

# Council Agenda



**6.00 pm Thursday, 29 November 2018**  
**Council Chamber, Town Hall,**  
**Darlington. DL1 5QT**

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

1. Introductions / Attendance at Meeting.
2. Minutes - To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of this Council held on 27 September 2018 (Pages 1 - 4)
3. Declarations of Interest.
4. Sealing.
5. Announcements.
6. Questions - To answer questions (where any appropriate notice has been given from):-
  - (a) The Public;
  - (b) Members to Cabinet/Chairs;
  - (c) Members to the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner for Durham and Darlington.
7. Council Reports.
  - (a) Investment Opportunities - Update and Request to Increase the Fund – Report of the Managing Director.  
(Pages 5 - 10)
  - (b) Council Tax Support - Scheme Approval 2019/20 – Report of the Managing Director.  
(Pages 11 - 54)

- (c) Polling District, Polling Place and Polling Station Review 2018 – Report of the Managing Director.  
(Pages 55 - 102)
8. Cabinet Reports.
- (a) Overview Report of the Leader and the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio;  
(Pages 103 - 106)
  - (b) Overview Report of the Adult Social Care Portfolio; (Pages 107 - 110)
  - (c) Overview Report of the Children and Young People Portfolio; (Pages 111 - 116)
  - (d) Overview Report of the Community Safety Portfolio; (Pages 117 - 122)
  - (e) Overview Report of the Economy and Regeneration Portfolio; (Pages 123 - 128)
  - (f) Overview Report of the Housing, Health and Partnerships Portfolio; and (Pages 129 - 132)
  - (g) Overview Report of the Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio. (Pages 133 - 140)
9. Scrutiny Reports - To consider Scrutiny Overview Reports:-
- (a) Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 141 - 144)
  - (b) Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 145 - 146)
  - (c) Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 147 - 148)
  - (d) Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee; and (Pages 149 - 150)
  - (e) Place Scrutiny Committee. (Pages 151 - 152)
10. Membership Changes - To consider any membership changes to Committees, Subsidiary Bodies and Other Bodies.



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

**Wednesday, 21 November 2018**

**Town Hall  
Darlington.**

**Membership**

The Mayor, Councillors Baldwin, Carson, Cartwright, Cossins, Coultas, Crichlow, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Dixon, Donoghue, Galletley, Grundy, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, C L B Hughes, L Hughes, Johnson, B Jones, Mrs D Jones, Kane, Kelly, Kelley, Knowles, Lawton, Lee, Lister, Lyonette, Marshall, McEwan, Mills, Newall, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Nutt, Rahman, S Richmond, E A Richmond, A J Scott, Mrs H Scott, Storr, C Taylor, J Taylor, Tostevin, Wallis, Wright and York

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

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## ITEM NO. 2

### **COUNCIL**

27<sup>th</sup> September 2018

**PRESENT** – The Mayor; Councillors Carson, Cossins, Coultas, Crichlow, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs. Culley, Curry, Donoghue, Galletley, Grundy, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, C. L. B. Hughes, Johnson, B. Jones, Mrs. D. Jones, Kane, Kelly, Lawton, Lee, Lyonette, Marshall, McEwan, Newall, K. Nicholson, Nutt, E. A. Richmond, S. Richmond, A. J. Scott, Storr, C. Taylor, J. Taylor, Wallis, Wright and York. (38)

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Baldwin, Dixon, L. Hughes, Kelley, Knowles, Lister, Mills, M. Nicholson, Rahman, Mrs. H. Scott and Tostevin. (11)

**ABSENT** – Councillor Cartwright. (1)

**20. MINUTES** – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Council, held on 19 July 2018.

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

**21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

**22. ORDER OF SEALING DOCUMENTS** – Presented – The Register showing the documents which had been sealed since the last meeting of Council.

**23. ANNOUNCEMENTS – Former Mayor and Councillor Bill Stenson** - The Mayor reported on the death of Former Mayor and Councillor Bill Stenson, who had sadly passed away on 22 August 2018, and referred to Former Councillor Stenson's years of service, and roles on the Council.

As a mark of respect, Members stood and observed a short silence for Councillor Stenson.

**24. QUESTIONS – TO ANSWER QUESTIONS (WHERE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN) FROM – (1) The Public** – There were five questions, with notice, from members of the public, who each received an answer thereon.

**(2) Members to Cabinet/Chairs** – There were no questions from Members, where notice had been given, for the Mayor, Members of the Cabinet, or the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees.

**(3) Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner for Durham and Darlington** – The Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner for Durham and Darlington, addressed Members, and answered questions thereon.

**25. COUNCIL REPORTS** – There were no reports for consideration at the meeting.

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

**NOTE:** In introducing his report, the Leader of the Council announced that Councillor Crumbie had been appointed to Cabinet, to fill the vacancy created due to Councillor Dixon's resignation from Cabinet in July.

**(b) Treasury Management Annual Report and Outturn Prudential Indicators 2017/18 –** The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide important information regarding the regulation and management of the Council's borrowing, investments and cash-flow. The submitted report also sought approval of the Prudential Indicators results for 2017/2018, in accordance with the Prudential Code.

The submitted report outlined the circumstances with regard to treasury management for 2017/2018. It was reported that due to low returns on cash investments new ways to improve investment returns were sought, and that it had been agreed that that alternative investment types to increase return were looked at. The submitted report stated that the cost of borrowing remained low throughout 2017/18, and that it was anticipated that the cost of shorter term borrowing would remain low for a number of years in the future.

The submitted report stated that the Council had complied with its legislative and regulatory requirements, and that the need for borrowing was only increased for capital purposes.

The submitted report stated that at 31st March 2018, the Council's external debt was £160.161m, which was £33.000m more than the previous year. It was reported that the average interest rate for borrowing was down to 3.84%, from 4.30% in 2016/17, and that investments totalled £52.443m at 31st March 2018, in comparison to £21.000m at 31st March 2017, earning interest of 0.31% on short term investments, 0.625% on longer term investments, and 2.2% on Property Fund units net of cost.

**RESOLVED –** (a) That the outturn 2017/18 Prudential Indicators within the submitted report, and those contained within Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2017/18 be noted.

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

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

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

**27. SCRUTINY REPORTS – OVERVIEW REPORTS** – The five Scrutiny Committee Chairs each submitted a report (previously circulated) on the main areas of work undertaken by their relevant Scrutiny Committee during the last cycle of Committee meetings

**28. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES** – Consideration was given to membership changes of the Committees, Subsidiary Bodies and Other Bodies for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2018/19.

**RESOLVED** – (a) That Councillor Cossins replace Councillor Crumbie on the Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee;

(b) That Councillor Crumbie be removed from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, leaving the seat vacant (Labour Member appointment);

(c) That Councillor Crumbie replace Councillor Harker on the Combined Fire Authority;

(d) That Councillor Crumbie replace Councillor S. Richmond as the Combined Fire Authority's Appointee to the Local Government Association;

(e) That Councillor Crumbie replace Councillor Harker on the Police and Crime Panel;

(f) That Councillor Heslop replace Councillor McEwan on the Planning Applications Committee;

(g) That Councillor Mrs. Culley replace Councillor Marshall on the Place Scrutiny Committee;

(h) That Councillor Donoghue replace Councillor Mrs. Culley on the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee;

(i) That Councillor Marshall replace Councillor Coultas on the Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee;

(j) That Councillor Marshall replace Councillor Coultas on the Appraisal Sub-Group;

(k) That Councillor Marshall replace Councillor Coultas as Councillor Johnson's Named Substitute on the Tees Valley Combined Authority's Audit and Governance Committee;

(l) That Councillor Mrs. H. Scott replace Councillor Coultas on the Town Centre Board;

(m) That Councillor K. Nicholson replace Councillor Donoghue on the General Licensing Committee;

(n) That Councillor Mrs. D. Jones be removed from the Planning Applications Committee, leaving the seat vacant (Independent Member appointment); and

(o) That the Assistant Director, Law and Governance, be authorised to make any consequential amendments to the Constitution occasioned by Councillor Crumby's appointment to Cabinet.



**COUNCIL**  
**29 NOVEMBER 2018**

**ITEM NO. 7 (a)**

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**INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES**  
**- UPDATE AND REQUEST TO INCREASE THE FUND**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Stephen Harker,**  
**Leader of the Council**

**Responsible Director -**  
**Paul Wildsmith, Managing Director**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Council on progress against the agreed Capital Investment Fund and to seek approval to increase the fund.

**Summary**

2. Council has previously approved the principle and establishment of an investment fund to be used for innovative investment opportunities beyond the traditional Treasury Management Strategy in order to achieve greater returns given the low returns on investment.
3. The established fund is being utilised as envisaged in the original reports to Council to include Joint Venture vehicles and economic regeneration initiatives. Returns on joint ventures are anticipated at over £4m.
4. To further deliver the desired outcomes of the fund this report presents a request from Cabinet to increase the provision from £30m to £50m.
5. Any use of the fund will be subject to a full detailed report to Cabinet.
6. It is anticipated that the next calling on the fund will be used for a new joint Venture at Middleton St George using the procured Housing Joint Venture agreement.

**Recommendation**

7. It is recommended that :-
  - (a) The Capital Investment Fund be increased to £50m.

- (b) Repaid loans are recycled back into the Investment fund.
- (c) The operation of the fund is delegated to Cabinet in line with previous Council approval.

## Reasons

8. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
- (a) To allow the Council to take up opportunities to gain investment returns.
  - (b) To allow the investment fund to be established and financed.
  - (c) To enable Cabinet to consider detailed proposals many of which will be commercially sensitive.

**Paul Wildsmith**  
**Managing Director**

## Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Elizabeth Davison : Extension 5830

S17 Crime and Disorder	No impact as a result of this report
Health and Well Being	No impact as a result of this report
Carbon Impact	No impact as a result of this report
Diversity	No impact as a result of this report
Wards Affected	No impact as a result of this report
Groups Affected	No impact as a result of this report
Budget and Policy Framework	This is a Council decision and is a variation to the MTFP
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	No impact as a result of this report however detailed proposals are likely to enhance the Borough's economy.
Efficiency	The utilisation of the Investment Fund is likely to increase Council income.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Background

9. In November 2016 Council agreed to the establishment of a Capital Investment Fund and following the successful implementation agreed to increase the fund to £30m on 22 February 2018.
10. Since the establishment of the fund Cabinet have agreed to six uses of the fund:-
  - (a) £1.5m to fund a Joint Venture Company to build and sell houses at Eastbourne. The project is progressing well with sales going to plan and interest being earned on the investment. In addition to the earned interest, profit projections currently exceed the original £0.4m with a likely pre-tax profit of over £0.7m.
  - (b) £1.5m has been made available to advance a loan to Market Asset Management to fund improvements to the covered market. Some small advances have been made, but the majority of the loan is not expected to be advanced until next year.
  - (c) £1.5m has been earmarked as a guarantee should the Council wish to exercise its step in rights in respect of the Darlington Mowden Park Arena should the Sports Village not prove viable.
  - (d) £3.14m being the balance of funding required to purchase land at Neasham Road to facilitate the Darlington Farmers Auction Mart move. The funding will be repaid from future section 106 receipts from affordable housing along with any capital receipts received from the site. This scheme is in its infancy so the funding won't be repaid for a number of years.
  - (e) £2.63m being the balance of funding on the Feethams House Office development. This development is due to start in the next couple of months with an anticipated completion date later in 2019.
  - (f) £12m to fund a Joint Venture company to build and sell houses at West Park. The scheme has recently been approved and will be completed over a seven year period. The Council is due to receive interest on the loan of £0.5m and a pre-tax profit on the venture of over £1.565m.
  - (g) £6.1m to fund a joint venture company to provide the infrastructure, build and sell homes in Heighington. The Council is due to receive interest on the loan of £0.225m and a pre-tax profit on the scheme of £0.677m.

### Anticipated returns

11. The profits anticipated on the joint venture schemes along with the profit on the loans is over £4m as shown below and are crucial to the MTFP. There are however further financial benefits not captured in these figures including increased council tax and new homes bonus payments.

Joint Venture	Pre-tax profit £m	Interest on loan £m
Eastbourne	0.700	0.400
West Park	1.565	0.500
Heighington	0.677	0.225
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.942</b>	<b>1.125</b>

12. The investment fund utilisation also provides for wider benefits which extend further than direct financial reward, for example the investment into Feethams house. The establishment of Grade A office accommodation in the town centre is seen as a significant regeneration scheme and job creation opportunity.
13. With regard to the Cattle Mart, this has been a priority for the Council for a number of years as it was recognised that the current location is unsuitable for a Mart operation, undesirable in the context of wider regeneration opportunities, impacts on the neighbourhood around Bank Top, and furthermore is constraining DFAM's growth opportunity. The acquisition of the land at Neasham Road not only assists with this priority but also facilitates significant additional development of affordable and social housing to meet an identified need within the borough.

### **Request for additional funding**

14. In total Cabinet have allocated £28.37m of the fund to date; the success of the fund and the returns achieved, and anticipated to be achieved, are key to the MTFP. Further opportunities are available which would be advantageous to the Council, Cabinet will shortly receive a detailed report relating to a development at Middleton St. George utilising the Housing Joint Venture framework to build and sell homes on the site. The development of the site could be up to 55 homes, the funding required for this project could be up to £5m.
15. During the forthcoming financial year further opportunities may arise for the Council to make investments therefore it is recommended that the investment fund is increased from £30m to £50m. As previous any utilisation of the fund will be subject to a full detailed report to Cabinet.
16. The fund will be created as needed by the use of prudential borrowing and the revenue funding of each proposal will be identified within each report so all financial implications can be considered at the time of the report.
17. The aim of this report is to provide a provision that will allow investment decisions to be taken in a timely and commercial manner.

## Recycling the fund

18. As the life of an investment comes to an end and repayment is made, it is proposed the funding is recycled back into the investment fund for further utilisation. Any future scheme would of course still require a full detailed business case report to Cabinet.

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**COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT – SCHEME APPROVAL 2019/20**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Stephen Harker,  
Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – Paul Wildsmith, Managing Director**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To approve the Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for 2019/20.

**Summary**

2. On 23 November 2017, Council approved the local CTS scheme for 2018/19 and the scheme became operational on 1 April 2018.
3. Councils are required to set a CTS scheme each year and as part of that exercise:
  - (a) Consider whether any changes should be made to the existing scheme, and
  - (b) Where changes are made, consider what transitional protection, if any, should apply to anyone affected by those changes.
4. This report sets out the details of the CTS scheme for 2019/20. No major changes are proposed to the existing scheme.

**Recommendation**

5. It is recommended that Council:-
  - (a) Consider the contents of this report.
  - (b) Approve the CTS scheme for 2019/20 at **Appendix 1** which is to:-
    - (i) Continue providing up to 100% CTS for care leavers under the age of 25, and
    - (ii) Continue providing up to 80% CTS for all other working aged people.

**Reasons**

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-

- (a) The Council is required to publish a local CTS scheme for 2019/20 by 11 March 2019.
- (b) The CTS schemes since 2013/14 have all been implemented successfully without any major challenges.
- (c) The continued application of a reduced entitlement for working aged people is still appropriate, given the current financial position of the Council.

**Paul Wildsmith,  
Managing Director**

### **Background Papers**

- (i) Local Government Finance Bill 2012
- (ii) Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations 2012
- (iii) Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012
- (iv) Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- (v) Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014
- (vi) Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
- (vii) Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- (viii) Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2017

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues
Health and Well Being	The CTS scheme may have an adverse impact on the health and well-being of low income groups
Carbon Impact	There is no carbon impact in this report
Diversity	Working aged recipients of CTS are treated differently to pensioners. An equality impact assessment was undertaken before the existing scheme was approved
Wards Affected	All wards are affected, but in particular those with higher numbers of people claiming CTS
Groups Affected	Working age recipients of CTS are affected by the local scheme. Pensioners are protected from any cuts under a national set of regulations
Budget and Policy Framework	The issues contained within this report do not represent a change to Council budget or the Council's policy framework
Key Decision	This is not an Executive decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an Executive decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report has implications for the 'Healthy Darlington' and 'Prosperous Darlington' themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
Efficiency	The operation of the local CTS scheme continues to represent a significant financial challenge to the Council and other precepting authorities



Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Young care leavers, who do not have the family support most young people have to establish themselves in the community, can receive up to 100% CTS
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## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

7. Since 2013, the previous national Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme has been replaced with local CTS schemes, designed and administered by local authorities. Grants are paid to local authorities to fund CTS, but the overall amount does not fully meet actual expenditure levels.
8. The Council is required to design and publish a new CTS scheme each year, in time to implement for annual Council Tax billing. A full public consultation exercise and an equality impact assessment were undertaken on the initial scheme in 2013.
9. Each year, the Council has to consider whether any changes should be made to the existing scheme and, where changes are made, consider what transitional protection, if any, should apply to anyone affected by those changes.
10. Each year's scheme then has to be approved by full Council.
11. The key feature of Darlington's CTS scheme is that most working aged people can only receive a maximum of 80% support towards their Council Tax. Young care leavers can receive up to 100% support (introduced in April 2018) and pensioners are also protected under a national set of regulations.
12. No other significant changes are recommended for the 2019/20 CTS scheme.

### Financial Implications

13. The recommendations will not have any significant financial implications and therefore it is not intended to amend the budget in the MTFP.

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# **Darlington Borough Council**

## **Council Tax Support scheme**

### **2019 - 2020**

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Council Tax Support (also referred to as Council Tax Reduction) is the means of helping people on low incomes pay their Council Tax. Each Council Tax billing authority is responsible for setting its own local Council Tax Support scheme every year.
- 1.1.2 Pensioners are protected from the effects of local schemes by a national framework of rules and eligibility. Working aged people however are subject to the provisions of the locally defined scheme.
- 1.1.3 On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017, Darlington Borough Council approved the Council Tax Support scheme for 2018/2019, which became operational from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.
- 1.1.4 This document sets out Darlington Borough Council's scheme for 2019/2020 and should be read in conjunction with:
  - 1.1.4.1 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012.
  - 1.1.4.2 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012.
  - 1.1.4.3 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.
  - 1.1.4.4 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.
  - 1.1.4.5 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2014.
  - 1.1.4.6 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.
  - 1.1.4.7 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.
  - 1.1.4.8 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2017.

## 2 Executive Summary

### 2.1 Prescribed requirements

- 2.1.1 There are a number of prescribed requirements that will apply to all local Council Tax Support schemes and are therefore not included in Darlington's local scheme. These are set out in the regulations referred to in 1.1.4.1 to 1.1.4.8, copies of which can be found at: [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)
- 2.1.2 Where the prescribed regulations apply, reference has been made to the relevant parts in the Council Tax Support scheme. For the purpose of this document, "the regulations" are the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended. A summary of the key features of the regulations are as follows:
- 2.1.3 There is a prescribed scheme for persons who have reached the qualifying age for state Pension Credit. 'Working aged' is defined as people who have not yet reached the qualifying age for state Pension Credit.
- 2.1.4 There are restrictions excluding foreign nationals with limited immigration status and non-economically active European Union individuals.
- 2.1.5 Individuals with refugee status, humanitarian protection, discretionary or exceptional leave to remain granted outside the immigration rules and who are exempt from the habitual residence test are entitled to support with their Council Tax.
- 2.1.6 Regulations allow arrangements for a person to act on behalf of another, for example where a person has been granted a power of attorney over a liable Council Tax payer.
- 2.1.7 Formal rights of appeal are set out in the regulations and appeals are heard by Valuation Tribunals.
- 2.1.8 Billing authorities are required to consider whether to revise or replace their Council Tax Support schemes each year and under such circumstances, to consider what transitional arrangements may be required to move from an existing local scheme to a replacement scheme. Schemes cannot be amended within a financial year.

## 2.2 Key features of Darlington's Council Tax Support scheme

- 2.2.1 The requirements for Council Tax Support schemes are set out in an amendment to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, under schedule 1A.
- 2.2.2 Council Tax Support for most working aged claimants will be based on 80% of their Council Tax liability (as opposed to pensioners, where entitlement is based on 100%).
- 2.2.3 Entitlement to Council Tax Support will be means tested. The amount of Council Tax Support awarded will depend on:
  - 2.2.3.1 The circumstances of the claimant and their family, such as their income and savings.
  - 2.2.3.2 The number of children who live in the household and their circumstances.
  - 2.2.3.3 The number of other adults who live in the household and their circumstances.
  - 2.2.3.4 The amount of Council Tax, less any other discounts or reliefs.

## 2.3 Temporary absence from home

- 2.3.1 There are no temporary absence rules for working aged people in Darlington's Council Tax Support scheme. Anyone who is liable for Council Tax on a dwelling which is their sole or main residence and not subject to a Council Tax exemption is able to claim Council Tax Support. Temporary absence rules for pensioners are set out in the regulations.

## 2.4 Students

- 2.4.1 There are no specific exclusions for students in the Council Tax Support scheme. Anyone who is liable for Council Tax and not subject to the Council Tax student exemption is able to claim Council Tax Support.

## 2.5 Extended payments

- 2.5.1 Under the Council Tax Support scheme, anyone losing entitlement to a qualifying benefit, such as Income Support or income-based Jobseekers Allowance due to moving into work or increasing their hours or pay, automatically qualifies for a 4 week run on of their Council Tax Support.

## 2.6 Backdating

- 2.6.1 An automatic backdating rule exists for Council Tax Support claims. Claims can be paid for any period where entitlement to Council Tax Support exists.

2.6.2 There is no requirement for a person to show 'good cause' as to why they didn't claim earlier.

## 2.7 Discretionary discounts

2.7.1 The Council has the power under section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, to reduce the Council Tax liability of a person "to such an extent as it thinks fit". This includes the power to reduce the amount to nil.

2.7.2 The Council has a Council Tax Discretionary Discount policy, details of which can be found at: [Darlington Borough Council - Discounts and Exemptions](#).

### **3 People who can claim Council Tax Support**

#### **3.1 Who can claim**

3.1.1 The rules for making an application to Council Tax Support is set out in schedule 8, part 2, paragraph 4 of the regulations. These state:

- In the case of a couple or members of a polygamous marriage an application is to be made by whichever one of them they agree should apply or, in default of agreement, by such one of them as the council decides.
- Where the person who is liable for Council Tax is unable to act the Council will accept or appoint a person who may make an application on their behalf, in accordance with the provisions contained within this part of the regulations.

3.1.2 The classes of working aged people entitled to a reduction under the Council's scheme are as follows:

#### **3.2 People in receipt of a qualifying benefit**

People in receipt of a qualifying benefit are classed as:

- Working aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Entitled to Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance.

3.2.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be entitled to the maximum support of 80% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

#### **3.3 People with income equal to or less than their applicable amount**

People with income equal to or less than their applicable amount are classed as:

- Working aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- Income is equal to or less than their applicable amount.

3.3.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be entitled to the maximum support of 80% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.



### 3.4 People with income more than their applicable amount

People with income more than their applicable amount are classed as:

- Working aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- Income is more than their applicable amount

3.4.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will have their income compared to their applicable amount. The amount of Council Tax Support will be reduced by 20% of the amount the income exceeds the applicable amount. Entitlement will be up to a maximum of 80% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

### 3.5 People receiving Universal Credit with income equal to or less than their Universal Credit maximum award

People receiving Universal Credit with income equal to or less than their Universal Credit maximum award are classed as:

- Working aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- In receipt of Universal Credit
- Assessment of income provided by Universal Credit plus the award of Universal Credit is equal to or less than their Universal Credit maximum award.

3.5.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be entitled to the maximum support of 80% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

### 3.6 People receiving Universal Credit with income more than their Universal Credit maximum award

People receiving Universal Credit with income more than their Universal Credit maximum award are classed as:

- Working aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- In receipt of Universal Credit
- Assessment of income provided by Universal Credit plus the award of Universal Credit is more than their Universal Credit maximum award.

3.6.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will have their assessment of income provided by Universal Credit plus the award of Universal Credit compared to their Universal Credit maximum award. The amount of Council Tax Support will be reduced by 20% of the amount the income exceeds the Universal Credit maximum award. Entitlement will be up to a maximum of 80% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

### 3.7 Young care leavers in receipt of a qualifying benefit

Young care leavers in receipt of a qualifying benefit are classed as:

- Aged 18 to 24
- A care leaver, as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Entitled to Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance.

3.7.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be entitled to the maximum support of 100% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

### 3.8 Young care leavers with income equal to or less than their applicable amount

Young care leavers with income equal to or less than their applicable amount are classed as:

- Aged 18 to 24
- A care leaver, as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- Income is equal to or less than their applicable amount.

3.8.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be entitled to the maximum support of 100% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

### 3.9 Young care leavers with income more than their applicable amount

Young care leavers with income more than their applicable amount are classed as:

- Aged 18 to 24
- A care leaver, as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000

- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- Income is more than their applicable amount

3.9.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will have their income compared to their applicable amount. The amount of Council Tax Support will be reduced by 20% of the amount the income exceeds the applicable amount. Entitlement will be up to a maximum of 100% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.10 Young care leavers receiving Universal Credit with income equal to or less than their Universal Credit maximum award

Young care leavers receiving Universal Credit with income equal to or less than their Universal Credit maximum award are classed as:

- Aged 18 to 24
- A care leaver, as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- In receipt of Universal Credit
- Assessment of income provided by Universal Credit plus the award of Universal Credit is equal to or less than their Universal Credit maximum award.

3.10.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be entitled to the maximum support of 100% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.11 Young care leavers receiving Universal Credit with income more than their Universal Credit maximum award

Young care leavers receiving Universal Credit with income more than their Universal Credit maximum award are classed as:

- Aged 18 to 24
- A care leaver, as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Capital is less than £16,000
- In receipt of Universal Credit
- Assessment of income provided by Universal Credit plus the award of Universal Credit is more than their Universal Credit maximum award.

3.11.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will have their assessment of income provided by Universal Credit plus the award of

Universal Credit compared to their Universal Credit maximum award. The amount of Council Tax Support will be reduced by 20% of the amount the income exceeds the Universal Credit maximum award. Entitlement will be up to a maximum of 100% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.12 The classes of pensioners who are entitled to a Council Tax reduction are set out in schedule 1 of the regulations, as follows:

3.13 Pensioners with income equal to or less than their applicable amount

Pensioners with income equal to or less than their applicable amount are classed as:

- Pension aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Not temporarily absent from the dwelling, as defined in schedule 1, part 1, paragraph 5 of the regulations
- Capital is less than £16,000
- Income is equal to or less than their applicable amount.

3.13.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be entitled to the maximum support of 100% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.14 Pensioners with income more than their applicable amount

Pensioners with income more than their applicable amount are classed as:

- Pension aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Not temporarily absent from the dwelling, as defined in schedule 1, part 1, paragraph 5 of the regulations
- Capital is less than £16,000
- Income is more than their applicable amount.

3.15 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will have their income compared to their applicable amount. The amount of Council Tax Support will be reduced by 20% of the amount the income exceeds the applicable amount. Entitlement will be up to a maximum of 100% of their eligible Council Tax, less any deductions for non-dependants.

3.16 Alternative maximum Council Tax Support

People entitled to alternative maximum Council Tax Support are classed as:

- Pension aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Not temporarily absent from the dwelling, as defined in schedule 1, part 1, paragraph 5 of the regulations
- One or more people reside with the claimant who are not a member of their family.
- No other resident in the dwelling is liable to pay rent to the claimant in respect of that dwelling.

3.16.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will have their Council Tax Support calculated on the income, or aggregate incomes, of one or more people who reside in the dwelling, up to a maximum of 25% of their eligible Council Tax.

### 3.17 Pensioners with war pensions

Pensioners with war pensions are classed as:

- Pension aged
- Liable to pay Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence
- Not temporarily absent from the dwelling, as defined in schedule 1, part 1, paragraph 5 of the regulations
- In receipt of War Disablement Pension, War Widow's Pension or War Widower's Pension

3.17.1 Having claimed Council Tax Support, this class of people will be assessed in accordance with the prescribed regulations for pensioners. War Disablement Pension, War Widow's Pension and War Widower's Pension will be fully disregarded.

### 3.18 Pensioners

3.18.1 The provisions for pensioners are set out in Schedules 1 to 6 of the regulations.

3.18.2 The meaning of who is and who is not a pensioner is set out in paragraph 3 of the regulations. These state:

- A person is a 'pensioner' if they have attained the qualifying age for state Pension Credit; and
- They, or their partner are not in receipt of Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance, or Universal Credit
- A person is 'not a pensioner' if they have not attained the qualifying age for state Pension Credit; or
- They have attained the qualifying age for state Pension Credit and they, or their partner are in receipt of Income Support, income-based Jobseekers

Allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance, or Universal Credit.

### 3.19 Membership of a family

3.19.1 The meaning of a 'couple' is set out in paragraph 4 of the regulations. These state a 'couple' is:

- A man and woman who are married to each other and are members of the same household,
- A man and a woman who are not married to each other but are living together as husband and wife,
- Two people of the same sex who are civil partners of each other and are members of the same household; or
- Two people of the same sex who are not civil partners of each other but are living together as if they were civil partners.

3.19.2 The rules for polygamous marriages are set out in paragraph 5 of the regulations. This regulation applies to:

- A person who is a husband or wife by virtue of a marriage entered into under a law which permits polygamy, and
- Either party to the marriage has for the time being any spouse additional to the other party.

3.19.3 The meaning of 'family' is set out in paragraph 6 of the regulations. These state a 'family' is:

- A couple
- A couple and a member of the same household for whom one of them is or both are responsible and who is a child or a young person
- A person who is not a member of a couple and a member of the same household for whom that person is responsible and who is a child or a young person
- A child or young person includes those in respect of whom section 145A of the Social Security Child Benefit Act 2005 applies for the purposes of entitlement to Child Benefit
- A young person does not include those who are in receipt of Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit; or a person to whom section 6 of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 applies.

3.19.4 The rules for circumstances in which a person is to be treated as responsible or not responsible for another are set out in paragraph 7 of the regulations. These state:

- A person is to be treated as responsible for a child or young person who is normally living with them.
- Where a child or young person spends equal amounts of time in different households, or where there is a question as to which household they are living in, they will be treated as normally living with;

- the person who receives Child Benefit in respect of that child or young person, or
- if there is no such person, the person who has claimed Child Benefit, or the person who has the primary responsibility for them.

3.19.5 The rules for membership of a household are set out in paragraph 8 of the regulations. These state:

- The claimant and any partner who are treated as responsible for a child or young person, that child or young person and any child of that child or young person, are to be treated as members of the same household.
- A child or young person is not treated as a member of the claimant's household where they are;
  - placed with the claimant or their partner by a local authority under section 22C or 23(2)(a) of the Children Act 2002 or by a voluntary organisation under section 59(1)(a) of that Act, or
  - placed with the claimant or their partner prior to adoption, or
  - placed with the claimant or their partner in accordance with the Adoption and Children Act 2002
- A child or young person is not treated as a member of the claimant's household where they are not living with the claimant as they are;
  - being looked after by a local authority under a relevant enactment, unless they live with the claimant for part or all of a relevant week or the authority considers it reasonable to do so taking into account the nature and frequency of that child's or young person's visits, or
  - placed with a person other than the claimant prior to adoption, or
  - placed for adoption in accordance with the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

### 3.20 Non-dependants

3.20.1 The meaning of non-dependants is set out in paragraph 9 of the regulations. These state a 'non-dependant' is:

- Any person who normally resides with the claimant or with whom the claimant normally resides.
- This excludes;
  - any member of the claimant's family,
  - a child or young person who is living with the claimant but is not classed as a member of their household,
  - any person who is jointly and severally liable to pay Council Tax in respect of the dwelling,
  - any person who is liable to make payments on a commercial basis to the claimant or their partner in respect of occupation of the dwelling, unless that person is a close relative of the claimant or their partner, or the tenancy or other agreement between them is other than on a commercial basis, or where it appears to the authority to have been created to take advantage of a scheme
  - a person who lives with the claimant in order to care for them or their partner and who is engaged with a charitable or voluntary

organisation which makes a charge to the claimant or their partner for the services provided by that person.

### 3.21 Persons from Abroad

3.21.1 The rules for persons treated as not being in Great Britain are set out in paragraph 12 of the regulations. These state:

- Persons treated as not being in Great Britain are a class of person prescribed for the purposes of paragraph 2(9)(b) of Schedule 1A to the 1992 Act and which must not be included in the Council's scheme.
- A person is to be treated as not being in Great Britain if the person is not habitually resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland, except;
  - a qualified person (or their family member), for the purposes of regulation 6 of the EEA regulations 2006 as a worker or self-employed person,
  - a person who has a right to reside permanently in the United Kingdom by virtue of regulation 15(1)(c), (d) or (e) of the EEA regulations 2006,
  - a person recorded by the Secretary of State as a refugee within the definition in Article 1 of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, as extended by Article 1(2) of the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees,
  - a person who has been granted leave outside of the rules under section 3(2) of the Immigration Act 1971 where that leave is discretionary leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom, leave to remain under the Destitution Domestic Violence concession, or leave deemed to have been granted by virtue of regulation 3 of the Displaced Persons (Temporary Protection) Regulations 2005,
  - a person who has humanitarian protection granted under those rules,
  - a person who is not subject to immigration control within the meaning of section 115(9) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and who is in the United Kingdom as a result of their deportation, expulsion or other removal by compulsion of law from another country to the United Kingdom,
  - a person in receipt of Income Support or income related Employment and Support Allowance,
  - a person in receipt of income based Jobseekers Allowance and has a right to reside in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland,
  - a person who is treated as a worker for the purpose of the definition of a 'qualified person' in regulation 6(1) of the EEA regulations 2006 pursuant to regulation 5 of the Accession of Croatia (Immigration and Worker Authorisation) Regulations 2013 (right of residence of a Croatian who is an "accession state national subject to worker authorisation"),



- a Crown servant or member of HM forces posted overseas and the person is performing overseas the duties of a Crown servant or member of Her Majesty's forces and was, immediately before the posting or the first of consecutive postings, habitually resident in the United Kingdom.
- A person must not be treated as habitually resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland unless the person has a right to reside in one of those places.
- A right to reside does not include a right which exists by virtue of, or in accordance with;
  - regulation 13 of the EEA regulations 2006 or Article 6 of Council Directive 2004/38/EC,
  - regulation 14 of the EEA regulations 2006, but only in a case where the rights exist under that regulation because the person, or a family member, is a jobseeker for the purpose of the definition of a 'qualified person' in regulation 6(1) of those regulations,
  - article 45 of the Treaty on the functioning of the EU (in a case where the person is seeking work in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or the Republic of Ireland)
  - regulation 15A(1) of the EEA regulations 2006, but only in a case where the right exists under that regulation because the claimant satisfies the criteria in paragraph (4A) of that regulation or Article 20 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (in a case where the right to reside arises because a British citizen would otherwise be deprived of the genuine enjoyment of their rights as a European Union citizen).

3.21.2 The rules for persons subject to immigration control are set out in paragraph 13 of the regulations. These state:

- Persons subject to immigration control are a class of person prescribed for the purposes of paragraph 2(9)(b) of Schedule 1A to the 1992 Act and which must not be included in the Council's scheme, except;
  - a person who is a national of a state which has ratified the European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance, or a state which has ratified the Council of Europe Social Charter and who is lawfully present in the United Kingdom.
- 'Persons subject to immigration control' has the same meaning as in section 115(9) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

### 3.22 Applicable amounts

3.22.1 The applicable amount will be made up of a number of elements. These may include, depending upon individual circumstances:

- A personal allowance for the claimant and their partner.
- An amount for every child or young person who is a member of the family.
- A family premium where at least one child or young person is part of the household.

- Premiums for people in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance.
- Premiums which may apply in special circumstances.

3.22.2 The weekly amounts to be included in the applicable amount are detailed below. The qualifying conditions for each of these personal allowances and premiums are set out in Schedule 3 of The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Default Scheme) (England) Regulations 2012. These are summarised in **Table 1**. The applicable amounts for pensioners are set out in schedule 2 of the regulations.

3.22.3 The amounts detailed below in **Table 1** are those stated within the 2018/2019 scheme and will be uprated for 2019/2020. The uprated amounts will be calculated with reference to the amended regulations and Social Security Up-rating Order 2018.

3.22.4 People in receipt of Universal Credit will have their Council Tax Support calculated based on their Universal Credit maximum award.

3.22.5 The Family Premium does not apply from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016, unless the conditions in 3.22.6 apply.

3.22.6 Claims for Council Tax Support where the Family Premium applied at 30<sup>th</sup> April 2016 will continue to be entitled to the Family Premium from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016 until their claim for Council Tax Support ends or their household no longer includes at least one child or young person.

**Table 1: Applicable Amounts**

<b>Personal allowances</b>	<b>Weekly amount 2018/2019</b>	<b>Weekly amount 2019/2020</b>
Single claimant aged 18 to 24	£57.90	
Single claimant aged 25 or over	£73.10	
Single claimant entitled to main phase Employment and Support Allowance	£73.10	
Lone parent	£73.10	
Couple	£114.85	
A child or young person until the day before their twentieth birthday	£66.90	
<b>Family premium</b>	<b>Weekly amount 2018/2019</b>	<b>Weekly amount 2019/2020</b>
A household which includes at least one child or young person (but see 3.22.5 and 3.22.6)	£17.45	
<b>Employment and Support Allowance premiums</b>	<b>Weekly amount 2018/2019</b>	<b>Weekly amount 2019/2020</b>
The claimant or their partner are in receipt of the work related activity component of Employment and Support Allowance	£29.05	
The claimant or their partner are in receipt of the support component of Employment and Support Allowance	£37.65	
<b>Special circumstances premiums (entitlement limited to only one of the premiums below)</b>	<b>Weekly amount 2018/2019</b>	<b>Weekly amount 2019/2020</b>
Disability premium (single) – the claimant is registered blind, or in receipt of one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance Allowance</li> <li>• Disability Living Allowance</li> <li>• Mobility Supplement</li> <li>• Long term Incapacity Benefit</li> <li>• Severe Disablement Allowance</li> <li>• The disability or severe disability element of Working Tax Credit</li> <li>• Personal Independence Payment</li> <li>• Armed Forces Independence Payment</li> </ul>	£33.55	

Disability premium (couple) – the claimant or partner is registered blind, or in receipt of one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance Allowance</li> <li>• Disability Living Allowance</li> <li>• Mobility Supplement</li> <li>• Long term Incapacity Benefit</li> <li>• Severe Disablement Allowance</li> <li>• The disability or severe disability element of Working Tax Credit</li> <li>• Personal Independence Payment</li> <li>• Armed Forces Independence Payment</li> </ul>	£47.80	
Carers premium – the claimant or partner is entitled to Carers Allowance	£36.00	
<b>Special circumstances premiums (entitlement can be applied on top of any other premiums awarded)</b>	<b>Weekly amount 2018/2019</b>	<b>Weekly amount 2019/2020</b>
Severe disability premium (single rate) - for a single claimant, lone parent or couple where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The claimant or partner is receiving Attendance Allowance, or the care component of Disability Living Allowance at the higher or middle rate, or the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment, or Armed Forces Independence Payment, and</li> <li>• No non-dependants aged 18 or over reside with them, and</li> <li>• No one is in receipt of a Carers Allowance or the carer element of Universal Credit for looking after them.</li> </ul>	£64.30	
Severe disability premium (double rate) - for a couple where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both the claimant and partner are receiving Attendance Allowance, or the care component of Disability Living Allowance at the higher or middle rate, or the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment, or Armed Forces Independence Payment, and</li> <li>• No non-dependants aged 18 or over reside</li> </ul>	£128.60	

<p>with them, and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No one is in receipt of a Carers Allowance or the carer element of Universal Credit for looking after both of them.</li> </ul>		
<p>Enhanced disability premium (single) – where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The claimant has limited capability for work related activity, or</li> <li>The highest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance is payable for the claimant or any member of the claimant's family, or</li> <li>The daily living component of Personal Independence Payment is payable for the claimant or any member of the claimant's family.</li> </ul>	£16.40	
<p>Enhanced disability premium (couple) – where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The claimant or partner has limited capability for work related activity, or</li> <li>The highest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance is payable for the claimant or any member of the claimant's family.</li> </ul>	£23.55	
<p>Enhanced disability premium (disabled child) – where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The highest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance is payable for a child or young person, or</li> <li>The daily living component of Personal Independence Payment is payable for a child or young person.</li> </ul>	£25.48	
<p>Disabled child premium – where a child or young person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receives Disability Living Allowance, or</li> <li>Receives Personal Independence Payment, or</li> <li>Is registered blind.</li> </ul>	£62.86	

## 4 Making a claim

4.1.1 The rules by which a person may apply for a reduction under an authority's scheme are set out in Schedule 7, Part 1 of the regulations. These state that:

- The claim may be made in writing, by electronic communication means or by telephone.
- A claim made in writing must be made to the Council on a properly completed form.
- A claim is considered properly completed if it has been completed in accordance with the instructions on the form, including any instructions to provide information and evidence in connection with the claim.
- Where a claim is defective because it has not been made on a form approved for the purpose, the Council may request the claimant to complete an approved form.
- Where a claim is defective because it is not accepted as being properly completed, the Council may allow the claimant sufficient time to provide information and evidence in connection with the claim, or request further information and evidence.
- If a claim made by electronic communication is defective, the Council must provide the claimant with an opportunity to correct the defect. A claim made by electronic communication is defective if the claimant does not provide all the information the Council requires.

### 4.2 Time and manner of making a claim

4.2.1 A claim for Council Tax Support may be made with the Council by completing the on-line claim form on the 'Council Tax Support' page of the Darlington Borough Council website. Where the Council holds sufficient information to decide entitlement to Council Tax Support, the claim may be made by telephone.

4.2.2 Where the Council becomes aware that a person may be entitled to Council Tax Support, or where a claim form has been requested, they will invite a claim by asking them to complete the on-line claim form or by contacting them by telephone.

4.2.3 Where a claim is made for Housing Benefit and the claimant or their partner is liable for Council Tax in respect of that dwelling, the claim for Housing Benefit will be deemed to be a claim for Council Tax Support.

4.2.4 Where a claimant notifies the Department for Work and Pensions of their intention to apply for Council Tax Support and as a consequence of this notification, the Department for Work and Pensions share details of the claimant's Department for Work and Pensions benefit with the Council, this data share will constitute an application for Council Tax Support.

4.2.5 The Council will offer assistance to the claimant to make their claim for Council Tax Support, where this is required.

### 4.3 Information and evidence

4.3.1 The rules for the information and evidence required to support a claim or ongoing award of Council Tax Support is set out in Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 7 of the regulations. These state:

- The claim must be accompanied by a statement of the claimant's (and any other person in respect of whom they are making an application) national insurance number and information or evidence to establish that that number has been allocated to that person.
- Where the person has applied for a national insurance number, the claim must be accompanied by evidence of the application for a national insurance number to be allocated.
- The claim must be accompanied by any certificates, documents, information and evidence in connection with the claim or an award as may reasonably be required by the Council to decide the claim or a continuing award.
- The claimant must provide the Council with the information and evidence it requires to decide the claim or a continuing award within one month of a request to do so, or such longer time as the Council may consider reasonable.
- The claimant is not required to provide evidence of any income or capital which are disregarded under the Council Tax scheme.

4.3.2 Where information and/or evidence has already been verified by the Department for Work and Pensions in relation to a claim for Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit, the Council will also accept this as verified for any Council Tax Support claim.

### 4.4 Amendment and withdrawal of claim

4.4.1 The rules for the amendment and withdrawal of a claim for Council Tax Support is set out in Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 8 of the regulations. These state:

- A person who has made a claim may amend it at any time before a decision has been made on it.
- A person who has made a claim may withdraw it at any time before a decision has been made on it.

## 5 Income and capital

### 5.1 Treatment of income

5.1.1 The income of the claimant and their partner will be added together, for the purpose of calculating entitlement to Council Tax Support. Where the person is receiving Universal Credit, the income will be the assessment of income provided by Universal Credit, plus the award of Universal Credit.

5.1.2 'Income' includes any of the following:

- Earnings
- Social Security Benefits
- Tax credits
- Pensions
- Maintenance
- Income from rent / board and lodgings
- Royalties
- Student grants
- Compensation payments.

5.1.3 Income will be calculated on a weekly basis. Any income paid for a period other than on a weekly basis, will be converted to a weekly figure. All income will be taken into account in full, unless a disregard applies.

5.1.4 The income to be taken into account will be the actual weekly income or likely average weekly income of the claimant and partner. This will be calculated over such a period as is likely, in the opinion of the Council, to provide the most accurate estimate.

5.1.5 In the case of earnings from employment, the earnings will be taken into account for the period they relate to, even if the person does not actually receive the earnings from their employer during that period.

5.1.6 In the case of earnings from employment, where employment is due to commence, an estimate of likely earnings will be based on whatever information is available from the person or the person's employer.

5.1.7 The treatment of income for a pensioner is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

### 5.2 Earnings

5.2.1 The meaning of remunerative work is set out in paragraph 10 of the regulations. These state:

- A person must be treated as in remunerative work if they are engaged on average, for not less than 16 hours a week, in work for which payment is made or expected.



- Where a person's working hours fluctuate, regard must be had to the normal cycle of work, the number of hours they are expected to work, or the 5 weeks immediately prior to the date of claim or such other length of time that may allow the person's weekly average hours of work to be determined.
- Where a person works at a school or other educational establishment, any vacation periods or holidays where they are not required to work will be disregarded for establishing the average hours for which they are working.
- Any periods of absence from work, such as holiday, will be disregarded for establishing the average hours for which the person is working.
- A person will not be treated as engaged in remunerative work if they are on maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, or if they are absent from work because they are ill.

5.2.2 'Earnings' mean any remuneration or profit derived from that employment and includes:

- Bonuses or commission
- Payments in lieu of remuneration
- Payments in lieu of notice
- Holiday pay
- Payments by way of a retainer
- Payments for expenses not wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred in the performance of the employment
- Statutory sick pay, maternity pay, paternity pay or adoption pay.

5.2.3 A claimant or partner's net earnings will be the gross earnings less:

- Income Tax
- National Insurance contributions
- Half of any sum paid by the employee towards an occupational or personal pension scheme.

5.2.4 Where the person is receiving Universal Credit, the earnings will be the assessment of earnings provided by Universal Credit.

5.2.5 The calculation of earned income for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

5.2.6 The following sums will also be disregarded in the calculation of earnings:

- Temporary care provision payments in the calculation of earnings.
- Payments relating to former employment paid after retirement.
- Compensation payments for loss of employment.
- Guarantee payments on medical or maternity grounds.
- Payments for expenses wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred in the performance of the employment.
- For a single person, the first £5.00 per week of any earnings.
- For a couple, the first £10.00 per week of any earnings.
- For a lone parent, the first £25.00 per week of any earnings.

- For people in receipt of contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance, where a permitted earnings disregard applies, the first £125.50 per week of any earnings.
- For people entitled to the disability premium, the severe disability premium or one of the Employment and Support Allowance premiums, the first £20.00 per week of any earnings, except where the permitted earnings disregard applies.
- For people entitled to the carers premium, the first £20.00 per week of any earnings.
- For people in certain special occupations, the first £20.00 per week of any earnings. These are:
  - Part-time fire-fighters.
  - Auxiliary coastguards.
  - Part-time life-boat workers.
  - Members of the Territorial Army or similar reserve force.
- For people in receipt of the additional earnings disregard in Working Tax Credit, an additional disregard of £17.10 per week of any earnings. If the additional disregard would result in a negative earned income figure, the disregard will be made from their Working Tax Credit.
- Child care charges (see below).

5.2.7 The sums disregarded from pensioner's earnings are set out in schedule 4 of the regulations.

### 5.3 Child care charges

5.3.1 Child care charges up to a maximum of £175 per week for one child, or £300 per week for two or more children, will be deducted from earned income, plus any Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit where:

- A lone parent works 16 hours per week or more, or
- Both members of a couple work 16 hours per week or more, or
- One member of a couple works 16 hours per week or more and the other member of the couple is disabled, and the disability premium or one of the Employment and Support Allowance premiums is included in the couple's applicable amount due to this disability, or
- One member of a couple works 16 hours per week or more and the other member of the couple is on maternity leave and receiving Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance, or
- One member of a couple works 16 hours per week or more and the other member of the couple is in hospital or prison.

5.3.2 The child must be under 15 years of age, or 16 if they are disabled, and the care must be provided by one of the following:

- A registered child minder.
- A registered nursery or play scheme.
- An out of hours scheme run by an approved provider.

- An out of hours club provided by a school on school premises (this applies only if the child is aged 8 or over).

5.3.3 The treatment of child care charges for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

#### 5.4 Self-employed earnings

5.4.1 The weekly earnings of a self-employed claimant or partner will be calculated based on:

- The most recent year's trading accounts, if the claimant or partner have been self-employed for one year or more, or
- The estimated net weekly profit figure provided by the claimant or partner, if they have been self-employed for less than a year, together with any evidence of their recent actual income and expenses.

5.4.2 In calculating the estimated net weekly profit figure, the Council will use the gross income of the employment, less any expenses which are wholly and reasonably incurred for the purpose of the business. The following will not be allowable in the calculation of the estimated net weekly profit figure:

- Sums employed or intended to be employed in setting up or expanding the business.
- Capital repayments on business loans, except where these are for replacing business equipment or machinery.
- Any other capital expenditure.
- Depreciation of any capital asset.
- Losses incurred before the beginning of the assessment period.
- Debts, other than proven bad debts.
- Business entertainment.
- Any sum for domestic or private use.
- Drawings from the business.

5.4.3 For child minders, one third of the gross profit will be used to calculate the gross income.

5.4.4 The net income will then be calculated by deducting an amount for tax, national insurance contributions and half of any pension contributions from the gross pre-tax profits.

5.4.5 In cases where the actual tax and national insurance contributions are not provided, the Council will estimate the likely tax and national insurance contributions payable.

5.4.6 The treatment and calculation of self-employed earnings for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

#### 5.5 Student income

## 5.6 Student grant

5.6.1 The whole amount of a person's grant income will be taken into account, with the exception of the following:

- Payments for tuition fees or examination fees.
- Payments in relation to the student's disability.
- Payments for term-time residential study away from the student's educational establishment.
- Payments for another home at a place other than which the student resides during the course.
- Payments for books and equipment.
- Payments for travel expenses to attend the course.
- Payments for child care costs.
- Any special support grant, education maintenances allowances, 16-19 bursary fund payments, higher education grant, or higher education bursary for care leavers.
- Any other amounts intended for expenditure necessary to attend the course.

5.6.2 A student's grant income will be apportioned over the period of study the grant relates to.

## 5.7 Covenant income

5.7.1 Where a student is receiving a grant and a contribution has been assessed, the whole of the covenant income will be taken into account.

5.7.2 A student's covenant income will be apportioned over the whole calendar year and an amount of £5 per week will be disregarded.

5.7.3 Where a student is not receiving a grant, the whole of the covenant income will be taken into account. In these circumstances, a student's covenant income will be apportioned as follows:

5.7.3.1 Any covenant income up to the amount of the standard maintenance grant will be apportioned over the period of study, less any amounts to be disregarded as set out above in 'Student grant'.

5.7.3.2 Any covenant income over the amount of the standard maintenance grant will be apportioned over the whole calendar year and an amount of £5 per week will be disregarded.

## 5.8 Student loans

5.8.1 The whole amount of a person's student loan will be taken into account, less any amounts to be disregarded as set out above in 'Student grant'. A student's loan will be apportioned over the period of study the loan relates to and an amount of £10 per week will be disregarded.

- 5.8.2 A person will be treated as having a student loan in respect of an academic year where:
- A student loan has been made to them for that year, or
  - They could have taken reasonable steps to acquire a loan. In these cases, the amount to be taken into account will be the maximum amount they could have acquired for that year.

5.8.3 A loan for fees, known as a fee loan or a fee contribution loan will be fully disregarded.

## 5.9 Payments from access funds

5.9.1 A payment from access funds will be disregarded as income, with the exception of any payments intended for:

- Food
- Ordinary clothing or footwear
- Household fuel
- Water charges
- Rent
- Council Tax

5.9.2 In these circumstances, the whole amount will be taken into account and an amount of £20 per week will be disregarded.

