

# Council Agenda



**6.00 pm Thursday, 31 January 2019**  
**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 29 November 2018 (Pages 1 - 6)
3. Declarations of Interest.
4. Sealing.
5. Announcements.
6. Questions - To answer questions (where appropriate notice has been given from):-
  - (a) The Public;
  - (b) Members to Cabinet/Chairs;
  - (c) Members to the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner for Durham and Darlington.
7. Council Reports.
  - (a) Council Tax Calculation of Tax Base 2019/20 – Report of the Managing Director (Pages 7 - 14)
8. Cabinet Reports.
  - (a) Overview Report of the Leader and the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio; (Pages 15 - 18)

- (b) Overview Report of the Adult Social Care Portfolio; (Pages 19 - 20)
- (c) Overview Report of the Children and Young People Portfolio; (Pages 21 - 24)
- (d) Overview Report of the Community Safety Portfolio; (Pages 25 - 28)
- (e) Overview Report of the Economy and Regeneration Portfolio; (Pages 29 - 32)
- (f) Overview Report of the Housing, Health and Partnerships Portfolio; and (Pages 33 - 36)
- (g) Overview Report of the Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio. (Pages 37 - 44)

9. Scrutiny Reports - To consider Scrutiny Overview Reports:-

- (a) Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 45 - 48)
- (b) Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 49 - 52)
- (c) Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee; (Pages 53 - 54)
- (d) Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee; and (Pages 55 - 58)
- (e) Place Scrutiny Committee. (Pages 59 - 60)

10. Notice of Motions

- (a) To consider a Motion to be moved by Councillor Haszeldine, and seconded by Councillor Kane –

That this Council will sign a local apprenticeship agreement with Unison that promises to:

- (i) Conduct a skills audit, to properly determine this Council's needs.
- (ii) Negotiate with relevant trade unions, to develop a high quality apprenticeship scheme, which ensures apprentices' rights are respected.
- (iii) Select and monitor a high-quality training provider.
- (iv) Recognise apprenticeships as investing in future labour, rather than 'cheap labour'.
- (v) Keep existing employees informed about the introduction of the apprenticeship scheme.
- (vi) Provide support and training for the supervisors of apprentices.

(vii) Meet regularly with apprentices and their representatives.

(viii) Actively challenge job stereotyping.

(ix) Encourage and celebrate apprentices.

- (b) To consider a Motion to be moved by Councillor Chris Taylor, and seconded by Councillor McEwan –

That, as this Council believes that every job should be a great job, for this Council that means workers in Darlington should be paid fairly; work in a safe and healthy workplace; be treated decently and with respect; have regular hours; have the chance to be represented by unions and be consulted on what matters at work; and get the chance to learn and progress at work and get on in life, this Council resolves to:

- (i) Support the TUC's Great Jobs Agenda, which sets out the actions employers and the government must take for every job to be a great job.
- (ii) Ensure as an employer we continue providing great jobs for our own employees.
- (iii) Continue to value meaningful workforce engagement and representation through our recognised trade unions.
- (iv) Continue our work with employers to secure business growth that is sustainable and ethical.
- (v) Make increasing job quality a key part of the conversation when pursuing local economic development opportunities.
- (vi) Use our commissioning and procurement processes where possible to raise employment standards amongst those suppliers and providers we work with.
- (vii) Where appropriate, engage with government and other bodies who hold regulatory powers, to tackle issues which local authorities do not have statutory powers to address directly.

11. Membership Changes - To consider any membership changes to Committees, Subsidiary Bodies and Other Bodies.



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

**Wednesday, 23 January 2019**

**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, Kelley, Kelly, 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

## COUNCIL

Thursday, 29 November 2018

**PRESENT** – The Mayor, Councillors Carson, Cartwright, Cossins, Coultas, Crichlow, Crumby, Curry, Dixon, Donoghue, Galletley, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, C L B Hughes, L Hughes, Johnson, Kane, Kelley, Knowles, Lawton, Lyolette, Marshall, McEwan, Newall, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Rahman, S Richmond, A J Scott, Mrs H Scott, Storr, C Taylor, J Taylor and Tostevin

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Baldwin, Crudass, Mrs Culley, B Jones, Mrs D Jones, Kelly, Lee, Lister, Mills, Nutt, E A Richmond, Wallis and York

**ABSENT** – Councillors Grundy and Wright

### 29 **MINUTES - TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS COUNCIL HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2018**

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Council, held on 27 September 2018.

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

### 30 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

### 31 **SEALING.**

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

### 32 **ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

There were no announcements made at the meeting.

### 33 **QUESTIONS - TO ANSWER QUESTIONS (WHERE ANY APPROPRIATE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN FROM):-**

#### (1) **THE PUBLIC;**

There was one question, with notice, from a member of the public, who 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) **MEMBERS TO THE 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.

## **34 COUNCIL REPORTS.**

NOTE: As both Items 7 (a) and 7 (b) on the Agenda had previously been considered by Cabinet, The Mayor varied the order of business to enable these reports to be taken at the appropriate time.

### **(1) POLLING DISTRICT, POLLING PLACE AND POLLING STATION REVIEW 2018**

The Managing Director submitted a report to report the outcome of a recent review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations for the Darlington and Sedgefield Parliamentary Constituencies.

The submitted report stated that the Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended by the Registration and Administration Act 2013, placed 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, and highlighted that the Review was being undertaken at the earliest opportunity to ensure that the Polling Places and Polling Stations remained fit for purpose ahead of the Local Government Elections in 2019.

The submitted report outlined the work undertaken to publicise the Review, the initial proposals submitted for consultation, the representations received, and the subsequent draft recommendations. The submitted report also addressed the recommendations of the Parliamentary Boundary Review 2018, and the observations of 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.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (a) That the changes proposed to the existing Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations ahead of the Local Elections in May 2019, be noted and approved.
- (b) That the recommendations of the Returning Officer in relation to the Polling Districts and Polling Places that will come into being should the recommendations of the Parliamentary Boundary Review be approved, be endorsed, and that Officers be requested to implement the recommendations accordingly; and
- (c) That the publication of the proposals for Polling Places be authorised.

#### **REASONS**

- (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.

## **35 CABINET REPORTS.**

- (1) 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.

### **(2) INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES - UPDATE AND REQUEST TO INCREASE THE FUND**

The Managing Director submitted a report to update Council on progress against the agreed Capital Investment Fund and to seek approval to increase the fund.

The submitted report stated that the Council had 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. The submitted report confirmed that the established fund was being used as envisaged, and included Joint Venture vehicles and economic regeneration initiatives, with returns on joint ventures anticipated at over £4m.

The submitted report presented a request from Cabinet to increase the provision to the Capital Investment Fund from £30m to £50m, in anticipation that the next calling on the fund would be used for a new joint venture at Middleton St. George using the procured Housing Joint Venture agreement.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (a) That the Capital Investment Fund be increased to £50m.
- (b) That repaid loans are recycled back into the Investment fund.
- (c) That the operation of the fund is delegated to Cabinet in line with previous Council approval.

#### **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.

### **(3) COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT - SCHEME APPROVAL 2019/20**

The Managing Director submitted a report requesting approval of the Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for 2019/20.

The submitted report stated that Councils are required to set a CTS scheme each year, and as part of that exercise they must consider whether any changes should be made to any existing scheme, and, where changes are made, consider what transitional protection, if any, should apply to anyone affected by those changes. The submitted report outlined the details of the proposed CTS scheme for 2019/20.

#### RESOLVED

- (a) That the CTS scheme for 2019/20, as appended at Appendix 1 of the submitted report, 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, be approved.

