



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee Agenda

10.00 am

Wednesday, 24 April 2024

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT

Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.

1. Introduction/Attendance at Meeting
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To approve the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny held on 28 February 2024 (Pages 3 - 6)
4. CAMHS Update –
Report of the General Manager, Children and Young People’s Services, Durham and Tees Valley
(Pages 7 - 14)
5. Community Mental Health Transformation –
Report of the Associate Director of Partnerships and Strategy - Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust
(Pages 15 - 28)
6. Council Plan 2024 - 2027 –
Report of the Chief Officers Executive
(Pages 29 - 46)
7. Housing Services Asset Management Strategy –
Report of the Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues

(Pages 47 - 74)

8. Housing Services Vulnerability Policy –
Report of the Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues
(Pages 75 - 90)
9. Work Programme –
Report of the Assistant Director Law and Governance
(Pages 91 - 106)
10. 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.
11. Questions



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Tuesday, 16 April 2024

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

Councillors Baker, Crudass, Holroyd, Johnson, Layton, Mahmud, Mammolotti, Pease, Mrs Scott and Beckett

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Michael Conway, Mayoral and 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: michael.conway@darlington.gov.uk or telephone 01325 406309

HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 28 February 2024

PRESENT – Councillors Layton (Chair), Baker, Crudass, Holroyd, Johnson, Mahmud, Mrs Scott and Beckett

APOLOGIES – Councillors Mammolotti and Pease,

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Anthony Sandys (Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues), Ken Ross (Public Health Principal) and Michael Conway (Mayoral and Democratic Officer)

HH33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

HH34 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

RESOLVED

- (a) That the minutes of the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee – 3 January 2024 are approved.
- (b) That the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee – 23 January 2024 are approved.

HH35 BREAST SYMPTOMATIC SERVICES UPDATE

The Integrated Care Board – Director of Place (Darlington) provided members with a presentation covering the current clinical services strategy including diagnostic and treatment services.

Information was provided on the current numbers of patients in the Darlington catchment area, current screening services offered including fixed and mobile sites, with differentiations provided between screening and symptomatic services.

Post COVID recovery on both screening and symptomatic services was highlighted with screening services recovery from lockdown's backlog being a point of note along with symptomatic services' referrals increasing as normal service provision recommenced.

Challenges to the service were covered with workforce pressure remaining the greatest of these, on this point we were informed that additional staff are being trained in order to free-up consultant capacity in order to maintain quality of treatment.

Members wished to express that the numbers of screening uptake in Darlington is very encouraging and suggest that continual promotion of the importance of screening is vital. Officers agreed and highlighted the dichotomy that the high quality of service offered can adversely affect screening uptake due to less of the population being personally affected by breast cancer. A member questioned if residents who do not attend screening are

repeatedly invited, and it was confirmed that they are however tackling fear and apprehension of attending screening remains a continual focus.

A member noted Darlington's positive performance in service uptake in comparison to surrounding localities and asked the possible reason for this. Officers stated that exact reasons are not clear however population makeup and the presence of a popular and well-used hospital in Darlington Memorial Hospital are suspected contributing factors.

Discussion was held with regards to cultural barriers that may prevent attending screening with officers confirming that women's health hubs aim for increased engagement to help target underrepresented individuals. Members questioned if individuals in susceptible families are being tested and that those who require screening are not being missed with officers confirming that every attempt is made to arrange services for those individuals.

RESOLVED – Members noted the content of the presentation and the quality of information provided.

HH36 PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY UPDATE

The Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues attended and presented the proposed update to this strategy that was previously approved by Cabinet in July 2019 with an update provided to this Scrutiny Committee in December 2022. Members were informed that all actions in the current strategy have been completed and the development of a fresh strategy is now proposed with the considerations now present in the post-COVID period.

The production of the updated strategy is intended to help manage an increase in demand for services to prevent rough sleeping. A major contributor to this was the lifting of the ban on no-fault evictions following the COVID period.

It was reported that a main ongoing challenge is sourcing accommodation for those with complex needs and those who have lost previous accommodation due to their own behaviour. With further challenges including the increase in presentations and demand for emergency accommodation has meant that services have had to be more reactive to ensure that no-one is left homeless or having to rough sleep.

It was highlighted that a key project for the strategy is to create a scoping document in order to present key pressures and to develop themes for work moving forward. It is also important to establish who will be involved in the production of the strategy and it is proposed that this is at least comprised of a blend of council departments, voluntary sector and social housing providers.

Discussions included members highlighting the importance of working with partners in the production of the strategy with a member highlighting that those involved in hospital and prison discharges would have insight that may be valuable in the production of the strategy. The quality of accommodation provided was also discussed with a consensus that secure and good standards of accommodation play an important role in maintaining the health and wellbeing of those housed and in order to break the cycle of individuals repeatedly presenting as homeless.

A further discussion was held with regards to individuals with military service presenting as homeless. Officers confirmed that those who have served are a priority and that efforts are made to identify these individuals, it was also clarified that such people can be directed to the Town Hall to speak to Housing Options staff.

Questions included the most common circumstances for presentations and officers confirmed that there are always a number of transient presentations but also that Darlington residents may present as homeless as current accommodation arrangements break down alongside more individuals coming through the asylum service which is showing an increase for all authorities in the North East with a member also adding that those being released from prison are also a common source for presentations.

A member queried what the most common accommodation required is and if there is scope for housing families. It was confirmed that most accommodation is 1 or 2 bedroom as this is the most common requirement however larger properties are currently under construction at the Neasham Road development but that turnover for families is generally a lot lower than that of individuals.

RESOLVED – Members considered the content of the report and agreed to the development of a new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2025-30.

HH37 DARLINGTON BETTER CARE FUND UPDATE

The Head of Service - Commissioning, Performance and Transformation provided an update on the Darlington Better Care Fund (BCF) 2023/25 Programme informing members of the next steps across the programme. We were informed the tight timeframes for submission, with guidelines being received in late December 2023 and that final submission was made in early February 2024.

Members were informed that the underlying vision for the BCF over 2023-25 is to support people to live healthy, independent and dignified lives, through joining up health, social care and housing services seamlessly around the person. This vision is underpinned by the two core BCF objectives: to enable people to stay well, safe and independent at home for longer and to provide the right care in the right place at the right time.

A member raised the point that many activities specified in the submission relate to later-in-life individuals with the opinion that the prevention of unnecessary admissions would be more feasible if activities commenced earlier in people's lives. Officers acknowledged this and responded that there was an element of the funding allocated to prevention of admissions. Members were informed that funding is required to be assigned to areas under greatest stress with a focus on facilitation of discharge; with the post-COVID period showing greater strain than in previous years.

A member also expressed that they felt it would be beneficial for the report to clearly highlight that it is a Quarter 3 update and that a summary of changes from its previous presentation at the committee meeting would be beneficial and aid members in navigating the report more effectively. Officers acknowledged this for future presentations.

RESOLVED – That the submission and reporting requirements of the programme be noted

and agreed for a report to be presented at a future meeting of this committee to detail the outcome of the ongoing review of the BCF Scheme.

HH38 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 – It was requested that a an overview of new Health Scrutiny powers be provided to members when feasible.

Children & Young People's Services

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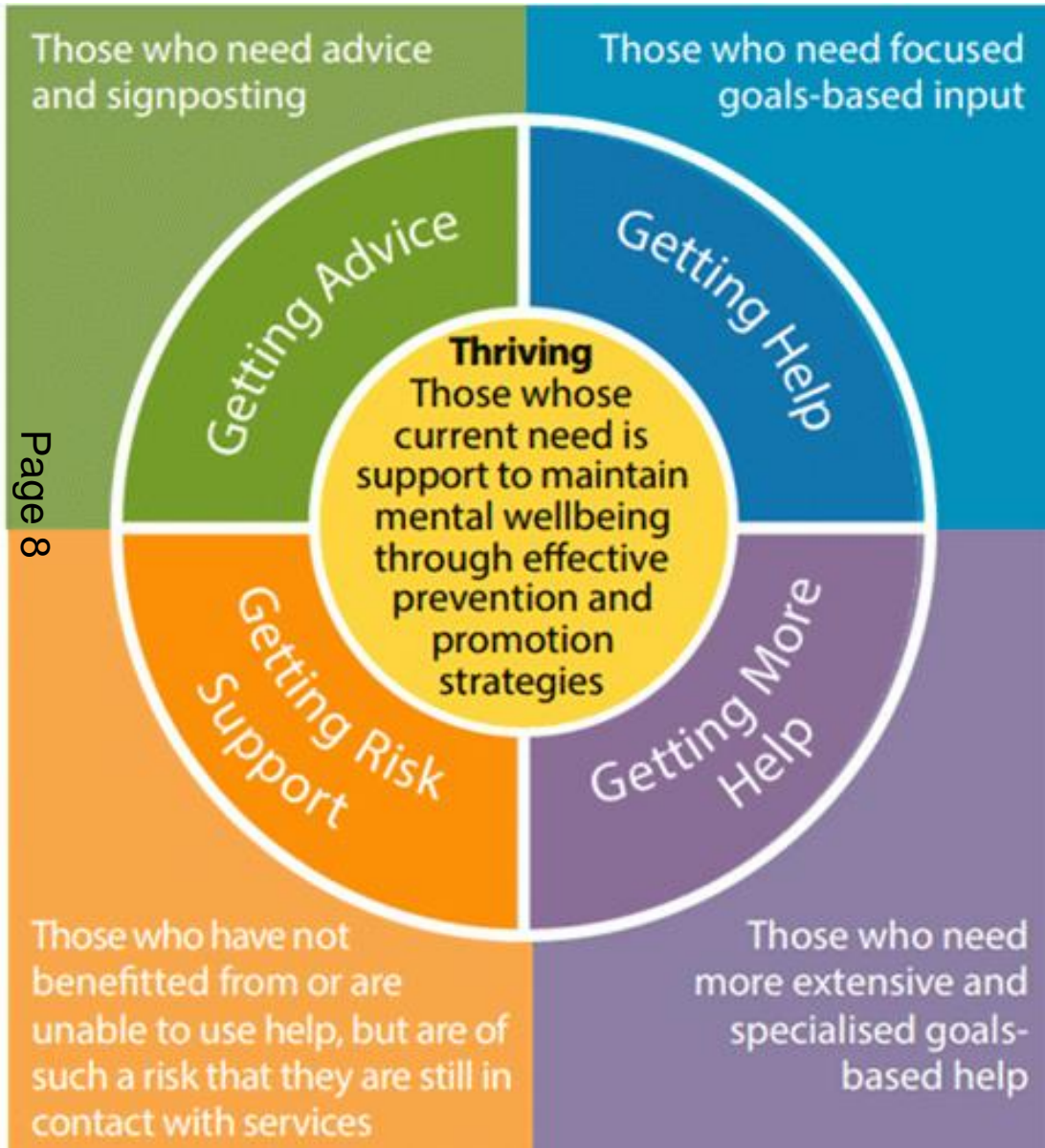
James Graham
General Manager, Children and Young People's Services, Durham and Tees Valley
21st March 2024

Agenda Item 4

Children & young people's services – i-THRIVE



Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys
NHS Foundation Trust



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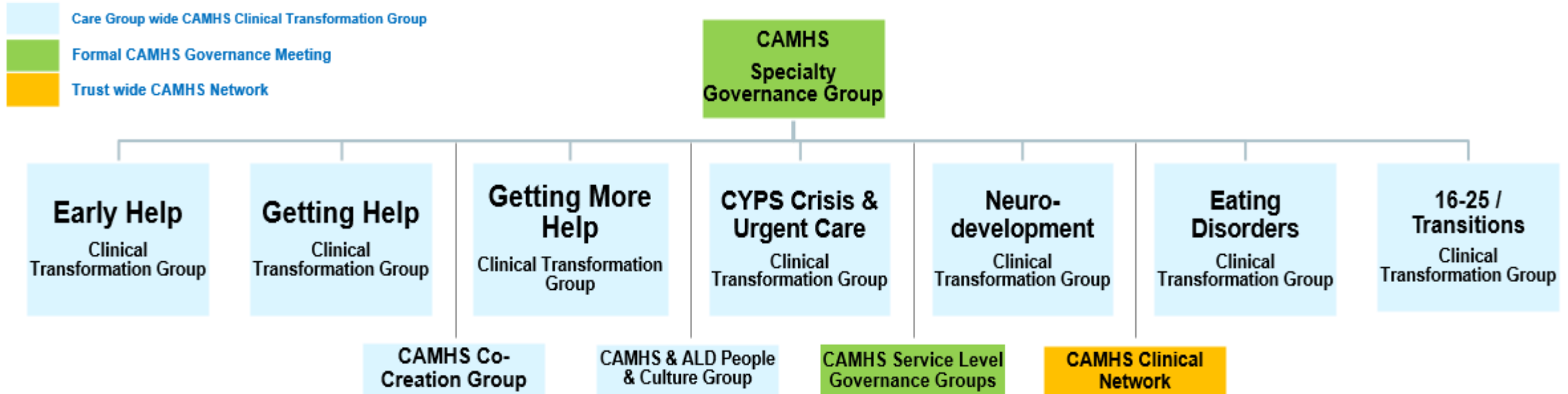
Working with our partners, including commissioners, VCS/3rd sector providers and some local authority colleagues to co-create and deliver the i-THRIVE framework of care

A whole system and evidenced-based approach in supporting families with their emotional wellbeing and mental health needs

Draws a clear distinction between treatment and support

Children, young people and their families are active decision makers

CAMHS Clinical Transformation model



Clinical Transformation Group function:

To lead priority actions and objectives related to designated work stream from the clinical strategy priorities & business plan

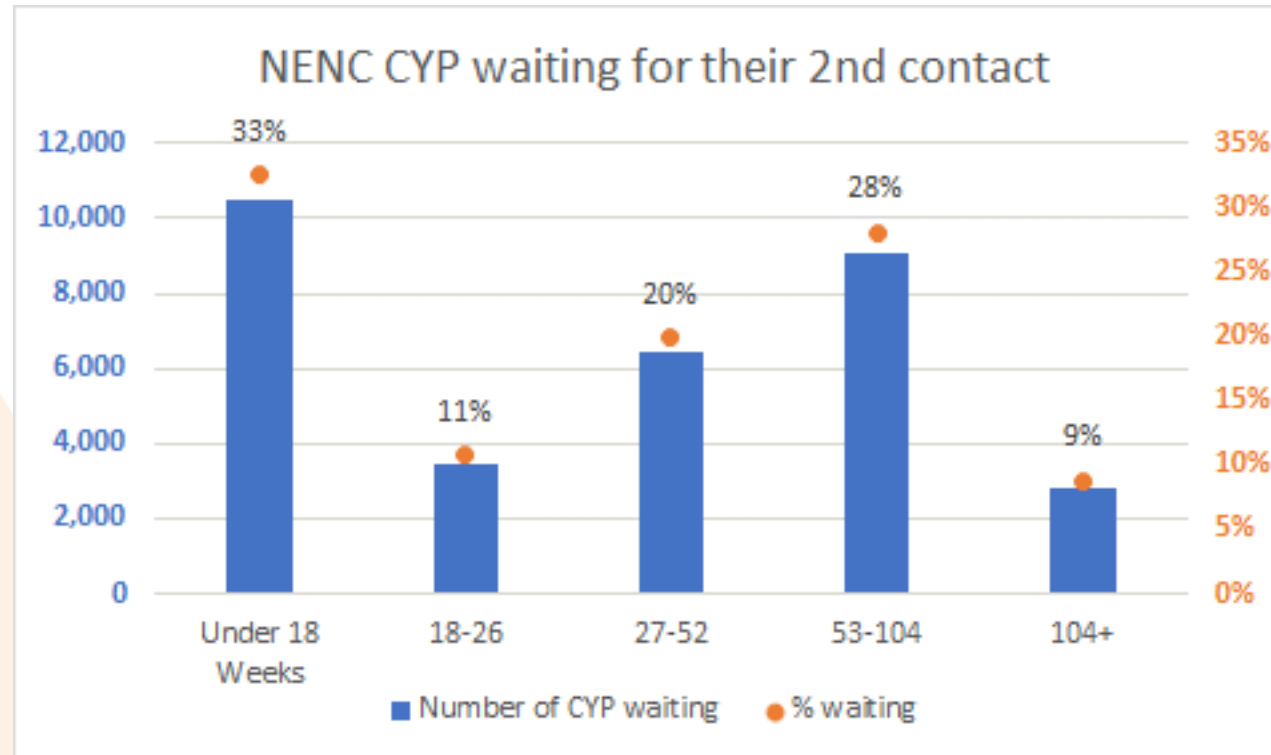
To monitor progress and impact against priority metrics related to the high impact changes each month

To provide assurance against previous reporting month activities, planned future activities and detail any support or escalations to the Specialty Governance Group

Children & Young People's Services

- In Darlington, waits for triage, needs assessment and commencement of support through SPA (single point of access), Getting Help and Getting More Help teams compare favourably with national benchmarks
 - Average wait for assessment in Q3 23/24 26 days
 - Follow-up appointments typically within 4-6 weeks for Getting Help and 6-12 weeks for Getting More Help.

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Children & Young People's Services

- Specialist eating disorders performance against national access standards
 - In Q3 23/24 88% of routine referrals seen within 4 weeks
 - In Q3 23/24 67% of urgent referrals seen within 1 week
 - All reported standard breaches due to data quality or patient choice
- Crisis and IHT teams performing well
 - In Q3 23/24 94.4% of urgent referrals were seen within 4 hrs
- Progress against national plans
 - In 23/24 Tees Valley had a target to achieve 10,442 young people accessing NHS commissioned mental health services
 - This is on track to be exceeded by over 1000

Children & Young People's Services

- Neurodevelopmental assessments
 - Average wait in Darlington currently 463 days
 - Currently, assessments are typically concluding 29 months post referral onto the assessment pathway
 - A small number are prioritised for early conclusion based on individual circumstances and risk
 - Referral demand continues to outstrip capacity
- In response all partners and key stakeholders are:
 - Embedding a needs-led system to offer support to young people, families, carers and schools, regardless of a young person's diagnostic status
 - Reviewing diagnostic pathways to maximise efficiency
 - Submitting a proposal to use non-recurrent funds for a waiting list initiative

Children & Young People's Services

- Keeping in Touch (KIT) process helps mitigate any risks associated with all waiters and is monitored daily at clinical and senior management levels.
- Young persons' engagement lead in post to drive coproduction of care delivery and service development.
- Rolling out of PCN practitioners to support GP practices with young people's mental health and emotional well being
- MHSTs (school-based teams) having a positive impact across the Tees Valley
 - Darlington will be the first local authority in the Tees Valley to achieve 100% coverage

Thank you

Any questions?

Working collectively to transform the mental health system

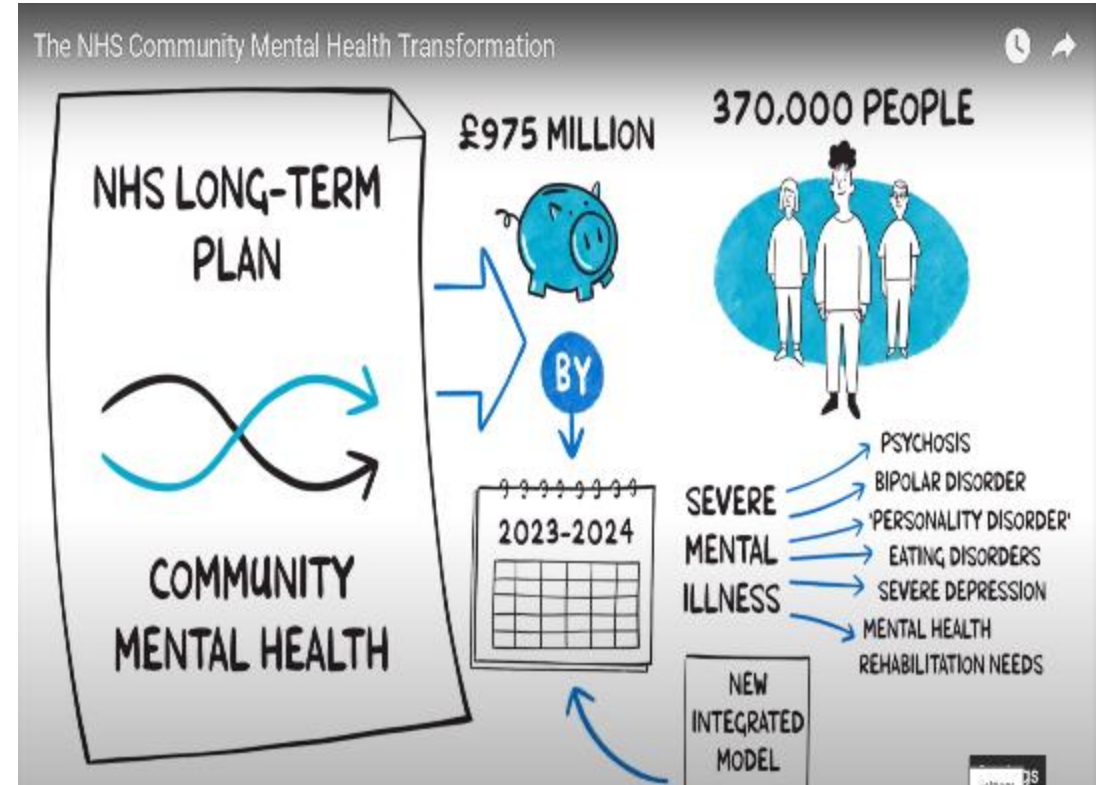
Darlington Health and
Housing Scrutiny Committee

April 2024



Reminder of core aims of Community Transformation

- To deliver a new mental health community-based offer which allows for collaborative pathways across the system it operates within.
- Create a **core mental health service** which is aligned with **primary care networks and voluntary sector organisations**
- Ensure services are **accessible** to the community it serves and **inclusive of population need**.
- Allow the individual seeking advice and support the right care, at the right time in the right place and in doing so **ensure timely access to care**



Progress since December 2022

COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION NHS
ENGLAND: DARLINGTON



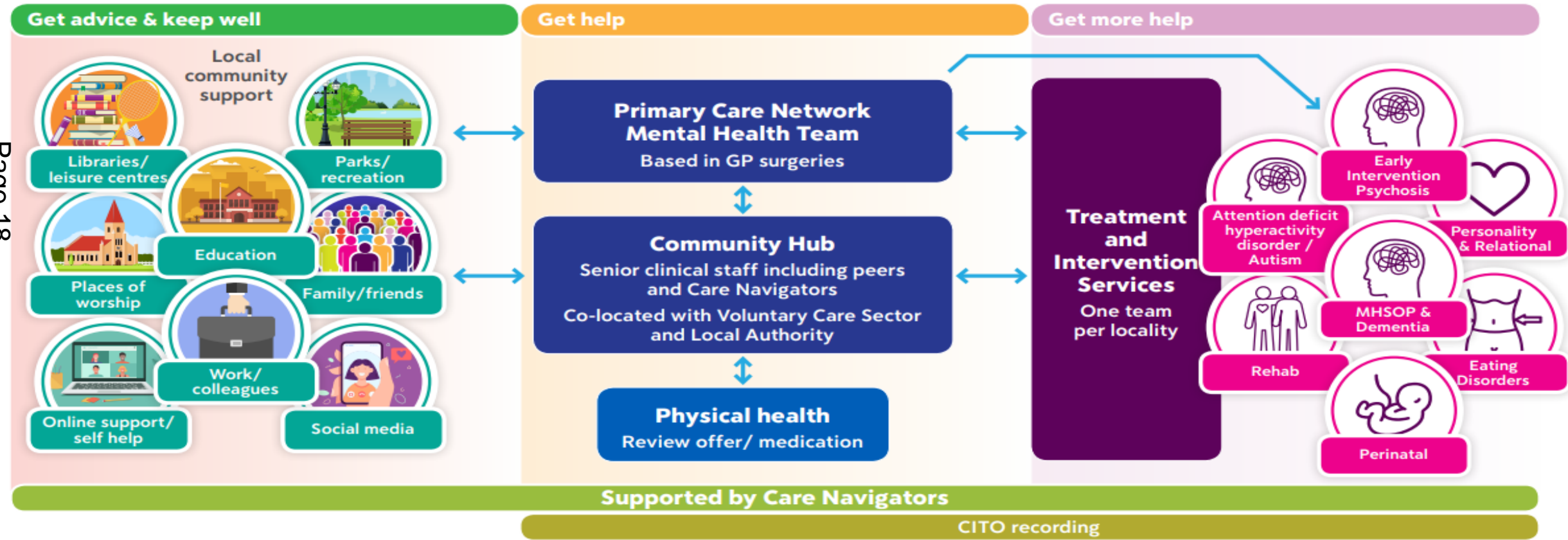
Community Transformation

Our vision:



- Integrated services delivering collaborative pathways which meet the needs of the local population
- Empowering individuals to choose and manage their own personalised recovery, as experts in their own mental health (informed by social, cultural and ethnic needs)

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Principles:

- We accept each other's assessments
- We do not refuse a referral
- There is no wrong door to Get Help
- Patients are not "discharged" by services

Primary Care Network Mental Health Team

MDT input across both as a shared resource

COMMENCED February 2023

Community Hub

- Triage and assessment
- Medication reviews
 - Interventions:
- Graded Exposure
- Anxiety Management
 - Hearing Voices
 - Life line work
- Stress Vulnerability
 - Sleep Hygiene
 - CBT
 - Clinics
- Physical wellbeing checks
- Signposting and navigating
- Interface with PCN workforce
- ASD/ ADHD assessment
 - Peer support

Treatment and Intervention Services

- Complex presentation and prescribing
 - Risk Management
 - ASD/ADHD complex needs
 - Governed therapies
- Intense/high frequency /complex referrals
 - Physical wellbeing checks
- Interface with PCN workforce
 - Peer support

Access, Affective and Psychosis teams Re-configured into the hub and treatment teams

Tees Valley Primary Care Mental Health Services

Rationale / need



- Thresholds to enter into secondary care services are high
- Care should be accessible at first point of entry via the GP
- NHSE mandate: improvement letter states inclusion of a joint approach to funding Mental Health practitioners on a 50/50 basis via the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme under the PCN directed service contract (DES)

Model development

Introduction of a mental health workforce which operates as an integrated part of the primary care network

Proposed Impact:

- reduced referrals into secondary care
- improve access for patients with the positive benefit this will have on carers, staff and stakeholders

Model Development/Workforce

ANP

12, 20 min appt per day

Patients who have a Severe Mental Illness (SMI) and or personality and relational disorders

Too complex for IAPT, would not meet the threshold for TEWV

Allow for assessment, complex medication reviews, short term intervention/stabilisation work/exploring where a patient may benefit from support within our local VCS services (right care, right place)

MHWP

Longer, more flexible appointments for place of appt

Use of Dialogue & ReQoI as Patient Recorded Outcome Measures (PROM) – helps with care planning and longer term recovery focused work.

May do joint working with SPLW/VCS

Offering psychologically informed interventions (such as CBT based skills)

SMI Physical Healthcare Practitioner

New development within TEWV

Time split between 50/50 primary care and secondary MH service

Importance of screening (core 20plus5 - national approach to reducing health inequalities)

Kits from NHSE allows for portable screening for patients who may be difficult to reach hard to engage – assertive outreach.

Importance of intervention and making every contact count

Proposed outcome measurement - benefit of workstream

Time

20 minute appointments enables greater throughput of patients and greater availability of being seen at the earliest opportunity

Number of appointments

Page 22
6 appointment per week per clinician available as per service level agreement. Flexibility in appointment time outside of 9-5

Individual needs are met at the earliest opportunity

Only 2% of all patients are stepped up into secondary care services (of 41,000 between 2021-2023)

SMI Health Care Checks

National drive for PCNs to meet the ambition of 60% target for all SMI physical healthcare checks, One life Hartlepool are now over 70% since practitioner is in post. Havelock Surgery (pilot) at 80%.

Improved Relationships with Voluntary Care Sector and Primary Care

Feedback from surveys sent out to staff and partners

It goes towards helping with a large, currently, unmet need for patients unable to access secondary mental health care. It enables primary care to be able to offer a joined-up service in a timely manner.

Patients receive a fantastic quality of care and there has been an improvement in the primary secondary care interface, with bouncing of patients between primary and secondary care reduced, reducing the risk of harm/delays in accessing the right support/care.

Feedback from surveys sent out to services users

Absolutely excellent service. Really good at making you feel at ease and listening to what you say and giving you different options of help available.

The mental health nurse I spoke to was excellent, however the waiting time to speak to her was too long.

Give me the help I needed and were so quick to help me though my support I still have a long journey to go yet but I really want to say thank you.

When I first started having appointments with the mental health nurse I was so unwell and she took time to help me and understood and listened. She got me support from secondary mental health I now have a bipolar diagnosis and waiting to be prescribed mood stabiliser and she prescribed Trazadone which has helped with my insomnia and has helped also she is amazing and changed my life.

Darlington Connect Mental Health & Wellbeing Hub

Funding hosted by the 700 Club

Darlington have created a Community Hub known as Darlington Connect.

Funding covers the building, lease and project management costs for day-to-day coordination and delivery.



Darlington Connect

- A holistic approach to supporting mental health and wellbeing for the people of Darlington
- Opened March 2023 in the high street
- Led by 700 club with a range of VCSE partners – “connecting” the offer
- Approximately 500 appointments per quarter plus informal drop in advice
- Trained support staff delivering the service
- Now includes outreach work – employed development manager
- Development of online directors including: Health, Utilities, Recreation, Clothing & Essentials, Finance, Training & Employment, transport.
- Household support fund
- Accessible toilet
- Soundproof “pods”



Expectations/Impact of the model

- No wrong door – no rejections: *Community Navigator post pivotal to this.*
- Warm transfers of care.
- Pathway simplified: Easier navigation for people who need help and staff
- Holistic offer – people will receive a package of care from TEWV and system partners
- Staff recruitment/ retention and wellbeing
- Earlier access to support/ guidance and interventions
- Waiting times reduced from 6 months to within 28 day target
- Specialist caseload reduced to allow more meaningful therapeutic treatment



Challenges

- Funding
- Unprecedented system pressure
- Specialist Workforce
- Time to transform
- Maintaining momentum
- Funding (such a challenge its worth repeating.....)



Thank you for listening. Any questions?

COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION NHS
ENGLAND: DARLINGTON



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**HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
24 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.

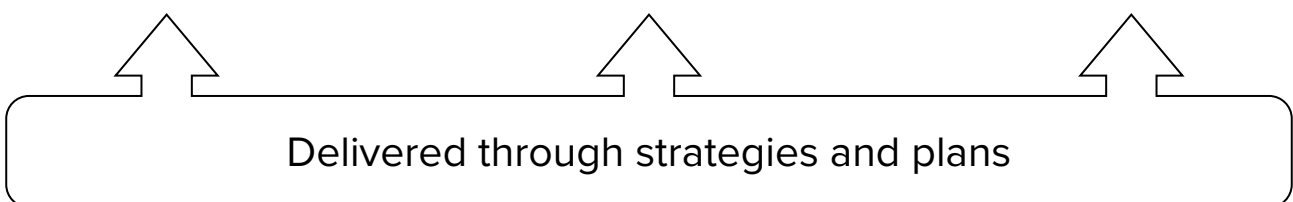
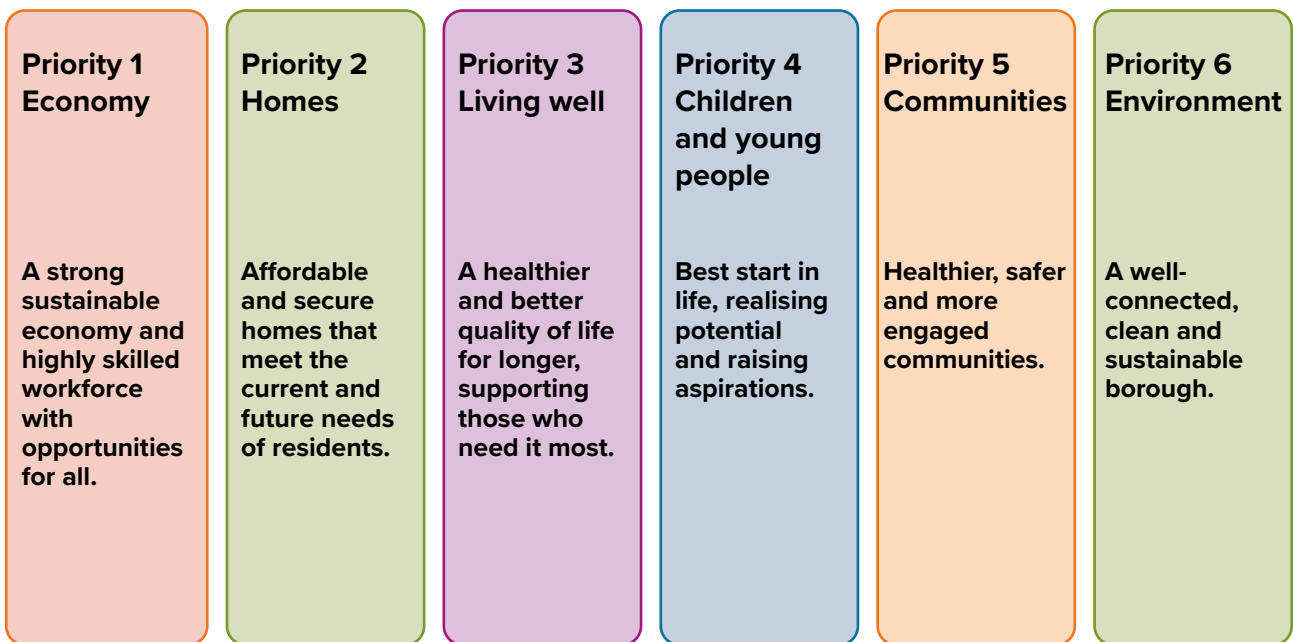
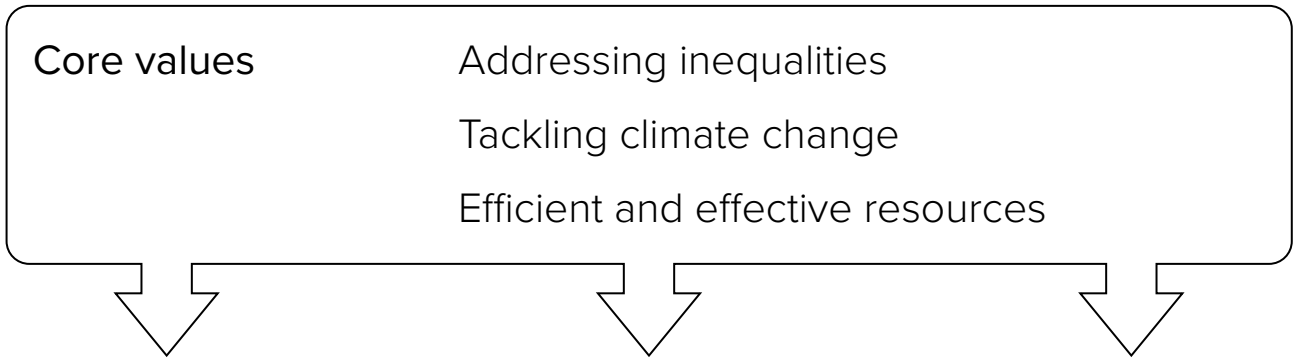
These are both exciting and challenging times for Darlington, and we want your views on our proposals in this plan to help shape our priorities and how we deliver.



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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

**HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
24 APRIL 2024**

HOUSING SERVICES ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. For Members to consider the draft Housing Services Asset Management Strategy 2024-2029 before approval by Cabinet on 7 May 2024.

Summary

2. Darlington Borough Council provides over 5,300 high quality homes for local residents and we are committed to providing safe, energy efficient and comfortable homes.
3. The Housing Services Asset Management Strategy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** sets out how Housing Services will ensure the efficient and effective management of our homes, as a core requirement of meeting our landlord services function.
4. The Tenants Panel has been consulted on the draft policy and they have given their full support.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Members:
 - (a) Consider the report and draft Housing Services Asset Management Strategy at **Appendix 1** and agree its onward submission to Cabinet.

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) The Regulator of Social Housing's new Consumer Standards from April 2024 places a duty on social housing landlords to:
 - (i) Have an accurate, up to date and evidenced understanding of the condition of our homes that reliably informs our provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for our tenants, and
 - (ii) Provide an effective, efficient, and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for our homes and the communal areas and shared spaces for which we are responsible.

- (b) The adoption of a formal Asset Management Strategy is one of the ways to demonstrate how we will achieve this.

Anthony Sandys
Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues

Background Papers

Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards.

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no impact
Health and Wellbeing	Well maintained Council homes will have a positive impact on the health and well-being of Council tenants
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	An effective asset management strategy will have a positive impact on the energy efficiency of our Council homes
Diversity	This policy supports the promotion of diversity
Wards Affected	All wards with Council housing
Groups Affected	Council tenants and leaseholders
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This report supports the Council plan to ensure we are able to provide our tenants with good quality housing
Efficiency	An effective asset management strategy will ensure we make efficient use of our resources
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. Darlington Borough Council provides over 5,300 high quality homes for local residents and we are committed to providing safe, energy efficient and comfortable homes. This strategy sets out how Housing Services will ensure the efficient and effective management of our homes, as a core requirement of meeting our landlord services function.
8. The Housing Services Asset Management Strategy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** sets out the following key aims:
 - (a) To ensure our housing stock (our “assets”) is safe and well maintained.
 - (b) To develop a housing portfolio that is fit for purpose, meeting the needs of current and future generations of tenants and their families.
 - (c) To improve the energy efficiency of our housing stock and the ways of working that reduce carbon emissions and level of fuel poverty.
 - (d) To develop skills and support the local economy.
9. To meet these aims, the strategy sets out the following priorities and plans for improvement:
 - (a) Ensure all tenants live in homes that offer affordable warmth, by completing Energy Performance audits of our properties, ensuring all achieve a minimum of EPC Band C by 2030. Where this is not possible, we will review our options in line with the Housing Services Climate Change Strategy.
 - (b) Maximise all available grants, particularly relating to energy improvements and making applications for works to improve our properties.
 - (c) Reduce the risk of condensation and mould growth, by ensuring adequate ventilation, along with sufficient levels of insulation and adequate heating. We will also advise residents on how to reduce moisture levels in their homes in line with our Housing Services Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy.
 - (d) Ensure all tenants live in homes with adequate levels of fire protection by completing Fire Risk Assessments and regularly assessing these, completing new assessments if significant changes occur within the property.
 - (e) Ensure all tenants live in homes with appropriate levels of security, by listening to our residents’ concerns and those of the people that support them and ensure we support any request to improve security, both within the home and to the boundaries.
 - (f) Ensure that appropriate tenant engagement is undertaken and that tenants are involved in any project works to be completed within their home, prior to

commencement.

- (g) Maintain all properties in the most cost-effective manner over a realistic period, including the completion of appropriate option appraisals, where necessary.
- (h) Ensure all works are recorded on the asset management system, along with updating the attributes, such as the date of install and expected life cycle of that component.
- (i) Review high-cost schemes and schemes that appear un-economical.
- (j) Increase the proportion of planned maintenance to responsive repairs by working towards a budget split of 70:30 respectively.
- (k) Reduce reactive maintenance costs, by ensuring all properties are loaded on to the asset management system with relevant attributes, updated to reflect current condition.
- (l) Conduct timely replacement of property components. By ensuring all information is loaded on to the asset management system, we can ensure planned maintenance programmes can be calculated and planned when they are due.
- (m) Ensure consistency of improvement standards. Ensuring everyone is given the opportunity to give feedback on the way to improve the delivery of our services.
- (n) Ensure we deliver an effective and efficient repairs and maintenance service, in line with our Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy.
- (o) Ensure, through proactive contract monitoring, that all work undertaken on our properties by external contractors, or by other Council services under Service Level Agreements, is completed to a high standard and in a timely manner.
- (p) Develop our workforce, through improved training and skills development, and address any shortfalls in staffing resources through proactive recruitment drives, apprenticeships and procurement of external contractors, where required.

Outcome of Consultation

10. Our Tenants Panel were consulted in March 2024 and overall, the Panel support the proposed Housing Services Asset Management Strategy.

**HOUSING SERVICES
ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
2024-29**

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Introduction

We are committed to providing safe, energy efficient and comfortable homes. This strategy sets out how Housing Services will ensure the efficient and effective management of its homes, as a core requirement of meetings our landlord services function.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan is the Council's strategy for spending and borrowing to maintain its stock, operate services for its tenants and leaseholders, and design and build new council homes. As with any other business plan, it must show that we have clear proposals for achieving our objectives and that these are financially viable in the short, medium and long term. Having an HRA Business Plan that is approved by full Council, based on reasoned assumptions and an underlying financial model, forms the basis of good governance and sound financial management. It demonstrates that we are spending tenants' rent and service charges effectively and achieving value for money and managing debt and reserves to maintain a viable HRA overall. This strategy provides a framework under which the investment detailed in the (HRA) Business plan 2024-2053 can be achieved.

Asset management is the range of activities we undertake to ensure that our Housing Properties (assets) meet the needs and standards for the future.

The Housing Services Asset Management Strategy not only has to direct our investment priorities but also demonstrates how we will deliver excellent services to our tenants, leaseholders, and wider stakeholders. It will identify how we will ensure that people living in our homes remain informed, involved, safe and secure.

The strategy outlines the approach and commitments the council is making under the following key themes:

1. Understanding our service, homes, tenants and stakeholder requirements
2. Providing modern, safe and secure homes for tenants and leaseholders across the borough
3. Proactively decarbonizing the homes to support our [Housing Services Climate Change Strategy](#)
4. Developing skills and supporting the local economy.

We will think strategically about our property portfolio to ensure we maintain value and help to meet our aims and objectives.

Background

In 2011, we implemented our previous HRA Housing Services Asset Management Strategy with aims:

- To deliver an investment standard that mean our homes continue to achieve the decent homes target, reduce fuel poverty, meet identified needs, and contribute to community development.
- To manage the repair and maintenance service as an integral part of asset management, with a twin focus on improved performance and lower costs.
- To manage the stock portfolio, in terms not just of age, condition and standards, but also as part of a process of assessment to guide policies of re-investment to meet the needs of current and future tenants.
- To support our corporate priorities through investment plans that reflect the agreed allocation of resources for repair, maintenance and improvement of the stock and contribute to sustainable homes in sustainable communities.

Since that time, the housing sector has faced a period of great political and financial pressure characterised by rent cuts and the sector's response to the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017.

Despite those challenges during the lifetime of the strategy, we have delivered against our action plan, as follows:

- Undertaken a new Stock Condition Survey and further improved the quality of our stock condition data through in-house surveys.
- Implemented a new IT system to manage the maintenance and repairs service, to plan and schedule responsive repairs.
- Introduced on-line repairs reporting for customers.
- Embedded a new asset management IT system (Asset) which includes an 'Intelligent Energy' module.
- Maintained a 100% level of Decent Homes compliance.
- Recorded that 80% of customers are satisfied with the repairs service.
- Continued to invest in the repairs and maintenance of our housing stock at a level that meets the needs of the stock, improving the average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating to 64 in 2023 and an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D in 2023. The SAP rating is the methodology currently used by government to estimate the energy performance of homes. The methodology has two main uses:
 - To demonstrate compliance of new homes with Part L of the Building Regulations
 - To generate EPC's, which tells us and our tenants how energy efficient a building is and is rated from A (very efficient) to G (inefficient).

Aims

We will maintain our housing stock to a high standard that ensures effective investments, while meeting legislative requirements and meeting the needs of our tenants and leaseholders.

This strategy is based on four key aims:

- 1) Ensure the housing stock is safe and well maintained.
- 2) Develop a housing portfolio that is fit for purpose, meeting the needs of current and future generations of tenants and their families.
- 3) Improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock and the ways of working that reduce carbon emissions and level of fuel poverty.
- 4) Developing skills and supporting the local economy

Our key priorities are:

- Ensure homes are always safe and compliant.
- Develop a fabric first approach to net zero carbon in use.
- Continue to invest in the new build programme.
- Work towards a ratio of at least 70:30 planned maintenance to responsive repairs.

This strategy is framed around the following objectives and will continue to act as the framework, which will drive the decisions on housing asset spend in the 30-year HRA business plan. It provides the framework around which the maintenance, regeneration and the new build of our social housing portfolio will be undertaken.

- Delivery of an efficient and effective repairs and maintenance service is both critical to tenant satisfaction and the proper management of the property portfolio.
- We need to minimise the number of responsive repairs we undertake. This strategy will be reviewed annually, with a key aim of reducing the work undertaken as a responsive repair and to increase the work undertaken in a planned manner.
- All maintenance activity will be undertaken in a targeted and timely manner, which makes the most cost-effective use of maintenance resources and protects the value of an asset.
- We will ensure, through proactive contract monitoring, that all work undertaken on our properties by external contractors, or by other Council services under Service Level Agreements, is completed to a high standard and in a timely manner.
- We will support our tenants by completing minor adaptations to their homes, where appropriate, and will support our tenants in making applications for larger adaptations.
- We will take a fabric first approach with our properties, to support delivery of net carbon zero targets.

- We will set an annual budget to deal with environmental issues, to support the woodland strategy, such as tree management and hedge cutting.
- We will review our asset performance, such as the number and cost of repairs, to ensure investment decisions are appropriate. This evaluates the costs required to bring properties to the correct standards and if they are value for money (this is known as a stock asset performance review).
- We are the freeholders of our properties, and we will work our leaseholders under the terms of their leases, to ensure the safety of the building, including fire safety.

In summary, this strategy aims to build on the successes of our previous HRA Asset Management Strategy and sets out our approach to asset management moving forward. It also aims to make the link between our ambition and delivery on the ground, helping an improved sense of place and community. This will be achieved with a set of key actions, which we will deliver over the next five years.

Given the increased knowledge we now have about how our stock is performing, this strategy purposely draws on this intelligence and the stock asset performance review we have undertaken in the past five years, to highlight our asset management challenges and priorities moving forward.

Our Approach

Delivering our Asset Management Strategy

To achieve our strategy aims and objectives, we have developed a time-bound and prioritised action plan.

As a plan for action, this strategy purposely takes account of changes in our operating environment and sets out the priorities for the next five years. These priorities apply to the specification, physical care and improvement of our property related assets.

We will deliver the strategy aims and objectives by:

- **Working with our tenants** – ensuring effective engagement, involvement and communication with our tenants, both about repairs and maintenance and safety relating to their individual homes and in the areas surrounding their homes, such as open spaces and communal entrances.
- **Adding Social Value** – ensuring real local employment and training outcomes for the town’s residents and communities and ensuring investment programmes and other asset management related interventions are delivered in a cost-effective manner and following sound procurement principles, including, where possible, meeting the needs of young people and particularly those in care and care leavers. We will do this through our standard procurement processes.
- **Enhancing the value of the HRA asset base** – we are committed to achieving value for money (VfM) in the way that we deliver services. We recognise that having a value for money service relates to the quality of the service provided, as well as the cost. We recognise the need to deliver ever improving and cost-effective services for all our tenants and in doing so, we will seek to adopt good practice and incorporate VfM principles into every project. VfM will be an integral element of all performance measures and we will work to ensure that there is VfM awareness throughout the organisation and partners that we work with.
- **Maintaining the availability of accurate information about the HRA asset base** – ensuring programmes, interventions and investment decisions are timely and well informed, being based on good quality information associated with our properties.
- **Maintaining compliance with statutory obligation and emerging legislation** – ensuring that all statutory compliance obligations are achieved, that plans are in place to respond to anticipated legislative and regulatory changes, including those stated in the Social Housing White Paper 2020 and the Carbon Zero agenda, and that we can respond to any new regulatory requirements.

Impact of the strategy

This strategy will have a positive impact upon the repairs and maintenance service and therefore, on the organisation as a whole.

This strategy will help to:

- Improve tenant satisfaction with property standards and the repairs service.
- Contribute towards having a well-maintained property portfolio, ensuring that capital and revenue funding is effectively prioritised and utilised.
- Deliver projects effectively and efficiently.
- Maximise returns on any investment into properties.
- Deliver continuous improvement through performance management.
- Allow an effective utilisation of resources.
- Provide our tenants with warm, safe and sustainable homes.

Legislation and Regulation

As a registered provider of social housing, we adhere to the required standards set out by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in the Consumer Standards:

- Housing Services Information Standards 2024 – We will process and manage your data to ensure we keep your information safe and secure.
- Housing Services Safety and Quality Service Standards 2024 – Our commitment to providing safe, energy efficient and comfortable homes.
- Housing Services Your Neighbourhood and Community Service Standards 2024 – We want our neighbourhoods to be places where you want to live and where you will have peaceful enjoyment of your home.
- Housing Services Rent Account Service Standards 2024 – We are committed to providing an effective, accessible, and accountable rent collection service to assist tenants to be able to pay their rent and service charges.
- Housing Services Tenant Involvement Service Standards 2024 - Involving our tenants in everything we do is integral in helping us to shape and improve our services. We want to make sure that you can easily give us feedback and be involved in improving our service.

We will adhere to the standards set out in the Consumer Standards and determine how we meet these. The [Safety and Quality Service Standards](#) has particular importance within this strategy and will become an underlying core value as this sets out our commitment to providing safe, energy efficient and comfortable homes.

We will comply with the significant range of legislation and regulation which supports the delivery of repairs and maintenance and the standards that govern the way in which we work, including (but not limited to):

- Housing Act 1985.
- Housing Act 2004.
- Defective Premises Act 1972.
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Gas Safety (Installation and use) Regulations 1998.
- The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994.
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.
- Building Regulations Act 1984.
- Defective Premises Act 1972.
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, including requirements for Fire Doors and Means of Escape (MOE).
- Housing Health and Safety Rating 2006.
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Building Safety Act 2022.

Links to internal policies and procedures

This document should also be read in conjunction with:

- Housing Services Management Policy 2022-2026.
- Repairs Handbook.
- Housing Services Damp, Mould, and Condensation Policy 2023-2027.
- Leaseholder handbook.
- Fire Safety Policy for Sheltered and Extra Care Accommodation.
- Darlington Borough Council Customer Standards.
- Housing Services Tenancy Agreement.
- Housing Services Void Lettable Standards.
- Housing Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure.
- Housing Services Climate Change Strategy.
- Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

Social Housing (Market) Context

Asset Management in the affordable housing sector has been going through a significant transformation in recent years. This is described as the sector moving from 'doing maintenance' to becoming strategic managers of assets.

The Decent Homes Standard was, for many years, the key sector driver, using stock condition data to drive timely programmes of elemental replacement, such as kitchens and bathrooms, while providing effective repairs services. We established our own standards 'The Darlington Standard', meaning some replacements were carried out earlier than recommended.

The Decent Homes Standards (DHS) dealt with historic underinvestment issues and keeping that standard has been important for residents. However, following a government consultation, 72% of respondents identified changes were needed. As part of the social housing white paper, the government committed to carry out a review of the DHS. This was also built upon in the levelling up white paper, which sets to reduce the number of non-decent homes and bring legally binding DHS into the private sector.

The sector continues to change, and the government relaunched its review of the DHS in June 2023. This review will consider a range of changes including:

- An updated list of items which must be kept in a reasonable state of repair for a home to be considered 'decent'.
- An updated list of services and facilities that every property must have to better reflect modern expectations for a 'decent' home.
- Whether the current DHS sets the right standard on damp and mould, to keep residents safe.
- Updates to how the condition of building components, such as roofs and walls, are measured to ensure that buildings which are not fit for use, cannot pass the standard.
- The introduction of a Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard for the social rented sector.

As the DHS is still under review, we need to plan for the unknowns. Our strategy must also include wider considerations:

- An asset management strategy must consider investment and standards in the immediate environment, such as open green spaces, as well as the home within which it is located.
- Building and tenant safety is key, with new legislation and best practice.
- Achieving EPC rating of C or above by 2030.
- Achieving a net zero-carbon housing stock by 2050.

We now need to ensure our asset management strategy and underlying regeneration and investment plans accommodate all these new demands, to continue to give our tenants good quality, safe, energy efficient and well-maintained homes, in attractive places to live.

Our business plans must make adequate provision for all known and expected investment needs and we must be prepared not to invest in inadequate assets, where design, quality,

construction type or energy efficiency are not cost effective, to be addressed by capital investment to meet the required standards.

We need to be clear about our core assets, to plan for investing in and improving these, but for any less well performing stock we must be prepared to be more visionary, to secure best overall returns on investment. This will take consideration of the cost of bringing properties up to standards, the costs of ongoing maintenance and repairs, the rental income achievable on those properties and the lifecycle of those properties before further major investment would be required.

This may involve remodeling, demolition, change of use or more significant regeneration. We will continue to use our financial capacity to create the very best housing assets from our existing homes, as well as through regeneration and new development.

Strategic Drivers

Ageing Assets – Maintaining the performance and safety of an ageing asset base.

More exacting tenant expectations – Keeping our assets relevant by ensuring they are aligned with the reasonable expectations of new and existing tenants.

Technology – Exploiting technological advances in property management and ensuring our homes can be adapted to accommodate the increase in use of electric vehicles and are digitally connected.

Climate Change – Responding to climate change by decarbonising our homes and providing homes and services in a sustainable way.

Financial constraints – Becoming more efficient in the way we manage limited financial resources from HRA income and seeking opportunities for inward investment, such as grant funding.

Legislative and regulatory change – The social housing white paper 2020 (including DHS Review proposals) and further significant changes to building safety and consumer standards.

Asset Management Components, Tools and Information

We need significant additional investment to improve energy efficiency, as well as the ongoing investment in key components (such as kitchens, bathrooms and windows) and building safety. To effectively balance and manage these priorities, we will ensure we have a strong approach to understanding our assets, the service expectations of our tenants, as well as the data to support our decision making. Additionally, this will be clear and well communicated, to ensure we have a coordinated and consistent approach to our investment in our housing stock.

This will be managed through an improved approach to both asset and service data and intelligence, so we know as much as we can about our tenants and their homes.

Asset Data

Having accurate and up-to-date Stock Condition Surveys will be vital to understanding the current standard of our properties, as well as being able to carefully project the investment requirements over the 30-year business plan. Following a recent data review, the elements of data we collect and the ICT systems we use are robust. Even so, we will refresh, update and improve the accuracy of the data we hold, as well as increasing the number of properties we will survey.

We will work closely with our contractors, analysing their data to identify materials or components which are more costly to maintain, or where we are seeing repeat failures. This will be used to continually improve our quality standards and specifications. We will also use this data to inform our New Build Design Standards. We will develop a rolling programme of new stock condition surveys and we will also undertake a review of our ICT systems and data held, including future development and the investment required.

We have developed a range of analytical tools to assist in meeting our aims. These include:

- An asset system supported by extensive stock condition data, which is regularly updated through ongoing surveys.
- Maintenance planning, building safety and repairs scheduling systems.
- An HRA Business Plan to support programmes of work including:
 - A planned maintenance programme, achieving economies by replacing components just before they would otherwise require responsive repairs, anticipating changes in minimum acceptable standards, and reducing future requirements for demand driven maintenance.
 - Regularised maintenance programmes with a primary focus on keeping residents safe in their homes, such as testing fire alarms and smoke detectors.
 - Cyclical maintenance, such as gas servicing to prevent deterioration in the physical condition of the stock.
 - A responsive maintenance service to address unforeseen irregular repairs and to prevent unplanned deterioration in its condition.
 - An efficient and effective empty homes repairs service, ensuring we offer our new tenants' good quality and safe homes that meet our lettings standards (provide link to website).

Asset Profile and Grading

We own and manage approximately 5,300 homes, 114 of which are leasehold, with an approximate value of £390m. These provide a well-balanced mix of property types that supports the ranging household compositions and needs of our tenants. The majority, 93%, of homes are let as general needs, with some of these allocated specifically to older people.

There are no high-rise residential buildings (over 11m) within our stock, which greatly reduces risk in terms of building and fire safety, in comparison to other social landlords. Even so, the building safety agenda remains a key priority.

The nature and requirements of leasehold properties does vary to that of General Needs properties due to the properties being owned by the resident, but we retain some maintenance and upgrade responsibilities, and this has been considered when developing this strategy.

The council has several sheltered schemes which, because of their vulnerable tenants and possible difficulties in evacuation, will be considered high risk by this strategy.

The council also owns 1,018 garages, which are rented to both council tenants and other residents. We have reviewed the condition and overall demand for our garages, but this has been on individual garage sites, rather than taking a holistic view. Consideration has been given to the use of less popular garage sites for future development opportunities and assessments will be conducted to understand the current condition and future maintenance liability, to improve the letting of garages. Whilst a garage strategy has not specifically been developed as part of this Asset Management Strategy, the standard, safety and use of garages is an important factor of good asset management and is considered as part of the provision of quality homes.

Stock Profile

(Graphic to be inserted here with our data)

Type of Homes	Homes %	Year Built	Year %
Senior Living	5%		
Bungalows	7%		
Flats/Maisonettes	40%		
Houses	49%	Pre 1945	15%
		1945-65	49%
		1965-1973	21%
		1974+	15%

Property Type	No of Properties	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4+ bed
Flats/Maisonettes	2,089	1,503	586	-	-
Houses	2,567	0	1,051	1,474	42
Bungalows	344	313	30	1	-
Sheltered (Flats)	209	209	-	-	-
Extra Care (Flats)	48	48	-	-	-
TOTAL Dwellings	5,257	2,073	1,667	1,475	42

Other Properties	Quantity
Garages	1,018

Age Profile of tenants

(Graphic to be inserted here with our data)

The adult population has an increasing life expectancy; currently, 30% of our tenants are aged 65 or over. Due to this expected increase, an ageing tenant population will bring increased health issues and vulnerabilities. 9% of all our tenants have notified us of a disability.

Adaptations will support our tenants living longer but not necessarily in good health. This will mean we will need to cater for frailer tenants who may not be able to meet their responsibilities to look after their homes, which may need significant support due to dementia rather than a physical disability.

The design of new properties and adaptation of existing homes to meet the ageing population, will be a key feature of our Asset Management plans. Properties that enable tenants to remain in their homes longer will need to embrace not just structural adaptation, but also telecare products that enable remote monitoring and care. Links with our Housing Lifeline Service, social care and other appropriate partners will become essential, as the same tenants may be cared for by the different agencies.

27% of our tenants are aged 40 or under. Due to this younger population, we are seeing an increase in demand for family homes. This also brings opportunities and drivers for new technology and smart homes. Since the Covid pandemic, we have seen an increase in the use of digital and online services. Technology is already changing the way we do things across multiple services, such as enhancing customer service and providing transparency, where previously there was none. Although transparency is important, the data collected is arguably even more so. It can be used to inform and improve our services, helping us to analyse trends, predict behaviour and provide better customer service. Technology can also be a driver to improve safety, such as monitoring when smoke detectors are offline, or predicting homes that are at increased risk of suffering damp or mould conditions. We will continue to explore these technologies to help support us to take a proactive approach to managing both our stock and the health and safety of our tenants.

Asset Management Priorities

Priorities and plan for delivery

In addition to compliance with all legal requirements, we will:

- Ensure all tenants live in homes that offer affordable warmth, by completing Energy Performance audits of our properties, ensuring all achieve a minimum of EPC Band C by 2030. Where this is not possible, we will review our options in line with the Housing Services Climate Change Strategy.
- Maximise all available grants, particularly relating to energy improvements and making applications for works to improve our properties.
- Reduce the risk of condensation and mould growth, by ensuring adequate ventilation, along with sufficient levels of insulation and adequate heating. We will also advise residents on how to reduce moisture levels in their homes in line with our [Housing Services Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy](#)
- Ensure all tenants live in homes with adequate levels of fire protection by completing Fire Risk Assessments and regularly assessing these, completing new assessments if significant changes occur within the property.
- Ensure all tenants live in homes with appropriate levels of security, by listening to our residents' concerns and those of the people that support them and ensure we support any request to improve security, both within the home and to the boundaries.
- Ensure that appropriate tenant engagement is undertaken and that tenants are involved in any project works to be completed within their home, prior to commencement.
- Maintain all properties in the most cost-effective manner over a realistic period, including the completion of appropriate option appraisals, where necessary.
- Ensure all works are recorded on the asset management system, along with updating the attributes, such as the date of install and expected life cycle of that component.
- Review high-cost schemes and schemes that appear un-economical.
- Increase the proportion of planned maintenance to responsive repairs by working towards a budget split of 70:30 respectively.
- Reduce reactive maintenance costs, by ensuring all properties are loaded on to the asset management system with relevant attributes, updated to reflect current condition.
- Conduct timely replacement of property components. By ensuring all information is loaded on to the asset management system, we can ensure planned maintenance programmes can be calculated and planned when they are due.
- Ensure consistency of improvement standards. Ensuring everyone is given the opportunity to give feedback on the way to improve the delivery of our services. As an example, we will work with our new build design team, and our planned and responsive maintenance teams, to explore new products together and apply those improvements across all areas.
- Ensure we deliver an effective and efficient repairs and maintenance service, in line with our [Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy](#).
- Ensure, through proactive contract monitoring, that all work undertaken on our properties by external contractors, or by other Council services under Service Level Agreements, is completed to a high standard and in a timely manner.

- Develop our workforce, through improved training and skills development, and address any shortfalls in staffing resources through proactive recruitment drives, apprenticeships and procurement of external contractors, where required.

Planned Maintenance

Planned Maintenance (PM) are works carried out at agreed intervals to keep our homes in good repair and working order. We upgrade major components, such as central heating systems, kitchens, and bathrooms when they reach the end of their useful life. This helps to reduce the number of unplanned repairs, by reducing the probability and likelihood of failure. PM tasks are undertaken in accordance with a predetermined plan at regular, fixed intervals.

The advantages of PM over responsive repairs are:

- Maintenance tasks can be planned and undertaken when convenient for the tenant and staff.
- Maintenance costs can be reduced by avoiding the cost of consequential damage and use of emergency resources.
- Downtime (the time that an element of the building or whole building is out of service) can be minimised, so the occupancy and rental income of the building is maintained and increased.
- Health and Safety of tenants and staff can be improved.

However, there are some disadvantages to consider with PM:

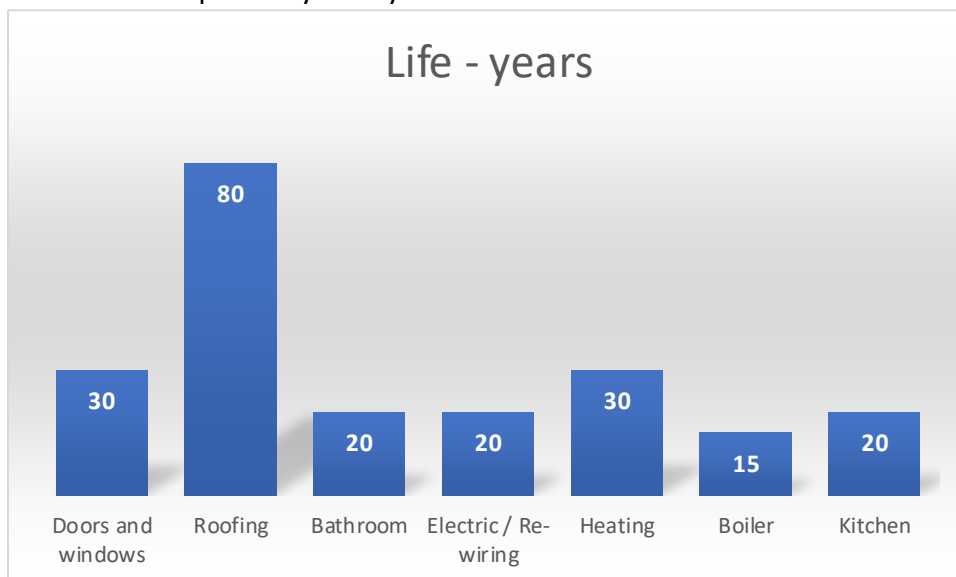
- Maintenance will be performed irrespective of the condition of the item/element (that is, some tasks will be performed on elements that may have remained in a safe/acceptable operating condition for a longer period).
- Maintenance tasks can be more costly in terms of spare parts and labour costs if they are carried out without control or when not required.

To address these disadvantages, we will consider the condition of the item/elements against their current lifecycle and the current number of repairs, to review if the lifecycle should be extended. In some instances, we may only be required to carry out part replacements, rather than full replacements, such as in a bathroom, where a bath may have a shorter lifecycle than the sink or toilet.

We will also ensure that any new products we use have been considered in relation to maintenance, to ensure all our teams are qualified, skilled, and equipped to deal with those unforeseen repairs, ensuring parts are cost effective and easily obtainable at the same time.

Where resources permit, we will aim for a ratio of 30% funding on Responsive Maintenance to 70% Planned Maintenance. Whilst there is no industry standard on the percentage of planned maintenance to responsive repairs, the 70:30 split is based on our current asset data and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Current Life expectancy of key elements:



Cyclical maintenance

These are works organised and carried out to a pre-determined plan or interval of time. This can be to meet regulatory, manufacturing, or good practice requirements. This is done to prevent the premature breakdown of time sensitive components, with a view of prolonging the life of that component.

This includes servicing, checking components and identifying elements which may need replacement to avoid failure. An example of this would be Gas Boiler Servicing. We are required by law to carry out an annual landlord gas safety check. We exceed this, by carrying out a full service in line with the manufacturer guidelines, to ensure the continued safety and efficient operation of the appliance. At the same time, we also check that smoke detectors and Carbon Monoxide alarms are also in working order. In each of these instances, we check all parts are working correctly and identify if any parts are showing signs of decline and arrange for those to be replaced.

Tenant Involvement

We are committed to involving our tenants and ensuring they play a meaningful part in the shaping of services and setting standards. This strategy complements the council's [Customer Engagement Strategy](#) and ensures tenants and leaseholders, their families and carers, are at the heart of the decisions we need to make, to ensure this strategy is a lasting success.

Managing Risk

The evaluation of risk is an essential part of an effective asset management approach. Major decisions taken about the future and utilisation of the asset base in the absence of a risk assessment, may have a long-term detrimental effect on the sustainability of communities and financial health of the HRA.

We have a systematic approach to managing asset-related risks. This involves the regular review of impact and probability of specific risks occurring and an evaluation of the control arrangements that are in place for managing and minimising current and emerging risks. For example, legionella bacteria occur naturally within freshwater and when exposed to certain conditions, such as water being stagnant and exposed to high temperatures, which could occur in hot water tanks/cylinders. Legionella can be breathed in via small droplets of water in the air that contain legionella bacteria, so for instance when running a shower or tap. To eliminate or reduce this risk, we have improved our specifications to remove or move to a lower risk system during our planned programme or empty property works. This would include water tanks or outside taps and are updated, considering changing circumstances.

Funding the Strategy

HRA Business Plan

The HRA 30-year Business Plan is updated annually, providing a long-term income and expenditure profile, based upon the latest data and business priorities. To ensure that the asset management strategy is deliverable, it is critical to understand this business plan and profile this against known and identified additional investment.

As outlined in the Housing Services Climate Change Strategy, significant investment is required to achieve net zero carbon by 2050. This needs to be considered alongside this strategy, to evaluate the performance of our stock against our business plans. This means we need to give careful consideration to the long-term future of any lower performing stock, in terms of energy efficiency and return on investment, together with the lifecycles for asset replacements and the high levels of investment required.

In addition, there are further risks that could potentially impact the balance between the business plan and actual investment needed. The primary factors are considered as:

- **Labour shortages and Cost Increases** - the social housing sector is experiencing a disproportionate increase in the cost of materials associated with construction and property maintenance; this has been further heightened by wider economic factors and labour/skills shortages. It is expected that component costs will increase and potentially inflation might rise higher than assumptions included within the business plan. This is also expected when labour demand outstrips supply and costs increase, particularly where there will be peaks of similar activity as the sector works towards the short-term 2030 EPC target and the longer term 2050 Net Carbon Zero target.
- **Investment to meet Decent Homes Standard** – as the standard is still under review, the impact of any changes cannot yet be evaluated and may not have been factored in.

Government Grant Funding

We will continue to bid for Government funding for energy efficient works. This will help support investment into the properties and will offset investment required by the HRA business plan. Any Government funding will need to be matched by investment from our HRA, usually on a 50:50 basis.

Asset management and maintenance

Good asset management needs to consider whether a 'one-off' capital expenditure to enhance an asset would reduce the ongoing revenue costs of maintenance. To make the most effective use of limited funds, maintenance and upgrading improvement works are often carried out together to meet service needs.

Maintenance works often involve decisions about using newer, better materials, components and systems, and these will be considered alongside our plans.

Responsibility and Review

The strategy will be monitored on a regular basis, as part of existing governance arrangements and will involve our tenants at key stages in its delivery.

The Government are still developing the Decent Homes Standards and this strategy will be reviewed alongside this, once that has been published.

Performance Monitoring

To assist in our continuous improvement, we will collate and monitor performance information. We will use tenant feedback, including survey data and complaints to look for improvements and will involve our Tenants Panel and Council Members in monitoring this. We will also ensure that our performance is provided to the RSH through Tenant Satisfaction Measures. We will provide information on our performance on our website, our annual report and in our in-house magazine, Housing Connect.

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HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
24 APRIL 2024

HOUSING SERVICES VULNERABILITY POLICY

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. For Members to consider the draft Housing Services Vulnerability Policy 2024-2029 before approval by Cabinet on 7 May 2024.

Summary

2. To ensure that we meet the diverse needs of our tenants, we need to provide adaptable services, which takes our tenant's, and their household's needs into account, whilst ensuring we meet regulatory and legal requirements.
3. The Housing Services Vulnerability Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** sets out our aims, including how we will record any of our tenant's vulnerabilities on our systems and how we will use this information in the way we provide our services, the decisions we make and how we refer to other statutory and external organisations.
4. The Tenants Panel has been consulted on the draft policy and they have given their full support.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Members:
 - (a) Consider the report and draft Housing Services Vulnerability Policy at **Appendix 1** and agree its onward submission to Cabinet.

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) The Regulator of Social Housing's new Consumer Standards from April 2024 places a duty on social housing landlords to:
 - (i) Treat our tenants and prospective tenants with fairness and respect, and
 - (ii) Take action to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for our tenants and prospective tenants.
 - (b) The adoption of a formal Vulnerability Policy is one of the ways to demonstrate how we will achieve this.

Anthony Sandys
Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues

Background Papers

Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards.

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no impact
Health and Wellbeing	Treating our Council tenants with fairness and respect will have a positive impact on their health and well-being
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There is no impact
Diversity	This policy supports the promotion of diversity amongst our Council tenants
Wards Affected	All wards with Council housing
Groups Affected	Council tenants and leaseholders
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This report supports the Council plan to ensure we are able to provide our tenants with good quality housing
Efficiency	There are no implications
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. Darlington Borough Council provides over 5,300 high quality homes for local residents. We are committed to meeting the diverse needs of our tenants by providing adaptable services, which takes our tenant's, and their household's needs into account, whilst ensuring we meet regulatory and legal requirements.
8. The term 'vulnerabilities' has no standard definition. The Housing Ombudsman's defines vulnerabilities as; *"characteristics that a tenant or household member possesses, either permanently or temporarily, that may mean they need care, support or other reasonable adjustments to complete landlord-tenant transactions such as paying their rent, opening the door to allow a gas safety check. These characteristics may mean that reasonable adjustments are appropriate to actively prevent harm or distress. These can include recognised physical disabilities or mental health issues, but will also include transitory situations, such as financial difficulties or a broken leg"*.
9. The Housing Services Vulnerability Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** sets out the following aims:
 - (a) To record any vulnerabilities on our ICT systems and keep this up to date.
 - (b) To use all available information to identify if a tenant has vulnerabilities.
 - (c) To ask our tenants to inform us of vulnerabilities, permanent or temporary, within their household, as well as taking a pro-active stance at our interactions with tenants.
 - (d) To take account and evidence that we consider known vulnerability factors in the provision of services and decision making.
 - (e) To assist tenants in accessing additional services that they may need.
 - (f) To record any known representatives who act as a 'delegated authority' or with power of attorney, to act on the tenant's behalf or who the tenant states can access their account on their behalf.
 - (g) To consider any additional needs due to their vulnerability, and where appropriate, vary our service delivery to ensure tenants still receive the same level of service.
 - (h) To make appropriate referrals to our own advice and support teams, such as Housing Plus, Tenancy Sustainment, Lifeline or Social Services, to provide additional support and guidance, where appropriate to do so.
 - (i) To refer to statutory agencies and external support agencies, where appropriate.
 - (j) To make safeguarding referrals whenever needed.

Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Consumer Standards

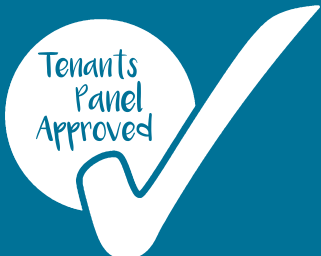
10. The RSH has published new consumer standards from April 2024. Under these new standards is a section specifically relating to transparency, influence and accountability, which provides outcomes about how landlords provide information, listen to tenants, and act on their views.
11. Included within this standard, the RSH has stated, “landlords need to have a good understanding of the different tenants that they serve and their diverse needs and provide the right support and access to services to deliver fair and equitable outcomes for tenants”.
12. Our Housing Services Vulnerability Policy will help us demonstrate how we will achieve these new proposed standards.

Outcome of Consultation

13. Our Tenants Panel were consulted in March 2024 and overall, the Panel support the proposed Housing Services Vulnerability Policy. Examples of the Panel’s comments were as follows:
 - (a) “On the whole it is a really good document. Every opportunity is given to vulnerable tenants, while also ensuring they do their part and fulfil their tenancy requirements. As far as I can see, the author of the document has looked at everything I could think of and a lot more besides. A good document and interesting too.”
 - (b) “This is a really excellent policy. It gives a strong message with communication, managing expectations, capturing data and improving awareness. Vulnerability is an ever-increasing area where it is difficult to be mindful and universal, covering all bases. I think the document covers everything very well. It highlights all the legislation covering the guidance and laying the foundation for adequate policy and process to be implemented. I can’t add to the superb document or think of anything that should be changed.”
 - (c) “I’ve read through this, and everything is absolutely fine.”
 - (d) “After questioning about staff having refresher training, I am more than happy with the document. It is well thought out and I have no further suggestions.”



Housing Services Vulnerability Policy 2024-2029



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Introduction

Our tenants are at the heart of what we do. They are involved in decision making, improving, and scrutinising our service. We are committed to providing good-quality, affordable housing to tenants, listening to their views and treating them with empathy and respect. To meet the diverse needs of our tenants, we need to provide an adaptable service which takes our tenant's, and their household's needs into account, whilst ensuring we meet regulatory and legal requirements.

We will support our tenants to sustain their tenancy and live as independently as possible. We are committed to ensuring that every opportunity is provided to support them throughout their tenancy.

Aims

Our aim is to ensure that our tenants receive the services and assistance they require to sustain their tenancy. To achieve this, we aim to:

- Record any vulnerabilities on our ICT systems and keep this up to date.
- Use all available information to identify if a tenant has vulnerabilities.
- Ask our tenants to inform us of vulnerabilities, permanent or temporary, within their household, as well as taking a pro-active stance at our interactions with tenants.
- Take account and evidence that we consider known vulnerability factors in the provision of services and decision-making.
- Assist tenants in accessing additional services that they may need.
- Record any known representatives who act as a 'delegated authority' or with power of attorney, to act on the tenant's behalf or who the tenant states can access their account on their behalf.

Under the Equality Act 2010, we have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments and have regard to protected characteristics which are:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender re-assignment.
- Marriage and civil partnership.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

- Consider any additional needs due to their vulnerability, and where appropriate, vary our service delivery to ensure tenants still receive the same level of service.
- Make appropriate referrals to our own advice and support teams, such as Housing Plus, Tenancy Sustainment, Lifeline or Social Services, to provide additional support and guidance, where appropriate to do so.
- Refer to statutory agencies, and external support agencies where appropriate.
- Make safeguarding referrals whenever needed.



What do we define as vulnerabilities?

We recognise that not everyone who needs additional care and support are vulnerable, but we will always consider the needs of our tenants, how vulnerabilities may affect their access to services and how we can best provide our services to them.

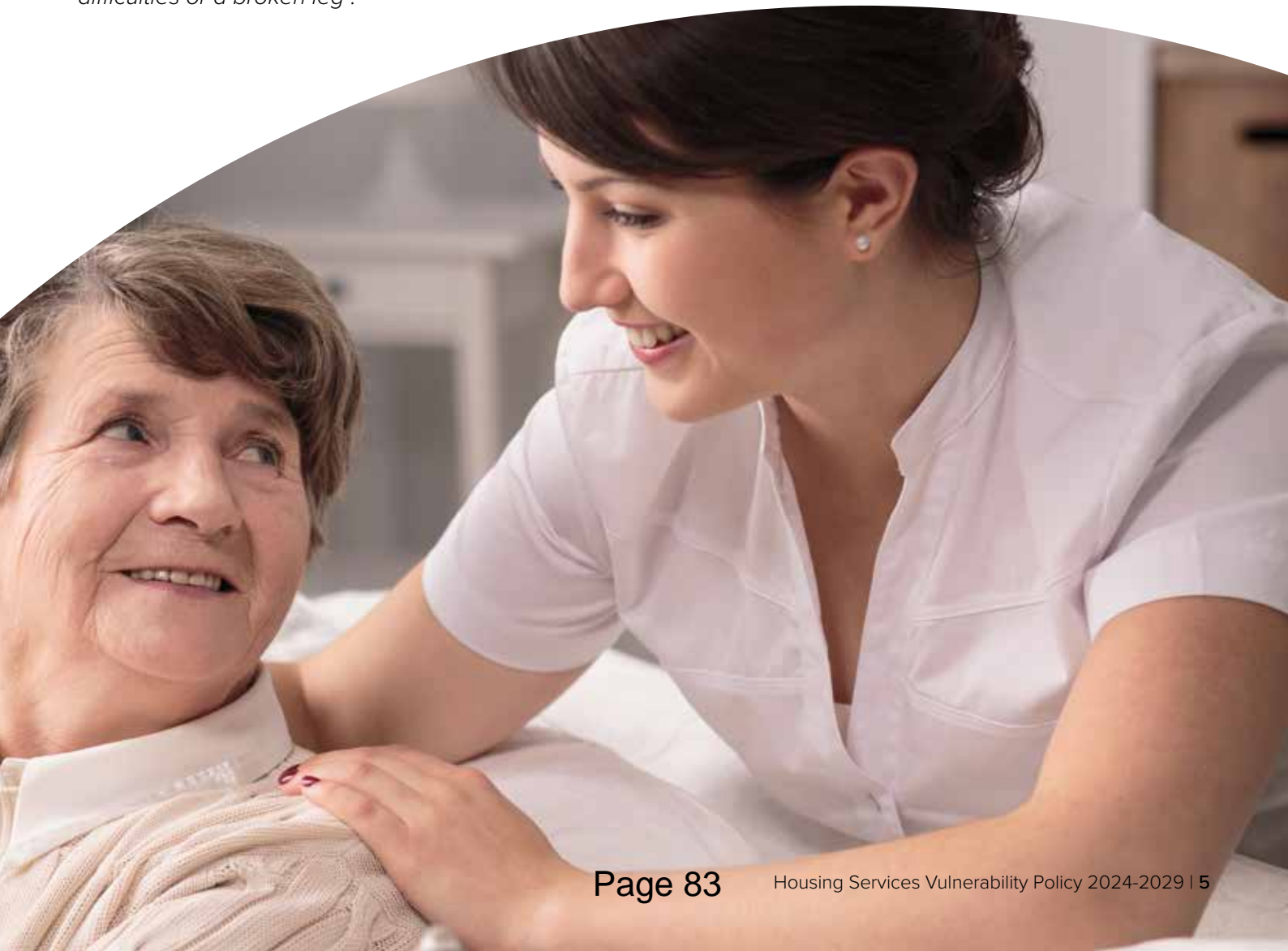
The term 'vulnerabilities' has no standard definition. The Housing Ombudsman's defines vulnerabilities as:

"Characteristics that a tenant or household member possesses, either permanently or temporarily, that may mean they need care, support or other reasonable adjustments to complete landlord-tenant transactions, such as paying their rent, opening the door to allow a gas safety check. These characteristics may mean that reasonable adjustments are appropriate to actively prevent harm or distress. These can include recognised physical disabilities or mental health issues, but will also include transitory situations, such as financial difficulties or a broken leg".

Housing Services define vulnerable in relation to the provision of our services as:

"Tenants who have a particular characteristic and/or experience an exceptional life event and are currently unable to act independently and/or are unable to cope with managing their tenancy without additional support."

This reflects our understanding that 'vulnerability' can be a permanent or temporary state which can be influenced by multiple factors and experiences, such as age, physical disability, bereavement, mental health, domestic abuse, poverty, etc.



Relevant legislation and internal resources

- Equality Act 2006 & 2010.
- Mental Health Act 2007.
- Housing Services Housing Management Policy 2022-2026.
- Housing Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2022-2026.
- Housing Services Allocation Policy 2023-2028.
- Housing Services Repairs & Maintenance Policy 2023-2028.
- Darlington Borough Council Customer Standards.
- Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Strategic Plan 2023-2026.
- Darlington Safeguarding Partnership - Safeguarding is Everyone's Business (<https://www.darlington-safeguarding-partnership.co.uk/media/1800/dchs0124-web.pdf>)
- <https://www.darlington-safeguarding-partnership.co.uk/safeguarding-training/safeguarding-training/>
- County Durham and Darlington - Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy 2021-2024.
- Housing Act 1985, 1988, 1996, 2004.
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986.
- The Human Rights Act 1998.
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.
- Data Protection Act 1998/2018.
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- The Care Act 2014.
- The Children's Act 2004.
- Homelessness Act 2002.
- Regulator of Social Housing - Consumer Standards.
- Darlington Borough Council Equality Policy and Objective 2023-2027.
- Mental Capacity Act 2005



Our responsibilities

Housing Services are responsible for:

- Ensuring we adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and adapt normal policies, procedures, or processes to meet individual's needs through reasonable adjustments.
- Ensuring that we meet regulatory standards and understand the diverse needs of our tenants, and ensure that all tenants have fair access to, and equitable outcomes of, housing and landlord services.
- Ensuring that our staff have the appropriate training around vulnerabilities and protected characteristics.
- Ensuring that all sections of our Housing teams are aware of tenants, so they can make appropriate adjustments to service delivery across Housing Services.

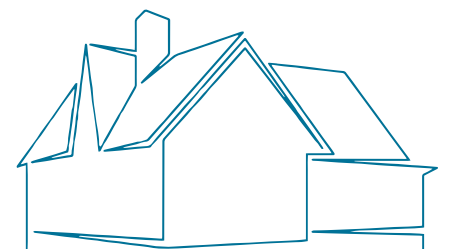
- Raising awareness with our tenants of how to report any vulnerabilities to us.
- Increasing awareness of vulnerabilities and protected characteristics in our Tenants Panel, so we can ensure they consider these when making decisions on behalf of all tenants.
- Ensuring our records are kept up to date on household vulnerabilities within our homes.

We will use Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) and/or risk assessments to assist us to ensure that our policies, processes, and decision-making are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups. We will ensure that we complete EIA's and/or risk assessments before taking significant action such as legal action.

Tenants' responsibilities

We expect our tenants to be open and honest with us around their vulnerabilities, so we can adapt to meet their needs. However, being a vulnerable person does not mean that we do not expect tenants to adhere to the terms of their Tenancy Agreement.

We will take enforcement action against tenancy breaches; however, we will always offer support, make reasonable adjustments, and ensure any action is proportionate before taking action.



How will we identify tenants who have vulnerabilities?

There are many ways in which we can collect information about tenants' vulnerabilities including (not exhaustive):

- At the point of application to us for housing.
- At sign up of a new tenancy.
- At introductory tenancy visits.
- At any home visits or telephone calls with tenants.
- At estate inspections.
- During repairs or post or pre inspections.
- At community events.
- Through tenants making us aware either in person, via email, via their digital tenancy, in writing or by telephone.

- Via a referral or notification from another department or external agency.
- Through complaints and feedback.

Whilst we do not necessarily define all people with a protected characteristic as vulnerable for the purposes of this policy, we will give due consideration to any protected characteristics in deciding any enforcement action under the terms of a tenancy or lease to avoid any inadvertent discrimination.

Why is it important that we identify tenants who have vulnerabilities?

Information empowers and equips us with the knowledge we need to develop our services. Therefore, it is vital that we identify our vulnerable tenants so that, as well as ensuring that tenants can sustain their tenancy and that we adapt our service delivery, it means that we can:

- Be aware of known vulnerability factors in the provision of our services and in our decisions.
- Help tenants in accessing additional services that they may need.
- Record any known representatives who act as a 'delegated authority' or with power of attorney to act on the tenant's behalf.

- Consider any additional needs due to the vulnerability and make appropriate referrals to statutory agencies and other external partner support agencies.
- Make safeguarding referrals whenever needed.
- Ensure no tenant is disadvantaged in accessing our services.
- Ensure all tenants are treated fairly.

Information Management

Information is critical to every part of Housing Services, and we understand the importance of managing our tenant's information effectively and having appropriate systems in place to improve our service delivery to tenants.

We will:

- Manage and maintain our documents and records appropriately.
- Ensure we have up to date and accessible information, so that tenants receive a service that is appropriately tailored to their needs and opportunities are not missed because vulnerabilities have not been recorded.
- Ensure all members of staff are aware of the importance of managing information appropriately.
- Provide training and support to staff and our Tenants Panel to develop their skills and competencies.
- Ensure we have a robust governance framework, ensuring responsibilities are clearly defined, and there is a clear decision-making process.
- Carry out quality assurance checks as part of our regular performance monitoring of staff and systems.
- Employ Data Quality Officers to assist us in ensuring our data is accurate and up to date.
- Look for good practice in data management and IT systems.



Reasonable Adjustments

Housing Services will make reasonable adjustments for tenants, and whilst this will be different for each tenant and their circumstances, reasonable adjustments will include (not exhaustive):

- Allowing longer for tenants to answer their door when we call for an appointment.
- Arranging a joint visit with carers or avoiding unannounced visits.
- Visiting (where possible) at specific times to fit around appointments, or to allow for someone else to attend the home visit.
- Visits in person where we would normally provide a phone call.
- Explaining a letter over the phone or in person, in addition to sending it.
- Providing or referring victims of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) for additional support either through internal departments and teams or external agencies.
- If appropriate, providing or referring perpetrators of ASB for additional support instead of enforcement action.
- Providing documents in other languages.
- Arranging for translators.
- Sending documents to someone else who has delegated authority to act on a tenant's behalf.
- Providing a home visit when signing up for a new tenancy.
- Agreeing longer-term repayment plans for rent arrears.
- Dealing with a repair request more urgently, due to the vulnerability of the tenant or someone in their household.
- Dealing with a report of ASB differently, or more urgently, due to the adverse impact the ASB may have on a vulnerable household member.
- Giving additional priority to someone on HomeSearch for their particular vulnerability.
- Offering a single or main point of contact.

We will consistently consider whether our decisions would have an unfair or disproportionate impact on vulnerable tenants, compared with another tenant who does not have a protected characteristic.

In particular, where possession action is being considered, we will ensure that pre-action consideration is given to:

- Whether the tenant's behaviour, actions or lack of action is related to their vulnerability.
- Whether the behaviour is putting the health and safety of others at risk such as, neighbours.
- Alternatives to possession action and why they were not suitable.
- Whether possession action is justifiable and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
- Whether the effect on the occupier is outweighed by the advantages of our action.

In line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, we will liaise with those who have legal authority to act on behalf of our tenants who lack capacity. That may be a representative who has or is:

- A Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA).
- Deputyship Order from the Court of Protection.
- A litigation friend appointed in Court proceedings, if the tenant lacks capacity to litigate.
- An appointee appointed by the DWP to manage a person's benefits, if they lack capacity.
- An Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) commissioned by the local authority who are appointed, where a person aged 16 or over lacks ability to act to decide for themselves, where to live and has no-one, such as a friend, relative, attorney or deputy to advise or support them.

Training

Housing Services staff receive regular refresher training in relation to Equality & Diversity, Safeguarding and other relevant training courses. This training assists them to recognise potential signs of vulnerability such as (not exhaustive):

- Being a victim of anti-social behaviour (ASB), harassment, hate incidents or domestic abuse.
- A repeated failure to respond to correspondence, or to answer the door when visited.
- Hoarding, self-neglect or other behaviour, which results in the person's home and/or garden becoming damaged, neglected or otherwise unfit for occupation.
- Erratic rent payments and falling into arrears when the tenant previously had a good payment history.

Confidentiality

We will treat all information received in a private and confidential manner and will only disclose information to third parties, once we have the consent to do so. We may, however, have a legal

obligation to pass information on, for example, to the Police or other relevant agencies, such as Social Services.

Performance

Our Tenants Panel have reviewed and agreed this policy and we will continue to monitor performance through feedback from our tenants, through

complaints, compliments, feedback surveys and Tenant Satisfaction Measures.





**HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
24 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**).
4. Following agreement of the work programme for the Municipal Year 2023/24 at the Scrutiny Committee held on 28 June 2023, Officers have proposed that a task and finish group be established for Members to undertake a review of physical accessibility to health care and ancillary care.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that:-
 - a) Members note the current status of the Work Programme and consider any additional areas of work they would like to include.
 - b) Members consider the establishment of a task and finish group to review physical accessibility to health care and ancillary care, and if agreed, to nominate Members to participate in the review.

**Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance**

Background Papers

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

Author: Mike Conway 6309

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

6. 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.
7. 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'.
8. 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.
9. The visions for the Health and Housing portfolio is:-

 'a borough where people enjoy productive, healthy lives. They will have access to excellent leisure facilities and recognising the importance of having a home, there will be access to quality social housing.'
10. It is intended to commence work on developing a new Council Plan later in 2023.

Forward Plan and Additional Items

11. 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.
12. A copy of the Forward Plan has been attached at **Appendix 3** for information.

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HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
Primary Care (to include GP Access to appointments)	Last considered 3 January 2024	Emma Joyeux, ICB		To scrutinise development around Primary Care Network and GP work
Housing Services Climate Change Strategy (Report and Presentation)	Last considered 3 January 2024	Anthony Sandys		
Performance Management and Regulation/ Management of Change Regular Performance Reports to be Programmed	Year End August 2024	Relevant AD	Full PMF suite of indicators	To receive biannual monitoring reports and undertake any further detailed work into particular outcomes if necessary
Housing Revenue Account	Last considered Special Meeting 23 January 2024	Anthony Sandys		
Medium Term Financial Plan	Last considered 3 January 2024	Brett Nielsen		To scrutinise those areas of the MTFP within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee.
Quality Accounts Update	To be agreed Year End Special May 2024	TEWV/CDDFT		

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Update	Last considered 28 February 2024	Anthony Sandys		To look at progress following the implementation of the strategy. Update on current position within Darlington
Better Care Fund	Last considered 28 February 2024	Paul Neil		To receive an update on the position of the Better Care Fund for Darlington. To receive an update on the programme review.
Breast Symptomatic Services	Last considered 28 February 2024	Martin Short, ICB		
Council Plan	24 April 2024	Lynne Davies		
CAMHS update	24 April 2024 Last considered 14 December 2022	James Graham		
Community Mental Health Transformation	24 April 2024 Last considered 14 December 2022	Allison Housam/Shawn Mayo/John Stamp TEWV		To receive a briefing and undertake any further detailed work if necessary.
Healthy Weight Plan and Physical Activity Plan	June 2024	Ken Ross/Lisa Soderman		
Housing Services Asset Management Strategy	24 April 2024	Anthony Sandys		
Housing Services Vulnerability Policy	24 April 2024	Anthony Sandys		
Suicide Prevention	To be agreed	Ken Ross		

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
Strategic Housing Needs Assessment	To be agreed	Anthony Sandys		
Director of Public Health Annual Report	Last considered 30 August 2023	Penny Spring		Annual report
Customer Engagement Strategy 2021-2024 Update (Presentation)	Last considered 30 August 2023	Anthony Sandys		To provide annual progress reports to Scrutiny. To look at work being done within communities and how the Customer Panel engage with new communities.
Health and Safety Compliance in Council Housing	Last considered 30 August 2023	Anthony Sandys		To provide annual updates to Scrutiny Members undertake any further work if necessary.
Housing Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy – Update (Presentation)	Last considered 30 August 2023	Anthony Sandys		To provide annual updates to Scrutiny Members undertake any further work if necessary.
Healthwatch Darlington - The Annual Report of Healthwatch Darlington	Last considered 1 November 2023	Michelle Thompson, HWD		To scrutinise and monitor the service provided by Healthwatch – Annual
Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy	Last Considered 1 November 2023	Anthony Sandys		
Dental Services	Last considered 1 November 2023	Pauline Fletcher, NHS England		To update Scrutiny Members undertake any further work if necessary.
Public Health Protection	August 2024	Ken Ross / Cherry Stephenson		

MEMBERS BRIEFINGS

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
Integrated Care System (ICS)	Last Considered 23 August 2023	Martin Short, ICB		To receive an update on the ICS
Drug and Alcohol Service Contract – We Are With You	Last considered 14 September 2023	Mark Harrison/Jon Murray		To update Scrutiny Members undertake any further work if necessary.

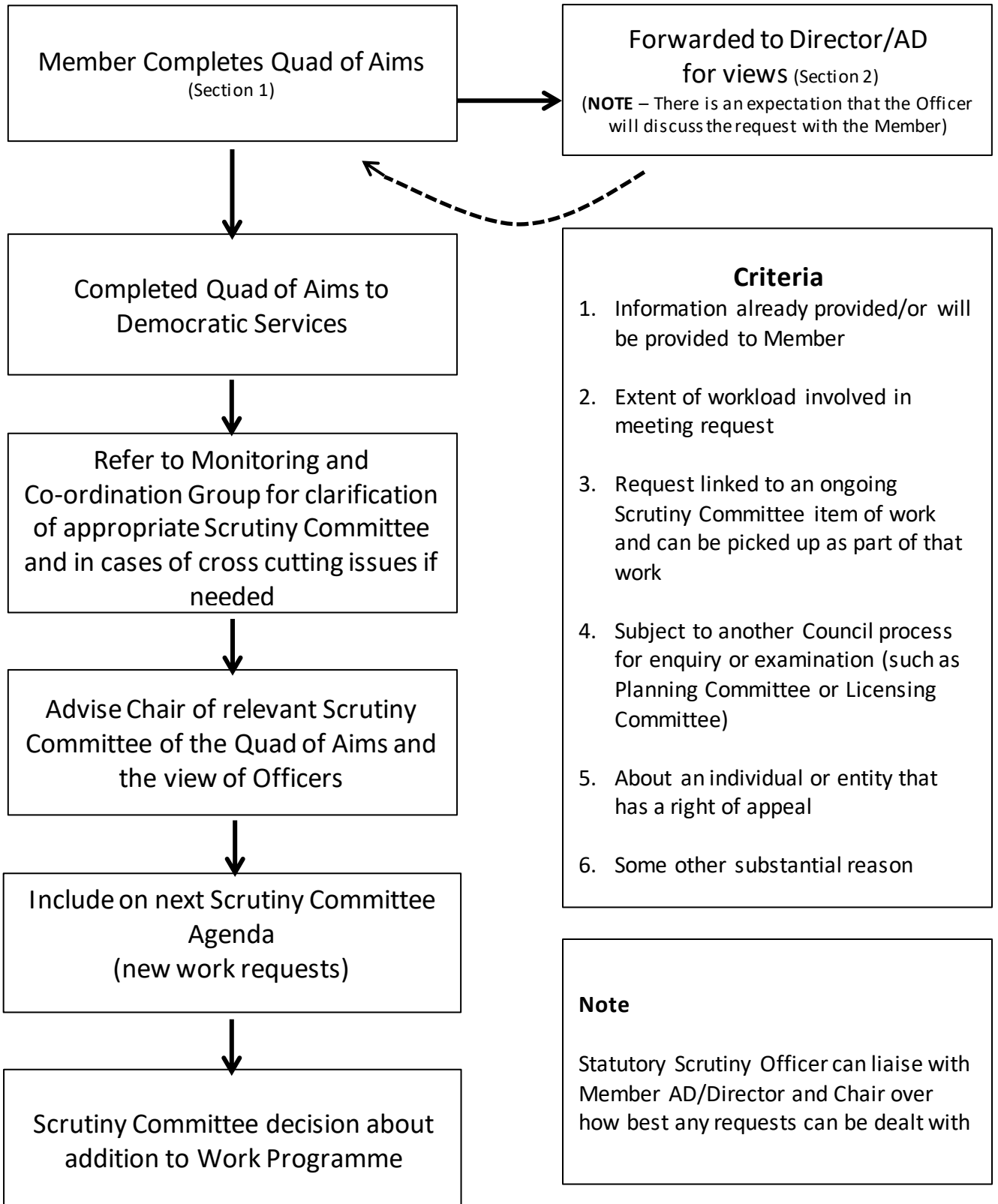
TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
Physical Accessibility to health care and ancillary care	Scoping meeting TBC	Ken Ross/TBC		

JOINT COMMITTEE WORKING – ADULTS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer/ Organisation Involved	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
<p>Loneliness and Connected Communities</p> <p>Adults Scrutiny to Lead</p>	<p>Scoping meeting 28 January 2020</p> <p>Meeting on 5 October 2020</p> <p>Meeting on 15 December 2020</p>			

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**



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

**FORWARD PLAN
FOR THE PERIOD: 3 APRIL 2024 - 31 AUGUST 2024**

Title	Decision Maker and Date
Annual Procurement Plan	Cabinet 9 Apr 2024
Dolphin Centre Update: Phase 3 Mechanical and Electrical Replacement Programme and Release of Additional Capital Funds from Swimming Pool Support Fund	Cabinet 9 Apr 2024
Proposed Waiting Restrictions Outram Street - Objection	Cabinet 9 Apr 2024
Council Plan	Council 16 May 2024
	Cabinet 7 May 2024
Housing Services Asset Management Strategy	Cabinet 7 May 2024
Housing Services Vulnerability Policy	Cabinet 7 May 2024
Schedule of Transactions - June 2024	Cabinet 11 Jun 2024
Air Quality Strategy 2024/29	Cabinet 11 Jun 2024
Amendments to Northgate Conservation Area - Consultation	Cabinet 11 Jun 2024
Disabled Facilities Grant 2024/25	Cabinet 11 Jun 2024
Land at Faverdale - Burtree Garden Village - Proposed Infrastructure Development Agreement (IDA)	Cabinet 11 Jun 2024
Representation on Other Bodies 2023/24	Cabinet 11 Jun 2024
Collection of Council Tax, Business Rates and Rent 2023-24	Cabinet 16 Jul 2024
Council Plan Performance Report - Quarter Four	Cabinet 16 Jul 2024
Housing Services Domestic Abuse Policy 2024/29	Cabinet 16 Jul 2024
Housing Services Gas and Electrical Safety Policies 2024/29	Cabinet 16 Jul 2024
Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring Outturn 2023/24	Cabinet 16 Jul 2024
Proposed Middleton St George Conservation Area - Consultation	Cabinet 16 Jul 2024
Revenue Budget Outturn 2023/24	Cabinet 16 Jul 2024
Xentrall Shared Services Annual Report	Cabinet 16 Jul 2024
Town Centre Site Development and Proposal to seek Development Partner through Framework and Acquisition of East Street Leasehold Interest	Cabinet

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