5.9.3 Where a payment from access funds is made to bridge the period until a student loan is received, the whole amount will be disregarded.

## 5.10 Student income treated as capital

5.10.1 The following amounts paid to students will be treated as capital:

- A refund of tax deducted from a student's covenant income.
- An amount paid from access funds as a single lump sum, whatever the purpose of the payment.

## 5.11 Notional income

5.11.1 A claimant will be treated as possessing income of which they or their partner have deliberately deprived themselves of, to qualify for Council Tax Support.

5.11.2 The treatment of notional income for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

## 5.12 Tariff income from capital

5.12.1 Where the claimant and their partner have capital in excess of £6,000 (but less than £16,000), a tariff income of £1 per week will be taken into account for every £250, or part of £250, over £6,000.

5.12.2 The calculation of tariff income from capital for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

### 5.13 Other income

5.13.1 Any other income of the claimant or partner will be taken fully into account, with the exception of 'income disregarded' below.

5.13.2 Where deductions are being made from income in the recovery of overpayments or taxes, by public bodies, the gross income amount will be taken into account.

### 5.14 Income disregarded

5.14.1 The following income paid to the claimant or partner will be disregarded in full, unless otherwise stated:

- Any payment of expenses for participation in 'work for your benefit' schemes.
- Any payment of expenses for attending mandatory work activity, employment, skills or enterprise schemes.
- Any payment of expenses for a person who is a volunteer for a charitable or voluntary organisation.
- Any payment of expenses for a person who participates as a service user.
- Certain state benefits and pensions:
  - Attendance Allowance.
  - Child Benefit.
  - Disability Living Allowance.
  - Discretionary Housing Payments.
  - Education Maintenance Allowance.
  - Guardian's Allowance.
  - Housing Benefit.
  - Income Support.
  - Income based Jobseekers Allowance.
  - Income related Employment and Support Allowance.
  - Mobility supplements.
  - Personal Independence Payments.
  - Armed Forces Independence Payments.
  - War Disablement Pensions.
  - War Widow's Pensions.
  - War Widower's Pensions.
  - Widowed Mother's Allowance.
  - Widowed Parent's Allowance.
- The income of a person in receipt of Income Support, income based Jobseekers Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance.
- Any payment made to a person as a holder of the Victoria Cross or George Cross.

- Charitable or voluntary payments.
- Any income from capital.
- Any payments received from dependants or non-dependants.
- The first £20 per week of any rental payments from a person, other than a non-dependant, who occupies the claimant's home.
- The first £20 per week, and then 50% of any income over £20 per week, of any rental payments from a boarder, other than a non-dependant, who occupies the claimant's home.
- Any payment in kind made by a charity.
- Any income payable outside the United Kingdom where there is a prohibition against the transfer to the United Kingdom of that income.
- Any payment made for adoption, fostering, guardianship support or supported lodgings.
- Any payment made for a person who is not normally a member of the claimant's household, but is temporarily in their care.
- Any payment made by a Local Authority under section 17 of the Children's Act 1989.
- Any payment ordered by a court for a personal injury, accident or disease in respect of the claimant or their family.
- Any payment made under an agreement to settle a claim for personal injury.
- Any payment received under an insurance policy taken out to insure against the risk of being unable to maintain repayments of a loan.
- Any income treated as capital.
- Social Fund payments or its equivalent.
- Any payment for banking charges or commission, to convert a payment of income to sterling.
- Any payment made under the following:
  - The Macfarlane Trust
  - The Eileen Trust
  - The Independent Living Fund
  - The Skipton Fund
  - The Caxton Foundation
  - The London Bombing Relief Charitable Fund
  - The London Emergencies Trust
  - The We Love Manchester Emergency Fund
  - The Variant Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease Trust
  - An approved infected blood support scheme
  - The Thalidomide Health Grant or other Thalidomide Trust.
- Any payment of expenses for jurors, witnesses or prison visitors.
- Any refund of Council Tax.
- Any payment of child maintenance.
- The first £15 per week of any maintenance, other than child maintenance.
- Sports awards.

5.14.2 The income disregarded for pensioners is set out in schedule 5 of the regulations.

## 5.15 Capital

5.15.1 The capital of the claimant and their partner will be added together, for the purpose of calculating entitlement to Council Tax Support. Where the person is receiving Universal Credit, the capital will be the assessment of capital provided by Universal Credit.

5.15.2 All capital of the claimant or partner will be taken fully into account, with the exception of 'capital disregarded' below.

5.15.3 Where capital is jointly held by the claimant or partner and one or more other persons, the Council will apportion the capital to decide what share is held by the claimant or partner.

5.15.4 Where the value of the capital item is not known, the Council will calculate the value of the capital item using the information available to provide the most accurate estimate, including:

- The current market or surrender value of the capital item.
- Less any costs for selling the capital item.
- Less any debt or charge secured against the capital item.

5.15.5 The treatment and calculation of capital for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

## 5.16 Income treated as capital

5.16.1 The following payments will be treated as capital:

- Holiday pay, paid 4 weeks or more after termination of employment.
- Tax refunds.
- Lump sum charitable or subsistence payments.
- Arrears of Tax Credits.

## 5.17 Notional capital

5.17.1 A claimant will be treated as possessing capital of which they or their partner have deliberately deprived themselves of, to qualify for Council Tax Support.

5.17.2 The treatment of notional capital for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

## 5.18 Capital disregarded

5.18.1 The following capital held by the claimant or partner will be disregarded in full, unless otherwise stated:

- The dwelling normally occupied by the claimant as their home.



- Any property which is actively being sold.
- Any property acquired by the claimant which they intend to occupy as their home, whilst they are preparing for occupation.
- Any property acquired by the claimant, which they intend to occupy as their home, which is undergoing essential repairs or alterations.
- The proceeds of sale of any property formerly occupied by the claimant as their home, which is to be used for the purchase of another property intended for their occupation.
- Any property occupied by a partner or relative of the claimant or any member of their family, where that person is a pensioner or is disabled.
- Any property occupied by the former partner of the claimant as their home, where the former partner is a lone parent, or where the property is actively being sold.
- The capital of a person in receipt of Income Support, income based Jobseekers Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance.
- Any future interest in property, other than land or premises where the claimant has granted a lease or tenancy.
- The assets of any business owned by the claimant for the purpose of their self-employment.
- Any arrears of state pensions, benefits or tax credits.
- Any amount paid to the claimant, or acquired by the claimant as a loan, as a result of damage or loss of the home or personal possessions and intended for its repair or replacement.
- Any amount deposited with a Registered Provider, which is to be used for the purchase of another property intended for occupation.
- Any personal possessions.
- The value of the right to receive any income under an annuity or the surrender value of an annuity.
- Where the funds of a trust resulted from a payment for a personal injury to the claimant or their partner, the value of the trust fund and the right to receive any payment under that trust.
- The value of the right to receive any income under a life interest or from a life rent.
- The value of the right to receive any income payable in a country outside the United Kingdom where there is a prohibition against the transfer to the United Kingdom of that income.
- The surrender value of any life insurance policy.
- Where payments of capital are made by instalments, the value of the right to receive any outstanding instalments.
- Any payment made by a local authority under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
- Any payment made for adoption, fostering, guardianship support or supported lodgings.
- Any social fund payment or its equivalent.
- Any refund of tax deducted on a payment of loan interest for the purpose of acquiring a home or carrying out repairs or improvement to the home.

- Where a payment of capital is made in a currency other than sterling, any banking charge or commission payable in converting that payment into sterling.
- Any payment made under the following:
  - The Macfarlane Trust
  - The Eileen Trust
  - The Independent Living Fund
  - The Skipton Fund
  - The Caxton Foundation
  - The London Bombing Relief Charitable Fund
  - The London Emergencies Trust
  - The We Love Manchester Emergency Fund
  - The Variant Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease Trust
  - An approved infected blood support scheme
  - The Thalidomide Health Grant or other Thalidomide Trust.
- The value of the right to receive any rent.
- Any payment in kind made by a charity.
- Any refund of Council Tax.
- Any payment made by a local authority to the claimant, to be used to purchase a property for occupation as their home, or to carry out repairs or alterations to the home.
- Any payments for:
  - travel expenses for hospital visits
  - medical supplies and vouchers
  - health in pregnancy grants
- Home Office payments for prison visits.
- Any payment made to assist a disabled person to obtain or retain their employment.
- Any payment made by a local authority under the Blind Homeworkers' Scheme.
- Any capital administered on behalf of a person by the High Court, County Court, or the Court of Protection.
- Any payment to the claimant as a holder of the Victoria Cross or George Cross.
- Any payment made to assist a person under the self-employment route.
- Any payment of a sports award.
- Any payment of an education maintenance allowance.
- Any payment made by a contractor for a person participating in an employment zone programme.
- Any arrears of subsistence allowance.
- Any payment made by a local authority for a service which is provided to develop or sustain the capacity of the claimant or their partner to live independently in their accommodation, including personal budgets.

5.18.2 The capital disregarded for pensioners is set out in schedule 6 of the regulations.

## 6 Calculation of entitlement

### 6.1 Maximum Council Tax Support

6.1.1 The amount of a person's maximum Council Tax Support for a day which they are liable to pay Council Tax will be 80% (100% for Young Care Leavers).

6.1.2 The amount of Council Tax Support will be calculated as A divided by B and multiplied by 80% (100% for Young Care Leavers) where:

- A is the amount of Council Tax set for the financial year for the dwelling the person resides in and for which they are liable, less any discount which applies
- B is the number of days in that financial year
- Less any non-dependant deductions.

6.1.3 Where a person is jointly and severally liable for Council Tax, which they are liable with one or more other persons, the maximum amount of Council Tax Support will be the amount in A divided by the number of people who are jointly and severally liable. This will not apply if the only person they are jointly and severally liable with is their partner.

6.1.4 The maximum Council Tax Support for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

### 6.2 Council Tax Support taper

6.2.1 The percentage of excess income over the applicable amount (or Universal Credit maximum award) which will be deducted from the weekly maximum Council Tax Support will be 20%.

### 6.3 Non-dependant deductions

6.3.1 A deduction from a person's maximum Council Tax Support will be made for non-dependants, as follows. The amounts detailed below are those stated within the 2018/2019 scheme (**Table 2**) and will be updated for 2019/2020. The updated amounts will be calculated with reference to the amended regulations 2018.

**Table 2: Non-dependant deductions 2018/2019**

Non-dependant type	Weekly amount
A non-dependant aged 18 or over in remunerative work where their normal gross weekly income is:	
• Less than £202.85	£3.90
• Between £202.85 and £351.64	£7.90
• Between £351.65 and £436.89	£9.95
• £436.90 or over	£11.90

A non-dependant aged 18 or over not in remunerative work	£3.90
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- 6.3.2 In calculating the gross income of a non-dependant, any amounts which would normally be disregarded for a Council Tax Support claimant, will also be disregarded for a non-dependant.
- 6.3.3 Only one non-dependant deduction will be made for a couple, and the amount deducted will be based on their joint income, calculated as above.
- 6.3.4 Where a person is jointly and severally liable for Council Tax for a dwelling they reside in, which they are liable with one or more other persons, the amount of the non-dependant deduction will be apportioned equally between those liable persons.
- 6.3.5 Non-dependant deductions will not be made in the following circumstances:
- Where the claimant or their partner is blind
  - Where the claimant or their partner receives Attendance Allowance, or the care component of Disability Living Allowance, or the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment, or Armed Forces Independence Payment.
  - Where the non-dependant normally resides elsewhere
  - Where the non-dependant receives a training allowance
  - Where the non-dependant is a full-time student
  - Where the non-dependant is not residing with the claimant because they have been an in-patient for more than 52 weeks (without any break exceeding 28 days)
  - Where the non-dependant receives Income Support, income based Jobseekers Allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance, or Pension Credit
  - Where the non-dependant receives Universal Credit, where the award has been calculated on the basis that they do not have any earned income
  - Where the non-dependant is aged under 18
  - Where the non-dependant is not residing with the claimant because they are a member of the armed forces and they are absent, while on operations, from the dwelling usually occupied as their home.
- 6.3.6 Where the income of the non-dependant is not known or has not been provided, the Council will assume that the maximum deduction will apply.
- 6.3.7 The rules for non-dependant deductions for pensioners are set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

#### 6.4 Date on which a claim is made and entitlement begins

- 6.4.1 The rules for the date on which a claim is made are set out in schedule 8, part 2, paragraph 5 of the regulations. These state:
- Where an award of Pension Credit (guarantee credit), Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income-related Employment and

Support Allowance, or Universal Credit has been made to the claimant or their partner; and the claim for Council Tax Support is made within one month of the date of the claim for one of those benefits; the date of claim will be the first day of entitlement to those benefits.

- Where the claimant or their partner is receiving Pension Credit (guarantee credit), Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, or Universal Credit; and they become liable for Council Tax for the first time; and the claim for Council Tax Support is made within one month of the date of the change; the date of claim will be the date on which the change takes place.
- Where the claimant is the former partner of a person who was entitled to Council Tax Support before the date of death or separation; and the claimant makes a claim for Council Tax Support within one month of the date of death or separation; the date of claim will be the date of death or separation.
- Where the claim for Council Tax Support is made within one month of a request to claim Council Tax Support, or such longer period as the Council considers reasonable, the date of claim will be the date on which the request was made.
- In all other cases, the date of claim for Council Tax Support will be the date the claim form is received by the Council.

6.4.2 Council Tax Support will begin on the Monday following the date of claim unless:

- The claimant requests the claim is paid for an earlier period, or
- The Council identifies entitlement to Council Tax Support for an earlier period.

Providing that the Council has sufficient information and evidence to calculate entitlement to Council Tax Support for the earlier period.

6.4.3 The rules for the backdating of claims for pensioners are set out in schedule 8, part 2, paragraph 6 of the regulations.

## 6.5 Duration of award and reviews

6.5.1 Council Tax Support will be awarded for an indefinite period, until:

- Council Tax liability ends.
- A change in the claimant or partner's circumstances results in Council Tax Support ending.
- The claimant fails to respond to a request for information or evidence in connection with their claim or an award.

6.5.2 The Council may review a person's entitlement to Council Tax Support at any time.

## 6.6 Extended reductions

6.6.1 A person who is entitled to Council Tax Support will be entitled to an extended reduction where:

- The claimant or their partner were entitled to a qualifying benefit or any combination of those benefits of either;
  - Income Support, or
  - Jobseekers Allowance (income based or contributory), or
  - Employment and Support Allowance (income related or contributory), or
  - Universal Credit, or
  - Incapacity Benefit, or
  - Severe Disablement Allowance.
- Entitlement to a qualifying benefit ceased because the claimant or their partner;
  - Commenced employment as an employed or self-employed earner, or
  - Increased their earnings from their employment, or
  - Increased the number of hours in their employment.

6.6.2 Providing that the claimant remains liable for Council Tax at the dwelling in which they reside during the extended reduction period.

6.6.3 The extended reduction period will start on the day after Council Tax Support would normally have ended after the qualifying benefit has ceased and will last for 4 weeks or up to the day Council Tax liability at the dwelling in which they reside ends, if this is earlier.

6.6.4 The amount of the extended reduction will be the higher of:

- The amount of Council Tax Support which the claimant was entitled to before the qualifying benefit ceased, or
- The amount of Council Tax Support which the claimant is entitled to after the qualifying benefit ceased.

6.6.5 The rules for extended reductions for pensioners is set out in schedule 1 of the regulations.

## 6.7 Extended reductions – movers into Darlington

6.7.1 The rules covering people who move into Darlington who are in receipt of an extended reduction is set out in Schedule 8, Part 1 of the regulations. These state:

- Where a claim for Council Tax Support is made and the claimant or their partner is in receipt of an extended reduction from another authority, the Council must reduce any entitlement to Council Tax Support by the amount of that extended reduction.

## 7 Decision making and notifications

### 7.1 Decisions and notification

7.1.1 The rules by which the Council must make and notify decisions for Council Tax Support are set out in Schedule 8, Part 3 of the regulations. These state:

- The Council must make a decision on a Council Tax Support claim within 14 days of receiving all the information and evidence for that claim, or as soon as reasonably practicable after that date.
- The Council must notify the claimant in writing of any decision relating to a Council Tax Support claim within 14 days of making the decision, or as soon as reasonably practicable after that date.
- The decision notice must include a statement informing the claimant of their duty to notify changes of circumstances, explaining the consequences of failing to comply with that duty, and setting out the changes which may affect entitlement to Council Tax Support.
- Where the decision is to award Council Tax Support, the notice must include a statement as to how it will be paid.
- The decision notice must include the procedure by which an appeal may be made.
- The claimant may request a statement of reasons about the notification, within one month of the date of the notification. The statement of reasons must then be sent to the claimant within 14 days of the request, or as soon as reasonably practicable after that date.
- A person affected by a decision relating to Council Tax Support will be the claimant, or where the person who is liable for Council Tax is unable to act, the accepted or appointed person who has made an application on their behalf.

### 7.2 Payment of Council Tax Support

7.2.1 The rules for the payment of Council Tax Support are set out in Schedule 8, Part 4 of the regulations. These state:

- Payment of Council Tax Support will be made to the person entitled to the reduction of their Council Tax liability.
- Where a person is jointly and severally liable for Council Tax, payment of Council Tax Support will be paid to the person entitled to the reduction of an appropriate amount of their Council Tax liability, rounded to the nearest penny.

7.2.2 Payment of Council Tax Support will be made by reducing the Council Tax liability of the person entitled to the reduction.

### 7.3 Electronic communications

7.3.1 The rules by which the Council can undertake electronic communications is set out in Schedule 7, Part 4 of the regulations. These state:

- The Council must meet certain conditions to allow electronic communication in relation to its Council Tax Support scheme.
- The Council may use intermediaries in connection with electronic communication in relation to its Council Tax Support scheme.
- Any information delivered by the Council by electronic means must meet all the other conditions relating to its Council Tax Support scheme.
- Proof of identity of the sender or recipient of information will need to be verified where information is sent or received by electronic means.
- The Council will need to establish procedures to verify delivery of information by electronic means.



## **8 Changes in decisions**

### **8.1 Duty to notify changes of circumstances**

8.1.1 The duty to notify changes of circumstances is set out in Schedule 8, Part 2, paragraph 9 of the regulations. These state:

- The claimant, or a person acting on their behalf, must notify the Council of any changes of circumstances which they might reasonably be expected to know may affect their entitlement to Council Tax Support.
- Notification of a change of circumstances may be made in writing, by telephone or by any other means agreed by the Council and within 21 days of the change occurring, or as soon as reasonably practicable after that date.

8.1.2 Notifications of changes of circumstances in writing may be made by completing the on-line change of circumstances form on the 'Council Tax Support' page of the Darlington Borough Council website.

### **8.2 Date on which a change of circumstances will affect Council Tax Support**

8.2.1 The Council will review the amount of Council Tax Support, following a change of circumstances, as follows:

- Where entitlement to Council Tax Support continues after the change, Council Tax Support will change on the Monday following the date the change occurred.
- Where entitlement to Council Tax Support ends after the change, Council Tax Support will end on the Sunday of the week in which the change occurred.
- Where Council Tax liability changes or ends, Council Tax Support will be changed or ended on the same day.

### **8.3 Ending Council Tax Support**

8.3.1 Council Tax Support will end in the following circumstances:

- Council Tax liability ends.
- A Council Tax exemption applies.
- A change of circumstances occurs, which ends entitlement to Council Tax Support.
- A change of circumstances occurs, but there is insufficient information or evidence to decide if entitlement to Council Tax Support will continue.
- The claimant fails to provide, when requested, sufficient information or evidence to decide if entitlement to Council Tax Support will continue, one month following the date of the request or such longer time as the Council considers reasonable.

### **8.4 Revisions**

8.4.1 An original decision relating to a claim for Council Tax Support may be revised by the Council at any time.

## 8.5 Appeals

8.5.1 The rules by which a person may make an appeal against certain decisions of the authority are set out in Schedule 7, Part 2 of the regulations. These state:

- A person who disagrees with a decision in relation to their Council Tax Support claim may appeal in writing, stating their grounds for appeal.
- The Council must consider the appeal and notify the person in writing of the outcome of their appeal and the reasons for the decision, within 2 months of the appeal being received.
- If the person is still aggrieved or if the Council fails to notify the person of the outcome of their appeal within 2 months of receiving their appeal, they may appeal to a valuation tribunal under section 16 of the 1992 Act.

## 8.6 Downward adjustments of Council Tax Support

8.7 Any additional Council Tax liability created as a result of a downward adjustment of Council Tax Support entitlement, will be treated under the national Council Tax regulations.

## 8.8 Discretionary reductions

8.8.1 The rules for an application for a discretionary reduction are set out in Schedule 7, Part 3 of the regulations. These state:

- An application for a reduction under section 13A(1)(c)(a) of the 1992 Act may be made in writing, by telephone, or by electronic means.
- A claim for Council Tax Support may also be treated as an application for a reduction under section 13A(1)(c) of the 1992 Act.

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**POLLING DISTRICT, POLLING PLACE AND POLLING STATION REVIEW 2018**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Stephen Harker, Leader of the Council,  
and Cabinet Member with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Paul Wildsmith, Managing Director**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To report the outcome of a recent review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations for the Darlington and Sedgefield Parliamentary Constituencies.

**Summary**

2. The Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, places a duty on all local authorities in England and Wales to undertake and complete a review of all of the Polling Districts and Polling Places in its area.
3. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 specified the timing of compulsory reviews of the UK Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places, with the next compulsory review due to be started and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 (inclusive).
4. As the last Polling District, Polling Place and Polling Station Review was held in 2014, and in order to ensure that our Polling Places and Polling Stations remained fit for purpose ahead of the Local Government Elections in 2019, it was determined that the next Polling District, Polling Place and Polling Station Review should commence at the earliest opportunity, that being 1 October 2018.
5. Conducting the review at this time provides the earliest opportunity to address the recommendations made in the report produced by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK following their UK Parliamentary (General) Election Assessment Mission in 2017, and the observations made by Democracy Volunteers at the same election. It also allows sufficient time polling stations to be reserved for the elections on 2 May 2019.

6. Undertaking the review at this time also allows the Council to proactively respond to the recommendations contained within the 2018 Parliamentary Boundary Review, which were submitted to Government on 5 September 2018.

### **Recommendation**

7. Council are requested to:-
  - (a) Note and approve the changes proposed to the existing Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations ahead of the Local Elections in May 2019 **(Appendix D)**;
  - (b) Endorse the recommendations of the Returning Officer in relation to Polling Districts and Polling Places that will come into being should the recommendations of the Parliamentary Boundary Review be approved, and request that Officers implement the recommendations accordingly; and
  - (c) Authorise the publication of the proposals for Polling Places.

### **Reasons**

8. The reasons for the request are to:-
  - (a) To comply with the requirements of the Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.
  - (b) To enable the decisions to be made, publicised and implemented in good time for the elections scheduled for May 2019.

**Paul Wildsmith**  
**Managing Director**

### **Background Papers**

- (i) 'Reviews of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations': The Electoral Commission.
- (ii) Equality and Human Right Law during an Election Period. April 2017. Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Paul Dalton: Extension 5805

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	There are no issues relating to health and wellbeing which this report needs to address.
Carbon Impact	There are no issues relating to carbon impact.
Diversity	All polling places have been assessed to ensure that they are accessible for voters who have a disability.
Wards Affected	The proposals affect all wards.
Groups Affected	The proposals do not affect any specific group.
Budget and Policy Framework	The report does not change the Council's budget or Policy framework but needs to be considered by Council
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an executive decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	There are no links.
Efficiency	There are no efficiency proposals identified as part of this review.
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

9. The Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, placed a duty on all local authorities in England and Wales to undertake and complete a compulsory review of all of the Polling Districts and Polling Places in its area within a prescribed period. The relevant prescribed period for the review required it to be started and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 (inclusive).
10. The scope of the review only allows for Polling District boundaries and Polling Places to be changed, and does not permit changes to Ward, County, Parish and Parliamentary Electoral boundaries.
11. Local authorities must comply with a number of legislative requirements in relation to the designation of Polling Districts and Polling Places. Each parish in England should be a separate Polling District, unless special circumstances apply.
12. Local authorities must designate a Polling Place for each Polling District, unless the size or other circumstances of a Polling District are such that the situation of the Polling Stations does not materially affect the convenience of the electors.

13. A Polling Place must be within the Polling District unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate somewhere outside of the Polling District (for example, if no accessible Polling Place can be identified within the District). This may be the case in rural areas where suitable premises can be few and far between.
14. Local authorities must also comply with certain access requirements, and as part of the review they must seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in the local authority area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances, and ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every Polling Place is accessible to electors who are disabled.
15. In determining that every Polling Place, and prospective Polling Place, is accessible to disabled voters, local authorities should give due consideration to the requirements of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.
16. In the report, 'Polls Apart 2010: Opening Elections to Disabled People', produced by SCOPE in 2010, it was made clear that access is still a barrier to some disabled people who want to cast their vote in person. Some of the main physical access issues identified by SCOPE, which were taken into consideration as part of this review, were Polling Places and Polling Stations with steps into the entrance, or being otherwise inaccessible, narrow doorways and corridors, lack of space for motorised wheelchair manoeuvrability, and a lack of space and secrecy for the elector and their companion to discuss the elector's choice of vote.
17. Whilst the Review itself could not formally commence until 1 October 2018, the Electoral Commission did permit local authorities to undertake preparatory work ahead of the review period, including research about the geography and demographics of the area, examining the suitability of existing buildings, and conducting work to identify and consider potential alternative buildings. With this in mind, staff from the Elections Team inspected a number of Polling Places during the summer months, and an invitation was extended to Members to contribute at an early stage.
18. Consideration was also initially given to reducing the number of proposed Polling Places, however in light of indications provided by the Cabinet Office to introduce a voter identification requirement, potentially within the lifetime of this review period, it was deemed prudent to retain the same number of Polling Places.

### **Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations**

19. Ahead of the start of the review, on 25 September 2018 details of the review were published on the news page of the Council's website and also on the Council's social media profiles. A Press Release was also issued, and appeared in The Northern Echo and the Darlington and Stockton Times on 29 September 2018, advising of the forthcoming review.

20. A Notice advising of the formal start of the review was placed on the Council's website (**Appendix A**) on 1 October 2018. All Members of the Council, local political groups, the Members of Parliament (MPs) for the constituencies of Darlington and Sedgfield, the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) for the North East Region, Parish Councils, Darlington Association on Disability, and a number of community groups were also advised that a review was taking place, and that representations could be made accordingly.
21. Those minded to submit representations which objected to the current Polling Place were encouraged to suggest alternative venues within the Polling District. In addition, Presiding Officers, Polling Station Inspectors, stakeholders and residents of the Borough were invited to comment. Representations were invited in writing and via e-mail, with information placed on the Council's website (<https://www.darlington.gov.uk/your-council/democracy/elections-and-electoral-registration/polling-districts-polling-places-and-polling-stations-review-2018/>) and social media profiles.
22. The initial consultation period ran from 1 to 14 October 2018, and encouraged respondents to comment on the initially proposed Polling Districts and Polling Places (**Appendix B**), or make suggestions as to alternative provision.
23. The initial proposals did not recommend any changes to Polling Districts, as the current boundaries are well-defined and reflect natural boundaries within each area (main thoroughfares, railway lines, rivers, etc.). We have not been informed of any major obstacles in place that would prohibit electors from reaching their Polling Place.
24. The initial proposals included a number of changes affecting Polling Places:
  - (a) The initial proposals responded to strong objections previously received in relation to the use of Gurney Pease Academy from the Head Teacher at the school, and the Educational Trust responsible for the School. In previous reviews there were no alternative premises suitable within Polling District STA, however work has now been undertaken at St. James The Great Church Hall, and the premises now comply with the access requirements expected of a Polling Place. The initial proposals therefore reflected a change from Gurney Pease Academy to St. James The Great Church Hall, which is better situated for the majority of electors within Polling District STA, allowed for a provision of car parking not available at the School, and ensured that the School could retain its nursery provision on Polling Days.
  - (b) Due to changes in service provision, Dodmire Children's Centre no longer exists and the building previously used for the provision of this service has reverted back to the use of Rydal Academy. Rydal Academy has agreed to provide the same space previously used at Dodmire Children's Centre as a Polling Station.

- (c) Likewise, Mount Pleasant Children's Centre no longer exists, and use of the building has reverted back to Mount Pleasant Primary School. Unfortunately, it is now no longer possible to use the same area within the school, however Mount Pleasant Primary School has agreed to relocate the Polling Station elsewhere on site. The Polling Station will now be situated in the 'Little Learners' Nursery. Both options enable the schools to remain operational on Polling Days.
- (d) Branksome Community Centre has now been leased to The Redeemed Christian Church of God, however arrangements have been made with the Church to continue with use of the building as a Polling Place on Polling Days. The initial proposals also reflected this consequential changes.

### **Representations Received**

25. During the initial consultation stage, representations were received from one Deputy Head Teacher, and two Electors (the representations received are outlined in **Appendix C**).
26. Following this initial stage of consultation, Officers gave consideration to the representations received, conducted further premises inspections, and prepared draft recommendations for the existing boundaries, and also prepared draft recommendations based on the potential new Parliamentary Boundary arrangements, being considered by the Government following the completion of the 2018 Parliamentary Boundary Review.
27. The representations received made no comments in terms of the proposed Polling District boundaries.

### **Representation 1 – Hurworth Primary School**

28. A representation was received from an elector living in Hurworth, who objected to Hurworth Primary School being used as a Polling Place due to the fact that the School closed causing children to miss a day of their education.
29. It is appreciated that the closure of any school causes huge disruption to staff, parents and children alike, and therefore only seeks to use a school where it is the best, or only, solution within a Polling District. The decision to close any school used as a Polling Place is made solely by the Head Teacher of that school, and not the Returning Officer.
30. The Representation of the People Act 1983 allows the Returning Officer to use schools and public rooms, free of charge, for the purposes of taking the poll.

#### *Use of schools and public rooms*

*22 (1) The Returning Officer may use, free of charge, for the purpose of taking the poll –*



(a) a room in a school to which this rule applies;

(b) a room the expense of maintaining which is payable out of any rate. This rule applies –

(i) in England and Wales, to a school maintained or assisted by a local education authority or a school in respect of which grants are made out of moneys provided by Parliament to the person or body of persons responsible for the management of the school.

31. This does not necessarily mean that a school must close, and the Elections Team have worked closely with schools and colleges across the Borough in an attempt to keep many schools fully, or partially, open, where suitable safeguarding arrangements can be implemented. Indeed, Carmel College, Mount Pleasant Primary School, Mowden Junior School, Northwood Primary School, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Reid Street Primary School, Rydal Academy, West Park Academy and Whinfield Primary School, will all remain fully, or partially, open on Polling Day, whilst being used as a Polling Place.

32. Guidance received from the Department for Education states:

*“Schools which need to close as a result of being used as Polling Stations can move to alternative accommodation or make up the lost day by other means. The lost day could be made up at the beginning or end of a term, or a training day could be arranged on the day of the poll if the head teacher or governors so wish.”*

33. As the school remains central to the main residential area with the Polling District, and as no further suitable venues within the Polling District were proposed as part of the representation received, we continued to propose that Hurworth Primary School serve as the Polling Place in Polling District HUB.

## **Representation 2 – St. Thomas Aquinas Church Hall (Longfield Academy)**

34. A representation was received from a resident of the Ridgeway, who proposed that Longfield Academy be used as a Polling Place to serve Polling District NRA, and claimed that there was no public transport available to attend the Polling Place at St. Thomas Aquinas Church Hall.

35. Ridgeway is situated within the North Road Ward, whereas the proposed Polling Place of Longfield Academy is situated in the Harrowgate Hill Ward. Guidance states that a Polling Place must be within the Polling District unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate somewhere outside of the Polling District. In this case, it would be designating somewhere within a different Ward.

36. Longfield Academy is not currently used as a Polling Place within the Harrowgate Hill Ward (D.S.R.M. Social Club, Longfield Road, Darlington is used

as the Polling Place to serve Polling District HHC), and therefore use of the School could potentially mean closing another school to enable the Poll to take place.

37. There are no public transport links to St. Thomas Aquinas Church Hall via the most direct route of Thompson Street West, however buses do run the length of Longfield Road, and subsequently down North Road, or along Whessoe Road and Westmoreland Street, and subsequently up North Road, which would provide electors with adequate access the Polling Place via public transport.
38. In view of the above the recommendation is therefore to continue to use St. Thomas Aquinas Church Hall to serve as the Polling Place in Polling District NRA.

### **Representation 3 – St. Teresa’s R. C. Primary School**

39. The final representation received during the initial consultation phase was from the Deputy Head Teacher of St. Teresa’s R. C. Primary School, who expressed concern that the School closed due to being used as a Polling Place.
40. In light of the representation received, Officers visited Geneva Road Evangelical Baptist Church Hall, with a view to using the venue as a Polling Place. The building complied with all the requirements of a Polling Place outlined within Electoral Commission guidance, and is situated within the Polling District, and it was therefore decided that Geneva Road Evangelical Baptist Church Hall be proposed as the Polling Place for Polling District EAA in the next round of consultation.

### **Draft Recommendations**

41. Draft recommendations were then published on the Council’s website on 22 October 2018 for further consultation (**Appendix D**), together with the observations of the Returning Officer and the situation of Polling Stations within Polling Places (**Appendix E**), and a link to the relevant webpages was once again circulated to interested parties, and those who had previously made representations.
42. The Returning Officer for the Sedgefield Parliamentary Constituency advised that he was not aware of any issues in relation to the Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations in that part of the Sedgefield Parliamentary Constituency administered by this local authority, and offered no comments in terms of our review.

### **Further Representations Received**

43. One further representation was received from an elector by the closing date of the second period of consultation of 4 November 2018 (**Appendix F**).

## **Representation 4 – St. Thomas Aquinas Church Hall (St. George’s Bridge Centre)**

44. A representation was received from a resident of the Ridgeway, who proposed that St. George’s Bridge Centre on the corner of Elmtree Street and Whessoe Road be used as a Polling Place to serve Polling District NRA, as opposed to St. Thomas Aquinas Church Hall.
45. An external inspection of the premises revealed adequate car parking and what appeared to be suitable external lighting, however a representative from the St. George’s Bridge Centre subsequently informed Officers that the premises were in use every Thursday, and that the Returning Officer would therefore be unable to use the premises on Polling Days.

## **Parliamentary Boundary Review 2018**

46. In anticipation of the final recommendations contained within the Parliamentary Boundary Review, which proposes that the Darlington Parliamentary Constituency Boundary become coterminous with the Darlington Borough Boundary, and was presented to Parliament on 5 September 2018, our proposals allow for the combination of Polling Districts BFA (Darlington) and BFA (Sedgefield) into one Polling District (BFA), whose electors would vote at one Polling Station at West Park Academy.
47. The Parliamentary Boundary Review 2018 also provisionally proposes that Polling District PEE be brought back into the Constituency, which in turn allows for Polling Districts PED and PEE to be brought back within the same Polling Place at The Coleridge Centre, and thus dispense with the use of Skerne Park Youth and Community Centre.
48. These changes will only be enacted if the recommendations of the Parliamentary Boundary Review 2018 are accepted by Government.

## **Additional Changes (Polling Stations)**

49. Our proposal also addresses concerns raised by accredited observers following the Parliamentary (General) Election in 2017, which suggested that the rooms used at Whinfield Primary School and the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College were too congested to accommodate two Polling Stations.
50. In terms of Whinfield Primary School, objections regarding the use of the School were previously received due to the fact the School closed. Prior to the last review, much work was undertaken with the School to ensure that it remained operational during Polling Day, with the classroom housing the Polling Station now having a separate external access allowing it to be isolated from the remainder of the school on Polling Day. Discussions have taken place with representatives at Whinfield Primary School, who have agreed to provide a second classroom, which can also be isolated from the School. This will permit

one Polling Station in each classroom, whilst keeping the remainder of the School open.

51. Likewise, discussions have taken place with staff at the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, and it has agreed to provide a second classroom, adjoining the classroom which is currently used, and can also be isolated from the remainder of the College. Again, this will allow one Polling Station in each classroom, whilst keeping the rest of the College open.



**NOTICE OF REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS**

Under Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006, Darlington Borough Council is required to undertake a complete review of all Polling Districts and Polling Places.

This Review will commence on **Monday, 1st October 2018** and has to be completed by **Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018**.

Electors within Darlington Borough Council's area may make representations to the Returning Officer, but should, if possible, give alternative places that may be used as Polling Places.

Local political parties and Councillors will be consulted and views are invited from electors. The Council will also welcome comments and representations from any person or body with expertise in access for persons with any type of disability.

Initial representations should be submitted by **Sunday, 14th October 2018**. The Council will then prepare draft recommendations, which the Returning Officer will then comment upon, and interested parties can then make further representations between **Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018** and **Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2018**, before final recommendations are considered by Council on **Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018**.

Information on the current Polling Districts and Places, and plans of individual Polling Districts can be obtained from the Elections Team at the address provided below, or by visiting <https://www.darlington.gov.uk/your-council/democracy/elections-and-electoral-registration/polling-districts-polling-places-and-polling-stations-review-2018/>

Representations should be sent, in writing or by e-mail, to the following address:

**The Returning Officer,  
Elections Team,  
Darlington Borough Council,  
Room 116, Town Hall,  
Feethams,  
Darlington,  
DL1 5QT.**

**E-mail: [elections@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:elections@darlington.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.darlington.gov.uk](http://www.darlington.gov.uk)**

**Please note:** In accordance with the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006, all correspondence received will be published on the Council's website.

Dated: Monday, 1st October 2018.

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**Appendix B**

**Proposed Polling Stations 2018 – 2022**

<b>Polling Station Number</b>	<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Polling Place Address</b>	<b>Post Code</b>	<b>Polling Station Voters (as at September 2018)</b>
1	BFA	West Park Academy, Alderman Leach Drive, Darlington	DL2 2GF	642
2	BFB	West Park Academy, Alderman Leach Drive, Darlington	DL2 2GF	1236
3	BFC	Darlington Railway Athletic Club (Snooker Room), Brinkburn Road, Darlington	DL3 9LF	1880
4	BLA	King William Street Community Centre, King William Street, Darlington	DL1 4YS	874
5	BLB	Rydal Academy, Rydal Road, Darlington	DL1 4BH	1430
6	BLC	Rydal Academy, Rydal Road, Darlington	DL1 4BH	1224
7	BLD	St. John's Church of England Academy, Fenby Avenue, Darlington	DL1 4UB	813
8	CKA	Holy Family R. C. Primary School, Prior Street, Darlington	DL3 9EN	1693
9	CKB	'Little Learners', Mount Pleasant Primary School, Newton Lane, Darlington	DL3 9HE	1249
10	CKC	The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Eggleston View, Darlington	DL3 9SH	960
11	COA	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Vane Terrace, Darlington	DL3 7AU	1094
12	COB, COC	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Vane Terrace, Darlington	DL3 7AU	1521
13	EAA	St. Teresa's R. C. Primary School, Harris Street, Darlington	DL1 4NL	871
14	EAB	Firthmoor Community Centre, Burnside Road, Darlington	DL1 4SU	1954
15	EAC	Pilmoor Green Community Centre, West Moor Road, Darlington	DL1 4LN	1398
16	HCA	Heighington Village Hall, Heighington	DL5 6QX	1500
17	HCB, HCE, HCF	Walworth Castle Hotel, Walworth	DL2 2LY	160
18	HCC, HCD	Summerhouse Village Hall, Summerhouse	DL2 3UD	109
19	HCG	St. Mary's Church, The Green, Piercebridge	DL2 3SH	87
20	HCH, HCI	High Coniscliffe Church Hall, The Green, High Coniscliffe	DL2 2LR	580
21	HCJ, HCK	Whessoe Village Hall, Harrowgate Village, Darlington	DL1 3AA	207
22	HCL	Brafferton Village Hall, Brafferton	DL1 3LB	100

23	HHA	Whessoe Village Hall, Harrowgate Village, Darlington	DL1 3AA	670
24	HHB	Harrowgate Hill Working Men's Club, Salters Lane North, Darlington	DL1 3DT	2147
25	HHC	D.S.R.M. Social Club, Longfield Road, Darlington	DL3 0HX	1102
26	HKA	Carmel College, The Headlands, Darlington	DL3 8RW	819
27	HKB	Carmel College, The Headlands, Darlington	DL3 8RW	1320
28	HSA	Haughton Children's Centre, Salters Lane South, Darlington	DL1 2AN	1472
29	HSB	Haughton Children's Centre, Salters Lane South, Darlington	DL1 2AN	1036
30	HSC	St. Anne's Church Hall, Welbeck Avenue, Darlington	DL1 2DR	1410
31	HUA	Linden Court, Linden Drive, Hurworth Place	DL2 2DL	736
32	HUB	Hurworth Primary School, Westfield Drive, Hurworth	DL2 2ET	1232
33	HUC, HUD, HUE	The Reading Room, Neasham, Darlington	DL2 1PH	339
34	MOA	Mowden Junior School (Staff Room), Federation of Mowden Schools, Conyers Avenue, Darlington	DL3 9QG	987
35	MOB	Mowden Junior School (Staff Room), Federation of Mowden Schools, Conyers Avenue, Darlington	DL3 9QG	1336
36	NGA, NGB	Corporation Road Community Primary School, Corporation Road, Darlington	DL3 6AR	2016
37	NGC	Borough Road Nursery School, Borough Road, Darlington	DL1 1SG	313
38	NRA	St. Thomas Aquinas Church Hall, North Road, Darlington	DL1 2PU	965
39	NRB	Rise Carr College, Eldon Street, Darlington	DL3 0NS	1100
40	NRC, NRD	Northwood Primary School, Pendleton Road South, Darlington	DL1 2HF	1656
41	PEA	St. Augustine's Parish Centre, Larchfield Street, Darlington	DL3 7TF	542
42	PEB	Borough Road Nursery School, Borough Road, Darlington	DL1 1SG	478
43	PEC	St. Columba's Church and the Clifton Centre, Clifton Avenue, Darlington	DL1 5EE	1585
44	PED, PEE	The Coleridge Centre, Coleridge Gardens, Darlington	DL1 5AJ	1670
45	PIA	Willow Road Community Centre, Willow Road, Darlington	DL3 6PZ	1132
46	PIB	Willow Road Community Centre, Willow Road, Darlington	DL3 6PZ	966
47	PIC, PID	Reid Street Primary School, Reid Street, Darlington	DL3 6EX	1498
48	PWA, PWB	All Saint's Millennium Centre, Ravensdale Road, Darlington	DL3 8DT	1560
49	PWC	St. Augustine's Parish Centre, Larchfield Street, Darlington	DL3 7TF	1116



50	RLA	Red Hall Community Centre, Headingley Crescent, Darlington	DL1 2ST	782
51	RLB	St. Herbert's Church Hall, Yarm Road, Darlington	DL1 1BD	1760
52	SMA, SMC	Great Stainton Church Hall, Glebe Road, Great Stainton	TS21 1NB	111
53	SMB	Bishopton Village Hall, Church View, Bishopton	TS21 1HB	261
54	SMD, SMF	Sadberge Village Hall, Sadberge	DL2 1SB	488
55	SME, SMG, SMH	St. Anne's Church Hall, Welbeck Avenue, Darlington	DL1 2DR	119
56	SMI	Middleton St. George Women's Institute Hall, Neasham Road, Middleton St. George, Darlington	DL2 1LD	422
57	SMJ	Middleton St. George Women's Institute Hall, Neasham Road, Middleton St. George, Darlington	DL2 1LD	2254
58	STA	St. James the Great Church Hall, Barton Street, Darlington, (Entrance on Grey Street)	DL1 2LD	884
59	STB	Eastbourne Sports Complex, Bourne Avenue (off Hundens Lane), Darlington	DL1 1LJ	1543
60	WHA	Whinfield Primary School, Augusta Close, Darlington	DL1 3HT	1574
61	WHB	Whinfield Primary School, Augusta Close, Darlington	DL1 3HT	839

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**Representations Received**

Name / Organisation	Date Received and Number	Polling District	Polling Place	Comments
Elector – (Name Supplied)	<b>7<sup>th</sup> October 2018 (1)</b>	HUB	Hurworth Primary School	<p>“I live at (<i>address supplied</i>) and our polling station is Hurworth Primary School. I strongly object to the school being closed for polling causing the children to miss a day of their education.</p> <p>Quite rightly parents are told that every day of a child's education is important and they can be fined for taking their children out of school without permission. It is therefore completely inconsistent for DBC to cause about 200 children to lose a day at school. Surely an alternative polling station can be found that doesn't impact the children's education.”</p>
Elector – (Name Supplied)	<b>7<sup>th</sup> October 2018 (2)</b>	NRA	St. Thomas Aquinas Church Hall	<p>“I complained some time ago about it being difficult to vote if you live on Ridgeway. I would like to point out once again that Ridgeway is alongside Longfield School, so why do we have to go to St Thomas Aquinas Church to vote. There is no public transport to get there, for people without personal transport it is a long walk, all this when there is a school bordering this estate.”</p>
St. Teresa's R. C. Primary School	<b>12<sup>th</sup> October 2018 (3)</b>	EAA	St. Teresa's R. C. Primary School	<p>“I am writing to you to express our concerns about being used as a polling station next year and in forthcoming years. Having to close the whole of St. Teresa's school or having to close part of St. Teresa's School impacts greatly on the lives of our children, staff and parents.</p> <p>Quite often the closure around local elections, police commissioner elections and general elections occurs just before one of our most crucial periods in the school calendar – namely year six SAT time. The consequences for our children of missing out on vital learning time can damage their performance in their external year six SATs and then thus</p>

Name / Organisation	Date Received and Number	Polling District	Polling Place	Comments
Page 72				<p>damage the reputation of our school. A reputation that we have spent many years of hard work establishing.</p> <p>The consequences of closing impacts greatly upon our parents. Children have to be looked after -subsequently involving child care costs for working parents or loss of income if they have to take days off from work to care for them.</p> <p>In closing only part of our school – this causes concern about the safety of our children in the remaining school buildings and outside areas. Having lots of unfamiliar adults on our premises is not ideal.</p> <p>I am sure an alternative venue can be found that is far more suitable - rather than to close St. Teresa's and impact on the learning of 360 children and the lives of their parents. In my own Co Durham ward, the county there, for example, hire porta cabins and place them in public house car parks or on verges. My local school has not been impacted upon for many years now. Community centers are also used. It does seem to be a shame that when other local authorities are offering creative solutions that Darlington cannot find polling stations that impact less on the community within the building.”</p>

**Recommended Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations**

Polling District	Polling Place Address	Post Code	Polling Station Number	Polling Station Voters (as at September 2018)
BFA (D)*	West Park Academy, Alderman Leach Drive, Darlington*	DL2 2GF	1	628
BFA (S)*	West Park Academy, Alderman Leach Drive, Darlington*	DL2 2GF	2	14
BFB	West Park Academy, Alderman Leach Drive, Darlington	DL2 2GF	3	1236
BFC	Darlington Railway Athletic Club (Snooker Room), Brinkburn Road, Darlington	DL3 9LF	4	1880
BLA	King William Street Community Centre, King William Street, Darlington	DL1 4YS	5	874
BLB	Rydal Academy, Rydal Road, Darlington	DL1 4BH	6	1430
BLC	Rydal Academy, Rydal Road, Darlington	DL1 4BH	7	1224
BLD	St. John's Church of England Academy, Fenby Avenue, Darlington	DL1 4UB	8	813
CKA	Holy Family R. C. Primary School, Prior Street, Darlington	DL3 9EN	9	1693
CKB	'Little Learners', Mount Pleasant Primary School, Newton Lane, Darlington	DL3 9HE	10	1249
CKC	The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Eggleston View, Darlington	DL3 9SH	11	960
COA	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Vane Terrace, Darlington	DL3 7AU	12	1094

COB, COC	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Vane Terrace, Darlington	DL3 7AU	13	1521
EAA	Geneva Road Evangelical Baptist Church, Geneva Road Darlington	DL1 4HS	14	871
EAB	Firthmoor Community Centre, Burnside Road, Darlington	DL1 4SU	15	1954
EAC	Pilmoor Green Community Centre, West Moor Road, Darlington	DL1 4LN	16	1398
HCA	Heighington Village Hall, Heighington	DL5 6QX	17	1500
HCB, HCE, HCF	Walworth Castle Hotel, Walworth	DL2 2LY	18	160
HCC, HCD	Summerhouse Village Hall, Summerhouse	DL2 3UD	19	109
HCG	St. Mary's Church, The Green, Piercebridge	DL2 3SH	20	87
HCH, HCI	High Coniscliffe Church Hall, The Green, High Coniscliffe	DL2 2LR	21	580
HCJ, HCK	Whessoe Village Hall, Harrowgate Village, Darlington	DL1 3AA	22	207
HCL	Brafferton Village Hall, Brafferton	DL1 3LB	23	100
HHA	Whessoe Village Hall, Harrowgate Village, Darlington	DL1 3AA	24	670
HHB	Harrowgate Hill Working Men's Club, Salters Lane North, Darlington	DL1 3DT	25	2147
HHC	D.S.R.M. Social Club, Longfield Road, Darlington	DL3 0HX	26	1102
HKA	Carmel College, The Headlands, Darlington	DL3 8RW	27	819
HKB	Carmel College, The Headlands, Darlington	DL3 8RW	28	1320

HSA	Haughton Children's Centre, Salters Lane South, Darlington	DL1 2AN	29	1472
HSB	Haughton Children's Centre, Salters Lane South, Darlington	DL1 2AN	30	1036
HSC	St. Anne's Church Hall, Welbeck Avenue, Darlington	DL1 2DR	31	1410
HUA	Linden Court, Linden Drive, Hurworth Place	DL2 2DL	32	736
HUB	Hurworth Primary School, Westfield Drive, Hurworth	DL2 2ET	33	1232
HUC, HUD, HUE	The Reading Room, Neasham, Darlington	DL2 1PH	34	339
MOA	Mowden Junior School (Staff Room), Federation of Mowden Schools, Conyers Avenue, Darlington	DL3 9QG	35	987
MOB	Mowden Junior School (Staff Room), Federation of Mowden Schools, Conyers Avenue, Darlington	DL3 9QG	36	1336
NGA, NGB	Corporation Road Community Primary School, Corporation Road, Darlington	DL3 6AR	37	2016
NGC	Borough Road Nursery School, Borough Road, Darlington	DL1 1SG	38	313
NRA	St. Thomas Aquinas Church Hall, North Road, Darlington	DL1 2PU	39	965
NRB	Rise Carr College, Eldon Street, Darlington	DL3 0NS	40	1100
NRC, NRD	Northwood Primary School, Pendleton Road South, Darlington	DL1 2HF	41	1656
PEA	St. Augustine's Parish Centre, Larchfield Street, Darlington	DL3 7TF	42	542
PEB	Borough Road Nursery School, Borough Road, Darlington	DL1 1SG	43	478
PEC	St. Columba's Church and the Clifton Centre, Clifton Avenue, Darlington	DL1 5EE	44	1585

PED	The Coleridge Centre, Coleridge Gardens, Darlington	DL1 5AJ	45	1502
PEE**	Skerne Park Youth and Community Centre, Coleridge Gardens, Darlington**	DL1 5AP	46	168
PIA	Willow Road Community Centre, Willow Road, Darlington	DL3 6PZ	47	1132
PIB	Willow Road Community Centre, Willow Road, Darlington	DL3 6PZ	48	966
PIC, PID	Reid Street Primary School, Reid Street, Darlington	DL3 6EX	49	1498
PWA, PWB	All Saint's Millennium Centre, Ravensdale Road, Darlington	DL3 8DT	50	1560
PWC	St. Augustine's Parish Centre, Larchfield Street, Darlington	DL3 7TF	51	1116
RLA	Red Hall Community Centre, Headingley Crescent, Darlington	DL1 2ST	52	782
RLB	St. Herbert's Church Hall, Yarm Road, Darlington	DL1 1BD	53	1760
SMA, SMC	Great Stainton Church Hall, Glebe Road, Great Stainton	TS21 1NB	54	111
SMB	Bishopton Village Hall, Church View, Bishopton	TS21 1HB	55	261
SMD, SMF	Sadberge Village Hall, Sadberge	DL2 1SB	56	488
SME, SMG, SMH	St. Anne's Church Hall, Welbeck Avenue, Darlington	DL1 2DR	57	119
SMI	Middleton St. George Women's Institute Hall, Neasham Road, Middleton St. George, Darlington	DL2 1LD	58	422
SMJ	Middleton St. George Women's Institute Hall, Neasham Road, Middleton St. George, Darlington	DL2 1LD	59	2254
STA	St. James the Great Church Hall, Barton Street, Darlington, (Entrance on Grey Street)	DL1 2LD	60	884



STB	Eastbourne Sports Complex, Bourne Avenue (off Hundens Lane), Darlington	DL1 1LJ	61	1543
WHA	Whinfield Primary School, Augusta Close, Darlington	DL1 3HT	62	1574
WHB	Whinfield Primary School, Augusta Close, Darlington	DL1 3HT	63	839

\* Should the recommendations contained within the Parliamentary Boundary Review 2018 be enacted we would seek to combine the Polling Districts BFA(D) and BFA(S) as Polling District BFA, and have one Polling Station for this Polling District in West Park Academy, Alderman Leach Drive, Darlington, DL2 2GF.

\*\* Should the recommendations contained within the Parliamentary Boundary Review 2018 be enacted we would seek to move the Polling Station for Polling District PEE into a new Polling Place at The Coleridge Centre, Coleridge Gardens, Darlington, DL1 5AP.

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**The Returning Officer's Submission**

As part of the Polling District, Polling Place and Polling Station Review, the Returning Officer must comment on existing or proposed Polling Places. The Returning Officer's report must contain information as to the location of Polling Stations within Polling Places, and must be published within 30 days of receipt.

<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Polling Place Address</b>	<b>Post Code</b>	<b>Polling Station Number</b>	<b>Comments received from the Returning Officer (Darlington)</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Page 79 BFA (D)*	West Park Academy, Alderman Leach Drive, Darlington*	DL2 2GF	1	<p>The school is a modern, accessible building. There is a designated parking bay for disabled voters close to the Polling Place, with a dropped kerb to allow a wheelchair user access to the pavement, and this is clearly signposted.</p> <p>The school remains open on polling day, as the Polling Station itself is situated in the Family Support Hub, which is situated on the left-hand side of the school when viewed from the front of the building.</p>	<b>The continued use of West Park Academy is recommended.</b>
BFA (S)*	West Park Academy, Alderman Leach Drive, Darlington*	DL2 2GF	2	<p>The school is a modern, accessible building. There is a designated parking bay for disabled voters close to the Polling Place, with a dropped kerb to allow a wheelchair user access to the pavement, and this is clearly signposted.</p> <p>The school remains open on polling day, as the Polling Station itself is situated in the Family Support Hub, which is situated on the left-hand side of the school when viewed from the front of the building.</p>	<b>The continued use of West Park Academy is recommended, however this is subject to the recommendations submitted to Government in relation to the Parliamentary</b>

					<b>Boundary Review 2018.</b>
BFB	West Park Academy, Alderman Leach Drive, Darlington	DL2 2GF	3	<p>The school is a modern, accessible building. There is a designated parking bay for disabled voters close to the Polling Place, with a dropped kerb to allow a wheelchair user access to the pavement, and this is clearly signposted.</p> <p>The school remains open on polling day, as the Polling Station itself is situated in the Family Support Hub, which is situated on the left-hand side of the school when viewed from the front of the building.</p>	<b>The continued use of West Park Academy is recommended.</b>
Page 80 BFC	Darlington Railway Athletic Club (Snooker Room), Brinkburn Road, Darlington	DL3 9LF	4	<p>This building is a good venue that is located within the Ward. There is no designated or reserved parking, however there is on-street parking available on Brinkburn Road. There are two dropped kerbs near the entrance for use by wheelchair users.</p> <p>There are no steps to the entrance of the premises, and a ramp of appropriate gradient runs between walls. The front entrance consists of a double door, which would provide sufficient access for a wheelchair user. There are also good transport links to the building, as it lies on a bus route.</p> <p>The Polling Station itself is situated in the Snooker Room.</p>	<b>The continued use of Darlington Railway Athletic Club (Snooker Room) is recommended.</b>
BLA	King William Street Community Centre, King William Street, Darlington	DL1 4YS	5	<p>The Community Centre is a good venue. There is reserved parking but no designated disabled parking bay available. The approach to the polling station is in a good condition with ramped access for wheelchair users. There is on-street car parking with a dropped kerb to allow easy access for</p>	<b>The continued use of the Community Centre in King William Street, Darlington is recommended.</b>

				wheelchair users. The Polling Station is situated in a communal area within the Community Centre.	
BLB	Rydal Academy, Rydal Road, Darlington	DL1 4BH	6	<p>The school is a good venue that is located centrally within the Ward. There are no parking facilities within the school grounds, but there is on-street parking.</p> <p>The Polling Station itself is situated within the Nursery, which can be isolated to allow the remainder of the school to remain open, is fully accessible for disabled voters, and has sufficient space to allow for two Polling Stations.</p>	<b>The use of the Rydal Academy is recommended.</b>
Page 81	Rydal Academy, Rydal Road, Darlington	DL1 4BH	7	<p>The school is a good venue that is located within the Ward. There are no parking facilities within the school grounds, but there is on-street parking.</p> <p>The Polling Station itself is situated within the Nursery, which can be isolated to allow the remainder of the school to remain open, is fully accessible for disabled voters, and has sufficient space to allow for two Polling Stations.</p>	<b>The use of the Rydal Academy is recommended.</b>
BLD	St. John's Church of England Academy, Fenby Avenue, Darlington	DL1 4UB	8	<p>The School is a good venue, fully compliant with the Equality Act. There is limited car parking available.</p> <p>The Polling Station itself is sited in a room to the left-hand side of the Main Entrance. The room has its own external access, and can be isolated from the remainder of the school, allowing the school to remain operational on Polling Day.</p>	<b>The continued use of the St. John's C.E. Primary School is recommended.</b>
CKA	Holy Family R. C. Primary School,	DL3 9EN	9	<p>The school is a good venue that is located within the Ward. There are no parking facilities within the school grounds, but</p>	<b>The continued use of the Holy Family R. C.</b>

Page 82	Prior Street, Darlington			<p>there is on-street parking. There is a dropped kerb outside the school allowing wheelchair users access to the pavement and the paving approaching the Polling Place is in adequate condition.</p> <p>There are both steps and a ramp leading up to the entrance to the Polling Station and the ramp would appear to be of an appropriate gradient, strong, level and has railings at each side. The front entrance consists of a double door, which would provide sufficient access for a wheelchair user and there are double doors throughout the Polling Station.</p> <p>The Polling Station is presently situated in the Main Hall. The school currently closes on polling day (alternative siting of the Polling Station within the school has previously been explored, however there were access issues, and therefore use reverted back to the Main Hall).</p>	<b>Primary School is recommended.</b>
CKB	'Little Learners', Mount Pleasant Primary School, Newton Lane, Darlington	DL3 9HE	10	<p>The Mount Pleasant Children's Centre closed during the lifetime of the previous review, and the building reverted back to the use of Mount Pleasant Primary School. The space previously used as a Polling Station was no longer available, however the Cockerton Ward By-Election in July 2018 necessitated the identification of another Polling Place.</p> <p>Fortunately, the 'Little Learners' nursery on the school site was available, and provide a suitable alternative.</p> <p>The Polling Place is on a bus route (Newton Lane) and there are two bus stops in close proximity to the Polling Place. There is a car park at the Polling Place, and there is limited</p>	<b>The continued use of Mount Pleasant Primary School ('Little Learners') is recommended.</b>

				<p>'on street' parking. There are two designated disabled parking bays directly outside the Polling Place.</p> <p>Access to 'Little Learners' is via the rear entrance, which is both disabled accessible and can be isolated for safeguarding purposes. The siting of the Polling Station in 'Little Learners' allows the remainder of the school to remain open during the day. Additional signage is required to ensure voters use the correct access to the building.</p>	
Page 88 88	The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Eggleston View, Darlington	DL3 9SH	11	<p>The Branksome Community Centre closed during the lifetime of the previous review, and has now been let on a long-term lease to The Redeemed Christian Church of God.</p> <p>The building remains a good venue. Limited car parking is available at the front of the building, but the access must be kept clear as it is ramped for wheelchair access. Paving is in good condition and a ramped access accommodates wheelchair users.</p> <p>The building is in use during the evening on a Thursday for a Prayer Meeting, however as the Polling Station is in a separate room (to the right as entering the building) this can be isolated and used accordingly. Additional signage is required to ensure voters use the correct access to the building.</p>	<b>The continued use of The Redeemed Christian Church of God (formerly Branksome Community Centre) is recommended.</b>
COA	Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Vane Terrace, Darlington	DL3 7AU	12	<p>The college is a good venue that is located centrally within the Ward. Entrance to the Polling Stations is via Abbey Road. Parking is available on-street around the college, although there are some restrictions in place. The paving</p>	<b>The continued use of the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College is recommended.</b>

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 84</p>				<p>around the college is in good condition. The access is all on one level, and complies with the Equality Act.</p> <p>Previously one classroom has been used to accommodate two Polling Stations, however comments received from accredited observers following the Parliamentary (General) Election in 2017 suggested that the room used at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College was too congested to house two Polling Stations. Negotiations with the college have enabled us to access a second classroom, which will provide greater space and eliminate the potential of cross-pollination of ballot papers within ballot boxes.</p> <p>The classrooms used will be screened off to ensure privacy whilst enabling to college to remain open on Polling Day.</p>	
<p>COB, COC</p>	<p>Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Vane Terrace, Darlington</p>	<p>DL3 7AU</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>The college is a good venue that is located centrally within the Ward. Entrance to the Polling Stations is via Abbey Road. Parking is available on-street around the college, although there are some restrictions in place. The paving around the college is in good condition. The access is all on one level, and complies with the Equality Act.</p> <p>Previously one classroom has been used to accommodate two Polling Stations, however comments received from accredited observers following the Parliamentary (General) Election in 2017 suggested that the room used at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College was too congested to house two Polling Stations. Negotiations with the college have enabled us to access a second classroom, which will provide greater space and eliminate the potential of cross-pollination of ballot papers within ballot boxes.</p>	<p><b>The continued use of the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College is recommended.</b></p>



				The classrooms used will be screened off to ensure privacy whilst enabling to college to remain open on Polling Day.	
EAA	St Teresa's RC (Aided) Primary School	DL1 4NL	14	Following a representation from St. Teresa's RC Primary School about the impact of the school closing on polling day and the continued use of the school as a Polling Place, officers visited Geneva Road Evangelical Baptist Church on the 18 October 2018, to assess the venue as an alternative Polling Place. The building complied with all the requirements of a Polling Place outlined within Electoral Commission guidance, and is situated within the Polling District. The move would allow the school to remain open.	<b>St Teresa's RC (Aided) Primary School is no longer used (Geneva Road Evangelical Baptist Church Hall is recommended as a replacement Polling Place).</b>
EAA Page 85	Geneva Road Evangelical Baptist Church Hall	DL1 4HS	14	<p>The Geneva Road Evangelical Baptist Church Hall is situated within the appropriate Polling District, and is fully accessible to disabled electors. The property has a car park adjacent, and is on a main thoroughfare and bus route, so has good transport links.</p> <p>The access to the Church Hall has a ramped access, with fixed railings. Once inside the premises, the Church Hall is accessed through a lobby on the right-hand side. The Hall itself is large enough to accommodate the Polling Station, providing sufficient space for a high volume of electors and observers within the Polling Station. The Polling Station has both toilet and kitchen facilities for staff, and plenty of required furniture (chairs and tables).</p> <p>The use of this Polling Place as an alternative for St Teresa's RC (Aided) Primary School would allow the School to remain open.</p>	<b>The use of the Geneva Road Evangelical Baptist Church Hall is recommended as a replacement for St Teresa's RC (Aided) Primary School</b>

EAB	Firthmoor Community Centre, Burnside Road, Darlington	DL1 4SU	15	The Community Centre is situated in the centre of the Polling District, so is convenient to all electors, and is fully accessible to disabled electors. The Polling Station itself is situated through the Reception area and café, and is sited in a room on the left-hand side ('The Bill Cook Room').	<b>The continued use of the Firthmoor Community Centre is recommended.</b>
EAC	Pilmoor Green Community Centre, West Moor Road, Darlington	DL1 4LN	16	The Community Centre is situated in the centre of the Polling District, so is convenient to all electors. The Polling Station is situated in the Main Hall.	<b>The continued use of Pilmoor Green Community Centre is recommended.</b>
CPA Page 86	Heighington Village Hall, Heighington	DL5 6QX	17	The Village Hall is situated in the centre of the village, and has a level access. There is limited car parking available on the left-hand side of the premises when viewed from the front. Entry is through a set of double doors, through a lobby, and the Polling Station is situated through a further set of double doors in the Main Hall.	<b>The continued use of Heighington Village Hall is recommended.</b>
HCB, HCE, HCF	Walworth Castle Hotel, Walworth	DL2 2LY	18	The Hotel is situated on the outskirts of the village of Walworth, and serves the parishes of Walworth, Denton and Houghton-le-Side. Ample car parking is available on site, and there is disability access to the hotel. The Polling Station is situated in the Ballroom.	<b>The continued use of Walworth Castle Hotel is recommended.</b>
HCC, HCD	Summerhouse Village Hall, Summerhouse	DL2 3UD	19	The Village Hall is situated on the outskirts of the village of Summerhouse, and serves the villages of Summerhouse and Killerby. Car parking is available on site. Access is level, and entry is through a set of double doors, through a lobby, and the Polling Station is situated in the Main Hall ahead of you.	<b>The continued use of Summerhouse Village Hall is recommended.</b>

HCG	St. Mary's Church, The Green, Piercebridge	DL2 3SH	20	<p>The Church is situated in the centre of the village of Piercebridge, and serves the village of Piercebridge and the surrounding parish. There is limited car parking available on site.</p> <p>Entry is directly into the Church itself, and the Polling Station is established at the rear of the Church.</p>	<b>The continued use of St. Mary's Church is recommended.</b>
HCH, HCI Page 87	High Coniscliffe Church Hall, The Green, High Coniscliffe	DL2 2LR	21	<p>The Church Hall is situated in the centre of the village of High Coniscliffe, and serves the parishes of High Coniscliffe and Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent. There is limited car parking available on site.</p> <p>Entry is through a set of double doors, through a lobby, and into the Main Hall. Disabled access is via a side door into the Hall.</p>	<b>The continued use of High Coniscliffe Church Hall is recommended.</b>
HCJ, HCK	Whessoe Village Hall, Harrowgate Village, Darlington	DL1 3AA	22	<p>There is a car park at the Polling Place, though additional parking is limited as the Polling Place is situated on a busy thoroughfare. The Village Hall is complies with the Equality Act with an entrance for wheelchair users to the side, and once in the building there is level access throughout. The building is well lit and has non-slip flooring throughout. There is enough space for a wheelchair user to move about easily.</p> <p>The Polling Station is situated in the Main Hall.</p>	<b>The continued use of Whessoe Village Hall is recommended.</b>
HCL	Brafferton Village Hall, Brafferton	DL1 3LB	23	<p>The Village Hall is situated in the centre of the village of Brafferton. There is no specific car parking available on site, however there is on-street parking available around the Village Green.</p>	<b>The continued use of Brafferton Village Hall is recommended.</b>

				Entry is through a set of double doors, through a lobby, and into the Main Hall, where the Polling Station is situated.	
HHA	Whessoe Village Hall, Harrowgate Village, Darlington	DL1 3AA	24	<p>There is a car park at the Polling Place, though additional parking is limited as the Polling Place is situated on a busy thoroughfare. The Village Hall is complies with the Equality Act with an entrance for wheelchair users to the side, and once in the building there is level access throughout. The building is well lit and has non-slip flooring throughout. There is enough space for a wheelchair user to move about easily.</p> <p>The Polling Station is situated in the Main Hall.</p>	<b>The continued use of Whessoe Village Hall is recommended.</b>
Page 88 HHB	Harrowgate Hill Working Men's Club, Salters Lane North, Darlington	DL1 3DT	25	<p>There is a car park at the rear of the Polling Place, which provides for ample parking. The Polling Place is on a bus route too, so transport link are good. The entrance to the Polling Place is on the left-hand side of the building as you look at the building from the front. There are both steps and a railed ramp leading to the entrance door.</p> <p>The Polling Place is level throughout and has sufficient space for a wheelchair user to move about easily.</p> <p>The Polling Station is situated in the Front Bar, which remains closed on the day.</p>	<b>The continued use of Harrowgate Hill Working Men's Club is recommended.</b>
HHC	D.S.R.M. Social Club, Longfield Road, Darlington	DL3 0HX	26	<p>There is a car park at the Polling Place, which provides for ample parking. The Polling Place is on a bus route too, so transport link are good.</p> <p>The venue has a level access, is level throughout and has sufficient space for a wheelchair user to move about easily.</p>	<b>The continued use of D.S.R.M. Social Club is recommended.</b>

				The Polling Station is situated in the Function Room.	
HKA	Carmel College, The Headlands, Darlington	DL3 8RW	27	<p>The building is a good venue and disabled access is good. The Polling Station is situated in John Caden Hall.</p> <p>The Hall is totally separate from the main school buildings but located within the grounds, which allows the school to remain open on polling day.</p> <p>Limited disabled parking is available alongside John Caden Hall, and additional parking on the tennis courts adjacent to the Hall is provided.</p>	<b>The continued use of Carmel College is recommended.</b>
Page 89 HKB	Carmel College, The Headlands, Darlington	DL3 8RW	28	<p>The building is a good venue and disabled access is good. The Polling Station is situated in John Caden Hall.</p> <p>The Hall is totally separate from the main school buildings but located within the grounds, which allows the school to remain open on polling day.</p> <p>Limited disabled parking is available alongside John Caden Hall, and additional parking on the tennis courts adjacent to the Hall is provided.</p>	<b>The continued use of Carmel College is recommended.</b>
HSA	Haughton Children's Centre, Salters Lane South, Darlington	DL1 2AN	29	<p>The building is a good venue and disabled access is good, with a ramped access to the room used as a Polling Station. There is a small car park at the Polling Place, which includes a disabled parking bay, and there are a number of parking bays on-street. There are a number of dropped kerbs around the property to assist with disabled access.</p>	<b>The continued use of Haughton Children's Centre is recommended.</b>

				<p>The Polling Place is situated on a bus route, so public transport links are good.</p> <p>The Polling Station itself is situated in the former-Nursery.</p>	
<p>HSB</p> <p>Page 90</p>	<p>Haughton Children's Centre, Salters Lane South, Darlington</p>	<p>DL1 2AN</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>The building is a good venue and disabled access is good, with a ramped access to the room used as a Polling Station. There is a small car park at the Polling Place, which includes a disabled parking bay, and there are a number of parking bays on-street. There are a number of dropped kerbs around the property to assist with disabled access.</p> <p>The Polling Place is situated on a bus route, so public transport links are good.</p> <p>The Polling Station itself is situated in the former-Nursery.</p>	<p><b>The continued use of Haughton Children's Centre is recommended.</b></p>
<p>HSC</p>	<p>St. Anne's Church Hall, Welbeck Avenue, Darlington</p>	<p>DL1 2DR</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>The building is a good venue which is served by a small car park at the front of the Polling Place. On-street parking is also available. The Polling Station itself is situated through a small lobby, and within the Church Hall itself.</p>	<p><b>The continued use of St. Anne's Church Hall is recommended.</b></p>
<p>HUA</p>	<p>Linden Court, Linden Drive, Hurworth Place</p>	<p>DL2 2DL</p>	<p>32</p>	<p>There are a number of marked parking bays, with two bays for disabled parking. On-street parking is also available. The building is well lit and there is also street light near the entrance. There are two dropped kerbs within the vicinity of the entrance, and the access to the building itself is level. There are a set of double doors which are used to access the main Communal Room, in which the Polling Station is housed.</p>	<p><b>The continued use of Linden Court is recommended.</b></p>

<p>HUB</p> <p>Page 91</p>	<p>Hurworth Primary School, Westfield Drive, Hurworth</p>	<p>DL2 2ET</p>	<p>33</p>	<p>The school has good accessibility for electors, and the main entrance is accessed through the main residential area within the Polling District. Pedestrian access is also available to the school along a footpath. There is no designated parking bay for the disabled, however there is ample car parking in the grounds close to the Polling Place. There is also on street parking available, with a dropped kerb allowing wheelchair access to the pavement.</p> <p>The Polling Station itself is situated in a Meeting Room to the right-hand side of the Main Reception area as you enter the school.</p> <p>A representation was received in respect of the continued use of the school as a Polling Place as the school closed on polling day. However, the school remains central to the main residential area within the Polling District and no further suitable venues within the Polling District had been identified. It is suggested that it continues to use be used.</p>	<p><b>The continued use of Hurworth Primary School is recommended.</b></p>
<p>HUC, HUD, HUE</p>	<p>The Reading Room, Neasham, Darlington</p>	<p>DL2 1PH</p>	<p>34</p>	<p>The Polling Place is situated in Neasham Village, and serves the parishes of Neasham, Low Dinsdale and Sockburn. The Reading Room is an established building within the village, with ramped and railed access to the main entrance, providing appropriate disabled access.</p> <p>The Polling Station is situated in the Main Hall itself.</p>	<p><b>The continued use of The Reading Room is recommended.</b></p>
<p>MOA</p>	<p>Mowden Junior School (Staff Room), Federation of Mowden Schools,</p>	<p>DL3 9QG</p>	<p>35</p>	<p>The school is in a good central venue within the Ward. The Staff Room within the Junior School is used for two Polling Stations on Polling Day, which allows the remainder of the</p>	<p><b>The continued use of Mowden Junior School (Staff Room) is recommended.</b></p>

	Conyers Avenue, Darlington			school to remain open. There is limited parking available within the school grounds.	
MOB	Mowden Junior School (Staff Room), Federation of Mowden Schools, Conyers Avenue, Darlington	DL3 9QG	36	The school is in a good central venue within the Ward. The Staff Room within the Junior School is used for two Polling Stations on Polling Day, which allows the remainder of the school to remain open. There is limited parking available within the school grounds.	<b>The continued use of Mowden Junior School (Staff Room) is recommended.</b>
NGC, NGA, NGB 92	Corporation Road Community Primary School, Corporation Road, Darlington	DL3 6AR	37	<p>This is a central location within the Ward. There is a car park to the rear of the school, off Bartlett Street, however there are no designated disabled or reserved parking spaces. There is on street parking available, with a dropped kerb, for wheelchair users.</p> <p>The paving outside the school is in an adequate condition. The entrance to the Polling Station (which is housed in the Main Hall within the Junior Block) is the nearest entrance to the street, and has both steps and a ramp to the doorway. The ramp is of an appropriate gradient and has raised sides and railings. The entrance has double doors allowing sufficient access for a wheelchair user.</p>	<b>The continued use of Corporation Road Community Primary School is recommended.</b>
NGC	Borough Road Nursery School, Borough Road, Darlington	DL1 1SG	38	<p>The Polling Place is situated in the adjoining Polling District due to a lack of public buildings being available in Polling District NGC. The Cloakroom/Classroom at the front of the building is used as the Polling Station. Parking is on-street only, with a limited number of parking bays directly outside the Polling Place.</p> <p>Access to the Polling Place is level, and the entrance has double doors allowing sufficient access for a wheelchair user.</p>	<b>The continued use of Borough Road Nursery School is recommended.</b>



NRA	St. Thomas Aquinas Church Hall, North Road, Darlington	DL1 2PU	39	<p>The Church Hall is a good venue. There is no designated parking bay for the disabled, however there is adequate car parking within the grounds of the Polling Place. This is all on one level to allow a wheelchair user to access the pavement. The Polling Station itself is situated within the Church Hall.</p> <p>A representation was received in respect of moving the Polling Place for NRA from St Thomas Aquinas Church Hall to Longfield Academy. As Longfield Academy is not in the Polling District and it is not currently used as a polling place, it is not considered appropriate to move the Polling Place to Longfield Academy.</p>	<b>The continued use of St. Thomas Aquinas Church Hall is recommended.</b>
Page 93 NRB	Rise Carr College, Eldon Street, Darlington	DL3 0NS	40	<p>The Centre is a good venue. There is adequate car parking within the grounds of the Polling Place, and the entrance is level and wheelchair friendly. The Polling Station is situated to the right of the Main Reception Area.</p>	<b>The continued use of Rise Carr Academy is recommended.</b>
NRC, NRD	Northwood Primary School, Pendleton Road South, Darlington	DL1 2HF	41	<p>The school is a good venue that is located centrally in the Ward, ideally placed to accommodate both Polling Districts NRC and NRD.</p> <p>There is a car park at the school, however this is primarily used by teaching staff on Polling Day, however there is on-street parking close to the school with level access to allow a wheelchair user to access the Polling Place. There is a slight ramp to a level access at the entrance to the Polling Place. The Polling Station is sited in the Sports Hall, which allows the school to remain open and operational throughout the day.</p>	<b>The continued use of Northwood Primary School is recommended.</b>

PEA	St. Augustine's Parish Centre, Larchfield Street, Darlington	DL3 7TF	42	<p>The Parish Centre is a good venue. There is a sizeable car park that contains several disabled parking bays. The paving around the Polling Station is in good condition. There are no steps to the entrance of the Polling Station. There is a ramp, which appears to be of appropriate gradient, however has no railings. The entrance consists of double doors, which would provide sufficient access for a wheelchair user.</p> <p>The Polling Station is situated within the Main Hall.</p>	<b>The continued use of St. Augustine's Parish Centre is recommended.</b>
Page 94 B	Borough Road Nursery School, Borough Road, Darlington	DL1 1SG	43	<p>The Polling Place is a central venue for the Polling District. The Cloakroom/Classroom at the front of the building is used as the Polling Station. Parking is on-street only, with a limited number of parking bays directly outside the Polling Place.</p> <p>Access to the Polling Place is level, and the entrance has double doors allowing sufficient access for a wheelchair user.</p>	<b>The continued use of Borough Road Nursery School is recommended.</b>
PEC	St. Columba's Church and the Clifton Centre, Clifton Avenue, Darlington	DL1 5EE	44	<p>The Polling Station is a good venue. Parking is on-street only, however there is a dropped kerb directly outside the premises to allow access for disabled users. The paving leading to the premises is adequate with a paved ramp leading to the entrance. There is a ramp with railings at each side for assistance. The entrance comprises a double door, which would provide sufficient access for a wheelchair user.</p>	<b>The continued use of St. Columba's Church and the Clifton Centre is recommended.</b>
PED	The Coleridge Centre, Coleridge Gardens, Darlington	DL1 5AJ	45	<p>The Polling Place is a central venue for the Ward. The Conference Room at the front-right of the building is used as the Polling Station, and can be segregated during the day from the rest of The Coleridge Centre. The centre and the</p>	<b>The continued use of The Coleridge Centre is recommended.</b>

				room itself are fully compatible with disability access legislation.	
PEE**	Skerne Park Youth and Community Centre, Coleridge Gardens, Darlington**	DL1 5AP	46	<p>The building is a good venue. There is limited car parking in front of the building.</p> <p>There is one entrance at the front of the building, with a sloped access to the doorway. The front entrance consists of a double door, which would provide sufficient access for a wheelchair user.</p> <p>When entering the Polling Place you must turn right, and the Polling Station is situated in the first room on the right-hand side.</p>	<b>The continued use of Skerne Park Youth and Community Centre is recommended, however this is subject to the recommendations submitted to Government in relation to the Parliamentary Boundary Review 2018.</b>
Page 95 PIA	Willow Road Community Centre, Willow Road, Darlington	DL3 6PZ	47	<p>The building is a good venue. There is on-street parking, but a bus stop directly outside the building can hinder parking availability. There is one entrance at the front of the building, with both steps and a ramp to the doorway. The ramp is of an appropriate gradient, strong and has railings on either side. The front entrance consists of a double door, which would provide sufficient access for a wheelchair user.</p> <p>The Polling Station itself is situated within the Main Hall.</p>	<b>The continued use of Willow Road Community Centre is recommended.</b>
PIB	Willow Road Community Centre, Willow Road, Darlington	DL3 6PZ	48	<p>The building is a good venue. There is on-street parking, but a bus stop directly outside the building can hinder parking availability. There is one entrance at the front of the building, with both steps and a ramp to the doorway. The ramp is of an appropriate gradient, strong and has railings on either</p>	<b>The continued use of Willow Road Community Centre is recommended.</b>

				<p>side. The front entrance consists of a double door, which would provide sufficient access for a wheelchair user.</p> <p>The Polling Station itself is situated within the Main Hall.</p>	
PIC, PID	Reid Street Primary School, Reid Street, Darlington	DL3 6EX	49	<p>The school is a good venue. There is limited on-street parking, although there are some residential parking restrictions in place. The paving leading to the Polling Place is adequate. The school is compliant with disabled accessibility criteria.</p> <p>The Polling Station is based in a classroom at the front of the school, to left of the Main Entrance as you view the building. The polling Station has its own access point, and the remainder of the corridor is screened off, which allows the school to operate and remain open during the day.</p>	<b>The continued use of Reid Street Primary School is recommended.</b>
PWA, PWB	All Saint's Millennium Centre, Ravensdale Road, Darlington	DL3 8DT	50	<p>The Polling Station is a central venue for the Ward. There is no designated parking bay for disabled people, however there is adequate car parking close to the Polling Place with dropped kerb close to allow a wheelchair user to access to pavement. The Polling Station is sited in the Garden Room.</p>	<b>The continued use of All Saint's Millennium Centre is recommended.</b>
PWC	St. Augustine's Parish Centre, Larchfield Street, Darlington	DL3 7TF	51	<p>The Parish Centre is a good venue. There is a sizeable car park that contains several disabled parking bays. The paving around the Polling Station is in good condition. There are no steps to the entrance of the Polling Station. There is a ramp, which appears to be of appropriate gradient, however has no railings. The entrance consists of double doors, which would provide sufficient access for a wheelchair user.</p> <p>The Polling Station is situated within the Main Hall.</p>	<b>The continued use of St. Augustine's Parish Centre is recommended.</b>

RLA	Red Hall Community Centre, Headingley Crescent, Darlington	DL1 2ST	52	<p>This building is a good venue. Car parking is available on Headingley Crescent and disabled parking bays are also located opposite the adjacent school. The building is fully compatible with disabled access legislation. Additional directional signs are required to be placed on Headingley Crescent, and at the entrance to the adjacent school, to assist the electorate in locating this Polling Place.</p> <p>The Polling Station is situated in Room 2.</p>	<b>The continued use of Red Hall Community Centre is recommended.</b>
PAGE 97	St. Herbert's Church Hall, Yarm Road, Darlington	DL1 1BD	53	<p>The Church Hall is a good venue that is located centrally within the Ward. There is no designated parking for the disabled, however there is parking on the road with a dropped kerb to allow a wheelchair user access to the pavement. The approach to the Polling Place is unobstructed and in good condition, with no steps into the entrance. There is also a ramp in place for disabled access and very good access available.</p> <p>The Polling Station is situated within the Church Hall.</p>	<b>The continued use of St Herbert's Church Hall is recommended.</b>
SMA, SMC	Great Stainton Church Hall, Glebe Road, Great Stainton	TS21 1NB	54	<p>The Polling Place is situated in the village of Great Stainton, and serves the parishes of Great Stainton and Little Stainton. The Church Hall is an established building within the village. The Polling Station is situated in the Church Hall itself.</p>	<b>The continued use of Great Stainton Church Hall is recommended.</b>
SMB	Bishopton Village Hall, Church View, Bishopton	TS21 1HB	55	<p>The Polling Place is situated in the village of Bishopton. The Village Hall is an established building in the centre of the village. There is limited car parking available beside the Village Hall. The main entrance has a step to the doorway, however there is a separate entrance with a ramp to permit</p>	<b>The continued use of Bishopton Village Hall is recommended.</b>

				wheelchair access. The Polling Station is established in the Main Hall.	
SMD, SMF	Sadberge Village Hall, Sadberge	DL2 1SB	56	<p>The Polling Place is situated on the outskirts of the village of Sadberge, and serves both the parish of Sadberge and East and West Newbiggin.</p> <p>The Polling Place is served by a car park, so there is ample parking available, with a disabled parking bay adjacent to the Main Entrance. The Main Entrance has a double door and disabled access, and the Polling Station is situated in the Main Hall on the right-hand side as you enter the building.</p>	<b>The continued use of Sadberge Village Hall is recommended.</b>
P SME, SMG, SMH	St. Anne's Church Hall, Welbeck Avenue, Darlington	DL1 2DR	57	The building is a good venue which is served by a small car park at the front of the Polling Place. On-street parking is also available. The Polling Station itself is situated through a small lobby, and within the Church Hall itself.	<b>The continued use of St. Anne's Church Hall is recommended.</b>
SMI	Middleton St. George Women's Institute Hall, Neasham Road, Middleton St. George, Darlington	DL2 1LD	58	This building is a good venue. Car parking is available on street, although parking can be busy during school drop off and collection times, due to the adjacent school. The building is fully compatible with disabled access. The Polling Station is situated in the Main Hall itself.	<b>The continued use of Middleton St. George Women's Institute Hall is recommended.</b>
SMJ	Middleton St. George Women's Institute Hall, Neasham Road, Middleton St. George, Darlington	DL2 1LD	59	This building is a good venue. Car parking is available on street, although parking can be busy during school drop off and collection times, due to the adjacent school. The building is fully compatible with disabled access. The Polling Station is situated in the Main Hall itself.	<b>The continued use of Middleton St. George Women's Institute Hall is recommended.</b>

STA	St. James the Great Church Hall, Barton Street, Darlington, (Entrance on Grey Street)	DL1 2LD	60	<p>The building is an established venue within the local community, central to the main electorate, and car parking facilities are available on Grey Street and in the grounds of the church opposite.</p> <p>The entrance to the Polling Place (via Grey Street) is level and is accessible to disabled electors. The Polling Station is situated within the room immediately entered from this access point.</p>	<b>The use of St. James the Great Church Hall is recommended.</b>
Page 99 SUB	Eastbourne Sports Complex, Bourne Avenue (off Hundens Lane), Darlington	DL1 1LJ	61	<p>The building is a good venue which is served by a medium sized car park at the front of the Polling Place. There is a level access to the Main Entrance, which comprises a double door making the Polling Place fully accessible to disabled electors.</p> <p>Moving through the Main Reception area, turn right and the Polling Station is situated in the first room on the left (the training room, opposite the entrance to the gym).</p>	<b>The continued use of Eastbourne Sports Complex is recommended.</b>
WHA	Whinfield Primary School, Augusta Close, Darlington	DL1 3HT	62	<p>The building is a good venue, however lacks designated car parking facilities. There is, however, ample parking available at the supermarket which is situated next to the school.</p> <p>The Polling Station is situated in the classroom to the right of the Main Reception area as you look at the school from the front, with access via an external doorway which is served by a ramped and railed access.</p> <p>The room can be locked and isolated from the remainder of the school, enabling the school to remain open on Polling day.</p>	<b>The continued use of Whinfield Primary School is recommended.</b>

WHB	Whinfield Primary School, Augusta Close, Darlington	DL1 3HT	63	<p>The building is a good venue, however lacks designated car parking facilities. There is, however, ample parking available at the supermarket which is situated next to the school.</p> <p>The Polling Station is situated in the classroom to the left of the Main Reception area as you look at the school from the front, with access via an external doorway.</p> <p>The room can be locked and isolated from the remainder of the school, enabling the school to remain open on Polling day.</p>	<p><b>The continued use of Whinfield Primary School is recommended.</b></p>
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**Further Representations Received**

Name / Organisation	Date Received and Number	Polling District	Polling Place	Comments
Elector – (Name Supplied)	<b>29<sup>th</sup> October 2018 (4)</b>	NRA	St. Thomas Aquinas Church Hall	<i>“Please consider the following, Ridgeway is some distance from St Thomas Aquinas which is very inconvenient for residents, there is no DIRECT bus service, it is close to a mile to walk too. Have you explored the possibility of using the bridge club which is on Whessoe road on the corner of Elmtree street.”</i>

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## LEADER AND EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

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### Updates and issues

1. I plan to use each Council report to update Council on important issues for the Borough to ensure Council is sighted on them and able to debate them. For this Council, the issues are highlighted below
2. **Town Centre** – master planning work is underway to produce a revised plan, which I have said many times before, will involve the more residential property and changes of use from retail. Councillors will have already seen such changes starting with residential conversions taken place in Grange Road and others planned in Horsemarket. A significant residential development may well result if the Northern Echo building sale is completed and such a development would potentially see the face of that area change significantly. The area, with the derelict Sports Direct building has potential for significant improvement and further residential opportunities and these will be explored as part of the master planning exercise along with consideration of what can be achieved in the Skinnergate area/the Yards and the Markets area.
3. **The Autumn Budget** - pleasingly gave help to businesses generally and Town Centres specifically. A relatively small national fund is to be set up to assist the redevelopment of Town Centres and we will be submitting appropriate bids in due course. I will also be working with Tees Valley Combined Authority colleagues to try and secure further funding to help improve the Town Centre. In the budget a new business rate relief was announced and this will further help small businesses but I do believe a more radical look at business rates in town centres is required. Finally on the Town Centre it was great to hear recently of awards for some of our restaurants, Darlington is seeing growth in the restaurant market with new and planned openings happening regularly – congratulations to Stable Hearth, Al Forno and Restaurant Celebrus for their recent awards.
4. **Environmental Enforcement** – the six month trial is underway and I am watching with interest the responses to the consultation and I would encourage people to feed back their views to influence our decision making on this topic.
5. **Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy** – I was pleased to agree this at Cabinet and the challenges we face in supporting the most vulnerable in our Borough are huge, but I believe if we and partners work hard and smart we can make a difference. Good jobs and homes are key factors so I am very pleased to see progress on Symmetry Park where 2,500 new jobs will be delivered and agreement at Cabinet to buy land at McMullen Road to deliver Phase 3 of the development, 50 excellent new Council houses. The first phase were all let in just under a week which shows

the quality of the houses, phase 2 is now under construction.

6. **Darlington Station** – I will be attending the Tees Valley Combined Authority Cabinet the day after Council and I will be supporting the approval of £25m for the Combined Authority budget to facilitate the improvements to the train network and connectivity for the Tees Valley. Such investment together with Government funding, will improve the economic viability of the region which in turn will bring more and better jobs to help tackle the inequality in the region and the Borough. See more detail about the station later in my report.
7. **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)** – I have been working with officers and Cabinet colleagues to produce the latest four year MTFP. We are awaiting final figures from the Government but I am confident we will be presenting a four year balanced budget albeit we will need to continue to wisely use revenue balances to achieve this. It is a great credit to this Council that we are in a relatively sound financial position given the loss of £42m of government grant in real terms. It is clear we will not regain these resources in the short term so we must plan without them and it is my intention that we work hard to maximise the benefits we can from the resources we have, we need to continue to be innovative and concentrate on making a difference. To do this, growing the economy is key to underpin our financial position and create investments to help the most vulnerable, we must deliver inclusive growth where all benefit.
8. **Housing Revenue Account Borrowing Cap** – I was pleased to hear of the lifting of the cap following years of lobbying by Local Government. The flexibility will enable the Council to review its plans for investment in affordable housing and hopefully significantly increase the numbers we plan to build. Such further investment may enable us to look at converting redundant commercial buildings therefore improving the environment of the Borough.

### **Transport Portfolio – Tees Valley Combined Authority**

9. As Council will be aware as Leader I sit on the Cabinet of the TVCA which is the executive decision making body of the Authority. It is important to remind Council that no decisions can be made by the TVCA without agreement of the Cabinet which includes the five Leaders of the Tees Valley Councils and the Mayor. For the current administrative year I also fulfil the role of Deputy Mayor. The Leaders across the Tees Valley are responsible for themed portfolios and TVCA Cabinet has approved my appointment to lead on Strategic Transport, below is a flavour of the work that my portfolio includes.
10. There is a significant work programme in the portfolio that I am familiarising myself with, some key elements of the portfolio are:-
  - (a) A Strategic Transport Plan for the Tees Valley is being developed and this will be consulted upon early in the New Year. This will look to bring forward strategies for all modes of transport.
  - (b) A new Tees Crossing to increase capacity on the A19 and improve north-south access to the region is being developed. Similarly, work continues on

developing a business case for Darlington Northern Link Road and improvements along the A66 to improve east-west connectivity. There is ongoing dialogue with the Department for Transport regarding the case for funding for both of these ambitious projects.

11. The East Coast Mainline and Darlington Station are not only valuable assets for Darlington but also for the Tees Valley connectivity to the rest of the UK. At the Darlington Station Project Board the Strategic Outline Business Case was agreed and has been submitted to the Department for Transport. This is the first milestone in a new process for Rail Enhancement projects set out by the Department for Transport. Work is now progressing on the next stage of development to further make the case for funding. Darlington Station is a key building block in the Tees Valley Rail Strategy that can enable a better rail system to be developed for the area. Work is also under development at other stations on the network including Middlesbrough, to improve capacity and customer experience. The above projects are key to maximise the benefits that will arise when HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail services are operational in the early 2030's. HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail will both significantly reduce journey times making the region better connected to the rest of the UK.
12. The Transport Portfolio is significant in terms of ambition and value. This requires close partnership working with the Tees Valley Authorities and National Agencies. The Transport Portfolio provides excellent opportunities for both Darlington and the Tees Valley to secure investment in the transport network and the infrastructure to support the Economic Growth planned for the region.

### **Cabinet - Efficiency and Resources Portfolio Update**

13. Cabinet received updates of the outcome of cases which have been determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman (HO) since the last report in December 2017 and with details of complaints, compliments and comments which have been received by the Council during 2017/18 under the Council's Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comment Procedure.
14. In accordance with Contract Procedure Rules, Cabinet has also received the Annual Procurement Plan and approved the assessment of strategic and non-strategic contracts.
15. Cabinet agreed the Council Tax Support Scheme for consultation with no major changes and the report is on this agenda for Council to consider.
16. Subject to receiving Housing Investment Funding, Cabinet has approved the release of that funding for the Stag House Farm housing development. It has also approved the acquisition of approximately 4.73 acres of privately owned land at McMullen Road for the development of approximately 50 Council properties.
17. Cabinet reviewed the regular quarterly financial updates on capital and revenue and its pleasing to note overall the financial position is on target however there are

pressures on the Children's services budget due to significant increases in looked after children mirroring the national picture.

18. At the Cabinet meeting on 6 November 2018, Members received an update against the agreed Capital Investment Fund, gave approval to increase the fund to £50 million and agreed that any repaid loans be recycled back into the Investment fund. Council has previously approved the principle and establishment of this fund to be used for innovative investment opportunities beyond the traditional Treasury Management Strategy in order to achieve greater returns given the low returns on investment. As I mentioned at Cabinet, Officers are working hard to use this fund to deliver income to replace lost government grant. A good example being the first housing Joint Venture which will deliver the Council income in the region of £1 million Council will be considering this report elsewhere on this agenda.

**Stephen Harker**  
**Leader of the Council and Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**

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## **OVERVIEW OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO**

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### **Purpose of the Report**

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

### **Strategic Commissioning**

2. The Council and NHS partners have embarked upon a joint transformation programme of Intermediate Care Services in Darlington. Intermediate care is a multi-agency service which has a key focus on independence, prevention and timely intervention in the community to help avoid the development of greater health and social care needs.
3. This programme will build on the work undertaken by the Council during 2017-18 as part of the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme, which has resulted in an improved and strengthened re-ablement service. It also incorporates the findings of the review of Intermediate Care beds available within the Borough which was undertaken by the Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group during 2017-2018.
4. The joint Intermediate Care transformation programme will help deliver a key Darlington Health and Wellbeing Plan Priority for 2018/19 by providing support and rehabilitation to people who are at risk of hospital admission or who have been in hospital. It also aims to ensure that people transfer from hospital to the community in a timely manner and to prevent unnecessary admissions to hospitals and residential care.

### **Operational Services**

5. Winter can be a challenging period for Adult Services as it is often associated with increased demand for health and social care services. Officers have been, and continue to work closely with health partners to prepare for potential 'winter pressures', to ensure that, wherever possible, people are discharged in a timely way and are supported at home. Performance relating to Delayed Transfers of Care remains positive for the Darlington system (Social Care and NHS). The latest official data relates to August 2018 which showed 133 days delayed for the system against a target of no more than 171 days.

6. Two Darlington social workers have been successful in being shortlisted for the Social Worker of the Year award, one being from Adult Services, who is a finalist for Mental Health Social Worker of the Year. These national awards recognise the success of the profession's most innovative social workers, and is the leading celebration of its kind in the sector. The awards ceremony is on 30 November, 2018, when the winners will be announced.
7. Work continues to further embed strengths based practice, and staff have been engaged in a series of developmental workshops to further support their knowledge and skills. Strength based practice looks first at how people can achieve their aspirations by using their skills and resources. This is key to promoting well-being, maximising independence and promoting self-worth.
8. We celebrated the achievement and commitment to public service throughout the Directorate, and were pleased to note that one of our longest serving members of staff has worked in Darlington for 40 years, with all of that time being in adult social care. This will be featured in an upcoming article in our newsletter.
9. In October, our in house Reablement and Supported Living services received an inspection from the Care Quality Commission (CQC). I am very pleased to report that we have achieved an overall rating of 'Good'; with 'Good' being achieved in each of the individual categories relating to Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive and Well-led services. This means that the service has retained a 'Good' rating since the last inspection in July 2016, which demonstrates our commitment to maintaining good quality services for the most vulnerable people in Darlington.

### **Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board**

10. The Board met on 4 October 2018 and endorsed the Safeguarding Adult Partnership Board's (SAPB) 2017-18 Annual Report. The report has been shared with the Leader and Managing Director of the Council, Chairs of the Safeguarding Children's Board, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Community Safety Partnership as well as the Police and the Crime and Victims Commissioner. Ann Baxter, the SAPB Independent Chair, presented the report to the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee on 30 October 2018 and will also be presenting to the Health and Wellbeing Board in early 2019. The report will be made available on the Board's website.
11. The Board had a focussed discussion on the business plan, including new actions identified by the sub groups for the current year. There were no new significant pieces of work highlighted and the board were assured that the sub groups will be working on streamlining this work. Board endorsed the work plan for the period 2018-19.
12. Following a focused discussion at the Board in August on the performance management framework, the Quality and Performance Sub Group undertook an extensive piece of work to present the exception report in an infographic style. There was consensus at Board that the new format made it much easier for members to identify performance priorities.



13. The Board is being kept apprised of the changes arising from the implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, in relation to those specifically regarding the new Local Partnership statutory arrangements that will replace the Local Safeguarding Children Board in September 2019.

**Councillor Sue Richmond**  
**Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Adult Social Care**

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## **OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO**

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

### **The Children's Trust**

2. The Health and Wellbeing Board (which acts as the Children's Trust) met on 13 September 2018. Representatives from education and child health were in attendance and participated in discussions about how to promote and improve health. Health and Wellbeing Board partners received a presentation from the Families Information Officers, including a demonstration of the Living Well Directory. Areas of particular interest were the SEND Local Offer and the section on Support to Children.

### **Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP)**

3. CCP met on 2 October 2018, when panel members were provided with the annual health report regarding children in local authority care.
4. Following feedback from Darlo Care Crew (DCC) members who attend CPP, a workshop was held, involving DCC and Members and Officers, to determine how CPP could become more interactive. As a result of the session, proposals will be shared, based on the workshop sessions, to agree our new approach.
5. Mark Riddell, DfE National Implementation Advisor for Care Leavers, visited Darlington Children's Services on 13 and 14 September. Mark met with myself, Paul Wildsmith and Suzanne Joyner regarding progress regarding our local implementation of the new statutory duties to support care leavers up to 25 years. Mark also met with the care leaver service to discuss the operational model for leaving care for 16 to 25 year olds, the impact on a strengthened 'local offer', the Personal Advisor duty to young people aged 25 years, and how Corporate Parenting responsibilities are shared across the service.
6. Mark was impressed overall with service delivery and at the rapid changes made since April 2018 to support care leavers between 21 and 25 years, quoting 'you are not far off outstanding'. The service will receive an outcomes letter from Mark.

### **Child Healthy Weight and Oral Hygiene**

7. Cabinet gave consideration to an interim recommendation from the Joint Review Group of the Children and Young People and the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committees to examine Child Healthy Weight and Oral Hygiene.

8. We have agreed to endorse the recommendation of the Review Group to carry out a technical appraisal for consideration of a water fluoridation scheme in Darlington and/or the Tees Valley.

### **Special Educational Needs (SEND)**

9. Following Cabinet approval of the SEND Strategy 2017/2020 on 5 December 2017, Members considered an updated draft SEND strategy (2019-2022), for which approval for consultation was being sought.
10. This Strategy has been updated in response to the key priorities set out in the SEND code of practice and highlights local strategic aims associated with each priority area for implementation.
11. Amendments to the application of the High Needs Block funding were also considered, which caters for pupils with SEND and funds Darlington special schools, SEN resource bases in mainstream schools, the pupil referral unit and provision of education to those pupils with complex and severe needs. This forms part of the consultation process.
12. Cabinet approved the period of consultation to take place on both of these areas, which was carried out between 10 October and 28 November. The consultation outcome will be considered by Cabinet in February 2019.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) – Home to School Transport**

13. Cabinet approved a public consultation on the SEND Travel Assistance Policy for pupils with special educational needs and/or disability which was carried out between 17 October and 28 November 2018.
14. The authority has a statutory responsibility to assist eligible children and young people of statutory school age to travel to school. The current Home to School Transport Policy needs updating. The proposed revisions will support children and young people with SEND to develop independent travel skills and offer families greater flexibility in transport arrangements.
15. The proposed SEND Travel Assistance Policy will help to ensure that travel assistance support can continue to be provide to all eligible children and young people in line with increasing demand.

### **Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)**

16. The Board met on 2 October 2018, and received two annual reports for consideration and endorsement:
  - (a) Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) Annual Report
  - (b) Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report and one Annual Report for information from North East Ambulance Service

17. The Board were provided with a thematic report on the key findings from single and multi-agency audits. The report demonstrated evidence of learning from gaps in practice and actions taken to mitigate this. The multi-agency audit programme has been aligned to focus on the introduction of the planned themed Joint Targeted Area Inspections and a presentation was provided to Board on the current position highlighting common strengths and weaknesses found in inspections. Self-assessments were underway across the multi-agency partnership, and multi-agency audits will be completed this month to evidence information contained within the assessments is a true reflection of operational service delivery.
18. British Transport Police (BTP) provided a presentation to Board, to promote awareness of increasing risks around children and the railway. It was noted that Darlington is one of the top ten locations for trespassing on the railways, with multiple trespass points. Every police force reports their missing young people to the BTP, which nationally equates to 30,000 per year. Return home interviews are a key mechanism in obtaining information from young people regarding what modes of transportation they use when they are missing and BTP are keen to link with local authorities to explore if and how this information can be shared. It was agreed explicit questions will be included in the return home interview to identify modes of transport used which may be shared with BTP, with agreed data sharing protocols in place for allow this. Further conversations will be undertaken to improve links between the BTP and the Board.

### **School Forum**

19. The Forum met on 18 October. It was presented with the updated budget position for 2018/19, which is projecting an in-year overspend of approximately £1.5 million in the high needs funding block, these pressures are ongoing from 2017/18.
20. The Forum was updated regarding the Council's SEND and SEN Transport consultation, both of which will inform future service delivery. The Forum was engaged in the work in readiness for the consultation.

### **Locality Teams**

21. The number of early help assessments by external agencies continues to increase month on month and at the end of September 2018, 31 per cent of all assessments were completed externally. This is significant progress in engaging external services in early help and contributes to our performance target of 35 per cent completed by partner agencies by March 18/19 year.
22. The children's centres continue to attract children and families from our 30 per cent most deprived areas with over 61 per cent of attendees, residing in these areas.
23. Two Darlington social workers have been successful in being shortlisted for the Social Worker of the Year award, one being from Children's Services, who is a finalist for the Practice Educator of the Year award. These national awards recognise the success of the profession's most innovative social workers, and is the leading celebration of its kind in the sector. The awards ceremony is on 30

November, when the winners will be announced.

### **Child Protection/Looked After Children Statistics**

24. As at 30 September 2018 the following figures were reported Child Protection and Looked After Children:
- (a) 99 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan, compared with 91 at same period last year; and
  - (b) 254 children were in care, compared with 220 at same period last year.

### **Strategic Commissioning**

25. The Council continues to work with our 12 North East Council partners to develop more productive and value for money arrangements of Independent Fostering provision. A series of informal consultation events are underway to explore key themes such as sustainable and affordable fee arrangements and how councils can secure positive outcomes for children and young people. These events held in mid-November will help inform an approach to Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) where a new commissioning model for services will be issued in a formal consultation process.
26. The Council is also undertaking a contract monitoring review in the Tees Valley region. Each of the five Tees Valley Councils have identified a group of IFAs and will lead the contract monitoring exercise individually. The findings from each monitoring exercise will be jointly assessed and key themes will be identified. The five Tees Valley councils will develop and set out any required improvement actions in a joint plan at the beginning of December.
27. The strategic review of community based short breaks for children with SEND has commenced. This will include a full review of current contract provision and identify and address any gaps. The review will include opportunities to obtain and reflect upon the voice of the child, parent/carer feedback, and stakeholder and provider feedback in the design of future contracting arrangements.

### **Meetings**

28. Since the last meeting of Council, I have attended:
- (a) Darlington Safeguarding Children's Board;
  - (b) The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee;
  - (c) Briefings with the Director of Children's and Adult Services and various officers from Children's Services;
  - (d) The South Park Foundation Launch;
  - (e) Schools North East Summit at St. James' Park, Newcastle;
  - (f) Longfield Academy's Presentation Evening;
  - (g) Schools Forum;
  - (h) Youth Offending Service Board;

- (i) Meeting with Jenny Chapman MP and the Director of Children's and Adult Services;
- (j) Young People's Surgery at the Dolphin Centre;
- (k) Asylum Seekers Drop-in session;
- (l) Coffee morning at Bradford Armory, Neasham Road;
- (m) Creative Care Home Event led by Blue Cabin;
- (n) Adoption Induction at the Regional Adoption Agency;
- (o) Care Leaver Launch at the new Care Leaver Hub;
- (p) Regional Children in Care Conference at St. James' Park, Newcastle;
- (q) SEND Consultation event at the Hippodrome;
- (r) Governors' Meeting for governors and directors from across the borough;
- (s) The Growing up digital conference at the Westminster Education Forum, provided a keynote on Darlington's approach to internet safety;
- (t) The Parent Carer conference at Blackwell Grange Hotel;
- (u) Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education;
- (v) North East Migration Partnership in Sunderland to discuss unaccompanied asylum-seeking children;
- (w) National Children and Adult Services Conference in Manchester;
- (x) Meeting with the Department for Education; and
- (y) Park Auction celebration with Darlington Cares.

**Councillor Cyndi Hughes**  
**Children and Young People Portfolio**

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## **OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO**

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1. I am pleased to be presenting the first Community Safety Portfolio Report to Council. The new portfolio includes the following responsibilities; Policing, Community Safety, the Council's responsibility for Fire and Rescue Service, Street Scene Enforcement, Illegal Encampments, Private Sector Housing, Licensing of Premises (except where delegated to Licensing Committee), Trading Standards and Animal Welfare, Co-ordination of the Council's responsibility under the Floods and Water Act, Civil Contingencies and Emergency Planning, Parking Enforcement and CCTV.
2. This is an exciting Portfolio with a new team of Council Officers working closely with partners on the Community Safety agenda.

### **Civic Enforcement Service**

3. This service will be launched early in the New Year once all vacant positions have been filled. This is a team of three Senior Enforcement Officers and ten full-time equivalent Officers working on a shift system, Monday to Sunday covering the hours of 8.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. The team will focus on parking enforcement, anti-social behaviour and environmental crime, including abandoned vehicles, waste in back lanes, fly tipping, graffiti, stray dogs/dog warden service as well as a range of other environmental issues. The team will support the work of Kingdom Services, the private sector partner the Council is working with, for litter and dog fouling enforcement.

### **Safer Parking Scheme**

4. Recently, the Council's car parks have undergone their yearly safer parking assessment, completed by the British Parking Association. This year we have also had the car parks assessed and are pleased to announce that not only have our car parks passed the safer parking scheme but we have also secured the disabled parking accreditation. This reinforces that our car parks in Darlington are safe to park and accessible for disabled parking accreditation.
5. Whilst it is really encouraging our car parks passed the disability accreditation, I am aware of an issue with regard to the multi storey car park and ease of access for a wheelchair user. Officers are currently looking into a solution to improve the situation and I am hopeful that this will be resolved in the near future.

## **Back on Track**

6. Back on Track is a school based project which commenced in December 2017 as a pilot with Longfield School, initiated by YMCA Tees Valley and Darlington's Anti-Social Behaviour Team. The project is supported by County Durham Fire and Rescue Service, Darlington Neighbourhood Police Team, Durham and Cleveland Road Policing Unit, all Darlington Secondary Schools and MSG Bike Wear, who provide helmets for the participants of the seven-week programme.
7. The programme is now rolled out to all Darlington Secondary Schools and revolves around young people accepting they must not participate in off road motorcycle nuisance, not to engage in any anti-social behaviour, co-operate with all school staff in terms of behaviour, uniform attendance and all project related homework. It broadens their knowledge and safety around motorcycles, their impact on the community and raises their achievement and self-esteem with a reward of a track day upon successful completion.
8. The young people gain valuable first aid and safety knowledge, gaining a certificate and the opportunity to build respectful relationships with the partners involved. We are celebrating a 90 per cent success rate (percentage of participants who don't go on to re-offend) and work experience and employment opportunities provide a long term positive outlook for the majority of participants. All Officers involved do this in addition to their everyday duties and consider the preventative approach a worthy investment in positively influencing young people's safety and future contribution to their communities.

## **Private Sector Enforcement**

9. The Council started a six-month pilot with Kingdom Services on 17 September 2018. During the first two weeks, up until the end of September, an amnesty period was put in place whereby warning letters were issued instead of Fixed Penalty Notices. A total of 120 letters were issued during this period. For the month of October 2018 there were 272 Fixed Penalty Notices issued, the majority of which were issued in the Town Centre for cigarette ends.
10. The opportunity for residents and others to comment on the enforcement service continues to be available on the Council's website, which will help inform the final decision as to whether or not the Council continues with private sector enforcement following the pilot.

## **Trading Standards**

11. Trading Standards has worked with the Police to seize a total of 7,870 cigarettes and 6.6kg of hand rolling tobacco during two visits to the same store in Darlington. Trading Standards took the investigation forward and the outcome was the prosecution of Alan Qader Ahmad trading as SV Market, Gladstone Street, Darlington. Mr Ahmad was convicted on 21 September 2018 and sentenced to a twelve-month Community Order during which time he must complete 120 hours of unpaid work. He also paid £700 in costs as well as a £85 victim surcharge. Forfeiture of the tobacco products was granted and they are in the possession of Trading Standards for destruction.

12. On 8 October 2018, Trading Standards participated in Operation Rogue Trader, which is a national multi-agency campaign co-ordinated by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute with Liberal, the National Police Intelligence Unit. The main focus of the operation was to visit garages selling part-worn tyres. It is not illegal to sell part-worn tyres, provided the trader follows industry guidance and standards to inspect, repair, mark and price the tyres correctly. Six tyre sellers in Darlington were visited as part of the operation. Unsafe, part-worn tyres were found on sale and these were removed from the supply chain. Traders received compliance advice. It is Trading Standard's intention to conduct revisits to check that the advice given has been implemented.
13. Partners came together to remove dangerous electric blankets from people's homes. Trading Standards working with AGE UK arranged free electric blanket testing on 17 and 18 September at Bradbury House. The event was well attended (over 40 attendees) and approximately 13 blankets were found to be dangerous and removed from use. AGE UK were able to replace six and Andrew Allison (community resilience officer) was able to obtain funding from CDDFRS/Safer Homes to replace the others. All attendees were offered information about scam phone calls and the use of call blockers and 17 people requested, and received Safe and Wellbeing Visits from CDDFRS crews.

### **Private Sector Housing**

14. Extended Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing came into effect on 1 October 2018. For those who have applied, their applications are currently being processed. There are several other properties that have been identified as being used as a licensable HMO's and where applications have not been received, formal enforcement action is currently being considered.
15. As a result of licensing conditions being imposed, two properties have been improved with regard to fire safety and space standards.
16. In addition to licensing, two prohibition orders have been served on property owners of commercial premises where the first floor areas were being used as dangerous living accommodations, with inadequate fire detection and fire separation.

### **PREVENT**

#### **Appointment of Community Resilience Officer**

17. Andrew Allison has been appointed as a Community Resilience Officer with Darlington Borough Council. Andrew is responsible for the delivery of the recently revised PREVENT programme (counter terrorism), improving community engagement (particularly with those considered 'harder to reach' and/or who are potentially more vulnerable to harm) and supporting the work of other partners to improve the lives of people living in, working in and visiting Darlington.

18. Andrew will also work closely with local Councillors, other internal teams and partners to ensure that the concerns of local people expressed via surveys, complaints procedures, Councillor surgeries, PACT meetings, etc. are responded to and actioned accordingly.
19. Andrew worked for the fire and rescue service for thirty years, most recently as the Community Safety Manager, so has good experience of working in partnership with other organisations to achieve positive outcomes for our communities.

### **Hate Crime Awareness Week: 13 – 20 October**

20. Jim Welch, founder and chair of Blind Life, raised concerns at the Joint Hate Crime Action Group regarding how, on occasions, people with disabilities are subjected to abuse and hate crime when trying to negotiate their way around streets and shops. To understand more about the issues and to raise awareness as part of Hate Crime Awareness Week, Paul Ibbertson (Traffic Manager) and Andrew Allison (Community Resilience Officer) joined Jim on a tour of Darlington Town Centre to share his experiences as a person who is blind and uses a wheelchair.
21. A subsequent article appeared in the Northern Echo and on Darlington Borough Council's website and social media. It publicised the Council's policy 'Pavements for People', produced in collaboration with Darlington Association on Disability (a guide for businesses/contractors working on or near public roads and footpaths) and highlighted the Council's commitment to tackling hate crime.

### **Contest (Counter Terrorism) Strategy**

#### **Contest Delivery Plan 2018-19**

22. Members of the Contest Silver Board recently met to consider the revised Contest - the United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism and review the Local Contest Delivery Plan 2018-19. The amended plan was presented at the Contest Silver meeting in Darlington in September and will be rolled-out in County Durham and Darlington in the coming months.

### **PSPO (Public Space Protection Order) Town Centre**

23. Due to ongoing anti-social behaviour, including nuisance drinking, begging and threatening and abusive behaviour, a report was submitted to Cabinet in July in order to commence public consultation on the implementation of a PSPO.
24. Consultation began in September and will continue for three months. A final cabinet report will follow at the end of the consultation.

### **Street Friends**

25. Darlington Community Safety Partnership has recently approved funding to support the introduction of Street Friends in Darlington Town Centre. Street Friends is a group of volunteers who will engage with the night time economy to safeguard people who are, or become, vulnerable in this environment.

26. They provide active support and advice to those considered vulnerable as well as additional 'eyes and ears' on the street to gather information concerning drug misuse, child sexual exploitation and modern day slavery. Darlington Street Friends were initially deployed with mentors from a similar scheme in Consett and the scheme went live in Darlington in November 2018.

### **Crime Prevention and Community Safety Roadshows 2018: 'Meet the Detectives'.**

27. Detective Chief Inspector, Paul Gray, supported by Darlington CID and specialist detectives and community safety partners, delivered a series of community safety roadshows in Darlington during November. Across four venues, various community associations were utilised to deliver a series of practical tips and information on preventing crime and staying safe. Subject matters included online fraud, cyber-crime, drug and alcohol harm, hate crime and fire safety.

### **Appointment of Systems Data Analyst**

28. The Council has appointed a Systems Data Analyst whose role it will be to identify crime and disorder threat and risk in our local communities. This will inform the tasking and coordination process within the Council and promote the effective deployment of joint-resources according to local need.

29. The Systems Data Analyst will have access to partner systems and manage the collection, storage and use of data associated with crime and disorder.

30. The role will include working closely with a range of partners, analysing and evaluating relevant data, identifying gaps in provision, research to check data consistency and producing reports to support local activity.

31. I have also attended :-

- (a) the Combined Fire Authority's Strategic Planning Day;
- (b) Durham PCVC'S Celebration of Local Heroes event at Shildon;
- (c) the North East Regional Prevent Forum at Hartlepool; and
- (d) a Meet the Detectives event at Corporation Road School.

**Councillor Helen Crumbie  
Community Safety Portfolio**

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## **OVERVIEW OF ECONOMY AND REGENERATION PORTFOLIO**

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

### **Introduction of Charging and Local Eligibility Criteria for the Self-Build Register**

2. Cabinet received a report outlining the statutory duties associated with the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as Amended) and in doing so noted that one of the duties was a requirement to provide serviced self-build plots to meet an identified need.
3. We also agreed the introduction of a charging schedule (to be reviewed on a regular basis) for inclusion on Part 1 of the Self-Build Register and the introduction of the eligibility criteria for inclusion on Part 1 of the Self-Build Register.
4. There is currently no fee to register so persons could have their name on more than one register in the Tees Valley, or wider area, which could result in an over-estimation of need. This could ultimately place a burden on several local authorities to provide serviced plots which would not all be required.
5. If left uncontrolled, the current arrangements could see wide interest in building self-build housing from persons with no local connection and it is felt that such plots should be directed towards genuine need within the Borough.
6. The introduction of a charge, albeit modest, would allow the authority to recover a small part of the cost of managing the register and associated work involved.

### **Development Management and Environmental Health**

7. Planning permission has been granted for the following housing schemes :-
  - (a) 90 houses at Roundhill Road, Hurworth;
  - (b) 61 houses at Oak Tree, Middleton St George; and
  - (c) One supermarket and 12 affordable homes opposite Acorn Close, Middleton St George.
8. In addition, expansion plans have been agreed for the Raby Hunt in Summerhouse.
9. Significant housing applications at Coniscliffe Park and Middleton St George are yet to be determined.

10. Environmental Health has recently completed two prosecution cases for food hygiene offences :-

(a) **China Red, Gladstone Street -**

The Food Business Operator placed unsafe food on the market contrary to General Food Regulations 2004, Regulation 4 (a) as required by Article 14(1) of Regulation (EC) 178/2002. The offence was identified during the investigation of an outbreak of food poisoning involving illness to ten symptomatic customers and three staff who were confirmed to have been suffering from Salmonella Enteritis food poisoning which was most likely caused by the consumption of food at China Red. It was highly likely that cross contamination from the raw egg product was the likely mode of transmission of the infection.

**Outcome:** Fined £8,000, costs £1,225, victim surcharge £120

(b) **Star Pizza, 89 Victoria Road-**

Offences were identified as part of a routine inspection. Three offences were identified:-

- (i) The premises were not kept clean as required by Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 Annex II Chapter I Paragraph 1, contrary to Regulation 19 of the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013.
- (ii) Equipment in the premises were not kept clean as required by Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 Annex II Chapter V Paragraph 1(a) contrary to Regulation 19 of the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013.
- (iii) Staff were not wearing suitable, clean and where necessary, protective clothing as required by Regulation (EC) No 852/2004, Art. 4(2), Annex II, Chapter VIII, paragraph 1 contrary to Regulation 19 of the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013.

**Outcome:** Fined £2,000, costs £562, victim surcharge £120

11. Environmental Health is delivering a two year project on behalf of and funded by Public Health. The project is to have two main elements :-

(a) A food related element centred around the following elements of the Draft Darlington Childhood Healthy Weight Plan 2017–2022 :-

- (i) To transform the environment so that healthier choices are available in the provision of out of home food.
- (ii) To transform the environment by supporting the public sector to lead by example with food choices.
- (iii) Increase making healthier choices easier by delivering an awareness raising campaign including the provision of allergen information in all sectors.
- (iv) Additionally to transform the environment by supporting the Care Sector, for all age groups, to lead by example with food choices.



- (b) An air quality element chosen from one or more of the following:-
- (i) Health impacts and pollutant concentrations from short term exposure outside schools linked to pick up and drop off.
  - (ii) Indoor air quality associated with the use of wood burning stoves especially with regard to PM<sub>2.5</sub> with this being a UK Public Health Outcomes Framework indicator. Linked to this could be a review of smoke control areas as parts of the Borough are not currently included such as Middleton St George.
  - (iii) Air quality inside vehicles compared to road side.
  - (iv) Further investigation into NO<sub>2</sub> diffusion tube results at the North Road Station and Blackwell. This work will be undertaken anyway as part of our obligations under Local Air Quality Management (LAQM).

## **Local Plan**

12. Work is ongoing assessing the 1,350 plus comments. A report will be considered at Cabinet in December and subsequently by Council in January, prior to publicising the proposed submission version of the Local Plan early in the New Year.

## **Town Centre**

13. Over the Summer months, a significant amount of work has taken place within the Town Centre which, due to the cross-cutting nature a number of initiatives, have been highlighted in other Portfolio reports. Work has focussed on implementing the Footfall Strategy, which includes increasing events, increasing and improving floral displays, employment of a Street Scene Team Leader, a review of wayfinding, as well as working in partnership with the Police to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime.
14. Street Angels was launched this month and work has started on collating information and evidence together for the Purple Flag scheme, which is a quality mark for town centres. The Christmas Lights Switch-on took place on 22 November, alongside a special Christmas Market as well as a significantly improved Christmas tree.
15. Planning is well underway on developing and building on this year's Events and Animation Strategy, working closely with a range of stakeholders and partners across the town centre for next year.
16. Examination of Town Centre private sector development opportunities along with recently commissioned pieces of evidence will help inform possible future development; areas under consideration include Skinnergate and the Yards; Crown Street and Northgate Street.
17. A Town Centre Marketing and Communications Group has been established over the last six months with a range of key stakeholders meeting every four weeks to develop a coherent approach to developing the profile and the content of Darlington's offer. Partners include the Cornmill and Queen Street Shopping

Centres, House of Fraser, Mercure Hotel, Arriva, The Hole in the Wall, TGI Media, Market Asset Management and Darlington Building Society, as well as the Dolphin Centre and Darlington Hippodrome. The Group works to produce joint marketing material (the Christmas brochure was distributed early November with a range of events throughout December) around key seasonal priorities, promotional offers and events/animation throughout the town centre. Furthermore, the group has also established the 'Love Darlo' platform through social media, which has proved a really strong engagement tool for retailers; TGI Media lead on this, working closely with the Town Centre Partnership and Events Manager. There is lots more potential with further marketing work ongoing including the production of a new town centre guide for visitors and a range of offers from retailers.

## **Business Week**

18. During this reporting period, the Business Investment Team have been proactively working on the planning and execution of 'Darlington Business Week'. This is the second annual Business Week, building upon the success of last year's event.
19. The main aim of the week was to increase business engagement with local businesses, to aid lead generation of business growth and investment projects in Darlington and to encourage more businesses to engage with the Council to highlight barriers to growth, which can be used to help shape and inform economic strategy.
20. There are a range of business support initiatives including access to capital grants to support expansion projects using monies held by the Combined Authority, through devolution and the SSI Task Force. Events were built around raising awareness to Darlington based businesses of the support available to them, to accelerate growth linked to job creation and retention.
21. A total of 16 events were delivered across the course of the week, including a Business Summit and Economic Briefing, a Jobs Fair and Finance and Grants for Business Growth event.
22. A wide range of business partners including the North East England Chamber of Commerce, the Tees Engineering Network, Darlington Business Club and the Tees Valley Business Compass service were also jointly involved in helping deliver events. This enabled a wider audience capture and showcasing of the strength of the business networks providing business support in Darlington.
23. The Jobs Fair attracted 765 residents and featured over 750 live vacancies from a range of employers, including EE, Deep Ocean, Arriva, Student Loans Company, Cummins and Sainsbury's. In addition, support providers such as Morrisons Trust, Job Centre Plus, Learning and Skills, Routes to Work and Tedco were on hand to assist those individuals who may find accessing the jobs market more difficult due to personal challenges.
24. A total of 452 attended business events across the week.

25. In terms of employment levels, latest figures (produced quarterly by the Office for National Statistics) show that Darlington currently has an unemployment rate of 5.2 per cent. This compares to the North East figure of 5.4 per cent and Great Britain at 4.2 per cent.

**Councillor Chris McEwan**  
**Economy and Regeneration Portfolio**

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## **OVERVIEW OF HOUSING, HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO**

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### **Purpose of the Report**

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

### **Public Health**

2. World Mental Health Day was supported on 10 October; the theme this year was a focus on children and young people. A social media campaign was delivered using the anti-stigma posters previously developed with Darlington College students. The campaign received a lot of support with Facebook posts reaching over 20,000 people and tweets almost 5,000.
3. The annual 'NHS Future in Mind Transformation Plan' refresh was completed in October. This aims to improve mental health and resilience in all children and young people in the Borough by working in partnership with the NHS Mental Health Trust, the voluntary sector, the Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group and partners in Education.
4. The 2018 Stoptober campaign has been delivered with staff from the Stop Smoking Service Hub visiting community venues to promote access to the service.

### **Free Flu Vaccines for all employees**

5. As part of the Council's commitment to our employees wellbeing, as a trial this year, we are extending the current criteria for free vaccines to all employees. Whilst this programme will not be mandatory it is hoped that the offer assists both our employee's health and reduces the impact of employees spreading the flu virus to families and the wider community who are more vulnerable to the effects of flu. Alongside the programme we will be aiming to increase the overall awareness of the flu vaccine and dispel the myths associated with it, this awareness should also assist with the wider education programme for the community. The administration of vaccines commenced on 1 November and will run until approximately end of January.
6. Whilst it is difficult to aligning the administration of flu vaccines locally to employee absence, the programme will be reviewed taking into account employee feedback and consideration will be given to extending the programme in future years. As far as we are aware, Darlington is the first Council in the Tees Valley to make this offer.

## **Darlington Partnership**

7. Following a meeting of Darlington Partnership, I have agreed to lead a work-stream of the 'Fairer, Richer Darlington' programme. The programme aims to address the growing gap between those who are struggling financially in Darlington and the rest.
8. I have agreed to lead the work-stream which is focused on supporting people's resilience. Boosting the resilience of households means they are more likely to have positive outcomes relating to education, employment and their ability to cope with future challenges. It also requires professionals and organisations to change the way they work to allow them to better recognise the strengths of children, families and communities affected by low incomes. This is a broad work-stream which will involve a range of activities across agencies in public, private and voluntary sectors. It will also involve making changes to the way the Council provides services.
9. As a first step, I will be holding engagement sessions with different communities in Darlington to explain what we are attempting to achieve and listen to their concerns and thoughts on how their lives could be improved.

## **Housing Services**

### **Red Hall**

10. Darlington Harriers, with the support of Heritage on Track, organised a fun run around Red Hall. Participants were encouraged with music from Locomotive Rhythm. Red Hall was chosen because of its location next to the original Stockton to Darlington rail bed. There was a good turnout for this event.

### **Cockerton**

11. Consultation on the development of the second phase of the play park was merged with a holiday hunger event in the October half term. The event based at Windsor Court included an opportunity to discuss the next stage of development and encourage a group to be formed to take an interest in the play area and organise events. There were also be a number of Halloween themed activities for children including making pumpkin lanterns and a Halloween Trail.

## **Digital Tenancy**

12. We are introducing a new electronic way for tenants to manage many aspects of their tenancy from the comfort of their own home. Using a smartphone, tablet or P.C. they will be able to access tenancy information safely and securely. They will be able to get things done faster and can connect to their account outside of office hours. It means they can manage their account at their own convenience.
13. Tenants will be able to :-
  - (a) Check current rent balance and transactions;
  - (b) Print rent statements;

- (c) Make online payments;
- (d) Set up direct debits; and
- (e) Report repairs

14. The Council is currently testing the system and have engaged with the Customer Panel to help support the testing and suggest ideas. A go live date is imminent and the plan is to start with new tenants as part of the sign up process. Existing tenants will also be able to sign up and details will be published via the website and social media to announce when and how to sign up.

### **Wi-Fi in Communal Areas**

15. Wi-Fi technology is being installed into the communal areas of sheltered housing, good neighbour schemes and Extra Care for the benefit of the tenants and their visitors. It will give them the opportunity to use their mobile devices more flexibly within the schemes and will help those visitors who need to access the internet. This links in well with the introduction of digital tenancies as it will make it easier for residents to access on line services.

### **Railway Housing**

16. To complement the Council's new build housing programme, Railway Housing has recently completed a new development of 73 houses and apartments off Haughton Road. Applicants registered on our Choice Based Lettings scheme were able to apply for these properties and this has greatly assisted us in meeting the housing needs of a range of applicants.

### **Rough Sleepers**

17. This year's Rough Sleepers count took place recently, based on one typical evening, and identified three rough sleepers in Darlington. The count involved consultations with various statutory and voluntary organisations. The definition of a rough sleeper is :-

- (a) People sleeping, about to bed down or actually bedded down in the open air; and
- (b) People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation.

18. The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or travellers.

19. All three individuals have been offered accommodation and various support options depending on their needs but have consistently refused assistance, choosing to sleep rough and/or beg. Now the colder weather is upon us it is timely to remind everyone of the Council's No Second Night Out Service where anyone can contact us about any concerns they may have on 01325 405333 or Street Link on 0300 500 0914. Our Outreach Service will then go out to the person/place reported to offer accommodation and support. No-one needs to sleep rough in Darlington.

**Councillor A Scott**  
**Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Health and Partnerships**



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## **OVERVIEW OF LEISURE AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO**

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

### **Review of Decision to Relocate the Central Library Service**

2. At our request, we have reviewed the decision to relocate the Central Library from Crown Street to the Dolphin Centre and have agreed that Central Library be retained at the Crown Street Building, and to the development of plans for the refurbishment of the Crown Street building and to refresh the internal design and service standards.
3. A consultation on the internal redesign and service standards for the Crown Street Library will take place to help inform the final decisions and the space earmarked for a relocated central library service at the Dolphin Centre and Bennet House will be released for other uses; and a quick picks library service point at the Dolphin Centre, will be developed.
4. It was noted that the Library Service Plan would need to be amended and updated to take account of the above proposals and that a revised Plan will be presented to Cabinet Members in early 2019.

### **Tees Valley Waste Management Strategy**

5. Approval was given to enter into consultation on the Joint Waste Management Strategy (JWMS) and the future of waste treatment/disposal for the Tees Valley.
6. The existing JWMS for the Tees Valley covers the period up to 2025 and it has been agreed that the new refreshed JWMS will cover the period from 2020 to 2035.
7. Public consultation commenced on 1 October 2018 for eight weeks and there will also be a stakeholder session organised for interested organisations within the waste industry; and feedback from the public across the Tees Valley and Industry will inform the final JWMS.

### **Proposed Waiting Restrictions on Alderman Best Way – Objections**

8. Cabinet gave consideration to two objections that had been received to the proposals to implement no waiting restrictions on Alderman Best Way at Morton Palms and agreed to set aside those objections.
9. On-street parking on Alderman Best Way has been an issue for a number of years and Morton Palms is a comparatively modern office development and off street car

parking associated with the offices is not sufficient to accommodate all of the staff and operational vehicles leading to a situation where staff and businesses rely on Alderman Best Way for parking.

10. Implementing the no waiting restriction is aimed at improving the flow of traffic and reducing the potential for road traffic accidents.

### **Christmas Parking Offer**

11. A seasonal parking offer at Christmas was approved to support local retail trade and encourage both existing and new customers to shop in Darlington.
12. The offer for all off-street short and long stay car parks to be free after 3.00pm began on 22 November for the Christmas Lights Switch and will end on 2 January 2019.

### **Schemes of Work**

13. Highways Maintenance Scheme complete:  
Lynton Gardens: Carriageway Reconstruction and Resurfacing.
14. Highway Maintenance Scheme ongoing:  
100 plus sites throughout the Borough: Carriageway Micro Asphaltting.  
Asphaltting complete, road marking installation ongoing.
15. Highway Maintenance Scheme due to start:  
B6280 Carmel Road North/B6279 Staindrop Road Roundabout – Carriageway Resurfacing.

### **Highway Schemes**

#### **Church Row**

16. There has been an increase in traffic passing alongside the market square area on Church Row outside St Cuthbert's Church. This is a result of the development of Feethams Leisure Park and the new bus stops outside of the Town Hall. This can occasionally cause some conflict in particular between buses, coaches and delivery vehicles. The existing footway is along the church yard boundary but many pedestrians are walking in the road as it is a more direct route. This is a road safety concern. In addition, the existing cobbled surface is suffering significant damage from road traffic and the effects of bad weather.
17. The scheme which is now substantially complete was designed to provide additional road space for vehicles, improved pedestrian facilities and address the deteriorating condition of the road surface.

#### **NPIF Yarm Road/McMullen Road Roundabout**

18. Works are currently ongoing on the Yarm Road/McMullen Road roundabout. The works comprise the creation of two lane approaches on four of the arms of the

roundabout and widening of the circulatory lanes. This is to address specific access issues relating to the development of Ingenium Parc, as well as pressures from development within the wider Eastern Growth Zone. Works on the roundabout are programmed to be complete by the end of March 2019.

## Transport

19. **Car sharing** - The Sustainable Transport Team has worked with EE to set up a car share scheme. EE has employed additional staff at its Yarm Road site, which has resulted in huge pressures on the car park. Therefore, EE has allocated a specific car park with priority parking and security staff to police the car share bays. The Council handles the administrative side and the allocation of permits. The scheme launched in September and during the first month 144 staff registered. Of these, 52 people car shared and they averaged 11 days car sharing during the month, resulting in 26 less cars on site on these dates. Promotion is ongoing and it is hoped to further expand the scheme.
20. **Cycling** - The Shining Example campaign went live on 23 October. A video was produced to highlight the importance of using bike lights at night, a legal requirement. A launch event was held at Chemoxy in Middlesbrough with employees and the Police. There was coverage on BBC Radio Tees and the video was played during two Middlesbrough Football matches at the Riverside Stadium. The video was pushed out on multiple channels and people encouraged to watch the video and enter a competition, which closes on 7 December. Early indications that the video is being watched are very encouraging.
21. Students in two schools in the Tees Valley are working on a related project to encourage their peers to cycle safely. Smooth FM are working with the students to develop their ideas. The materials that they produce will then be shared to secondary schools across the Tees Valley.
22. **Walking** – October was Walk to School month for local primary schools. Materials that were produced for the 2017 campaign have been re-used, including radio adverts and posters. A photo competition has been run to encourage children and the adults that walk them to school to notice what is going on around them.

## Sports Development

### Middleton Rangers Creating Space Aviva Application

23. Middleton Rangers FC Girls section continue to grow year on year from having one girls team five seasons ago, to six teams this season. Women and girls participation has been at the forefront of the club development plan, which intends to expand the teams and the number of women and girls playing the game in the next five years. The club has applied for a 'Creating Space' grant of £5,000 in partnership with Eastbourne Sports Complex, to support improving the quality of the playing pitches and to add an additional pitch on site. A decision will be made in December 2018 if the bid is successful.

## **Darlington Move More Team Engagement**

24. The Team continues to deliver on various projects engaging new participants to participate in sport and physical activity. The Team engaged 369 participants during the reporting period, delivering 353 sessions with 60 per cent female participants and 40 per cent male and 88 per cent of all participants sustaining their activity at the sessions.

## **Darlington Hippodrome**

### **Aladdin**

25. Stars from the cast of Aladdin were at Darlington Hippodrome on 10 October for the official launch of the 2018/19 Pantomime. The launch coincided with Rock of Ages week on tour in Darlington which also stars local artiste Zoe Birkett.

## **Engagement at the Hippodrome**

26. This Autumn the Theatre has launched a new and improved audio description service for members of our audience with visual impairments, which includes a touch tour of the stage prior to the show. Following feedback from customers the service is now offered at a matinee, rather than an evening performance.
27. Two new courses began in October as part of the Theatre's heritage activities. 'Pepi's People' is a course for people over 55 which blends practical activities with theatre theory and is sold out this term. 'A Brief History of Theatre' is led by Laurence Sach and features group discussions about a variety of plays throughout the ages.
28. Darlington College has located its performing arts course in the Theatre for two days each week in term time which is a good opportunity for students to get more involved with the Theatre and visiting companies.
29. Volunteer ambassadors from Darlington Culture Volunteers have been helping to promote the Touring Consortium Theatre Company production of Dracula which began at the Hippodrome on 6 November. They were able to visit Nottingham Theatre Royal to see the show in advance of its visit to Darlington and to meet with the cast and company.
30. During half term the Theatre organised family ghost tours which were proving very popular. There was also music in the Hippo Lounge.

## **Theatres Trust Conference 2018**

31. The Theatre Director and the Executive Director of Theatre Hullabaloo were invited to speak at the national conference of the Theatres Trust at the Lyric in Hammersmith, London, which this year had the theme: Adapt and Thrive. They were asked to speak about financial resilience and how this was demonstrated in recent developments in the arts in Darlington, particularly focussing on Creative Darlington and the restoration of the Hippodrome and also to talk about the

innovative operational model which underpins The Hullabaloo.

## **Public Art**

32. The Community Arts Project exhibition opened in Crown Street Library gallery space on 18 October 2018 and will run until 6 December 2018, with Darlington Society of Arts scheduled to exhibit from 8 December 2018 to 31 January 2019. Janet Melody's 'Natural Transitions' exhibition was on display at Darlington Town Hall exhibition space from 17 September until 26 October 2018.

## **The Last Train Home Music and Comedy Festival**

33. The Last Train Home music and comedy festival, organised by Darlington based Tracks with support from various parties including Arts Council England and Darlington Borough Council's strategic arts budget, was held on 22 September 2018 in venues located in close proximity to Darlington's Bank Top Station. The ticketed festival ran between 2.00 pm and 10.30 pm with over 50 performances across six venues, and stages curated by Tracks, NARC Magazine and Hilarity Bites.
34. Tracks also programmed a series of 'GET Informed' Sessions led by music industry experts at Hash Bar and Kitchen in Darlington, which took place during September and October 2018. The sessions covered getting press, getting gigs, getting heard and getting out there, and offered support to young musicians eager to develop their practice from a Darlington base.

## **Heritage Track Programme**

35. Locomotive Rhythm led a 'Red Hall Fun Run to Music' event, supported by Darlington Harriers, during September 2018 as part of the 'Heritage on Track' programme.
36. The Heritage on Track programme is expected to support activity up to September 2020, including school and community based activity focussing on the creative exploration of railway and local heritage, working in locations in close proximity to the track bed of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. Heritage on Track is part of the Tees Valley Great Place programme.

## **Head of Steam**

### **Exhibitions**

37. A new exhibition opened at the museum on 10 November to commemorate the end of the First World War and 100 years of the UK Parliamentary vote for some women and all men. The exhibition 'Vote100: Railways, Women and World War One' investigates whether women's work on the railways during World War I helped them to get the vote and if gaining the right to vote had an impact on women working on the railways.

## **Learning and Outreach**

38. During the period of 28 September to 19 November 2018, 678 children have worked with us. In addition, 25 active volunteers contributed over 130 hours during the period.

## **Events**

39. September was the Museum's railway month. On 30 September the Museum celebrated the 193 anniversary of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway with a free family event. We welcomed over 1000 people to the event, which included a children's entertainer, face painting, mini train ride, live music and street performers.
40. On 28 October the Museum hosted its annual Halloween Fun Day. The fun family event featured a mini train ride, magician and spooky arts and crafts.
41. Fun family activities continued at the Museum during October Half Term, with Block Party sessions, 'Jay's Animal Encounters' and 'Acorn Antics'.

## **Environmental Services**

### **Winter Maintenance**

42. The 2018/19 Winter Maintenance Season commenced on 1 October with 4,500 tonne of rock salt in the salt barn at Lingfield Way, and staff and vehicles all available in readiness for any inclement weather.

### **Grounds Maintenance**

43. The 2018 growing season is now drawing to an end and throughout the period there were no issues in relation to grass cutting or floral displays. The only concern was wild flower areas, as these were planted immediately prior to the long dry period and therefore struggled to germinate. However, when the wildflower areas came into bloom they were excellent and have received positive feedback. Plans are underway to expand this scheme to other suitable areas across the Borough in 2019.

### **Rail Heritage and 2025**

44. Since my last report I can announce that TGA Consult Creative Consultancy (TGAC) have been appointed to develop the Interpretation Plan or 'Grand Narrative' for the Stockton and Darlington Railway story. This will set the framework for telling which story along the length of the line, how best to tell it and what will this mean for branding, promotion and information. TGAC will be carrying out engagement work with local communities and stakeholders in the coming months and have targeted completion of the work by the end of February 2019. TGAC is an interpretive planning consultancy, with more than 25 years' practise-based experience. It specialises in strategic interpretive planning, creative direction and practical, collaborative advice and support. Working with diverse clients, it

helps plan and develop the full potential of museums and visitor experiences, commercial exhibitions and events across the UK, Europe, the USA and the MENA region.

45. I can also announce that Master Planners and Business Planners have been appointed to develop the world class visitor attraction ambitions at North Road. Bauman Lyons Architects will lead a multi-disciplinary team of consultants to develop the Masterplan and business case influenced by the Interpretation Plan. They will be working in collaboration with TGAC during engagement processes and will look to complete their work by the end of April 2019.
46. Richard Starrs has also commenced employment on 15 October as the Heritage Action Zone Project Manager. He will be working across the whole of the Stockton and Darlington Railway geography whilst being hosted by this Council.
47. Place Scrutiny Committee received an update about progress on the Railway Town Theme of the Experience Darlington Strategy on 25 October and Cabinet is due to receive an update report in December.
48. Can I thank John Anderson for his work on the Rail Heritage and Visitor Economy agenda and wish him well for his retirement on 30 November 2018. Mike Crawshaw commenced his new role as Head of Culture and Heritage on 1 October and will now be leading on this agenda.

**Councillor Nick Wallis**  
**Cabinet Member with Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio**

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## **OVERVIEW OF ADULTS AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

### **Darlington Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board Annual Report 2017-18**

2. Ann Baxter, the Independent Chair of the Darlington Safeguarding Adult Partnership Board, attended our meeting to present the Board's 2017-18 Annual Report.
3. The Safeguarding Adult Partnership Board, which is a statutory body, is required to produce an Annual Report, which outlines its activities over the previous year and makes an assessment of the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements within the local area. The report set out the progress against the six key principles, as outlined in the Care Act 2014 as the strategic aims to support good inter-agency Adult Safeguarding.
4. We discussed the challenges faced by the Board in relation to the increased demand for services within the context of reduced resources and the impact the changes to be brought in by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, may have on adult safeguarding.
5. Following the presentation by Ann, we were reassured that there was strong multi-agency partnership working across Darlington, with good practices and procedures in place and positive outcomes being achieved.

### **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards**

6. We received an update on the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) which had come into force in England and Wales on 1 April 2009, as amendments to the Mental Capacity Health Act 2007 and in response to a breach of the European Convention on Human Rights, which found that, legally, adequate protection was not given to people who lacked mental capacity to consent to care or treatment and who required some restrictions on the liberty to keep them safe.
7. The DoLS continue to place demand on the authority in terms of the high number of requests being received, however, additional resources have been provided to ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations. Reliance on independent Best Interest Assessors (BIA's) has been reduced with the Council employing its own BIA's and training existing staff.

8. The Government are currently looking at reviewing the DoLS scheme with a view to it being replaced and we will be kept informed of progress and the outcome.

### **Quality Standards for Care Homes – 2018/19**

9. The Authority's Agreement for the Provision of Residential Care for Adults and Older People with a Mental Health Problem, requires its Contract Officers to visit all contracted care homes for older people on an annual basis between April and June to monitor the care home against the agreed quality standards, which, along with the home's environmental grade determines the fee level for the coming year. The level of compliance is then graded A – C, with A achieving all ten standards and C with eight standards or less fully met.
10. Overall of the 18 homes visited, 12 homes have maintained the same grade as last year, four have increased their grading and two have decreased. It is pleasing to note the increase in homes achieving an A grade, however, it is disappointing to note that three previously C homes have not improved.
11. Written feedback will be given to providers and action plans will be required from each of the homes to address any shortfalls and the homes graded C will be monitored again by the Contracts Section against their outcomes and action plans in November/December 2018.

### **Adult Social Care Transformation Programme**

12. We have also received an update on the progress of the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme, which has been developed to modernise services and meet future demands and address pressures within that service area. We were advised that the programme is progressing well with work in a number of areas complete and many more nearing completion.
13. The Programme is regularly reviewed with new work added and the scope of existing pieces of work widened as applicable.

### **Non-Residential Charging Policy Consultation**

14. Following a complaint made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, the Council has undertaken a public consultation exercise on a specific aspect of its charging policy relating to Non-Residential Services in respect of the treatment of income from eligible benefits.
15. The current policy, approved by Cabinet in 2016, states that the Council **must** treat eligible benefits as income when considering what a person can afford to pay towards their care from their income. However, guidance and associated Regulations states that Councils **may** have discretion about the treatment of these benefits when completing a financial assessment and it is this element that was the subject of the four-week public consultation exercise.
16. We were advised that the recommendation to Cabinet was to continue to take the income received from benefits into account when completing a financial

assessment as to exclude these benefits would have a significant financial impact on the Authority.

17. As the previous Fairer Charging Policy and the incorrectly approved current policy does take income from benefits into account, applied assessments of individual contributions will not change and individuals will not be impacted further by the decision to continue to do this. The Policy is a framework document and any specific exceptional individual needs and circumstances can be addressed on a case by case basis.

### **Work Programme**

18. We have commenced a short review to look into the impacts on Darlington residents of the welfare reforms and we have spoken to a number of organisations who provide support services in Darlington. If any Councillors have any individual experiences from ward residents they wish to share with the Group, please contact me.

**Councillor Marjory Knowles**  
**Chair of Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee**

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## **OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

### **Appointment of Co-Opted Member**

2. Members have appointed John Armitage, Head of Rydal Academy, to represent the Primary Schools Forum as a Non-Voting Co-opted Member of this Scrutiny Committee and Helen Tarokh, Head of Heathfield Primary School, will act as his deputy.

### **Darlington Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/18**

3. Scrutiny Members were given the opportunity to comment on the Annual Report of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) for the period 2017/18.
4. All Local Safeguarding Children Boards are required to produce an annual report to account for their activities; make an assessment of the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements within the local area; and to ensure partners work together to protect children from harm and ensure the voice of the child is evident in all multi-agency work.

### **Children and Young People's Plan 2017/22 – Progress Report**

5. We received an update on progress to date on the delivery of the Children and Young People Plan 2017/22 adopted by Council on 29 September 2017. This Plan is a partnership plan which outlines how key partner organisations across the Borough will work together to ensure every child and young person is given the best start in life (a key priority of the local Sustainable Community Strategy: One Darlington Perfectly Placed).
6. A Multi-agency Steering Group has been established to ensure that delivery of the plan and effective monitoring is carried out, and to encourage and strengthen the links between key local partners.
7. A scorecard has also been developed containing a number of key performance indicators which measure delivery of the actions being taken to deliver the Plan.
8. We agreed that the year two (2019 – 2020) priorities would be to reduce the number of children and young people living in poverty; and to carry on working towards improving the mental health and emotional wellbeing of all children and young people (which was one of the year one 2018 - 2019 priorities). We expressed our concern at the levels of educational attainment and the number of

young people aged 18 – 25 claiming unemployment benefits and agreed that this issue (which was also one of the year one 2018 - 2019 priorities) would continue to be monitored through the Steering Group for the CYPP.

9. Members' discussions related to the child poverty area 'hotspots' and we suggested that Ward Councillors were invited to attend the Community Groups. We also expressed our concerns over the increasing number of takeaways within their wards and discussed how the authority can regulate these, although it was acknowledged that the authority has very limited powers in the licensing of takeaways.

### **Special Educational Needs Strategy and Funding**

10. We received a report on the summary plans to consult on a strategic plan for delivering better outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and proposed amendments to the funding model for children with special educational needs to enable the 'money to follow the child'.
11. The updated Strategy will build on progress to date, identify what has been achieved and prioritise actions up to 2022. Consultation on the revised SEND Strategy was undertaken between 10 October and 28 November 2018 and Members of this Scrutiny committed to attending as many of the consultation events as possible and will meet again to formulate a response to the proposed Strategy and funding arrangements.

### **Special Educational Needs Home to School Transport**

12. We also received a report on the introduction of a Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Travel Assistance Policy and the consultation that was undertaken between 10 October and 28 November 2018.
13. This Policy will provide an opportunity to offer a more flexible range of travel options to families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and an opportunity for the children and young people to develop independent travel skills.
14. As with the Strategy, Members agreed to attend the consultation events and will meet to discuss a Scrutiny response to the proposed Travel Assistance Policy.

### **Meetings**

15. Since the last meeting of Council, I have attended three of the public consultation meetings on the SEND Strategy.

**Councillor Chris Taylor**  
**Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

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## **OVERVIEW OF EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

### **Revenue Budget Monitoring 2018-19 – Quarter 2**

2. We received the Quarter 2 forecast of the 2018-19 revenue budget outturn. The latest projections show an overall improvement against the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) of £1.116 million, an increase of £0.161 million from the Quarter 1 position. The Children and Adult Services Group is reporting an overspend of £0.432 million which is being offset by an underspend on the financing costs budget of £0.591 million.
3. We particularly discussed the overspend in Children's Services which was mainly due to an increase in costs in relation to the adoption and placement budget as a result of a large spike in the number of children being brought into care and which, due to local capacity, had required further use of both independent fostering and independent residential placements and the continuing pressures on School Transport.
4. We were pleased to note the improved position in relation to financing costs and commended the work Officers have undertaken in relation to investments and borrowing in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.
5. We did discuss some specific variances within Departmental budget headings and we were given an explanation as to the possible reasons for those variances. Members did consider whether they should be supplied with more detailed information in respect of those larger variances in budgets, in addition to the narrative given in the covering report, however, we were reassured by the explanation of the processes involved in budget monitoring and management by Officers.
6. In addition to continuing to monitor the position, we have also asked for further information in relation to a number of specific areas which I will pursue as Chair

**Councillor Ian Haszeldine**  
**Chair Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee**

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## **OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

### **Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Stroke Services**

2. Members have had concerns about the services available to stroke patients following discharge from hospital for some time. We are pleased that the CCG is now fulfilling its commitment to review the rehabilitation provision for stroke.
3. We welcomed a presentation from Karen Hawkins, Director of Commissioning and Transformation, NHS Darlington CCG, on the Stroke Rehabilitation Service Review and noted the importance of engagement as a crucial part of understanding the views of patients, public and carers to inform any future decision making.
4. Patient surveys have been carried out on the wards at Bishop Auckland Hospital and the University Hospital of North Durham and also engagement with the carer groups across County Durham and Darlington. Unfortunately there have only been 66 responses to date so additional funding has been secured to undertake further engagement to maximise input.
5. We also examined the emerging themes and the next steps following the engagement activity.
6. One emerging theme was a lack of support once patients are discharged from hospital and Members were keen to see that patients who had already been through the system were being captured in the engagement exercise for their feedback on the service. We felt that engagement with patients and user of the service was critical and also that information is fed back to the participants of the review with any service developments.
7. I advised the Members that I had met with the Stroke Club on 22 October and the lack of support following discharge from Bishop Auckland Hospital was a recurring theme. I also intend to make contact with the Darlington Stroke Recovery Service.
8. Members also discussed the potential lack of general knowledge around services for patients of stroke and a lack of signposting and agreed that promotion of the pathways was also key and that General Practitioners were aware of the services available to signpost patients effectively.

## **NHS CCG Darlington Governance Arrangements**

9. Karen Hawkins, Director of Commissioning and Transformation, NHS Darlington CCG, gave a presentation on governance arrangements of the NHS Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group
10. CCGs are responsible for recruiting and selecting their leadership team under the NHS Act 2012 and Dr. O'Brien has been newly appointed as the Single Accountable Officer, across the five CCG's supported by a Joint Management Team.
11. The presentation highlighted the benefits of the five CCG's working collaboratively and confirmed that place-based commissioning was to continue and there was to be no change to existing governance or decision making and we will retain a local clinical voice and leadership.

## **Pain Management**

12. We received a presentation from Katie McLeod, Head of Commissioning and Strategy, NHS Darlington CCG, on the procurement of new Persistent Pain Services.
13. The presentation outlined the rationale for the change due to the lack of equity of service across Durham and Darlington with the previous model; the high wait times for access to pain psychology and the high level of opioid prescribing; and described the new Biopsychosocial model, which adopts a holistic approach to the management of pain, and a tiered approach to the provision of care based on the level of intensity of pain.
14. There is to be a single point of access and a tiered approach to care with community based tier 1 and 2 services and specialised acute based tier 3 services at the Darlington Memorial Hospital.
15. It was acknowledged that there had been some initial teething problems which had now been recognised and addressed and performance reporting was in place.
16. Members were pleased to see that the psychological impact on pain management was being recognised rather than just focussing solely on relieving the physical aspects of their pain.
17. We welcome the service and recognise the importance of an alternative service away from the general practitioners for the management of pain.

**Councillor Wendy Newall**  
**Chair of the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee**

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## **OVERVIEW OF PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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

### **Tees Valley Combined Authority Transport Strategy**

2. We received a presentation from the Head of Transport, Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), on the Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan (STP), which is currently being developed to support the delivery of the Strategic Economic Plan for the Tees Valley.
3. The transport vision for the Tees Valley is provide a high quality, quick, affordable, reliable and safe transport network for people and freight to move within, to and from the Tees Valley and the presentation set out the way in which it aimed to do this by improving local railways, maintaining and improving roads, providing better bus services, providing safe walking and cycling routes and making it easier and safer to transport freight by road, rail, sea and air, together with details of how this will be achieved and the priorities under each heading.
4. The STP will be considered at a meeting of the TVCA Cabinet scheduled to be held on 31 January 2019 and a formal consultation exercise will then be undertaken, closing in May 2019.

### **Tees Valley Draft Waste Strategy**

5. We also received a presentation on the Tees Valley Joint Waste Management Strategy (JWMS), which is currently being developed by the five Tees Valley Local Authorities and outlines options for the future waste treatment/disposal post 2025 when the existing contractual arrangements come to an end.
6. The strategy sets out the joint approach to the sustainable management of waste within the Tees Valley and prioritising actions for the next 15 years. It provides the framework for how each of the Council's will work towards reducing the amount of waste produced, to recycle as much as possible and find the most sustainable solution to deal with any waste that remains.
7. Consultation on the JWMS began on 1 October 2018 for an eight-week period and the documentation will be available on the Council's website where comments can be posted. There will also be stakeholder sessions organised for interested organisations within the waste industry. Feedback from across the Tees Valley will inform the final strategy.

## **Rail Heritage and 2025 Update**

8. Another presentation we received was from the Assistant Director Railway Heritage and 2025 which outlined the work being undertaken to deliver the railway heritage offer as one of the themes within the Experience Darlington Strategy.
9. The presentation covered the priorities for action under the Railway Town Theme, which will enable Darlington to improve its visitor offer for 2026 and beyond and create significant economic benefits that will support local businesses increase productivity and create jobs, together with the achievements to date and the next steps.
10. In terms of progress against the priority actions, particular reference was made to the establishment, with other partners, of a Rail Heritage Board; its governance arrangements and its high level programme, which consisted of 43 projects. The Board achieved Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) status for the Stockton and Darlington railway in May 2018 which will bring advantages in terms of national recognition and credibility from Historic England.

## **Work Programme 2018/19**

11. As part of our on-going work programme, we have requested reports to our meeting in December 2018 in relation to the library and road safety. We also aim to receive an update report on the legacy of the Healthy New Towns project in February/March 2019

**Councillor Bob Carson**  
**Chair of Place Scrutiny Committee**