#### 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.

#### **36 SCRUTINY REPORTS - TO CONSIDER SCRUTINY 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

#### **37 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - TO CONSIDER ANY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO COMMITTEES, SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND OTHER BODIES.**

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

#### RESOLVED

- (a) That Councillor Crumbie replace Councillor Sue Richmond on the Patrol and Bus Lane Adjudication Service Joint Committee;
- (b) That Councillor Crumbie replace Councillor Sue Richmond on the Combined Fire Authority - Finance and General Purpose Committee;
- (c) That Councillor Storr fill the vacancy on the Police and Crime Panel - Joint Audit Committee;

- (d) That Councillor Storr replace Councillor Crumbie on the YMCA Board;
- (e) That Councillor Coultas replace Councillor Kevin Nicholson on the Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee; and
- (f) That Councillor Kevin Nicholson fill the vacancy for an Independent Member on the Planning Applications Committee.

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**COUNCIL**  
**31 JANUARY 2019**

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## **COUNCIL TAX CALCULATION OF TAX BASE 2019/20**

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

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

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### **SUMMARY REPORT**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To determine the Council's tax base for 2019/20.

#### **Summary**

2. In accordance with Section 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the Council has to decide its tax base by 31 January in the year preceding that for which the tax base applies. This has then to be notified to any precepting authorities and is used in the calculation and setting of the Council Tax. The relevant tax base calculations are shown in **Appendices 1 and 2**.

#### **Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that:-
  - (a) The report for the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2019/20 be approved.
  - (b) The tax base for the Council and the individual tax base for the parishes as set out at Appendix 2 be approved.

#### **Reasons**

4. The recommendations are supported to comply with statutory requirements, enabling the Council Tax for 2019/20 to be set by Council in February 2019.

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

#### **Background Papers**

- (i) Council Tax regulations
- (ii) Council Tax database

Peter Carrick - Extension 5401

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for crime and disorder
Health and Well Being	There are no health and well being issues
Carbon Impact	There are no carbon impact implications
Diversity	There are no diversity issues
Wards Affected	The proposals affect all wards
Groups Affected	The proposals affect everyone liable for Council Tax
Budget and Policy Framework	The report does not represent a change to the Budget or 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 no implications for the Sustainable Community Strategy
Efficiency	The reports does not have any efficiency implications
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

5. The tax base is the total number of domestic properties in the Borough, calculated as a weighted average 'band D equivalents'. The amount of Council Tax payable for properties in each of the 8 valuation bands A to H is statutorily determined as proportions of band D. The tax base is adjusted for discounts, exemptions and estimated changes over the coming year. An estimate of the collection rate is also applied. The tax base represents the amount of revenue that it is estimated will be raised by each £1 of band D Council Tax. It is, therefore, an important part of setting the Council Tax.
6. The council tax base is, for the purpose of calculating a billing authority's and a major precepting authority's council tax, the taxable capacity of an area or part of an area. The amounts are calculated for each financial year and represent the estimated number of chargeable dwellings after allowing for reductions and discounts and adjusted to take account of the authority's collection rate.
7. The regulations changed the formula for calculating the council tax base so as to take account of any reductions which will be made under the local council tax reduction scheme or increases for local premiums for empty or long-term empty dwellings.
8. Under the previous council tax benefit system, billing authorities received payment to cover 100% of the cost of council tax benefit paid. The council tax base was therefore unaffected by changes in council tax benefit granted because the billing authority did not forgo any council tax income from dwellings in receipt of council tax benefit.
9. However, under the local council tax support scheme, the council tax base is affected by whether a dwelling is in receipt of a council tax reduction awarded under the scheme, as the authority is foregoing council tax income from these dwellings.
10. Local council tax support reductions need to be reflected in the calculation of the council tax base, in order to calculate the correct amount of Band D council tax for the billing or major precepting authority area. If the council tax base did not reduce, authorities would set their council tax bills based on an incorrect level of taxable capacity. The outcome being that dwellings where an occupier was eligible to receive a reduction under the local authority's council tax reduction scheme would not be required to pay the full amount of council tax and the authority would not therefore be able to collect the correct amount of council tax to meet its council tax requirement, with a deficit being created on the collection fund.
11. Similarly the tax base is increased by the premium generated through the empty and long term empty homes scheme whereby the consequent increase in the council tax base is used to lower council tax bills.
12. The actual calculation of the tax base is prescribed in the above regulations and has several components. Calculations must be made of the 'relevant amount' for the year, for each of the 8 valuation bands as shown in the Council's Valuation List submitted by the Listing Officer (HM Revenue and Customs) on 30 November 2018

and the band A(-) category introduced with effect from 1 April 2000 to provide relief to disabled persons residing in band A properties. The relevant amount for each band represents the number of chargeable dwellings, as adjusted for exemptions, disabled reductions, discounts and also estimated changes up to 31 March 2020. The final total for each band has to be converted to the equivalent number of band D dwellings.

13. The relevant amounts for the individual bands are then totalled and the estimated collection rate for the year is applied. The collection rate is based on the proportion of the amount payable into the Collection Fund for the year, including appropriate adjustments for benefits and any transitional relief, which the Council believes will ultimately be collected. The resulting figure, plus any contributions in lieu from the Ministry of Defence in respect of forces accommodation, is the Council's tax base for its area for the year concerned.
14. The estimates and calculations outlined above in respect of the tax base for 2019/20 are shown in **Appendix 1**. Members will see that the calculations produce a total Band D equivalent of 33,109.7 (line 15) which, when combined with an estimated collection rate of 99.0% and contributions in lieu, results in an overall tax base figure of 32,873.7 which is a 1.5% increase on 2018/19.
15. Similar calculations also need to be made in respect of the parishes and in particular the same estimated collection rate must be applied as that used for the whole of the Council's area. The tax base calculations for each parish are as shown in **Appendix 2**.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

16. This is a technical report, which follows a prescribed format. There has been no consultation in compiling this report.

## DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL - ESTIMATED TAX BASE 2019/20

		Band A (-)	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	TOTAL
1	Dwellings per Valuation List		22,788	10,558	7,275	5,329	3,010	1,218	551	52	50,781
2	Disabled Band Relief		(53)	(43)	(30)	(29)	(26)	(13)	(8)	(16)	(218)
3	Disabled Band Relief (Chargeable)	53	43	30	29	26	13	8	16		218
4	Disabled Band Relief (Adjusted)	53	(10)	(13)	(1)	(3)	(13)	(5)	8	(16)	0
5	Exemptions	0	(486)	(124)	(142)	(89)	(15)	(11)	(6)	(0)	(873)
6	Single discount (25%)	(21)	(10,821)	(3,645)	(2,202)	(1,180)	(546)	(191)	(76)	(2)	(18,684)
7	Double discount (50%)	(2)	(28)	(9)	(15)	(12)	(13)	(5)	(22)	(6)	(112)
8	Equated discounts	(6.2)	(2,719.2)	(915.7)	(558)	(301)	(143)	(50.2)	(30)	(3.5)	(4,727)
9	Empty Homes Premium (50%)		96	27	11	6	4	2	1	1	148
10	<b>Chargeable Dwellings</b>	<b>46.75</b>	<b>19,620.75</b>	<b>9,518.75</b>	<b>6,579.50</b>	<b>4,939.00</b>	<b>2,841.00</b>	<b>1,152.75</b>	<b>523.50</b>	<b>33.00</b>	<b>45,255</b>
11	Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)	(13.47)	(4,848.70)	(980.36)	(322.81)	(128.72)	(38.40)	(11.87)	(4.43)	(0)	(6,348.8)
12	<b>Chargeable Dwellings after CTRS</b>	<b>33.28</b>	<b>14,772.05</b>	<b>8,538.39</b>	<b>6,256.69</b>	<b>4,810.28</b>	<b>2,802.60</b>	<b>1,140.88</b>	<b>519.07</b>	<b>33.00</b>	<b>38,906.2</b>
13	Estimated Changes					226					226
14	Band D Multiplier	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9	9/9	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9	
15	Band D Equivalent (Relevant Amount)	18.49	9,848.03	6,640.97	5,561.50	5,036.28	3,425.41	1,647.93	865.12	66.00	33,109.7
16	Estimated Collection Rate										99.0%
17	Contributions in Lieu					95.11					95.11
18	<b>Council Tax Base</b>										<b>32,873.7</b>

## ESTIMATED TAX BASE 2019/20 – EXPLANATION OF TERMS

	Each column shows the totals for each Council Tax band A to H. The TOTAL column is the total for the whole Council. The Band A(-) column is the total in Band A where a disabled band relief applies.
<b>Lines</b>	
Line 1	The number of dwellings in each Council Tax band as per the Valuation List, as at 30/11/18.
Line 2	The number of dwellings in each band where a disabled band relief applies
Line 3	The number of dwellings in each band after the disabled band relief has been applied
Line 4	The net number of dwellings in each band after the disabled band relief has been applied (Line 3 - Line 2)
Line 5	The number of dwellings in each band that are exempt from Council Tax (where an exemption applies), to be deducted from the total number of dwellings
Line 6	The number of dwellings in each band where a single (25%) discount applies
Line 7	The number of dwellings in each band where a double (50%) discount applies
Line 8	The adjustment for each band where a discount applies (Line 6 x 25%) + (Line 7 x 50%)
Line 9	The number of properties that have been unoccupied or unfurnished for a period in excess of two years and which attract a 50% Premium.
Line 10	The equivalent number of chargeable dwellings before the application of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme
Line 11	The equivalent number of properties in receipt of council tax benefit (working age only) in each band
Line 12	The equivalent number of properties after the application of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme
Line 13	The estimated number of additional band D equivalent dwellings that will be included in the tax base during 2019/20
Line 14	The band D multiplier that is applied to the number of chargeable dwellings in each band (this multiplier is prescribed in law)
Line 15	The adjusted number of chargeable dwellings in each band after applying the multiplier (Line 12 + Line 13) x Line 14
Line 16	The estimated percentage collection rate
Line 17	The estimated number of band D equivalent dwellings for contributions in lieu. (Armed Forces Accommodation)
Line 18	The Council Tax Base for 2019/20 (Line 15 x Line 16) + Line 17

## PARISH COUNCILS – ESTIMATED TAX BASE 2019/20

Parish	Current Parish Tax Base (1)	Adjusted Band D Equivalent 19/20 (2)	Collection Rate	Parish Tax Base
Bishopton	173.7	174.4	99.0%	172.7
Heighington	898.1	911.0	99.0%	901.9
High Coniscliffe	107.3	112.3	99.0%	111.2
Hurworth	1,219.8	1,244.5	99.0%	1,232.0
Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent	305.6	288.9	99.0%	304.0
Middleton St. George	1,694.1	1,802.7	99.0%	1,784.6
Neasham	239.9	241.4	99.0%	239.0
Piercebridge	62.2	63.8	99.0%	63.1
Sadberge	287.7	287.7	99.0%	284.8
Whessoe	534.8	544.2	99.0%	538.8

## PARISH COUNCILS ESTIMATED TAX BASE 2019/20 – EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Columns	
Current Parish Tax Base (1)	The calculated Council Tax base for each Parish, using the methodology set out in Appendix 1, and after the estimated changes for 2018/19 have been applied
Adjusted Band D Equivalent 19/20 (2)	The calculated Council Tax base for each Parish, using the same methodology set out in Appendix 1, and after the estimated changes for 2019/20 have been applied
Collection Rate	The estimated percentage collection rate
Parish Tax Base	The Council Tax Base for 2019/20 for each Parish

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## **LEADER AND EFFICIENCY AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW**

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### **Updates and issues**

1. As previously explained, I am 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. **Tees Valley Combined Authority Investment Plan (TVCAIP)** – A great deal of my time in recent weeks and months has been taken up in considering the next update to the TVCAIP. Many of you will have seen proposals about the potential to purchase Durham Tees Valley Airport (DTVA), however the Investment Plan is far more wide ranging than a single issue. The anticipated resources available for the period 2019-2029 are £583.8M and at the time of writing this report, the indicative allocation of the resources is as follows :-

• Transport	252.3
• Education, Employment and Skills	55.0
• Business Growth	146.5
• Culture & Tourism	60
• Research, Development and Innovation	20
• Place Programme	50
3. Such significant an investment pot is available as a result of 5 Tees Valley Councils agreeing to and establishing a Combined Authority which is built on decades of joint working between the Councils on economic growth and related issues. I believe that the forward looking approach the Councils took in establishing the Combined Authority has real potential to make a step change for the Tees Valley economy, it is therefore essential we utilise the resources we have wisely which is why much time and energy has been applied to develop a 10 year investment plan.
4. The TVCA meeting to decide on the Investment Plan took place on 24 January 2018, the day after the despatch of the Council agenda papers so I will be able to update Council on the outcome of the meeting. However, in writing this update to Council, I wanted to let you know my intentions on the Investment Plan as a member of the TVCA Cabinet, the body which is constituted of the 5 Council Leaders and the Mayor and has to take decisions on the Investment Plan with approval subject to a unanimous vote.
5. It is my intention to support the whole Investment Plan which includes the much publicised purchase of the airport. Looking specifically at the Airport, the options are to let it close in 2021 or invest in trying to save and improve the airport. The latter is the correct route given the economic benefit an airport brings to the region. It is this economic benefit that convinces me we need to act, on a commercial basis the airport is loss making and will be for many years. The Investment Plan not only allows for the purchase of the airport but funds to invest and cover losses, the total set aside will be £70M at this stage. It is my firm view we must try and save and

develop the airport but as I have said before, not at any cost therefore we must keep progress on our plans under constant review.

6. The wide plan offers great opportunities to improve the Tees Valley economy and I am positively excited by the significant funding for transport which is key to unlocking access to jobs. The Combined Authority has always identified culture as key enabler to economic growth by increasing tourism and improving the “feel” and “offer” of the region. I do believe this plan will move the region forward significantly.
7. Finally on the plan, it would be remiss of me not to take a look at it from a Darlington perspective within the wider Tees Valley vision. The plan allows for some significant investment in Darlington as well as the generic cross region investment namely :-

Darlington Station Improvements	£25M
Darlington Railway Museum	£20M
Ingenuous Growth Fund to assist economy growth in the Borough likely to be targeted at the town centre	£10M

8. I trust Council will agree with me that to the proposed plan represents great opportunities for Darlington and the Tees Valley.

## Meetings

9. **Darlington Partnership** - I attended the Darlington Partnership Board meeting on 28 November 2018. The Board agreed the final version of the Fairer, Richer Darlington programme which is now published on the Partnership’s website. The meeting focused on action partners would take to deliver the programme. This is a significant initiative which aims to tackle poverty and address inequality in the Borough. A key element of the programme is focused on maximising the spend of public bodies in the Borough. With this in mind work is underway to examine Council spend. Fairer, Richer, Darlington addresses an important and worsening issue in Darlington and I will therefore want to ensure Council services are aligned to it.
10. **Darlington Cares** - I attended a celebration event which marked the success of a project delivered by Darlington Cares, ‘The Great Park Auction’ which saw four of its member companies pledge a total of 2,135 employee volunteering hours to help improve four of the Borough’s best loved green spaces and play areas.
11. Cummins pledged 465 hours to Eastbourne Park, EE donated 750 hours to The Denes, Darlington Building Society offered 500 hours to North Lodge Park and Capita volunteered 420 hours to Green Park. Working with the Council and its parks rangers and the respective parks’ Friends groups, the volunteers worked over the Summer to improve the parks. In all 921 volunteers donated 3,376 hours of their time – way in excess of the hours bid. The benefits of the initiative have been far wider than just the horticultural improvements, with far more local residents now able to enjoy the parks. I was delighted to be invited to pass on my congratulations to the participating companies. The initiative has now been shortlisted as a finalist in the Community Engagement Award category of the Keep Britain Tidy Network Awards, with the winners to be announced at a special ceremony in Manchester on 6 February 2019.

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

12. As TVCA Cabinet Member with the portfolio for strategic transport, I would like to provide you with some of the highlights:
- (a) The Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan is being developed for consultation in the Spring. This will include a suite of daughter documents covering:-
    - (i) Cycling and Walking Strategy;
    - (ii) Bus Vision;
    - (iii) Rail Strategy;
    - (iv) Freight Strategy; and
    - (v) Road Strategy.
- Darlington and the other TV authorities will develop Local Implementation Plans that complement Strategic objectives.
- (b) TVCA has been allocated £75m Transforming Cities Funding over four years to develop and improve public transport and sustainable transport networks. A programme of projects are now being developed.
  - (c) The Department for Transport has recently announced a new Large Local Major and Major Road Network Investment Fund. Business cases are in development for Darlington Northern Link Road and New Tees Crossing to seek entry into this programme or through Highways England's Road Investment Strategy.
  - (d) A strategic outline business case for Darlington Station has been submitted to DfT and TVCA is awaiting feedback. Work continues on the technical development to satisfy the next stages of the DfT's five stage process for the approval and delivery of new enhancement projects on the Rail Network.

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

13. Cabinet approved the Revenue Medium Term Financial Plan, and a proposed Capital Programme, for consultation, which included a Council Tax increase of 2.99 per cent for 2018/19, and the Schedule of Charges. I am very pleased that once again we have been able to produce a balanced year plan.
14. Cabinet received an update on the progress of Darlington Mowden Park's proposal for a Darlington Sports Village, previously considered by Cabinet in December 2017, and to seek agreement in terms of the ongoing approach in taking this project forward.
15. Cabinet gave consideration to the disposal of the former Beck House site and adjacent land at West Auckland Road, for commercial development and access, agreed that the land be sold, and that the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with myself, be authorised to conclude negotiations in line with the terms set out in the submitted report.

16. I was very pleased to receive our external audit report once again giving the Council's accounts a clean bill of health and stating we are a Value for Money Council.
17. We continue to fund new ways to raise income for the Council in innovative ways as Cabinet agreed the establishment of another joint venture company to build houses for sale this time at Middleton St. George. Profits from these venture being much needed to support front line services.

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

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

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### **Purpose of the Report**

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

### **Adult Social Care –Strategic Commissioning**

2. The Commissioning and Contracts team have provided support during the winter period by commissioning a Rapid Response service to ensure that people can be discharged from hospital in a safe and timely manner. A recent review of this service confirmed that the support offered by the service is highly effective.
3. The local provider market remains stable and occupancy levels across local Residential Care homes are such that people are able to choose which home they would like to reside in. The local Homecare contract also continues to work well, and unlike many areas across the country with them having capacity to deliver support.

### **Adult Social Care – Operational Developments**

4. The National Social Work awards recognise the success of the profession's most innovative social workers and is the leading celebration of its kind in the sector. As I noted in November's report, two social workers from Darlington had been announced as finalists for awards. Reaching the final is a significant achievement in itself, so I am very pleased to report that one of our colleagues was presented with a Silver award in the category of Mental Health Social Worker of the year.
5. Operational staff continue to work closely with NHS colleagues to plan for the potential winter pressures ensuring that the health and social care system could manage surges in activity over the Christmas period. An enhanced level of support was provided during the festive period, which included social workers proactively working within Darlington Memorial Hospital during weekends and bank holidays. This has enabled us to successfully facilitate 44 hospital discharges, 50% more than in 2017/18, with no delays attributable to adult social care.

### **Darlington Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board**

6. The Board met on 6 December 2018. There were presentations from the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) and an overview from County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust. CQC provided an overview of the Local System review of services. The review took place in a number of local authority areas and focussed on the pathway for people aged over 65 years and, in particular, on the interface between social care, general practice and acute services.

7. TEWV provided a presentation on Stopping over-Medication of People with a Learning Disability, Autism or both (STOMP). STOMP is a National Campaign led by NHS England and came about as a result of the Winterbourne View abuse enquiry, which highlighted serious concerns about reliance on psychotropic medication. TEWV signed up to the STOMP healthcare pledge in April this year. A discussion took place on local learning from Learning Disability Mortality Reviews (LeDeR) following the publication of the LeDeR Annual Report. A lead nurse for Learning Disabilities from CDDFT provided an overview to board on the organisations commitment to review all deaths prior to the introduction of LeDeR. A programme of awareness raising and training, as well as a flagging system for patients with a learning disability, has been introduced.
8. The Board also received a presentation and workshop facilitated by Suzanne Joyner, Director of Children and Adult Services, on the new safeguarding arrangements that are required to be in place by September 2019, replacing the existing Local Safeguarding Children Board. The presentation highlighted, under the new legislation, the three safeguarding partners, Darlington Borough Council, Durham Constabulary and Darlington CCG will have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Darlington. A shadow Executive Group has been established with chief officers of the three partners. A delivery plan has been established which will be monitored and updated by the Executive Group with updates to be provided to future children and adult Board meetings.

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

## **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 17 January 2019. Representatives from Education were in attendance and participated in discussions about how to promote and improve health. The focus of the Board meeting was a stocktake on the Health and Wellbeing Plan priorities including an update on the Darlington Children and Young People's Plan.

### **Ofsted Annual Conversation**

3. In line with the new Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services, the Director of Children and Adults Services and representatives from the senior management team met for an 'Annual Conversation' on 21 November 2018 with the Regional Director, Senior HMI and Regulatory Officer. An update on progress against the children's service improvement plan and self-evaluation; and an overview on our current performance, was presented. The updates were received positively by the Regional Director who also offered advice on how the presentation of both the improvement plan and self-evaluation could be further enhanced. Moving forward, the possibility of a focused visit in 2019 on Darlington Children's Services' Front Door – the service that received contacts and referrals or, children in need and those subject to a child protection plan, was discussed.

### **Corporate Parenting Panel**

4. The next meeting is scheduled for 31 January 2019.

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

5. The Board met on 4 December 2018 and received a presentation and workshop facilitated by Suzanne Joyner, Director of Children and Adults Services on the new safeguarding arrangements required to be in place by September 2019, replacing the existing Local Safeguarding Children Board. A shadow Executive Group has been established with chief officers of the three partners and under the new arrangements the formal Executive Group will have joint responsibility for children and adult safeguarding in Darlington. A delivery plan has been established which will be monitored and updated by the Executive Group with updates to be provided to future Children and Adult Board meetings.

6. Board were provided with a position report on safeguarding disabled children and young people in Darlington. The report highlighted there are currently 131 children and young people working with the disabled children and young adults team. Board was assured that there is good cohesion between services and children's social care for children not known to services.
7. Graham Hall, Head of Community Safety, provided Board with an overview of the PREVENT duty arrangements nationally and in Darlington. Members were assured that there has been an excellent take up of training around Prevent and the Channel process in Darlington is very effective. Operation Dovetail will be implemented in 2019 which will transfer responsibility for some elements of Channel from the Police to the Local Authority and a local delivery group has been set up to support with this. A recent HMICFRS inspection provided good feedback on the Durham and Darlington position and Board was assured there is no specific intelligence for Darlington regarding threats.

### **School Forum**

8. The Forum held a special meeting on 27 November to consider the school funding formula for 2019/20. The Forum agreed to a transfer of funding between the schools block and the high needs block of £400,000 to contribute towards high needs demand pressures. As the agreement was above the 0.5 per cent threshold (of the schools block) that Forum can approve (£400,000 is 0.6 per cent) a request has to be made to the Secretary of State to confirm the movement of funds.

### **Education**

9. Public consultations on the draft SEND strategy and funding arrangements and SEND Home to School transport were completed on 28 November. 108 responses to the surveys were received and 99 members of the public and professionals attended consultation events. In addition a number of consultation events were held for children and young people and 50 young people attended these events. Officers are completing their analysis of the results of the consultation and final proposals are due to be considered at Cabinet on 5 February 2019.

### **Locality Teams**

10. 2019 has seen the launch of a new service, 'Keeping Families Together', providing intensive support to maintain children within their family home. The service will work extended hours in supporting families develop strategies within their home to prevent children becoming subject to child protection plans or coming into care. Progress to this meeting will be reported bi-annually.

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

11. Young Ambassador Interviews were held on 18 December 2018. There were five posts available for Children in Care and/or Care Leavers for 6 hours per week each. All posts were appointed to following interviews. These posts have been created and are jointly funded by the 12 Local Authorities in the North East. The role of these Young Ambassadors is to deliver the regional Child in Care Council work. The Head of Service for Assessment, Care Planning and LATC was a member of the interview panel.

12. As at 30 November 2018 the following figures were reported:
  - (a) 103 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan, compared with 93 at the same period last year; and
  - (b) 253 children were in care, compared with 223 at the same period last year
13. The Leaving Care service received an internal audit in December 2018. There were no recommendations made following this audit.

### **National Implementation Advisor for Care Leavers First Year Report**

14. The first annual report from the National Implementation Adviser for Care Leavers has been published by the Department for Education. This covers the period from October 2017 to October 2018. The report is based on Mark Riddell's visits to Local Authorities following the passage of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It celebrates the findings of what is working well and identifies good practice relating to provision for Care Leavers. The report also identifies some key challenges that Local Authorities will need to address in order to provide consistently high quality services for Care Leavers. Darlington Leaving Care service is mentioned positively in this report.
15. Following Mark Riddell's visit to Darlington's Care Leaver Service on 13 and 14 September 2018, an outcome letter was received in which he noted; *'I was very impressed by the leadership and management approach that was ambitious, aspirational and I got a real sense of passion and commitment to have a better offer for care leavers across the whole service area.'* In relation to our Corporate Parenting Panel he noted *'I got a real sense of a yes we can do this approach and that you know the kids individually, which is very positive.'*

### **Children's Commissioning and Contracts**

14. The Council has completed the annual contract monitoring review on the Independent Foster Agencies (IFA) operating as part of the Tees Valley IFA contract. No issues with contractual compliance were identified, and there was evidence of positive outcomes for children and young people being supported by these providers.
15. A strategic review of community based short breaks for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is currently being undertaken. A presentation regarding this review was made at the annual Parent/Carer forum in November, and consultation with Parent/Carers is being carried out via engagement questionnaires and a series of focus groups, which will be held in early 2019. The review will be concluded in April 2019 and findings will inform future commissioning intentions for the provision of short breaks.

### **Meetings**

16. Since the last meeting of Council, I have attended:
  - (a) Darlington Safeguarding Children's Board;
  - (b) Community Safety Awards Event at Blackwell Meadows;

- (c) addressed the Carmel College 2018 Leavers and Sixth Form Presentation Evenings;
- (d) Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee;
- (e) HM Deerbolt Young Offenders Christmas Carol Service;
- (f) briefings with the Director and Assistant Directors of Children's and Adult Services;
- (g) meeting with the Managing Director of Darlington Borough Council;
- (h) Children's Services Team Event at Central Hall, Dolphin Centre;
- (i) Careers Education Advisory Group Meeting;
- (j) Adoption Tees Valley Briefing for Lead Members for Children and Young People;
- (k) Chaired LA Governor's Appointment Panel;
- (l) Schools Forum;
- (m) observed an adoption panel at the Tees Valley Adoption Agency as part of training to become a panel member;
- (n) met with Graham Hall, Community Safety Lead in relation to youth anti-social behaviour in the Town Centre;
- (o) Health and Wellbeing Board;
- (p) held my monthly Young Person Surgery at the Dolphin Centre;
- (q) Darlington Partnership Meeting at the Hippodrome; and
- (r) Youth Offending Service Board.

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

## **OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO**

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

### **Crime and Disorder**

2. There has been a four per cent decrease in the number of reported crimes during the period 1 April to 20 November 2018 compared to the same period in 2017. This equates to a reduction of 369 crimes. Crimes showing an increase include: violence without injury (disorder), harassment and possession of weapons. Crimes showing a significant decrease include: theft, burglary and vehicle crime.
3. The increase in crimes relating to violence and harassment is attributable to certain types of anti-social behaviour now being recorded as crimes and also compliance with national recording standards, which now requires certain crimes to be recorded which were previously not recorded as such.
4. The increase in the possession of weapons is 36 per cent which equates to 49 crimes compared to 36 in a previous period. These offences are currently under review to determine any further action.
5. Whilst Darlington is currently showing a decrease in reported crime there are increases elsewhere in the Durham Constabulary area, with figures ranging from four per cent in East Durham to nine per cent in West Durham.
6. Darlington has also experienced a seven per cent decrease in all reported incidents to the police during the same period and anti-social behaviour is currently 14 per cent lower than last year.
7. Exceptions relating to increases in anti-social behaviour include Northgate which is up 22 per cent and Eastbourne which is showing an increase of 17 per cent when compared to similar periods last year.
8. Darlington Community Partnership and the Multi-Agency Problem Solving Group are currently working together to tackle these issues and have developed and completed a number of operations, initiatives and time limited work to reduce crime and disorder in the areas of exception.

### **Civic Enforcement Service**

### **Youth Referral, Intervention and Diversion Programme**

9. Since 1 January 2017, 627 people (507 young people and 120 adults) have been referred to Darlington Borough Council Civic Enforcement Service and Youth Offending Service for intervention and diversionary activities. Of the total number, 627 have received official warnings, 66 have been issued with Acceptable Behaviour Agreements and four Criminal Behaviour Orders have been

granted by the Youth Court. The rate of recidivism (i.e. reoffending) is 10.76 per cent which is significantly below the national figure which is over three times higher.

### **Community Engagement Programme - MutualGain**

10. Durham Constabulary and partners, including Darlington Borough Council, local Councillors and members of the community are currently completing a programme of activity designed to increase social capital and reduce dependency on local services in Bank Top. The programme, facilitated by MutualGain, recently held a special event at Eastbourne Community Centre to focus on a number of local improvements around litter, dog fouling, motorcycle nuisance, local parkland and quality of life in the area. Around 40 local residents attended the event and a number of key actions were agreed for further development in early 2019.

### **Town Centre Begging**

11. A multi-agency problem solving group involving Darlington Borough Council Community Safety, Town Centre Partnership, Housing Options, Police, the 700 Club and NECA have recently developed a strategy to tackle begging in Darlington. The strategy, which is supported by an action plan, has four key strands including empathy, engagement, education and enforcement. All members are now actively supporting the plan which will address the challenges and complexities surrounding begging and homelessness in Darlington.

### **'Have A Heart Give Smart' Campaign**

12. The 'Have a Heart Give Smart' campaign was launched on 14 December 2018. The campaign aims to educate and inform members of the public against giving cash to an individual who is begging as they could be contributing towards a person's vulnerabilities. As an alternative, members of the public are advised to donate to the 700 Club who fund specialist workers to engage and support these individuals.
13. The initiative seeks to raise awareness by encouraging conversations around the issues of homelessness, rough sleeping and street begging, in addition to educating the public about public safety and security, as well as the role of local service providers.

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

14. Members of the Cabinet are shortly to consider the introduction of a Public Space Protection Order in a designated area of Darlington Town Centre. The order, if granted, will provide additional powers for Police, Police Community Support and Civic Enforcement Officers to effectively tackle the detrimental issues of alcohol related disorders, begging and youth nuisance. A report, which includes the detail of a three month consultation period, will be made available to Cabinet to support the decision-making process.

### **Trading Standards**

15. On 11 December 2018, a local trader received a written warning from Trading Standards following the seizure of a quantity of suspected illegal tobacco products from his business premises in August 2018. The trader signed possession of the

tobacco products over to Trading Standards for disposal.

16. One of Trading Standard's most recent service messages was 'Don't toy with your child's safety' which offered advice on how to avoid buying fake and unsafe toys this Christmas. Shortly after the message was published in the November 2018 edition of the One Darlington magazine, in local publications and through social media, Trading Standards received a complaint about toys offered for sale, which resulted in a trader receiving advice.

## **Private Sector Housing**

### **Warmer Homes Funding Application**

17. Darlington, along with the other four Tees Valley Councils, are submitting a bid for Warmer Homes Funding. The funding is available for Councils and other organisations to deliver heating and energy efficiency improvements. If grant funding is awarded in March 2019, this will enable the Council to pay for installing gas central heating to those who don't have heating and are in most the most need. Residents living in certain areas across the Borough will qualify automatically if they do not already have a heating system. A gas supply will be required and in some cases this will be paid for from grant funding. Residents living elsewhere will qualify for heating if they meet certain criteria, such as having a low income. Other heating options will be available for properties without a gas supply, especially for those living in rural off gas areas.
18. This is an excellent opportunity to continue to improve housing conditions and reduce fuel poverty and hardship. Owner-occupiers and those who are privately renting will be able to apply for heating improvements. The project in Darlington will be managed by the Council's Private Sector Housing Team and Stockton Council will be the lead Council to receive funding and oversee project delivery, if successful.

## **PREVENT**

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

19. I, as Portfolio Holder, and the Community Resilience Officer, recently attended the second Regional Forum of Prevent at Hartlepool Council on 16 November 2018. The Prevent Forum brings together elected members and Prevent leads from across the North East region. The Forum, supported by the Home Office and Local Government Association, provided attendees with a series of updates relating to Prevent, Channel, Operation Dovetail, cyber awareness, good practice and future training events.

### **Orcuma (First) Mapping Package**

20. Darlington Borough Council is currently working with Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary, Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue and Orcuma to introduce and develop a mapping package which displays crime and ASB data throughout Darlington and County Durham. The package, which went 'live' in Darlington on 14 December 2018, will support the effective deployment of multi-agency resources to focus on areas of threat and risk.

## **Taxi Operation**

21. The Licensing department has received a significant increase in calls regarding out of town taxi companies operating illegally in Darlington. In response to this, the Licensing department commenced a joint operation with officers from Durham Police over the Christmas period. The operation concentrated on known hotspots and reassured Darlington taxi companies that offenders were being targeted.

## **The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018**

22. The introduction of the above regulations has had a significant impact on the Licensing team. The legislation was hastily introduced in September 2018 and came into force in October 2018. The licensing team has worked hard since that time to deal with all applications to date.

23. I have also :-

- (a) carried out a morning shift with our PSCO on 4 December, 2018;
- (b) carried out a night shift with the Police Response Team on 10 December, 2018;
- (c) attended the launch of the Have a Heart Campaign on 14 December, 2018;
- (d) attended a meeting of the Combined Fire Authority on 18 December, 2018;
- (e) attended a meeting of the Police Crime Panel on 10 January, 2019; and
- (f) attended a meeting of the 700 Club on 15 January, 2019

**Councillor Helen Crumbie  
Community Safety Portfolio**

## **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.

### **Development Management Matters**

2. The following sites have been Granted Planning Permission since the last report to Members:
  - (a) Detailed Planning Permission for the erection of 3 dwellings at Hurworth;
  - (b) Detailed Planning Permission for the erection of 12 dwellings at land adjacent to the Oak Tree Pub Middleton St George; and
  - (c) Renewal of Planning Permission for the erection of an access road at Durham Tees Valley Airport.
3. Other significant applications which are awaiting determination include an application for 1500 houses at Coniscliffe Park and an application for a Lidl supermarket at Faverdale.

### **Environmental Health**

4. In Quarter 2 the Environmental Health Team dealt with 955 requests for service relating to 50 different subject topics.
5. Of these the highlights include:
  - (a) Food Hygiene 89
  - (b) Licensing Consultations 75
  - (c) Barking Dogs 83
  - (d) Domestic Noise 79
  - (e) Personal searches 264
  - (f) Planning Consultations 87
  - (g) Domestic Refuse 69
6. Additionally the Pest Control Service dealt with 233 requests for service and the Commercial Team carried out 141 Food Inspections.

### **Land Contamination**

7. Darlington's industrial heritage often results in the consideration of land contamination issues via the planning process in order to ensure that sites are suitable for use taking into account ground conditions and to prevent unacceptable risks in terms of human health and the wider environment. Officers in Environmental Health working together with Planning Officers have recently overseen the successful ground investigation and remediation of two former industrial sites within the Borough which were redeveloped for housing. These sites were located at Alexander Street (16/00686/FUL) and on a site known as 'The

Sidings' (15/00659/FUL) opposite Darlington College also off Haughton Road. The remediation works included the removal and disposal of the most heavily contaminated material off site, placement of a clean cover in garden areas and installation of gas protection measures where required.

## **Local Plan**

8. As a result of the Draft Local Plan consultation the Council received over 1350 representations, some of these representations have involved further discussion/negotiation. Due to that ongoing dialogue the Planning Policy Team consider it is prudent to carry out some further evidence gathering to de-risk the chance of the Plan being found unsound at Examination, which would incur extra expense and delay. As the Council believes it is now in a position that it has a five year supply of housing land there is a reduced risk in any Plan delay. The Council is not currently under the threat of Government Intervention.

## **Business Investment**

9. Year to date, the Invest in Darlington website has generated 206 property search enquiries. The website and content is currently being redeveloped for launch in quarter 1 of 2019. This will include a greater coverage of testimonials and case studies of Darlington's strategic employers in order to demonstrate the wide ranging business base in the town, as a means to attract further inward investment from priority sectors.
10. Notable investments to report include Cummins, whereby a significant expansion and refurbishment plan is currently underway at the Yarm Road site, which will also include the reoccupation of Meridian House in 2019. This will lead to an additional 220 office-based personnel being based on site across a variety of professional and managerial posts. This is in addition to 150 new warehouse and production staff taken on to meet growing demand for Cummins engines globally. Magnet is also currently investing heavily in site improvements and new machinery with an £8m investment. And finally, Thysis, a York based injection moulding company has now taken occupation of their new premises off Allington Way, leading to the creation of 50 new jobs.
11. There are currently 2,620 Darlington residents claiming out-of-work benefits. This equates to 4 per cent of all residents and is slightly higher than the North East figure as a whole which sits at 3.8 per cent. Great Britain's figure is 2.3 per cent.
12. Of those claiming out-of-work benefits, 580 are aged 18-24 (7.7 per cent) and 340 (8.25 per cent) are aged 18-21. These two age groups are those which are most notable in variance compared to Great Britain as a whole and the North East.

## **Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and Work Programme.**

13. The Council is currently delivering two initiatives aimed at supporting the unemployed, both projects operate from the One Stop Shop in the Market Place:-
  - (a) The YEI is a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and European Social Fund (ESF) funded programme and is being delivered by a range of partners across the Tees Valley; including DBC, Citizens Advice Bureau and Morrison Trust in Darlington. The programme supports 15-29 year olds into Education,

Employment and Training (EET) and currently runs up until 31 July 2022. Up to the end of September 2018 (Quarter 3) the programme had supported 721 young people in Darlington with 380 (53 per cent) successfully progressing into EET. Since the start of the programme in July 2016 DBC staff have delivered 284 of those supported interventions with an overall progression rate of 68 per cent.

- (b) The Routes to Work project started in July 2018 and is a DWP / TVCA joint funded project. The project is being delivered by the five local authorities and runs until 31 March 2021. Routes to Work is aimed at removing the barriers to employment for those aged 30+ and unemployed. To date, in Darlington, the project has already successfully engaged 84 unemployed adults of which 18 have made 'significant improvements' in moving towards the job market and there have been six successful job starts.

### **Town Centre**

- 14. The revitalisation and re-development of the Town Centre remains a top priority for the Council. We have identified the four major areas for investment and development which include:-
  - (a) Victorian Indoor Market
  - (b) Skinnergate and the Yards and Wynds
  - (c) Northgate
  - (d) Crown Street
- 15. We are working with partners to bring forward these development sites and it is anticipated that they will form the major element of the Council's bid into the Future High Streets Fund.

**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**

1. The NHS Health Checks contract has been successfully awarded and mobilisation will commence during February and March with the service going live from 1 April 2019.
2. Darlington Borough Council runs a Healthy Lifestyle Survey annually. The results of the self-reported survey helps schools, and services respond to local issues. The survey has been completed by over 6,000 pupils across 23 primary and seven secondary schools during the autumn and winter terms.
3. Darlington has been successful, along with Durham, Tees, Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby CCG areas in gaining, via a bidding process, some resource for suicide prevention from NHS England. The resource will support a national initiative to reduce suicide rates in England by 10 per cent by 2020-21. The local funding will be used to build on the work already underway in Darlington through the Darlington Suicide Prevention Plan. Part of the funding will support a grass roots grant fund, launched in December 2018.
4. Today, Thursday the 31, marks the end of Dry January! Well done to all who took part. Evidence shows us that 72 per cent of people who are alcohol free as part of Dry January have long term positive benefits.

### **Health and Well Being Board**

5. I chaired the meeting of the Health and Well Being Board held on 17 January 2019, at which a 'stocktake' was undertaken on the progress of the Board's priorities, since it adopted the 'life course' approach. The current Terms of Reference were also considered by the Board and Members were requested to consider what further changes they wished to make, if any, to those Terms of Reference.
6. A number of urgent/usual business reports were also considered at the meeting including a report on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy and High Needs Funding, an update from Healthwatch Darlington and a verbal update from the Clinical Commissioning Group on the Integrated Care System

### **Universal Credit**

7. In June 2018, the Universal Credit 'full-service' commenced in Darlington. This means that most people of working age making a new claim for benefit (including Housing Benefit paid by the Council) will now claim Universal Credit from the

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). This has started the process of moving everyone onto Universal Credit, which is due to be completed by 2023.

8. Darlington Borough Council has been working with the DWP and other agencies to ensure that residents receive the right information, advice and support to help them claim Universal Credit and maintain their tenancies. A dedicated team of Tenancy Sustainment Officers has been specifically recruited to assist Council Tenants with the transition to Universal Credit.
9. Since the implementation of the full service, the number of people receiving Universal Credit in Darlington has increased from 993 in June 2018 to 3,067 in November 2018. Council Tenant rent arrears have increased from £567k in June 2018 to £772k in December 2018. This increase is partly due to the way in which Universal Credit is paid; monthly in arrears. All tenants moving onto Universal Credit are offered support to manage their finances and sustain their tenancies. In some cases, the Council can also apply to the DWP to have the housing costs element of Universal Credit paid directly to the Council.
10. Further information about Universal Credit is available at: [www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit).

### **Begging**

11. As part of a multi-agency approach to begging, Housing Options are joining with the Community Safety Team, statutory and voluntary organisations in a 'Have a heart, give smart' campaign. The purpose is to encourage the public to donate to charities rather than give money to beggars. There is an assumption that anyone who is begging is homeless. Everyone who is found to be begging is approached to see what assistance can be given to them by a project run by the 700 Club. They have found that virtually all of those begging in the town centre have a home. In a number of cases they do have other problems such as addictions and assistance is always offered. The campaign therefore is intended to divert donations to charities who work with people who have these problems.

### **Community Fund**

#### **Red Hall**

12. The Friends of Red Hall ran a successful Christmas event for the community. They again linked with Stockton International Festival who provided a number of circus acts as part of an afternoon of entertainment that included food and presents for the children.
13. Housing Officers supported the Primary school's Christmas celebrations and provided two Christmas Hampers for a prize draw. The hampers were financed from the Community Fund and included ingredients for a full Christmas Dinner as well as other goods donated by a local supermarket. A residents survey was also held. Feedback was very positive, particularly in respect of improvements to the housing, play facilities and increased social events/community activities.

## **Firthmoor**

14. Housing staff supported Firthmoor's Christmas celebration. Selection boxes were provided for children funded from the Community Fund.

## **Cockerton Play Area**

15. An event was held for families at Windsor Court. This was an opportunity to provide some food and activities for children during the school holiday. It was also an opportunity to discuss with residents the plans for a second phase of development. A number of volunteers have now come forward who will help to form a group to develop the second phase and fund raise.

## **Customer Engagement Survey**

16. As part of a review of tenant engagement a survey of tenants was carried out in the Housing Connect Magazine to find out if tenants wanted to get involved in the way the housing service is planned and delivered. It found that a significant proportion of tenants were interested in improving their community. Just over half the tenants who responded were already involved in some form of voluntary work and 65 per cent said they would be more interested in getting more involved with the Housing Service. The top three issues were: improving the local area, tackling ASB and repairs. However it is clear the way that tenants want to get involved is changing. The most popular way tenants want to get involved and engage with us is on line.

**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.

### **National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) Update**

2. Yarm Road/McMullen Road roundabout – works are ongoing to improve the capacity of this important roundabout. Works in December focused on Salter's Lane to avoid causing traffic delays on Yarm Road on the run up to Christmas. Works on Yarm Road/McMullen Road and the roundabout will commenced this month and the scheme is programmed for completion at the end of April 2019.
3. Detailed design works have commenced on the proposed Lingfield Way/Yarm Road traffic signalled controlled junction. This scheme involves the widening of Lingfield Way to two lanes and the installation of a traffic signal control junction including pedestrian phases and the construction of a footway/cycleway on the east side of Lingfield Way. Some diversion work for statutory undertakers has already taken place and the main works are programmed to commence around Easter time.
4. Highways England propose to commence a scheme to improve Morton Palms roundabout in early February 2019. This scheme involves the widening of the Yarm Road approach to form three lanes onto the A66 and the widening of the A67 approach onto the A66 to create an extended two lane approach to the roundabout. This scheme is programmed to be completed by Easter 2019. Two lanes of traffic will be maintained between Morton Palms and Morton Park roundabout whilst construction is ongoing. The junction will be resurfaced overnight as it will require the closure of the A66.
5. The new Symmetry Park road, linking Morton Way with Tornado Way, is currently under construction. This link road runs parallel with the A66 and McMullen Road and will provide an alternative route to help traffic in the area.

### **Parkgate Bridge**

6. The structure is now in place and the landscaping works started in the New Year. It is anticipated that the bridge will be open towards the end of February 2019.

### **National Highway and Transportation Award**

7. All highway authorities are encouraged by Department for Transport to participate in a national public satisfaction survey annually. This year Darlington was asked to present at the annual conference and picked up an award for improved public satisfaction in road safety and managing congestion. Darlington ranked number one of 113 authorities in terms of our road safety education public satisfaction.

## Rotary Way Cycle Route

8. A new cycle route has been completed along Rotary Way in the Faverdale area of Darlington. The route links the toucan crossing on West Auckland Road adjacent to the junction with John Fowler Way, northwards to the roundabout junction with Rotary Way. The route then continues along Rotary Way to the Centurion Way roundabout. Rotary Way has a 50mph speed limit and large numbers of HGVs serving the industrial estate, and this cycle route provides a safe route separate to the traffic for those riding their bikes to work in this area. The scheme was funded jointly by Darlington Borough Council and the Tees Valley Combined Authority Access to Employment programme.

## Transport

9. Groundwork has been undertaking consultation with residents, businesses and visitors to Victoria Road (between the rail station and the ring road) and the surrounding roads. The aim is to identify how the area can be changed to improve sustainable and public travel to the station, as well as support the local economy and environment through improvements to safety, accessibility and connectivity. The work has involved face to face conversations, online surveys and stickyworld, an online planning resource. Groundwork has then developed ideas and concepts to address some of the issues raised and developed models to depict what these could look like. Two events to discuss these ideas have taken place in the Dolphin Centre involving local residents, businesses, Councillors and other stakeholders. These will be considered and options developed for implementation in 2019/20.
10. Bus Marketing – two events took place in December and January to promote travel by bus. In December, Arriva promoted the Christmas bus timetable and £1 twilight fare. A festive bus was parked at Joseph Pease Place and staff handed out festive goodies to visitors to the town centre. On 21 January, 'Blue Monday', the Council worked with Arriva, The Cornmill Centre, Queen Street Shopping Centre and House of Fraser to promote bus services and the town centre in general. A day long programme of events was held, designed to spread some cheer on what is supposed to be the most depressing day of the year. There were free coffees and pizzas for bus passengers, giveaways, promotions and entertainment. The event was promoted on buses and social media.
11. The Shining Example cycle safety campaign ran from the end of October until 7 December and aimed to highlight the requirement to use bike lights during the hours of darkness. The campaign centred around a video which demonstrated the difference that using bike lights and reflective clothing makes to the visibility of a cyclist in the dark. The campaign attracted media attention from across the Tees Valley, with the video being shown at two Middlesbrough Football Club matches at the Riverside Stadium, and a radio interview with BBC Tees, in collaboration with the accident reduction team at Durham and Darlington Constabulary. The outcomes of the campaign were over 1,200 views of the video on YouTube; 3,300 page-views of Shining Example content on the Let's Go Tees Valley website and 280 entries in the prize draw to win bike lights and reflective cycling gear.

12. As part of a year-round cycling incentivising scheme, cyclists were encouraged to log their rides during December on the Love to Ride website, for daily chances to win cycling gear from 1 to 25 December. Around 200 cyclists take part each year in the Tees Valley and around 20,000 miles are cycled in the challenge.
13. As part of the Let's Go Tees Valley programme we have worked with two secondary schools to develop materials for young people to share their messages for cycling safely. The concepts were generated by the students and then they produced story boards which were then turned into professionally shot videos, featuring the students themselves. The first video, produced by a school in Hartlepool, was piloted amongst students at Hummersknott School in Darlington at a series of assemblies during Road Safety Week. It focuses on the importance of wearing a helmet. In addition, the Shining Example video was shown to highlight the importance of using bike lights. It is planned to roll out the video to all secondary schools and via social media.
14. In mid-November we distributed 200 Bishop Line branded reusable coffee cups at Bank Top Station. The cups were so popular that throughout December we distributed 500 Christmas themed, Bishop Line branded, reusable coffee cups. They were distributed at Christmas events held at venues along the Bishop Line route – Auckland Castle Christmas Market, Locomotion Christmas weekend, Head of Steam 'Meet Santa' event, Hippodrome café and Dolphin Centre Horsemarket café. The cups promote the recently launched 'Hourly Service'; feature a list of attractions along the line; and the Bishop Line website address where visitors can see the new hourly service advert. Twelve Social media posts shown between 14 November and 13 December generated a reach of over 7,000 (no. of people seeing the posts) and ultimately 490 post clicks to find out more, 119 likes/comments/shares, and ten new Facebook page likes. Posters have also been placed at the stations along the line. The patronage continues to grow.

## **Sports Development**

### **Sheltered Housing Update**

15. The programme has engaged with 148 people in 2018 from sheltered housing schemes within the town and community. There was a total of 14 sessions weekly, which ranged from chair based exercises, to yoga and Tai Chi. There was a total of 3,128 attendances in 2018.
16. In addition to the weekly physical activity sessions in 2018, we engaged with the residents to provide different events, such as: choirs, dance shows, Dogs Trust visits, beauty treatments and ukulele lessons. We were assisted by five volunteers, who took part in various roles from bingo callings to befriending.

### **Red Hall Update**

17. The Healthy Darlington Project at Red hall engaged with 106 residents to provide activities, including: Strong by Zumba, Boxercise, Bootcamp and Archery. The total attendances in 2018 was 1,062.

## **Events Management**

### **Ice Sculpture Event –8 December**

18. Thousands of visitors explored Darlington's first ever interactive trail of festive ice sculptures, which were available for viewing at various locations around the town centre. The sculptures included Angel Wings, Rudolph, The Nutcracker, Aladdin's Lamp and our very own Locomotion No.1 Steam Train. Visitors had the opportunity to watch a sculptor at work in the Market Square and a chance to take part in the carving process at Joseph Pease. A map was provided online and at various locations in the town centre, which included a competition to win a family ticket to see Aladdin at the Hippodrome by guessing how many baubles were inside the treasure chest sculpture on Blackwellgate.

### **12 Days of Christmas Social Media Campaign – 8-19 December**

19. In December, 12 days of competitions were advertised on the Love Darlo Facebook page, with prizes donated by town centre businesses, including: Crown Street Library, Queen Street Shopping Centre, Cornmill Shopping Centre, and many of Darlington's independent retailers.

### **Christmas Lights Switch On –Thursday 22 November**

20. The annual Christmas Lights Switch On event drew over 8,000 people into the town centre. In addition to the lights, entertainment on the evening included carol singing by children from Gurney Pease Academy who were accompanied by Voices of Darlington. Our media partner TFM provided three singing talents from around the North East.

## **Darlington Hippodrome**

21. On 17 November the Hippodrome celebrated the first anniversary of the reopening of the Theatre following its restoration. BBC Tees helped us mark the day with a live broadcast from the Theatre with interviews with Councillor Wallis, the Theatre Director and cast members from Rock of Ages, which was in the Theatre that week, and also Liam Mellor, one of the stars of Aladdin, our Christmas pantomime.
22. Since reopening, 162,851 tickets have been sold for 358 performances. 5,736 hours have been volunteered and 6,542 items have been catalogued for the Theatre's archive. The Heritage, Education and Learning Officer with the support of the archive's volunteers, has succeeded in creating a record of every show ever presented at the Theatre since 1907, forming a very useful resource for people to engage with the archive.
23. The Autumn season at the Hippodrome concluded on a very successful week, with the show 'Cilla the Musical' having been seen by 4,000 people and was followed by a week of one night shows, which also proved very popular with a combined attendance of just under 4,000 people.
24. A new exhibition opened in the Catherine Cookson Gallery entitled 'Dickens in Darlington', which celebrates the special connection of Charles Dickens with Darlington. To complement the exhibition, two very successful events were held in the Hullabaloo: a concert by local band 'The Black Sheep Frederick Dickens' and a

performance of 'A Christmas Carol' by Guy Masterson, which was sold out.

25. This year's pantomime, Aladdin, opened on 8 December with packed houses for the opening weekend, including the press night on 9 December. The reviews were excellent and the public reaction was also very warm. On 13 December there was a 'relaxed' performance of the pantomime specifically designed to welcome people with an Autistic Spectrum Condition, learning or physical disabilities, and sensory and communication disorders into the Theatre to enjoy the Panto experience. There were 593 in the respective audiences including a number of school groups. Training on Autism was given to Front of House staff in preparation for the relaxed performance and signed/audio described performances were provided later in the run.
26. A Pantomime themed tour of the Hippodrome was organised as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund's #thankstoyou campaign, which encouraged grant recipients to give something back to the lottery players. Visitors had the opportunity to have a glimpse of the backstage area and chat to the Panto's stars.
27. The new season brochure was published at the end of November, including the launch of next year's pantomime: Jack and the Beanstalk.
28. The Hullabaloo also celebrated its first birthday. In the first year, Theatre Hullabaloo presented 187 performances independently, with 16 visiting companies, from six different countries. 26 schools and nurseries have visited and there have been 10,983 visitors to the Creative Play.

### **Visual Art**

29. The Community Arts Project exhibition ran from 18 October 2018 to 6 December 2018, securing 2,958 visits. The Darlington Society of Arts Winter exhibition opened on 8 December 2018 and ran through to 31 January 2019.
30. Julie MacBean's 'