growth in development within the structure of the town that is characteristic of Victorian landscapes.

It is thanks to these Victorian forebears that Darlington has a living legacy of urban street trees, historic parks and wooded cemeteries that is the envy of many other towns. This includes South Park, established in 1849 when farmland was bequeathed to the town.

The park is now included in English Heritage’s Register of ‘Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest’ and is referred to within the register as “a fine example of a mid-nineteenth century public park”. This Tree Strategy has been developed with due regard to protecting the tree heritage we have in Darlington.

What residents have told us

Residents have identified a number of common sources of complaint about trees, including overhanging branches, shade, leaf/fruit fall, sticky deposits, obstructing and physical damage.

Many of these problems can be dealt with by careful pruning once the tree is established. However, sometimes the problem is a result of inappropriate species selection in the past and may be difficult or impossible to resolve in all parties' favour.

Also, a common theme from complaints is the potential for structural damage caused through soil moisture extraction by tree roots.

This type of damage only occurs in areas where the soil type is heavy, shrinkable clay, which is prone to fluctuations in volume caused by changing soil moisture levels. There has been a relatively low amount of concern regarding tree roots and foundations in recent years. Much of this is unsubstantiated and the incidence of proven tree root related claims against the Council remains low despite the level of tree cover and proportion of our Borough having soils with a partial clay content. There are however occasions when removal/replacement of a tree or group of trees is required to halt a serious or a worsening case of subsidence damage.

Policy framework

Context

Residents have told us that they want to live in a pleasant environment that is clean, green and safe and this is why it is part of our vision for the future of Darlington.

This vision is being brought alive by closely working with our partners and delivering the Council Plan, which sets out the overall priorities for Darlington Borough Council.

This strategy can contribute to the vision by helping to ensure that Darlington provides an attractive, green environment that supports people's quality of life and by recognising the part that trees can play in counter-balancing CO₂ emissions and contributing to action on climate change.



Climate declaration

Darlington Borough Council in July 2019 declared a climate emergency. In this regard, the Council has pledged to be carbon neutral by 2050 and will work with partners including residents, trade unions, public sector organisations, businesses and the third sector on developing a plan to reach this target.

The planting of 20,000 trees between 2021-2024 will be included within this plan. The Woodland Trust estimates a young mixed woodland can store 400+ tonnes of carbon per hectare, and whilst we will be doing everything we can do to reduce the Council's carbon emissions, there will inevitably be a residual amount that needs to be offset. This tree planting policy forms one part of that solution.

How to use this strategy

This strategy covers the following aspects:

- How we manage trees we, the Council, own
- How we protect trees the public own on private land
- Action plan setting out what needs to be done over the next five years to achieve our aim

It is important to clarify the trees the Council owns, these are:

- Street Trees - These are the trees planted in pavements or road verges along the Council's highway network. They help to filter traffic pollution, provide shade for car parking and pedestrians and improve the overall appearance of the street scene.
- Woodlands - We maintain woodlands, which is approximately 3% of the Borough. The number of parks and open spaces also contains a proportion of woodland.

- Trees in Parks and Open Space - These are commonly the most significant trees in the area and have profound effect on its appearance and consequently, upon the leisure experience of users of the open space as well as for visual amenity for our residents and visitors alike.
- Trees within Cemeteries and Disused Cemeteries – Historic England has bequeathed parts of West Cemetery a site of special interest and is regarded as having one of the finest tree collections in the North of England.
- Housing Area Trees - These are found in and around communal or residential type gardens maintained by the Housing Department. These trees help to improve the landscape especially around communal housing areas and provide shade during hot weather and wildlife.

The above categories are by no means an exhaustive list, as we also maintain trees in allotments and other parcels of land.

Process to review the tree strategy

The Tree Strategy Action Plan will be monitored on an annual basis to ensure that the actions are being delivered according to the timescales set out. The Tree Strategy will be subject to a review every ten years.



How we will manage all council owned trees

The existing tree population is a valuable resource that requires more than just maintenance if it is to continue to provide the range of benefits that we expect.

Management will include a long-term view of the tree resource, providing for the future as well as for today.

Planting species

The different species for planting reflect, in most cases, what is already in situ. Different species will only be used if the originals are unavailable on the market, are unsuitable for the location, are prone to pest and disease attack or are part of a road containing mixed types.

Aftercare

All newly planted trees need aftercare, which includes:

- Watering in dry weather
- Checking and adjusting stakes/ties

Protective measures

- High profile areas where there is a risk of vandalism should be planted using guards
- Areas covered by CCTV also require consultation with the operator before planting new trees

Pruning work

All pruning work will be carried out to modern safety and technical standards and to standards set within BS 3998 2010 and subsequent revisions. Precautions are to be taken to avoid disturbance of nesting birds (between March to September) and Bat roosts. Advice will be sought if Bat roosts are believed to be present.

The type of pruning used will vary according to the tree species, age, condition, past works and the nature of any complaint associated with the tree.

In cases where trees are colonised by ivy, this can be left undisturbed unless the tree is becoming visibly suppressed or is likely to be vulnerable to wind damage or for a visible inspection of trees. Ivy provides valuable habitat and should not be removed during the bird-nesting season.

Pruning is usually found to be necessary because of the following reasons:

- To maintain the health and safety of the tree
- Obstruction to users of the highway, pathways and/or private property
- To abate actionable nuisance

Intervals for pruning will vary between species and locations i.e. visual restrictions on the highway. Minor works e.g. the removal of basal growth will need annual attention in some cases. Pruning can take place at most times of the year but ideally leaf flushing and autumn should be avoided as well as flowering periods. Certain species have more specific times because of disease and the risk of bleeding.

Trees, which are adjacent to pathways, will be lifted so that passage is unhindered at a reasonable level within their canopies.



Tree removal

It is sometimes necessary to remove trees for the following reasons:

- When they are dead, dying or dangerous
- To allow space for development of nearby trees that may be more desirable for retention
- To allow light and room for new planting
- To make way for any approved engineering or building works
- To abate actionable nuisance
- If bats are found roosting in a tree scheduled for removal then the Council has to obtain advice from qualified persons before starting work

Cyclical tree work

Work should be carried out to all trees on a regular basis according to their needs. Therefore, we will adopt biannual inspections of Highway trees and a 5 yearly inspection regime for other trees. A cyclical tree work regime brings the following benefits:

- Discovering dead or dying trees sooner and officer time can be targeted more effectively
- All trees receive attention so that few will become excessively overgrown before the next pruning cycle
- Fewer complaints
- Maintain improved appearance of roads
- Reduce insurance claims

Responsive tree work

There will always be a need to carry out responsive work even when cyclical work is established. The quantity of this work should reduce in proportion as cyclical work increases.

Residents' concerns

Trees have the potential to cause damage to buildings and structures, consequently many homeowners are concerned about tree roots and foundation damage.

Normally, this type of damage occurs where the soil type is shrinkable, usually clay, which is susceptible to soil movement from moisture extraction. Fortunately in the Borough of Darlington, although pockets of clay do exist, the majority of soils are of a non-shrinkable nature. It should also be noted that where buildings are damaged, trees are rarely the sole cause.

Much of the concern surrounding trees and building damage is unsubstantiated and claims against the Council for tree root damage remain low, especially in view of the huge number of trees under its care.

However, there is clearly a case for providing clear, concise and simple information on this subject and for promoting appropriate research where possible.

We will endeavour to investigate residents concerns and will take every appropriate action to prevent any further difficulties.

We have a policy only to remove trees that are dead, diseased, dangerous or can be proven to be linked to damage caused to buildings. This approach fully addresses the Council's duty of care in accordance with current industry best practice and ensures that all possible investigations are carried out.



Our policy for the management of all council trees

- 1.** We will ensure that the tree population continues to be developed and expanded with new planting where appropriate. Any trees removed shall be replaced unless there are special circumstances preventing this.
- 2.** We will provide a sustainable, high quality tree population. Where appropriate, native species will be planted to maximise habitats for wildlife.
- 3.** We will encourage and enable better understanding of the management of trees in order to promote greater community ownership and awareness.
- 4.** We will maintain the highest possible standards of tree care and management by:
 - i)** Working to standards set within BS 3998 2010.
 - ii)** Adopting best practise according to all relevant legislation and research.
- 5.** We will fulfil our obligation to ensure the safety of people and property.
- 6.** We will endeavour to avoid any work to trees that result in the loss of valuable wildlife habitat.
- 7.** We will resist the removal of trees unless there are sound arboricultural or other reasons e.g. disease or structural damage.
- 8.** We will not carry out felling or potentially disfiguring forms of tree work in order to improve the reception of television signals, solar panels and wind turbines or for CCTV operations, or the alleviation of bird mess, honey dew, leaf or fruit fall.
- 9.** We will support the process of natural regeneration on appropriate sites.
- 10.** We will maximise the recycling of tree related 'waste' created by the Council's own tree management.
- 11.** We will require more active protection of Council tree stock from avoidable damage caused by agencies responsible for engineering works near trees, such as highway maintenance contractors and the utility companies.
- 12.** We will endeavour where possible to keep tree cover.



Street trees

Street trees are trees located next to or within a public road. Trees planted in the highway help to reduce vehicle speeds (Department for Transport, 2007). They assist in improving road safety, as they can provide and maintain a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles. Street trees can assist in reducing traffic speed by giving the impression that the road is narrower and this may encourage slower driving.

The roadside environment is a tough place for a tree to survive. There is often intense pressure for space from underground cables and pipes, traffic, buildings, street lights, road signs, etc. This limited space is often polluted by car emissions, road salt, oil and other pollutants that challenge the tree's survival. There is also an increasing trend by car users to park their vehicles on verges, causing rutting and soil compaction, which seriously damages tree roots as well as leaving the verge in an unsightly and unsafe condition. This coincides with an increasing requirement for off street parking and subsequent construction of new vehicle crossovers. Despite all of this, trees can and do survive, albeit with a more limited life expectancy and with varying degrees of success.

Many of our most notable tree lined streets have tree populations that are over-mature.

Such trees are vulnerable to climatic variations (such as drought), disease and damage. An over-mature population of street trees tends to erode gradually over a number of years as individual trees decline and have to be removed. This generally affects the older areas of the Borough. In these areas new trees should be introduced between the mature trees to ensure that there will be continuous tree cover in future years.

In planning for the replacement of older forest-type trees, it is tempting to consider using small short-lived ornamental species that do not have the same scale and habit, thereby reducing maintenance costs. However, the massive contribution that large trees make to the character of the environment must be maintained and safeguarded, and be supported by new planting of similar species where applicable.

This will help to ensure that the balance of a dominant 'treescape' is retained within the Borough.



Our policy for street trees

- 1.** We will maintain our presumption against the removal of trees that are healthy but subject to complaint, unless the basis of the complaint has an overriding justification and no alternative management practice can be implemented.
- 2.** We will place a priority on the replacement of aging street tree populations, particularly where these adjoin major traffic routes, planting large-growing trees where appropriate.
- 3.** We will seek to plant new street trees in appropriate sites with priority given to sites where street trees are currently or have in the past been located.
- 4.** We will aim to use the same type of tree species for new and/or replacement planting in roads that reflect the type in use locally, maintaining single species avenues where appropriate.
- 5.** We will endeavour to protect street trees and the growing environment from threats such as: loss of and damage to verges, the activities of statutory undertakers and others excavating near trees and damage from the over-use of road de-icing salt.
- 6.** We will not support the removal of trees for vehicle crossovers unless the tree is of limited life expectancy or can be relocated elsewhere. All trees removed will be replaced and all costs will be borne by the crossover applicant.
- 7.** For new developments where appropriate, developers will be encouraged to include a street tree scheme within the development.
- 8.** We will support measures that discourage verge parking by road vehicles and damage to verge caused by adjoining building works.
- 9.** We will give advanced notice to all interested parties of proposed major tree work programmes, such as large scale felling.
- 10.** We will maintain the highway trees.



Trees in woodlands

The majority of the Borough's woodland is made up of Oak, Beech, Hornbeam, Ash, Birch, Hazel, Maple, Sycamore, Elm, Willow, Poplar, Thorn, Walnut, Chestnut, Pine, Cherry and Holly.

Most of the woodlands in the Borough will be managed with nature conservation objectives as a priority; some are managed by our in-house team. The future management of woodlands needs to address the continued problem of neglect.

Taking into account the multi-purpose objectives, which woodlands today fulfil, when appropriate dead trees will be left in situ to provide habitat for wildlife.

Our policy for trees in woodlands

1. We will ensure woodlands have an up-to-date management plan in place.
2. We will ensure that woodlands are managed as a long-term sustainable resource for the public, for education and for nature conservation.
3. We will support the natural regeneration on appropriate sites.
4. We will, where appropriate, ensure dead and fallen trees and wood are left on site and dead trees are left standing to encourage species diversity, unless there are sound conservation and safety reasons for removal.
5. We will manage woodland to fulfil its obligation to ensure safety of people and property whilst remembering that woodlands are natural places and the level of acceptable risk must reflect this.
6. We will quantify the canopy cover in the Borough and monitor in future years.

Trees in parks and open spaces

The Victorian legacy of fine specimen planting is more apparent within the parks and open spaces of Darlington than in any other area. Tree planting within the parks mirrored the popular interests of the time in botany and horticulture, hence the planting of various exotic specimen trees.

The tree coverage within these sites has for a long time provided a stunning amenity that can only be created and maintained through the presence of large mature specimens that were chosen for both their aesthetic qualities and contribution to the site as a whole.

This situation however is precariously placed at present. Little or no under planting has occurred within many areas; leading to the possibility of extensive loss of continuous tree-canopy coverage should mature trees require removal. Where under planting and replanting has been undertaken, the trees that have been planted often will never be of the same amenity value as the trees they are to replace, due to the use of smaller, less expensive species. This use of inappropriate trees has the potential to devalue this resource forever.

Our policy for trees in parks and open spaces

1. We will ensure woodlands have an up-to-date management plan in place.
2. We will ensure that woodlands are managed as a long-term sustainable resource for the public, for education and for nature conservation.
3. We will support the natural regeneration on appropriate sites.
4. We will, where appropriate, ensure dead and fallen trees and wood are left on site and dead trees are left standing to encourage species diversity, unless there are sound conservation and safety reasons for removal.
5. We will manage woodland to fulfil its obligation to ensure safety of people and property whilst remembering that woodlands are natural places and the level of acceptable risk must reflect this.
6. We will quantify the canopy cover in the Borough and monitor in future years.

Trees in disused churchyards and cemeteries

We maintain three large cemeteries within the Borough: these are North Cemetery, East Cemetery and West Cemetery.

English Heritage has bequeathed parts of West Cemetery, a site of special interest.

Some of the oldest trees in Darlington are within West Cemetery, as historically people would plant a tree as a monument to their loved ones. We will continue this practice within West Cemetery should residents require it.

Our policy for disused churchyard and cemetery trees

1. We will create a varied and sustained tree population in Council disused churchyards and cemeteries.
2. We will develop long term management plans for trees in disused churchyards and cemeteries to identify areas of risk and to prevent decline.
3. We will continue, where appropriate, to plant amenity trees and native species of local provenance.

Trees in council housing areas

Many of the public housing areas within the Borough have a good number and selection of trees, many of which are large old hedgerow trees, which are now over maturing. If evergreen hedges are not maintained to an acceptable level, then it may be necessary to remove them.

A large proportion of the trees within Council house gardens have been planted by tenants or by natural regeneration from seed. A number of trees have been inappropriately planted in the past on housing open spaced land and within some communal gardens.

Our policy for trees in council housing areas

1. We will ensure woodlands have an up-to-date management plan in place.
2. We will ensure that woodlands are managed as a long-term sustainable resource for the public, for education and for nature conservation.
3. We will support the natural regeneration on appropriate sites.
4. We will, where appropriate, ensure dead and fallen trees and wood are left on site and dead trees are left standing to encourage species diversity, unless there are sound conservation and safety reasons for removal.
5. We will manage woodland to fulfil its obligation to ensure safety of people and property whilst remembering that woodlands are natural places and the level of acceptable risk must reflect this.
6. We will quantify the canopy cover in the Borough and monitor in future years.

Trees on private land

The greatest proportion of both the urban and rural tree population is privately owned. Therefore, this part of the strategy sets out our approach to the protection of privately owned trees in the area.

As the Local Planning Authority, we have a statutory duty to take steps to protect trees that we believe make an important contribution to the amenity of the areas. The quality of private tree care is very variable and ranges from owners who are indifferent, through to motivated but poorly advised owners, to those who take great pride in their trees and are anxious to seek the best advice and engage quality contractors to carry out required work.

Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, we have powers to make and enforce Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) and designate Conservation Areas (CAs) within which all established trees are protected. It is usually only in cases of potential threat that a local authority will protect trees by use of a TPO.

Protection has not only been achieved through the statutory process, a substantial number of trees have been saved from inappropriate pruning or premature felling by the offer of tree advice from Council's officers. Recommendation is given to use reputable contractors/consultant who can give more detailed advice on site.

Advice can be given to the owners of protected trees and other tree owners; this advice is offered free and is seen as a valuable part of tree protection. The Council is however unable to give detailed advice regarding the safety of privately-owned trees.

Statutory protection of trees

The current Town and Country Planning Act 1990 makes it a duty of the Local Planning Authority to “ensure whenever it is appropriate that, in granting planning permission for any development, adequate provision is made by the imposition of conditions for the preservation of planting of trees” and to “make Tree Preservation Orders, under Section 198, as appear to the authority to be necessary in connection with the granting of such permission, whether for giving effect to such conditions or otherwise.”

As part of the Council's duty as set out in the 1990 Act, it will incorporate improved policies relating to Trees and Woodlands within its Local Plan through the review process.

More generally:

- Significant healthy trees and other landscape features such as hedgerows, ponds and watercourses shall be retained.
- Planning applications on sites with significant existing landscaping shall be supported by a full tree survey indicating all landscape features, tree species, canopy spreads, trunk diameter and levels at the base of each tree.
- Trees shall not normally be severely topped or lopped, or endangered by construction work or underground services. In addition, buildings shall not be sited so that sunlight and daylight is reduced to an extent that would lead to a request for a tree surgery.
- The Council will make Tree Preservation Orders and/or attach appropriate conditions to planning permissions to safeguard existing trees and ensure that new planting is established and protected.

- Where appropriate, adequate space for planting must be allowed within developments. In particular, screen planting including large trees will normally be required at the edge of settlements.
- Detailed landscaping schemes will normally be required as part of full planning applications. Amongst other things they must indicate existing trees and shrubs to be retained; trees to be felled; the planting of new trees, shrubs and grass; and screening and paving. Preference should be given to the use of native trees. Wildlife corridors shall be established wherever opportunities occur.

We are also guided by the Department of the Environment Circular 36/78 “Trees and Forestry” and Department of the Environment “Good Practice Guide for Tree Preservation Orders 2000” (and as amended).

While the most commonly known form of the statutory tree protection is the Tree Preservation Order (TPO), equally important are Conservation Areas within which nearly all established trees are protected. New TPO’s are being made all the time in line with its statutory duties.

The title “Tree Preservation Order” suggests that the tree or trees are “preserved” for all time. This is not the case and is, of course, impossible. Trees have a finite life and will require attention at some time in their life, especially in urban areas near properties etc. The TPO ensures that the local authority, as an independent party, has a measure of control over the fate of the tree to ensure that only appropriate works are carried out and that, where appropriate, the tree is replaced at the end of its life. Any tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order or Conservation Area that is rendered dangerous e.g. by storm damage or disease can be made safe without formal consent from the local planning authority. Tree owners or contractors are however encouraged to write to the Council to put any exempted work on record.

Trees on development sites

One of the most common threats against trees (and therefore a common reason for making a TPO) is the proposed development of land upon which trees are growing. It is common for plans to be submitted showing a relationship between trees and buildings that is unsuitable.

Schemes are frequently amended to ensure that significant trees are properly retained, often through a process of working with the applicant to reach mutually acceptable solutions to the conflicts that can arise.

Some developers assume that all trees on a site will have to be retained and consequently often view trees as a problem rather than an asset. Unfortunately, this can occasionally result in trees being removed from development sites before a planning application is made.

It is common for planning applications to fail to provide sufficient information to assess the likely impact upon trees on a proposed development site. This usually means that council officers have to spend time making detailed assessments of trees and other factors, which can delay the application process. This is easily addressed by developers and other professionals accessing the preapplication advice and guidance that the Council gives.

It is usual for us to impose tree protection and/or planting conditions as part of any planning permission. For the trees to be retained successfully within a development site, it is vital that their root system is properly protected from direct and indirect damage such as ground compaction. The protected areas should be large enough to ensure that no disturbance occurs within the crown spread of the tree as a minimum, the distance can vary accordingly to local ground conditions, tree species and health. Guidance for tree protection within development sites can be found within BS 5837 (2012).

Protection through advice

The advice we give is seen as an important area of work contributing to the general protection of the tree population.

Land owners have a Common Law right to remove (abate) the nuisance associated with tree encroaching onto your property.

They can only consider removing those parts of the tree from the point where they cross the boundary of your property. Land owners have no legal right to cut or remove any part of a tree that does not overhang your property.

Land owners are strongly advised to consult a professional tree surgeon for guidance on how best to prune back encroaching trees; they may be liable if the tree is heavily pruned in such a way as to render it unstable. If the works are trivial, meaning you could do the works with hand secateurs or similar, then such advice may not be necessary.

Before considering doing any works to a tree or trees you should find out if they are protected by a Tree Preservation Order or are within a Conservation Area. If the trees are protected, the land owner will need to gain consent by making an application give notice to the Council's Planning Department. To find out if the trees are protected and guidance on how to apply for works if they are protected contact:

- write to the Planning Department, Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT
- send a fax to 01325 388616
- email planning@darlington.gov.uk

Land owners are strongly advised to discuss with your neighbour your intention to prune encroaching branches.

Legally you do not own the encroaching branches and you should offer these to your neighbour but they are not obliged to accept them, you should consider disposing of the arisings yourself.

If the encroachment relates to a Council owned tree, any cuttings must be disposed of appropriately and not returned to Council land.

There are a variety of potential seasonal nuisances associated with trees, most of which are minor and considered to be problems associated with living near trees.

Falling leaves, honeydew, fruit, nuts, bird droppings or blossom, leaves falling into gutters, drains or onto flat roofs. Darlington Borough Council will not fell or prune Council owned trees solely to alleviate problems caused by such natural phenomena.

The maintenance of gutters is the responsibility of the landowner and the Council is not obliged to remove leaves that may have fallen from Council owned trees. Where gutters are regularly blocked by fallen leaves, gutter guards may be fitted to provide a low maintenance solution. Honeydew is caused by greenfly (aphids) feeding on the tree, and then excreting a sugary sap. Often the honeydew is colonised by a mould, which causes it to go black. There is little that can be done to remove the aphid which causes the problem and pruning the tree may only offer temporary relief and any re-growth is often more likely to be colonised by greenfly thereby potentially increasing the problem. Some trees, such as limes, are more prone to attack by greenfly and in some years greenfly are more common, especially following a mild winter.

Honeydew is a natural and seasonal problem as are nesting birds which are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, where bird droppings and honeydew affects cars, warm soapy water will remove the substance, particularly if you wash the car as soon as possible.

Our policy for the protection of privately owned trees

- 1.** We will seek to protect trees of amenity (and environmental) value.
- 2.** We will promote good standards of tree care and woodland management.
- 3.** We will give consent for works to a tree or woodland protected by a Tree Preservation Order provided it is satisfied that:
 - i) The long term health and appearance of the tree or woodland will not be impaired.
 - ii) The work will not unjustifiably inhibit or prevent the full and natural development of the tree.
 - iii) The work is necessary to its continued retention and consistent with good arboricultural practice.
 - iv) In the case of a woodland, the proposed work is consistent with the principles of sound woodland management.
 - v) There are sound arboricultural and/or safety reasons for the work.
- 4.** We may impose planning conditions to protect trees according to BS 5837 (2012).
- 5.** There will be a presumption against the cutting down, topping, lopping or uprooting of any tree protected by the Tree Preservation Order, Conservation Area or planning condition.
- 6.** We will not give consent to fell a tree or protect by a TPO unless it is satisfied that this is necessary and justified. Generally, any such consent will be conditional upon appropriate replacement of the tree. Any unauthorised works to protected trees will be investigated and enforcement action taken where appropriate.
- 7.** We will resist development, which it is considered makes inadequate provision for the retention of trees and other woody plants and natural features, particularly wildlife habitats such as woodlands.
- 8.** We will continue to protect significant trees by the use of Tree Preservation Orders and will review all such Orders periodically to ensure they contain accurate information.
- 9.** Applicants for the development of land with existing trees shall provide a tree survey with their application showing accurate positions of both trees to be retained and removed, including their dimensions and condition.
- 10.** We will usually expect a new site development to contribute to the overall tree population either through on-site planting through planning conditions or through the donation of funds via 'Section 106 Agreement' dedicated to the planting of trees by the Council in the locality.
- 11.** We will encourage all major tree-owning organisations to adopt best practice in the care of their trees, especially where those trees contribute to the character of the Borough.
- 12.** The Senior Arboricultural Officer will develop closer links with the Planning Section to keep up-to-date with planning applications that have been authorised or refused.
- 13.** If any land is to be adopted by the Council from a development, that the relevant officers inspect the site before the land is handed over, if trees are within this area, a tree survey should be carried out for health and safety purposes and that the developer would carry out any works which are necessary at their own expense. Any trees which require removal, should be replaced with heavy standard trees with a five-year maintenance plan, so that the Council do not adopt costly works.

Tree planting

The Council has made a commitment to plant at least 20,000 trees on Council land in the three year period of 2021-2024, in partnership with community groups with an ambition to double the target over the same period. Thereafter, to continue tree planting at this level past 2024, sites will be identified that will enable the target to be achieved.

Further to this, the Council will also plant a minimum of two trees for every tree that has been removed due to the conditions set out in this policy. Where appropriate we will ensure that trees lost as part of any new development are replaced within 5 years by the developer. Where a significant tree is removed for a legitimate reason, the replacement will be specified as a heavy standard.

We will work with local communities to identify suitable sites for the planting of trees to deliver our aspirations. We will also work with communities to ensure we plant appropriate species of trees in the various locations identified.

Equalities Impact Assessment Statement

This tree strategy provides a framework for the Council to manage trees, woodlands and hedgerows in the Borough in ways that enhance life and well being for people and wildlife.

Whilst the overriding aim of the strategy is to safeguard trees as an important part of Darlington's environmental quality, the Council recognises that in certain circumstances there may be conflict between tree protection and people's requirements for access or other needs. Where such circumstances arise, normally there will be a presumption in favour of protecting trees.

However, where issues arise relating to the access or mobility needs of disabled people, the presumption in favour of tree protection will be

weighed against those needs through Equalities Impact Assessment on a case-by-case basis. This recognises that the protection of trees must be balanced with the Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010 to advance equality of opportunity for disabled people, as well as other people with protected characteristics specified in the act.

This shift in the balance of consideration will only be applied where a disabled person's needs are specifically related to their impairment or disability, as distinct from general views or preferences that might be shared by any citizen.

Where such circumstances arise in relation to development proposals, the needs of disabled people and the desirability of protecting trees will be balanced within the planning application process. Policies CS2 and CS19 within the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework promote the access needs of disabled people, whilst CS15 provides the policy framework for tree protection.

In circumstances not related to development proposals, such as the maintenance and management of trees in the highway, this policy statement within the Tree Strategy provides the trigger for considering the needs of disabled people and of tree protection by means of Equality Impact Assessment. The overall approach will be to seek to find solutions that avoid the removal of healthy trees. If this is not possible, and the removal of trees is necessary, agreement will be sought on appropriate replanting.

In practice, the most frequent concerns tend to be related to problems with raised roots or low hanging branches on footways or in public open spaces. In most cases these can be easily rectified by routine management.

In cases of raised roots it will be important to seek to find solutions that do not cause medium to long term damage to trees.

Resolving problems arising from trees is often dependant on the ways in which maintenance work is carried out by front-line staff.

The Council will seek to ensure through appropriate training that staff are aware of the needs of disabled people in dealing on a routine basis with problems such as overhanging branches and raised roots.

Tree strategy action plan

| ACTION 2021 | LEAD OFFICER | TIME FOR COMPLETION |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Re-planting of street trees. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Re-assessment of TPO trees. | Phil Haynes/ Dave Coates | Ongoing |
| Continue rolling survey of the Borough's tree stock. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Begin parks assessments, with plans formulated for re-planting and under planting. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Locate positions and pursue planting within access routes into town. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Inventory and management proposals of Borough's rural woodlands. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Inspections and monitoring of high risk trees. | Phil Haynes | Within the specified time scale |
| Inspection of high risk (subsidence related) trees as outlined on Housing tree survey. | Phil Haynes | Within the specified time scale |
| Replanting of removed trees with more suitable species. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Monitor tree strategy. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |

| ACTION 2022 | LEAD OFFICER | TIME FOR COMPLETION |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Continue biannual inspections of Highways trees will take place. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Parks replanting and under planting. Following park by park prescription to assure continuous tree coverage and perpetuation of each park's character. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue individual woodland assessments. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue rolling survey of the Borough's tree stock. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue reassessment of TPO trees. | Phil Haynes/ Dave Coates | Ongoing |
| Continue re-planting of removed trees. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue re-inspection and monitoring programme of high risk trees. | Phil Haynes | Within the specified time scale |
| Monitor tree strategy. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |

Tree strategy action plan

| ACTION 2023 | LEAD OFFICER | TIME FOR COMPLETION |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Continue to link areas of extended woodland with green corridors, to create corridors of continuous cover from within the town out into rural woodlands. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue biannual inspections of Highways trees will take place. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue Parks replanting and under planting. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue reassessment of TPO trees. | Phil Haynes/ Dave Coates | Ongoing |
| Continue re-planting of removed trees. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue re-inspection and monitoring programme of high-risk trees. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue woodland assessments. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue utilisation of prospective planting areas as outlined on database. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Monitor tree strategy. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |

| ACTION 2024 | LEAD OFFICER | TIME FOR COMPLETION |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Biannual inspections of Highways trees will take place. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue Parks replanting and under planting. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue reassessment of TPO trees. | Phil Haynes/ Dave Coates | Ongoing |
| Continue re-planting of removed trees. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Re-planting of street trees. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue re-inspection and monitoring programme of high-risk trees. | Phil Haynes | Within the specified time scale |
| Continue woodland assessments. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue utilisation of prospective planting areas as outlined on database. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Review and reassessment of Tree Strategy | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Monitor tree strategy. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |

| ACTION 2025 | LEAD OFFICER | TIME FOR COMPLETION |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Biannual inspections of Highways trees will take place. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue rolling survey of the Borough's tree stock. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue reassessment of TPO trees. | Phil Haynes/ Dave Coates | Ongoing |
| Continue re-planting of removed trees. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Continue re-inspection and monitoring programme of high-risk trees. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Assure safety of Borough's tree stock. This will be primarily concerned with the removal of diseased street trees. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Monitor tree strategy | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |
| Review Next Five Years' Action Plan | Phil Haynes | Ongoing |





Tree and woodland
strategy 2021-2031



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

egr0322

| Settlement Breakdown | | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| ID | Settlements | Canopy Overlap / Settlement Area (%) | Canopy Overlap / Total Canopy (%) | Intersection (sqm) | Settlement Area (sqm) |
| 1 | Bampton | 6.79 | 0.00 | 573.92 | 8,446.80 |
| 2 | Beaumont Hill | 8.32 | 0.04 | 5,977.86 | 71,860.97 |
| 3 | Bishopton | 9.71 | 0.05 | 7,618.39 | 78,476.44 |
| 4 | Brafferton | 6.57 | 0.01 | 2,302.15 | 35,032.46 |
| 5 | Darlington | 12.39 | 20.50 | 3,374,389.28 | 27,236,412.61 |
| 6 | Denton | 10.18 | 0.01 | 1,649.81 | 16,204.27 |
| 7 | Great Burdon | 16.38 | 0.03 | 5,121.48 | 31,274.29 |
| 8 | Great stainton | 14.20 | 0.02 | 3,894.75 | 27,421.16 |
| 9 | Heighington | 11.26 | 0.23 | 37,486.74 | 332,965.24 |
| 10 | High Coniscliffe | 8.63 | 0.02 | 2,894.83 | 33,546.90 |
| 11 | Hurworth-on-Tees | 12.25 | 0.37 | 60,186.95 | 491,186.04 |
| 12 | Hurworth-on-Tees | 7.49 | 0.05 | 8,817.65 | 117,795.93 |
| 13 | Hurworth-on-Tees | 15.31 | 0.06 | 9,127.71 | 59,604.29 |
| | Hurworth-on-Tees Total | 35.05 | 0.47 | 78,132.31 | 668,586.26 |
| 14 | Killerby | 7.46 | 0.01 | 1,925.69 | 25,823.39 |
| 15 | Little Stainton | 12.14 | 0.02 | 2,675.38 | 22,045.31 |
| 16 | Low Coniscliffe | 10.34 | 0.03 | 5,000.35 | 48,336.73 |
| 17 | Merrybent | 16.56 | 0.09 | 14,172.89 | 85,606.25 |
| 18 | Middleton St George | 8.28 | 0.27 | 44,455.44 | 536,734.90 |
| 19 | Middleton St George | 21.02 | 0.39 | 64,055.68 | 304,687.66 |
| | Middleton St George Total | 29.31 | 0.66 | 108511.12 | 841422.56 |
| 20 | Neasham | 11.31 | 0.06 | 9,790.60 | 86,579.84 |
| 21 | Oak Tree | 5.37 | 0.02 | 3,057.13 | 56,943.00 |
| 22 | Oak Tree | 12.58 | 0.03 | 5,645.17 | 44,875.60 |
| | Oak Tree Total | 17.95 | 0.05 | 8702.30 | 101818.60 |
| 23 | Piercebridge | 17.53 | 0.04 | 6,855.74 | 39,107.79 |
| 24 | Redworth | 17.10 | 0.05 | 8,204.85 | 47,983.46 |
| 25 | Sadberge | 9.25 | 0.08 | 13,765.61 | 148,857.31 |
| 26 | Summerhouse | 6.49 | 0.01 | 1,983.36 | 30,553.35 |

| Borough Statistics | | |
|--------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|
| ID | Borough | Canopy Overlap / Borough Area (%) |
| 1 | Darlington | 8.28 |

| Settlements vs Rural | |
|------------------------|-------|
| | % |
| Within Settlements | 23.67 |
| Outside of Settlements | 76.33 |

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**Tree & Woodland Strategy 2021-2031
DRAFT Action Plan 2024/25**

APPENDIX 3

| Year | Action | Lead | Status | Measures of Success |
|----------------|--|-------------|---------------|---|
| 2024/25 | Inspections of trees in Zone 1 to take place on a 12-24 month programme. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspections of trees adjacent to highways, footpaths, children’s play areas etc. • Consistent ground based, visual inspections of the current condition of trees. As trees are dynamic organisms and therefore subject to change, inspections should detail the condition of trees on the day of the inspection. • Any works identified during inspections should be carried out within three months. |
| | Inspection of trees in Zone 2 to take place on a 24-36 month programme. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspections of Estate trees. • Consistent ground based, visual inspections of the current condition of trees. As trees are dynamic organisms and therefore subject to change, inspections should detail the condition of trees on the day of the inspection. • Any works identified during inspections should be carried out within two to three months. |
| | Other trees i.e. woodland, to be inspected as required. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk through inspections to be undertaken as required. • Any works identified during inspections should be carried out within the year, dependent on targets. |
| | Continue parks replanting and underplanting. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date in 2024, 1,381 trees have been planted in parks. • To continue to plant within parks and open spaces as necessary, planting heavy standard to replace removed trees. |

Tree & Woodland Strategy 2021-2031
DRAFT Action Plan 2024/25

APPENDIX 3

| Year | Action | Lead | Status | Measures of Success |
|------|---|-------------------------|---------|--|
| | Continue re-assessment of TPO Trees. (Enquiries) | Phil Haynes/Dave Coates | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhere to the nationally set timescales when determining tree applications: TPO applications (eight weeks) and TFC applications (6 weeks). Ensure that applications are determined in line with good arboriculture practice. |
| | Plant replacements for any removed trees. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable trees to be planted in locations where a replacement tree is required. |
| | Work with TVCA on their aim to plant 1 million trees across the Tees Valley. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist TVCA officers in their pursuit of maximising tree planting within the Borough, including planting trees on DBC owned land. |
| | Continue utilisation of prospective planting areas as outlined on the database, working towards the 100,000 trees target. | Phil Haynes | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where funding allows, trees will be planted at identified locations as follows: Merrybent, Low Coniscliffe, Morton Park Way, Hartford Road. |
| | Review and reassessment of Tree Strategy. | Brian Graham | Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a yearly update to the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee, on the progress of delivering the agreed actions and the number of trees planted against the target of 100,000 over the lifetime of the Strategy. Develop a range of annual KPIs to report to the Communities and Local Services Scrutiny Committee. |

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY 18 APRIL 2024

CCTV CAMERA REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update on the camera replacement programme.

Summary

2. A review of CCTV was completed in May 2021 to determine whether the public space CCTV system in Darlington was fit-for-purpose and met operational requirements.
3. The review established that the Internet Protocol (IP) cameras installed in the town centre produced high quality images and met operational requirements, however, the images from the legacy analogue cameras were soft and compared poorly to the IP cameras. The review concluded that the analogue cameras should be replaced with new technology and a delivery programme was agreed.
4. The assessment also concluded that there was a lack of frequency diversification and misalignment of existing CCTV equipment transmission so the project would also ensure appropriate alignment and configuration of the wireless network.
5. The project commenced on 1 May 2023, with a six-month envelope for completion by 31 November 2023.
6. All camera replacement and wireless transmissions were completed in the timescale, however, works to the Control Centre were delayed due to contractual issues with British Telecom. Control Centre works were finally completed in January 2024.

Recommendation

7. It is recommended that Scrutiny Members note the contents of this report.

Dave Winstanley
Group Director of Services

Background Papers

Cabinet report of 22 June 2022 outlining the replacement programme and associated release of funding.

Graham Hall / Paul Branch

| | |
|--|---|
| S17 Crime and Disorder | CCTV cameras help prevent and detect crime and anti-social behaviour, supporting the work of both the Council and Police. |
| Health and Wellbeing | Cameras around the town and in parks and open spaces contributes to these locations being safe places to enjoy and exercise therefore having a positive impact on health and wellbeing. |
| Carbon Impact and Climate Change | There is no impact on climate change. |
| Diversity | There is a positive impact on diversity as cameras contribute to the safety of areas. |
| Wards Affected | Wards that have CCTV cameras |
| Groups Affected | No group is affected differently. |
| Budget and Policy Framework | There is no impact on the budget and policy framework. |
| Key Decision | No |
| Urgent Decision | No |
| Council Plan | CCTV cameras contribute to the Council's vision by preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, helping make Darlington a safe place to live, visit and invest. |
| Efficiency | There is no impact on the Council's efficiency agenda. |
| Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers | This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers |

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) is part of everyday life within our towns and cities in the UK. Councils and law enforcement agencies rely heavily on surveillance as a tool to prevent and detect crime. It is now estimated that there are around 5.2 million CCTV cameras in the UK.
9. Darlington Borough Council operates a Public Space CCTV system throughout the Borough which primarily supports the Council Plan objectives of keeping the Borough safe. The benefits include:-
 - (a) They act as crime deterrent
 - (b) They provide peace of mind
 - (c) They enable evidence detection
 - (d) Help create conditions for success
10. The network is linked to a Control Centre where the range of services provided have developed over the years, from control of traffic system to the development of effective strategic partnership working with the Police and other statutory agencies.

11. Since the introduction of the system in the 1990s the system has developed and now supports 122 cameras located throughout the Borough of which a significant number are past the expected useful operating life. The quality of the pictures is well below what is expected from a modern camera.
12. Within the Council Plan, one of the key actions was to “review our approach to the use of CCTV in supporting community safety and work with partners to enhance the service further.”
13. Work commenced on updating our approach with one of the first actions being the investment in 10 re-deployable cameras to tackle crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. These cameras can be moved to different locations as and when required.
14. In addition, through the Home Office Safer Streets 2 Fund, the Council were awarded £230,400 to introduce 17 additional cameras in and around Darlington town centre (including subways). Included in this amount was £54,510 match funding provided by the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner. These cameras have only recently been installed.
15. The next phase was to review our fixed CCTV system and Eclipse Research were commissioned by the Council to assess the existing public space CCTV cameras and the transmission network, including the productivity and condition of individual cameras.
16. Of the 122 cameras, a significant number have been replaced over the years, however there were still 74 older style analogue cameras in operation. The images from the analogue cameras were soft and of poorer quality than the newer Internet Protocol (IP) cameras.
17. The second part of the replacement programme required the design of a wireless network to replace the leased fibre circuits that connect most of the cameras to the Control Centre, other than cameras connected wirelessly already. Moving away from leased circuits has provided an annual saving that will be reinvested to support the replacement camera programme.
18. The transmission network was upgraded to wireless links using the 5GHz, 60GHz and 70-80GHz frequencies, and should have sufficient diversification to avoid the problems that were experienced when just 5GHz was used. Where lines of site are not achievable, the system uses 4G/5G mobile telephone network.

Progress

19. A tender process for the contract to supply and install cameras, transmission equipment, design an edge to core Wi-Fi transmission network and supply and install additional recording servers was completed in April 2023, and contract awarded. Works for the project commenced 1 May 2023, and the contract completed January 2024.

20. The scheme has now been commissioned and is fully operational. The benefits of a digital CCTV system include:
 - (a) The cameras and transmission have in-built encryption, ensuring unauthorised access to the video recordings is prevented.
 - (b) Digital cameras can provide up to three times more coverage than analogue cameras.
 - (c) Cameras can zoom in without becoming too grainy and have better zoom-in clarity.
 - (d) IP cameras offer more expandability and scalability.
 - (e) IP cameras offer network intelligence and remote manageability. They can stream images, and different parts of images, to different recipients simultaneously.
21. As part of the project two additional servers were added to the Control Centre to increase the systems recording capacity as required for extra image quality of digital cameras.
22. Other upgrades in the Control Centre as part of the project included the extension of the monitor wall by installing eight new monitors to increase the potential overall viewing platform to 108 cameras at any one time.
23. The overall improvement resulting from the replacement and upgrade to Darlington's Public Space system is reflected in the quality of the images and recordings, leading to improved detection, monitoring and recorded evidence footage.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY 18 APRIL 2024

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update on Private Sector Housing Strategy and service area update.

Summary

2. The Private Sector Housing Strategy was published in 2022. This strategy included a vision statement:

“We aim to increase healthy home environments that maximises well-being and life opportunities for all residents and future residents in Darlington.”

3. The strategy sets out three core aims:-
 - (a) Aim 1 Decent quality homes in the private rented sector
 - (b) Aim 2 Enable growth in the private rented sector
 - (c) Aim 3 Working with and supporting all residents in Darlington
4. Updates for each of these aims is provided in the main report.
5. The report also provides an update on the service area and projects being delivered.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Scrutiny Members note the contents of this report.

Dave Winstanley
Group Director of Services

Background Papers

There are no background papers to this report.

Christine Booth

| | |
|--|--|
| S17 Crime and Disorder | The private sector housing team undertake a range of services that impact on preventing crime and disorder in the Borough. |
| Health and Wellbeing | The private sector housing team undertake a range of activity aimed at improving the health and well being of people living in the private rented sector. |
| Carbon Impact and Climate Change | The private sector housing team both promote investment and lead on the delivery of projects that improve energy efficiency of properties. |
| Diversity | The strategy was developed with regard for the Council equality duties. |
| Wards Affected | All Wards |
| Groups Affected | All Groups |
| Budget and Policy Framework | This report does not impact on the Councils Budget and Policy framework. |
| Key Decision | This is not a key decision. |
| Urgent Decision | This is not an urgent decision. |
| Council Plan | This report outlines how the private sector housing service and Private Sector Housing Strategy contribute to the current Council Plan |
| Efficiency | This report has no impact on the Council's Efficiency Programme. However, some of the projects and advice given will impact on the energy efficiency in the private rented sector. |
| Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers | This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers. Looked after Childrens or care leavers can access the service if required. |

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. Around 80% of Darlington's 51,885 homes are in the private sector. The Private Rented Sector more than doubled size in the 15 years to 2021, this has now stabilised, and it is currently estimated to be 20% of the housing market, approximately 8,875 properties.

Progress with the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2022-2027

8. The strategy sets out three core aims:-
 - (a) Aim 1 Decent quality homes in the private rented sector.
 - (b) Aim 2 Enable growth in the private rented sector.
 - (c) Aim 3 Working with and supporting all residents in Darlington.
9. The three core aims within the Strategy each have associated objectives. These are outlined below.

10. Aim 1 Decent quality homes in the private rented sector

- (a) **Reactive Housing Standards: the Private Sector Housing team work to ensure standards are maintained and take action where these standards are not met by providing a reactive response to complaints about poor property conditions. By dealing with these issues we reduce accidents and illness in the home and help to reduce health inequalities and improve life chances across Darlington.**
- (i) The Private Sector Housing team have continued to provide a reactive response to service requests. The team receive on average 600 requests for service per year.
 - (ii) The number of cases relating to damp and mould growth has increased by 30% in the last year from the previous four-year average.
 - (iii) A Civil Penalties protocol was adopted in June 2023 to assist with consistent and proportional legal action.
- (b) **Area based action: to tackle health inequalities in communities where housing conditions are worst.**
- (i) This action has been concentrated on the Northgate ward as part of the Northgate initiative, typically this ward contributes to 40% of the number of service requests received.
 - (ii) Darlington Borough Council was recently chosen to be part of a Healthy Homes Pilot Project to help to tackle Damp and Mould in residential properties. Darlington was chosen based on:-
 - a) Proportion of non-decent housing in the PRS;
 - b) Average deprivation score across the LA;
 - c) Proportion of LSOAs falling in the worst 10% most deprived in England;
 - d) Premature respiratory mortality rate;
 - e) Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) mortality; and,
 - f) Emergency Admissions for COPD.
- Depending on which funding stream Darlington is chosen for as part of the property, funding will either be provided to support treatment in the area or to improve statistics for damp and mould growth as a control group.
- (c) **Inspecting Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs): administering the scheme for Mandatory Licensing of relevant HMOs. Safeguarding residents living in multiply occupied properties through successful licensing and proactive property inspection.**
- (i) The number of HMO licence applications received since the publication of the strategy has increased by 45%. There are currently 51 mandatory licensed properties, with a further 11 HMO properties that are currently being investigated.

- (ii) The majority of HMOs are located in the Northgate ward however recent developments have been concentrated in Park East, particularly on Clifton Road.

11. Aim 2 Enable growth in the private rented sector

(a) **Management of private rented properties: the private-rented sector makes an important contribution to the borough's housing, provided it is well managed.**

- (i) Around 200 property inspections are carried out each year, as part of these inspections all documentation is checked to ensure landlords are managing their properties adequately.
- (ii) Property checks also includes ensuring that electrical safety checks have been carried out following the introduction of legislation in 2021, requiring all tenancies to have a valid Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR).
- (iii) A civil policy protocol in was adopted in 2023 to issue civil penalties where landlords had not produced a valid EICR.
- (iv) The team have been involved in regional housing events to promote changes in legislation to private landlords and continue to support both regional and local landlord groups.

(b) **Empty Properties: making best use of all our homes. We cannot allow homes to stay empty while housing is in short supply. Increasing activity to bring long term empty homes back into use.**

- (i) In October 2023, there were 1765 empty residential properties, with 677 being reported as being long term empty properties (over 6 months). Although the number of long-term empty properties has reduced slightly since the baseline number in 2020, the number has remained broadly consistent for the last 10 years.
- (ii) The number of service requests received for empty properties have also remained consistent over the past five years, with the team receiving 37 requests per year.
- (iii) The team have been involved in providing both reactive advice and assistance to both owners of empty properties and affected neighbouring properties, but also proactive assistance to organisations wanting to acquire properties to house vulnerable residents.

(c) **New homes: with a growing population and changing lifestyles we need to provide additional homes that are affordable for our residents, in the right place, and of the right quality to meet future demand.**

- (i) The Private Sector Housing Team have provided planning consultation advice to housing developers in order to ensure that resulting properties meet a decent housing standard in term of space and amenity.

- (ii) On average the team respond to 12 requests per year for consultations. As the number of larger Houses in Multiple increase however this number is also increasing with the team responding to 20 requests in 2023.

12. **Aim 3 Working with and supporting all residents in Darlington**

(a) **Green Homes: exploring and developing energy efficiency. Energy-efficiency is good for the borough and can save households money and make people healthier. Delivering warm home solutions to alleviate fuel poverty.**

- (i) Over the past 12 months this has been a rapidly developing area the team have been involved in, with the number of service requests for energy efficiency advice increased by 70% in 2023 from the previous four yearly average.
- (ii) There has also been a significant increase in requests for declarations in relation to the Energy Company Obligation scheme. ECO4 Flex is a household referral mechanism within the wider ECO4 scheme which enables Local Authorities to widen the eligibility criteria for ECO. Under ECO4 Flex, a participating Local Authority can refer private tenure households that it considers to be living in fuel poverty or on a low income and vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home. While ECO4 Flex is optional, suppliers can deliver up to 50% of their ECO obligation under this mechanism. In 2023, the team responded to 20 requests. In the first quarter of 2024, this demand has increased with 36 requests having been processed to date.
- (iii) The Team have also been involved in the Home Upgrade Grant phase 2, by managing the project on behalf of the other Tees Valley authorities involved in the scheme. Delivery for the scheme is expected to commence in April 2024.

(b) **Encourage and support owner occupiers to maintain safe homes: by advising of financial assistance that is available to homeowners.**

- (i) Although there is limited financial assistance available the team have provided signposting to organisations who are able to provide assistance.

(c) **Meeting the needs of residents living in Park Home Sites and Residential Caravan sites, the including the travelling community: by proactively improving the licensing conditions of existing licensed sites.**

- (i) Over the past 12 months the caravan site licensing conditions for new sites have been amended.

Service Area Update

13. The legal and regulatory framework within which the Private Rented Sector operates is fragmented and complex. There are also national legislative changes to the management of the Private rented sector.

- (a) Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023

- (b) The Renters Reform Bill is expected to be passed in the current parliamentary session although the full reforms proposed may take a number of years to be implemented.
14. These are increasing demand and duties on the service area. An overview of some of the existing and future challenges are outlined below:
- (a) Generally the number of service requests is increasing.
 - (b) We have experienced an increase the number of service requests relating to tenancy advice both from landlords and tenants, due to rent increases, the service of eviction notices.
 - (c) Empty properties are expected to rise in the short term as private landlords are evaluating their market position.
 - (d) There has been an increase in energy efficiency advice requests both from owner occupiers and private tenants.
 - (e) Asylum and Refugee schemes such as the Homes for Ukraine Scheme is currently adding a pressure on the service to provide an inspection service for prospective properties.
15. The team are delivering a number of projects that contribute towards the aims in the strategy. An overview of some of the projects is below:-
- (a) **Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2** – This project is being led by Darlington and is expected to run until March 2025. Delivery is expected to commence in April 2024.
 - (b) **ECO4 - ECOflex declarations – as 12(a)(ii)** as above this project will continue until March 2025.
 - (c) **Healthy Homes Pilot Project to help to tackle Damp and Mould – as 10(b)(ii)** above should funding be approved a project will commence in April 24 for 12 months.
 - (d) **Stock Condition Survey** – Funding has been received to carry out a Private Sector Housing Stock condition survey.
16. The team will continue to explore feasibility of initiatives and the use of discretionary powers to deliver the outcomes of the strategy.

**COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
18 APRIL 2024**

COUNCIL PLAN 2024-27 – DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To introduce the draft Council Plan to the Committee and seek comments.

Summary

2. The Council Plan is an official document that outlines the long-term ambitions for Darlington and priorities of the council to deliver over the next three years (2024-2027).
3. The plan gives strategic direction to the Council - and council services - defining priorities and shaping delivery. It gives clarity to residents, businesses and stakeholders on our values, what is important and what we will do.
4. The public consultation for the draft plan is now open and runs from 6 March to 25 April. The council is seeking views from residents, businesses, charities and key stakeholders. It is intended that the final plan goes to Cabinet and Council in May for approval and adoption.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that the Committee:-
 - (a) Review the plan and provide feedback views in the meeting
 - (b) Share the plan with your networks and encourage people to complete the survey.

Chief Officers Executive

Background Papers

Draft Council Plan and Survey available at: <https://www.darlington.gov.uk/councilplan>

Author: Lynne Davies, Extn: 5070

| | |
|--|--|
| S17 Crime and Disorder | The Council Plan prioritises the safety of our residents and communities. The Communities Priority identifies key actions that we will deliver in partnership. The performance monitoring framework will include measures to demonstrate progress against this outcome. |
| Health and Wellbeing | The Council Plan prioritises the health and wellbeing of our residents and communities. The Health and Wellbeing Priority identifies many actions and good health will be an important outcome across the plan. The performance monitoring framework will include measures to demonstrate progress against this outcome improving health and reducing health inequalities. |
| Carbon Impact and Climate Change | The Council Plan prioritises addressing carbon impact and climate change. Addressing climate change is a core value and will be considered in everything the council does. The performance monitoring framework will include measures to demonstrate progress against this outcome. |
| Diversity | Addressing inequalities is a core value within the plan. A desktop Equality Impact Assessment has not identified any significant negative impacts on protected characteristics. The key deliverables referenced in the plan will be progressed through other strategies and plans and will involve separate equality impact assessments where appropriate. |
| Wards Affected | All |
| Groups Affected | All |
| Budget and Policy Framework | The Council plan will be part of the policy framework and will be the primary strategy that strategies and plans demonstrate their contribution to the vision, ambition and priorities of the Council Plan |
| Key Decision | This is a key decision because following consultation, agreement to the recommendations will result in the Local Authority adopting a plan which will have an effect on the communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards within the area of the local authority. |
| Urgent Decision | This is not an urgent decision as it will require adoption by full Council after consultation. |
| Council Plan | This is the draft Council Plan for 2024-2027 for consultation. |
| Efficiency | The draft Council Plan prioritises efficient and effective resources as a key value and will be considered in all council business. |
| Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers | The Council remains committed to ensuring the best outcomes for Looked After Children, and contains a number of priorities and actions that will have a positive impact on this group. |

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Council Plan – Draft for Consultation

6. The draft Council Plan is a strategic document that gives direction to the Council and council services by defining priorities and shaping delivery; and gives clarity to residents, businesses and stakeholders on our values, what is important and what we will do.
7. The draft plan proposes a long term vision and ambitions for Darlington, and priorities for delivery over the life of the plan. Three core values feed into the plan: addressing inequalities, tackling climate change and efficient and effective use of resources. These are important principles we'll consider in everything we do.
8. The six priorities are given equal importance:
 - (a) Economy: A strong, sustainable economy and highly skilled workforce with opportunities for all.
 - (b) Homes: Affordable and secure homes that meet current and future resident need.
 - (c) Living well: A healthier and better quality of life for longer supporting those who need it.
 - (d) Children and young people: best start in life, realising potential and raising aspirations.
 - (e) Communities: Healthier, safer and more engaged communities.
 - (f) Environment: A well connected, clean and sustainable borough.
9. Each priority has a number of key deliverables to be progressed over the life of the plan. The plan is ambitious and requires a Team Darlington approach by strengthening our relationships and building new partnerships with our stakeholders and communities.
10. The public consultation for the draft plan is now open and runs from 6 March to 25 April. The council is seeking views from residents, businesses, charities and key stakeholders.
11. A survey has been published alongside the plan allowing for feedback. It is on the consultations page of the Darlington Borough Council website alongside a Questions and Answers paper. Printed copies of the plan and survey are available in Darlington Library, Cockerton Library and the Dolphin Centre and upon request. The March edition of One Darlington which is distributed across the borough also contains an article on the Council Plan with information on how to complete the survey.
12. Awareness raising will primarily take place through social media, ward surgeries of local councillors, at relevant stakeholder meetings and other suitable opportunities that arise. The outcome of the consultation will be reported to Cabinet in May. It is intended that the final plan goes to Cabinet and Council in May for approval and adoption.

Monitoring the Council Plan

13. Delivery is structured around the six priorities and three core values and will be progressed in a cross-council collaborative approach through key strategies and plans. The deliverables in the plan will be owned by key strategies and plans, in particular those highlighted in the council plan:

- (a) Climate change action plan
- (b) Inclusive economy strategy
- (c) Homes strategy
- (d) Health and wellbeing strategy, and
- (e) Children and young people’s plan.

14. Political accountability for the priorities and core values will be collaborative with a Cabinet member leading each priority and core value, working with relevant portfolio leads to deliver.

| Priority / Core Value | Lead Cabinet member | Portfolio Holders |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Economy | Cllr McEwan | Adults Children and Young People Economy Local Services Stronger Communities |
| Homes | Cllr Roche | Adults Children and Young People Health and Housing Stronger Communities |
| Living Well | Cllr Curry and Cllr Porter | Adults Health and Housing Resources |
| Children and Young People | Cllr Wallis | Children and Young People Economy Resources Stronger Communities |
| Communities | Cllr Riley | Adults Children and Young People Economy Local Services Stronger Communities |
| Environment | Cllr McCollom | Adults Economy Local Services |
| Addressing inequalities | Cllr Riley | All |
| Tackling climate change | Cllr McEwan | All |
| Efficient and effective resources | Cllr Porter | All |

15. Progress will be reported in a six monthly report to Cabinet. The process for reporting is currently in development whilst the public consultation is ongoing. It is expected to:
 - (a) Structure around the 6 priorities and 3 core values
 - (b) Include a core set of longer term indicators with a wellbeing approach designed to reflect the plan's focus on thriving, fair and sustainable lives and places. Taking a life course approach with a focus on understanding inequalities and their causes
 - (c) Contain a clear narrative for the priorities, deliverables and core values that demonstrate progress
16. This performance report will be supplemented annually by a refreshed Darlington profile report that analyses the most up to date published data and intelligence, including feedback from key surveys. We are in the process of evolving the Darlington profile report to align with the proposed new structure of the Council Plan. It will provide a more detailed analysis of key data to help us understand how lives are improving now and in the future. This will be prepared for use as a shared evidence base for the core strategies and plans that will deliver this council plan.

Outcome of the Consultation

17. There will be regular reporting to Chief Officers Executive and members of Cabinet on consultation feedback throughout the consultation period and a final report will be produced when the consultation closes. It is intended that that final plan will go to Cabinet and Council for approval and adoption in May 2024.

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Council Plan 2024-27

Draft For Consultation
6 March 2024



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Foreword

It is an honour to be Leader of Darlington Borough Council and to have the opportunity to share with you our draft Council Plan for 2024-2027. This plan sets out our long term ambitions for Darlington and priorities for the next few years. We want to hear your views.

Darlington is a great place to live and work. We are committed to making Darlington fairer and greener for everyone, building on opportunities and successes and facing up to the difficult challenges.

However, over the previous decade inequalities across our communities have worsened. The North East has seen the highest increase in child poverty over much of the previous decade. Child poverty restricts the chances for children to flourish. This is just a one example of inequalities that results in not everyone having the same life opportunities.

At the heart of the plan is our vision to be one of the best places in the UK to live, learn, work and invest - with a strong economy, healthy thriving communities and opportunities for all.

This means Darlington will have an inclusive and sustainable economy; people living well and staying healthy; thriving places and connected communities. This is a long term vision and the beginning of our journey that we want to make together.

Three core values feed into this plan:

- **Addressing inequalities** - Darlington is a wonderful place to live and work and we want these opportunities to be accessible to everyone. We will develop a long term focus on understanding and addressing the causes of inequality ensuring our communities are safe and can thrive.
- **Tackling climate change** - the changing climate will impact all our lives. We will play our part by making the council carbon neutral by 2040 and working with others to deliver a more resilient Darlington.
- **Efficient and effective resources** - we will remain focussed on the financial sustainability of the council, ensuring good governance and delivering the best services possible with the resources we have for our residents, communities, and business.

The Council faces unparalleled financial challenges. Reductions in public spending between 2010 and 2019 meant the Council's budget was reduced by £46m in real terms, a 36% reduction in budget. After covid, we have seen the cost of living increasing, income deprivation and poverty rising, high inflation and interest rates along with a significant increase in demand for adult and children's services consuming over two thirds of our budget.

You will see the plan sets out six priorities for the Council for the next three years: economy, homes, living well, children and young people, communities and the environment.

This is ambitious and requires collaborative effort to deliver with existing partnerships such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, Public Sector Executive Group and Voluntary and Community Sector Executive Steering Group to new partnerships focussed on the economy.

The health, wealth and wellbeing of our residents is really important to us. At the heart of our Council Plan is a determination to have a focus on addressing inequalities. This can only be achieved by the Council working in partnership with our communities.

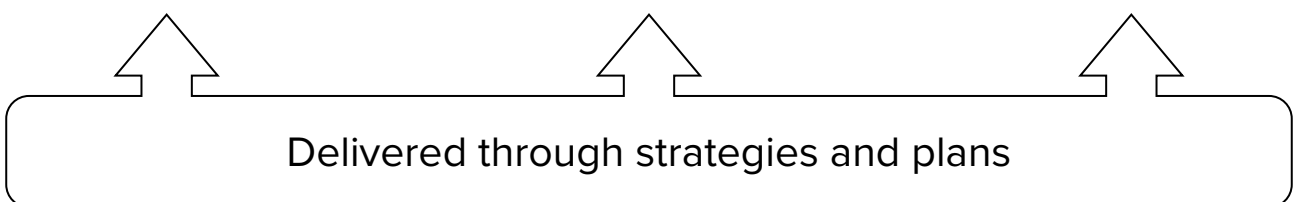
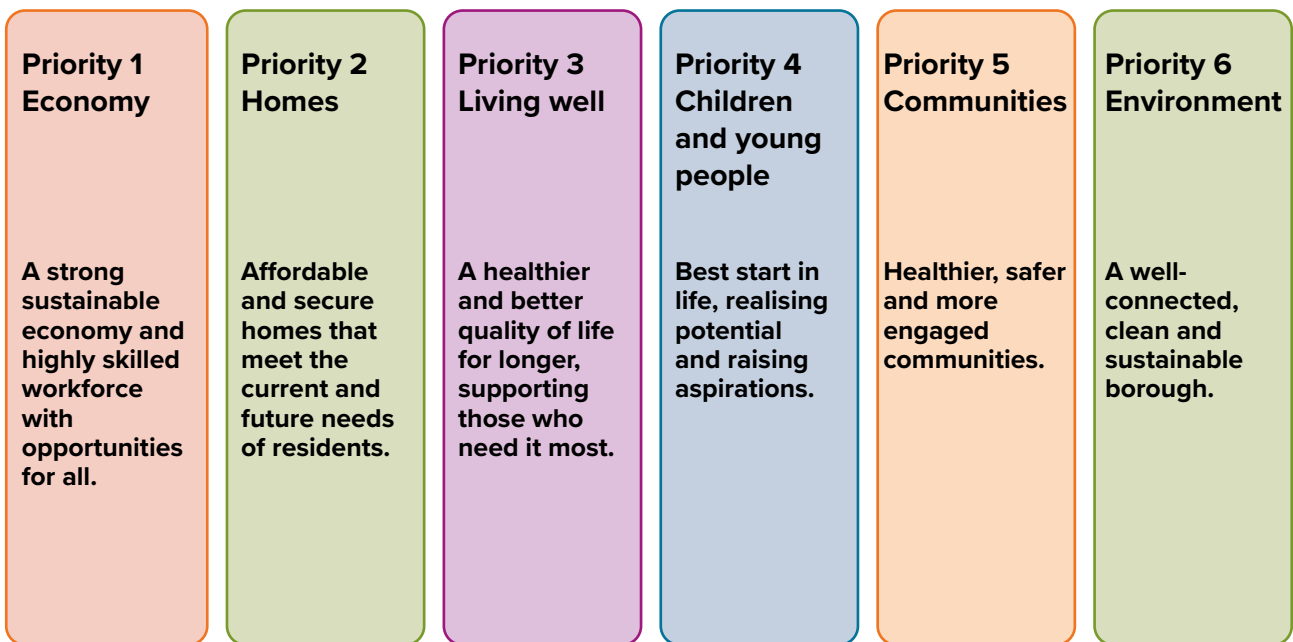
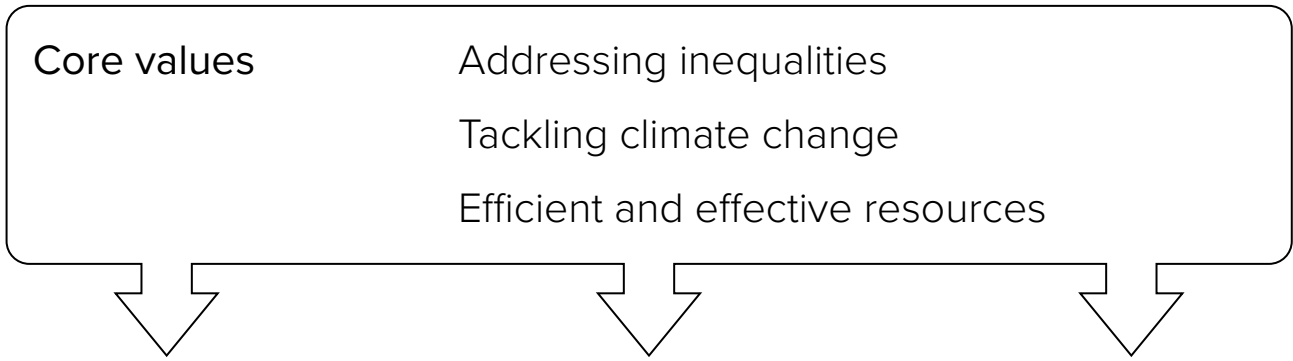
These are both exciting and challenging times for Darlington, and we want your views on our proposals in this plan to help shape our priorities and how we deliver.



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Our Plan For Darlington



What long term success looks like

An inclusive and sustainable economy will have:

- More people of all ages in good work
- Key sectors and sites innovating and growing by creating jobs, attracting more business and investment
- A healthy, productive and vibrant business community
- A business friendly public sector supporting businesses to locate and grow
- Increased skills levels in the resident labour market
- Vibrant town and neighbourhood centres providing services, retail and work for all generations
- A growing economy that supports our environment and heritage.

Living well and staying healthy will mean:

- Health outcomes are improved and inequalities reduced
- Children and young people have the best start in life
- People are supported to be independent
- Homes are affordable, healthy, secure and meet needs
- Households are more financially secure
- Residents live longer, healthier, more productive lives
- People are active and involved.

Thriving places and connected communities will have:

- Climate resilience where places are prepared for change and can adapt, with reduced CO₂ emissions
- Access to good services
- Happy, safe and secure communities with improved safety in public spaces
- Cultural, heritage and community assets
- Well-connected people and communities, with links to places within and outside the borough
- Digitally connected residents who are benefitting from opportunities offered online
- Attractive, relevant and welcoming places
- Sustainable and integrated transport across the borough and beyond.

Core values

We are committed to making Darlington a fairer and greener place for everyone. We are focussed on ensuring everyone has the opportunity for a good job, home and social connections. Our three core values are important principles we will consider in everything we do.

Addressing inequalities

Darlington is a wonderful place to live and work. We have a high quality of life and our economy is resilient and growing, but this is not felt by everybody. There are widening inequalities, and the gap between the people and places with the best and worst outcomes is unacceptably high. There are unacceptably high levels of child poverty and disadvantage, demonstrated by 25% of Darlington's children living in low income families, with the highest ward reaching nearly 47%. We want opportunities to be accessible to everyone. To achieve this will require a collaborative approach with our partners. We will:

- Develop a cross-council approach based on an in-depth understanding of inequalities and their causes, with a focus on local communities experiencing disadvantage
- Ensure all new strategies and plans consider inequalities, starting with the development of an inclusive growth strategy and a review of the health and wellbeing strategy
- Strengthen partnership working with key stakeholders and the voluntary and community sector with a long term focus on opportunity and addressing the causes of inequality; and short term focus on reducing the burden of the cost of living.

Tackling climate change

The climate is changing, which has an impact on our lives from the risk of flooding and more extreme weather to health impacts for our most vulnerable residents. We are also all facing increasing energy costs and potential threats to energy security. We cannot address these challenges alone, but we know we have an important role to play. One of the first things we did when we came to office was bring forward by 10 years the Council's commitment to being carbon neutral. We will:

- Deliver the climate change action plan to make Darlington Borough Council carbon neutral by 2040
- Involve all parts of the council in a cross-council approach to sustainability and climate change
- Work alongside our business community collaborating with groups such as the Darlington Employers Environmental Partnership to transition to net zero
- Work with partners, government, public and private sectors and residents for a resilient Darlington so we are able to respond and adapt to change.

Efficient and effective resources

The council is facing unparalleled financial challenges with rising costs and a significant increase in demand for services. We have a responsibility to ensure residents get value for money for their council tax and that every pound is spent efficiently and effectively. We will remain focussed on the financial sustainability of the council, ensuring good governance and delivering the best services possible with the resources we have for our residents, communities, and businesses. Our people are our best asset and will lead a culture of collaboration, innovation and creativity, and compassion, whilst maintaining focus on continuous improvement. We will:

- Deliver a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan and positive Value For Money outcome
- Deliver high quality governance and decision making
- Review and refresh the Asset Management Plan and Procurement Strategy
- Build on the Capital Project Management process by introducing an enhanced ICT system to improve efficiency and effectiveness
- Review and deliver the workforce strategy
- Maximise income through new joint venture companies, increase levels of business rates by growing the local economy; and maximising grant opportunities
- Explore opportunities to exploit digital assets to create efficiencies and increase productivity, including online delivery
- Continue to build strong relationships with partners, residents and communities.

Key deliverables

Priority 1 - Economy

- Develop and deliver an inclusive economic growth strategy to create the conditions for businesses and the economy to thrive and provide good work opportunities for residents
- Establish a place-based partnership to support the continued renewal of the town centre delivering more jobs and more homes
- Complete the refurbishment of the historic indoor market
- Accelerate bringing key sites to the market to attract private sector investment including Central Park, Ingenium Parc and Symmetry Park
- Deliver the Towns Fund projects, including the refurbishment of the Northern Echo building to secure new business occupiers
- Provide more education and skills opportunities for residents by delivering the Adult Skills Centre and collaborating with providers and Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA)
- Ensure that the borough is safe, clean and maintained to levels that support the economy and encourage inward investment
- Work with employers, national and local employability providers, and TVCA to promote good jobs and career opportunities for all, particularly young people and those with barriers to work, to access good employment outcomes.

Priority 2 - Homes

- Develop and deliver a new homes strategy to deliver current and future housing needs including social and affordable homes across the borough, in accordance with the Local Plan
- Review and refresh the preventing homelessness and rough sleeping strategy, working with partners to ensure the provision of the right support and services to help people avoid homelessness and support those who are
- Review our approach to empty homes across the town so more quality homes are available
- Support the delivery of more social houses and supported accommodation by building more council homes and working with other social landlords and charities
- Continue to improve the quality of housing through healthy home design principles, ensuring developers meet the new Building Regulations requirements to create greater energy efficiency in new homes. Continue investment in the Council's existing and new housing stock to ensure greater energy efficiency
- Introduce additional licencing for homes of multiple occupation, a voluntary landlords charter and work towards the introduction of selective licencing in areas with a high number of private rented sector homes
- Ensure effective use of the Disabled Facilities Grant to enable people to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible.

Priority 3 - Living well

- Health and Wellbeing Board to agree and deliver a new strategy to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities, and lead the creation of a health and wellbeing network
- Develop and implement a new public health strategy, focussed on tackling health inequalities. Including developing strategies on domestic abuse, drugs, alcohol and physical activity
- Continue to develop joint working with the NHS and key partners to support people to lead healthier lives, stay in their homes for longer and reduce hospital stays
- Widen participation in recreation and leisure facilities including the Dolphin Centre and Eastbourne Sports Complex
- Shape a sustainable and accountable care market which delivers support focussed on promoting, regaining and maintaining people's independence and wellbeing
- Develop an Adult Social Care engagement strategy to ensure people requiring care and support, and their carers are involved in service development and commissioning activity
- Deliver the key aims of the adult social care transformation plan to prevent, reduce and/or delay the need for care by supporting people to manage their own independence and wellbeing.

Priority 4 - Children and young people

- Refresh and deliver the Children and Young People's Plan working with services across the council, key stakeholders in Darlington, and children and young people
- Develop more meaningful services by ensuring children and young people are involved in service development and commissioning activity
- Work with the Department for Education and the successful academy trust sponsor to ensure the free school for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is developed on schedule providing vital additional specialist capacity in Darlington
- Continue the successful management of the Safety Valve plan to improve outcomes for young people with SEND, eliminate the historic deficit on funding and deliver a financially sustainable system
- Work with multi-academy trusts and schools to develop a high quality and inclusive education sector in Darlington
- Widen access for children in receipt of benefits related school meals to the Holiday Activities and Food Programme with a focus on health, wellbeing and raising aspirations
- Work in partnership with the early years sector and health services to promote school readiness and the delivery of the expansion of funded childcare entitlement
- Increase the number of local in-house placements for looked after children who are cared for by the council.

Priority 5 - Communities

- Support and strengthen partnership working with voluntary and community groups with a focus on addressing the causes of inequality, financial inclusion, social exclusion, and vulnerable families with children and young people
- Work with partners to reduce the burden of the cost of living with a focus on food and fuel insecurity
- Work with the voluntary and community sector to develop a strategy for informal volunteering which empowers people to volunteer and directs volunteering to areas of greatest need, including working with Darlington Cares to deliver an enhanced volunteering programme
- Support communities to remain safe and resilient by working with key agencies and communities to address anti social behaviour and crime issues in the community
- Support a strong Community Safety Partnership to ensure the issues affecting the safety and security of our communities are addressed collectively, including addressing hate crime
- Ensuring business activity is regulated, licensed and enforced effectively to protect the health and wellbeing of residents, visitors and businesses.

Priority 6 - Environment

- Celebrate the opening of Hopetown and deliver a successful 2025 festival programme that helps to promote Darlington as a destination for visitors and investment
- Work with local stakeholders and businesses to promote a diverse and accessible programme of events that maximises footfall in the town centre and has a positive impact on the local economy
- Deliver revised supplementary planning documents that guide better design in new developments and contribute to a sense of pride in place
- Enable improvements in transport systems by working in partnership with TVCA and public transport operators to deliver the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme, including the improvement of bus facilities and the reliability of services
- Introduce food waste collections and encourage residents to increase overall recycling rates to move towards the national average
- Work with statutory bodies to progress studies of flood risk in Darlington and enable funding to be sought to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Monitoring the plan

Progress in delivering the plan will be regularly reported to Cabinet. It is anticipated this will include a combination of qualitative and quantitative indicators that demonstrate progress against the long-term ambitions, priorities and deliverables. Some long-term indicators, which we know will take time to move, are likely to be included.

The Council Plan performance report will be supplemented annually by the Darlington Profile report that analyses the most up to date published data and intelligence, and feedback from surveys.

Have your say

We want to support the Borough to be the best it can be and have set out our long term ambitions and short term actions for you to review and have your say. This consultation is the beginning of a conversation with you on the future of Darlington and our priorities.

We want to know what you think of the plan and what is most important to you.

Follow the link below or scan the QR code to complete the short survey:



<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/consultations/>

The survey is open from 6 March 2024 and closes on 25 April 2024.

Printed copies of the plan are available to view and comment on at Darlington Library, Cockerton Library and the Dolphin Centre. Please email **strategy@darlington.gov.uk** if you would like a copy of the draft Council Plan in an alternative format.



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
18 April 2024

WORK PROGRAMME

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during the 2023/24 Municipal Year and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest should be added to the previously approved work programme.

Summary

2. Members are requested to consider the attached work programme (**Appendix 1**) for the remainder of the 2023/24 Municipal Year which has been prepared based on Officers recommendations and recommendations previously agreed by this Scrutiny Committee.
3. Any additional areas of work which Members wish to add to the agreed work programme will require the completion of a quad of aims in accordance with the previously approved procedure (**Appendix 2**).

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that Members note the current status of the Work Programme and consider any additional areas of work they would like to include.

Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Background Papers

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

Author: Paul Dalton
 Ext: 5805

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| S17 Crime and Disorder | This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder |
| Health and Well Being | This report has no direct implications to the Health and Well Being of residents of Darlington. |
| Carbon Impact and Climate Change | There are no issues which this report needs to address. |
| Diversity | There are no issues relating to diversity which this report needs to address |

| | |
|--|--|
| Wards Affected | The impact of the report on any individual Ward is considered to be minimal. |
| Groups Affected | The impact of the report on any individual Group is considered to be minimal. |
| Budget and Policy Framework | This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework. |
| Key Decision | This is not a key decision. |
| Urgent Decision | This is not an urgent decision |
| Council Plan | The report contributes to the Council Plan in a number of ways through the involvement of Members in contributing to the delivery of the Plan. |
| Efficiency | The Work Programmes are integral to scrutinising and monitoring services efficiently (and effectively), however this report does not identify specific efficiency savings. |
| Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers | This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers. |

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. The format of the proposed work programme has been reviewed to enable Members of this Scrutiny Committee to provide a rigorous and informed challenge to the areas for discussion.
6. The Council Plan sets the vision and strategic direction for the Council through to May 2023, with its overarching focus being ‘Delivering success for Darlington’.
7. In approving the Council Plan, Members agreed to a vision for Darlington which is a place where people want to live and businesses want to locate, where the economy continues to grow, where people are happy and proud of the borough and where everyone has the opportunity to maximise their potential.
8. The visions for the Stronger Communities and Local Services portfolios are:-

‘to build Stronger Communities that are resilient, sustainable and safe to ensure everyone has the best opportunities to succeed’ and ‘a borough that is attractive, green and clean, with a wide variety of activities to be enjoyed, and a transport offer that facilitates efficient movement and reduced carbon emissions in the borough’.

Forward Plan and Additional Items

9. Once the Work Programme has been agreed by this Scrutiny Committee, any Member seeking to add a new item to the work programme will need to complete a quad of aims.
10. A copy of the Forward Plan has been attached at **Appendix 3** for information.

COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

| Topic | Timescale | Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved | Link to Performance Management Framework (metrics) | Scrutiny's Role |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Performance Management and Regulation/ Management of Change Regular Performance Reports to be Programmed End of Year Performance (including Compliments Comments and Complaints) | 11 January 2024 (Q2) 18 April 2024 (Q3) Year End August 2024 | Relevant AD | Full Performance Management Framework suite of indicators. | To receive quarterly monitoring reports and undertake any further detailed work into particular outcomes if necessary. |
| Public Sector Executive Group 6 Month Review | 22 February 2024 Last considered 9 February 2023 | Seth Pearson | | To scrutinise and undertake any further work if necessary. |
| Camera Replacement Programme | 18 April 2024 Last considered 15 December 2022 | Graham Hall/Dave Winstanley | | To update Scrutiny Members. |
| Tree and Woodland Strategy 2021-2031 | 18 April 2024 | Brian Graham | | To receive a yearly review of the strategy. |
| Private Sector Housing Landlords | 18 April 2024 | Christine Booth | | |
| Council Plan | 18 April 2024 | | | To enable the Committee to be consulted on the Council Plan. |

| Topic | Timescale | Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved | Link to Performance Management Framework (metrics) | Scrutiny's Role |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Northgate Initiative | Work on the Northgate Initiative has been suspended – Per Officer's comments (15th December 2023) Last considered 9 February 2023 | Seth Pearson | | To update Scrutiny Members and undertake any further work if necessary. |
| Climate Change Update | To be agreed | Margaret Enstone | | |
| Tees Valley Combined Authority Transport Committee | Last received on 26 October 2023. To be received when published. | Anthony Hewitt | | To receive the Minutes from the Tees Valley Combined Authority Transport Committee |
| Waste Management (to include Tees Valley Energy Recovery Facility) | June 2024 Last considered 21 October 2021 | Ian Thompson | | To give Scrutiny Members the opportunity to consider prior to Cabinet. |
| Darlington Cultural Strategy Action Plan for 2023/24 | June 2024 Last considered 24 August 2023 | Ian Thompson | | To update Scrutiny Members. |
| Public Space Protection Order – Darlington Town Centre | Last considered 24 August 2023 | Graham Hall/Dave Winstanley | | To update Scrutiny Members and undertake any further work if necessary. |

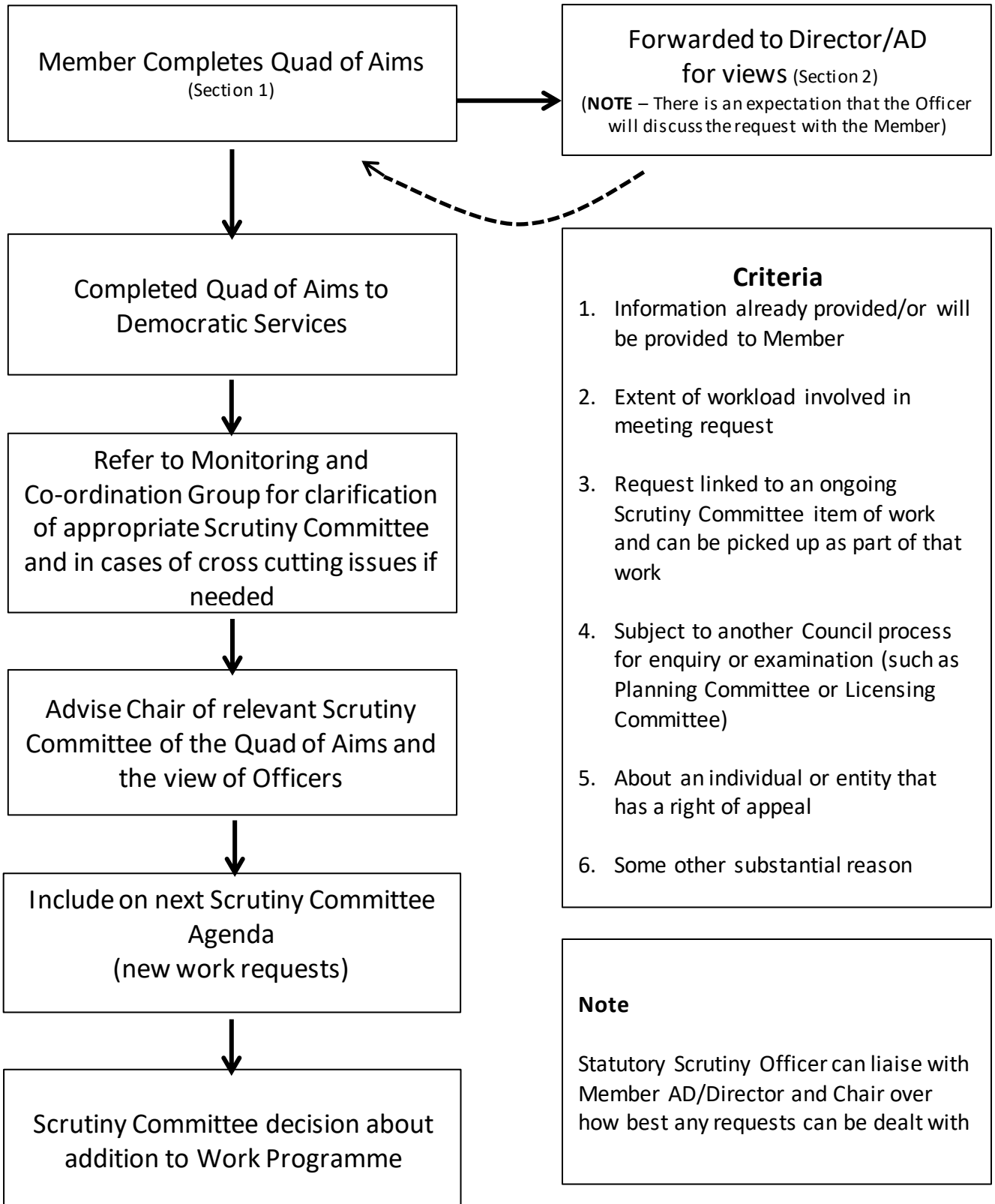
| Topic | Timescale | Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved | Link to Performance Management Framework (metrics) | Scrutiny's Role |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|-----------------|
| Street Scene | Members Briefing 11 September 2023 | Brian Graham | | |

Archived

| Topic | Timescale | Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved | Link to Performance Management Framework (metrics) | Scrutiny's Role |
|--------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Hippodrome | Agreed to remove 24 August 2023 Last considered 7 April 2022 | Ian Thompson | | To scrutinise and undertake any further work if necessary. |
| Open Spaces Groups | Agreed to remove 24 August 2023 Last considered 15 December 2022 | Brian Graham | | To update Scrutiny Members and undertake any further work if necessary. |

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



PLEASE RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

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

SECTION 1 TO BE COMPLETED BY MEMBERS

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

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

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Signed Councillor

Date

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

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

Signed **Position** **Date**

PLEASE RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

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**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
FORWARD PLAN**

APPENDIX 3



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

**FORWARD PLAN
FOR THE PERIOD: 7 FEBRUARY 2024 - 30 JUNE 2024**

| Title | Decision Maker and Date |
|---|---|
| Changing Places Toilet (Darlington Hippodrome) - Release of Funding | Cabinet 5 Mar 2024 |
| Council Plan | Council 21 Mar 2024 Cabinet 5 Mar 2024 |
| Local Development Scheme (LDS) | Cabinet 5 Mar 2024 |
| Local Transport Plan | Cabinet 5 Mar 2024 |
| Regulatory Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) | Cabinet 5 Mar 2024 |
| Release of Capital Funds - Hurworth Schools Section S106 Funding | Cabinet 5 Mar 2024 |
| Annual Procurement Plan | Cabinet 9 Apr 2024 |
| Land at Faverdale - Burtree Garden Village - Proposed Infrastructure Development Agreement (IDA) | Cabinet 9 Apr 2024 |
| Schedule of Transactions - April 2024 | Cabinet 9 Apr 2024 |
| Town Centre Site Development and Proposal to seek Development Partner through Framework and Acquisition of East Street Leasehold Interest | Cabinet 9 Apr 2024 |
| Housing Services Asset Management Strategy | Cabinet 7 May 2024 |
| Housing Services Vulnerability Policy | Cabinet 7 May 2024 |
| Offset Strategy | Cabinet 8 Oct 2024 |

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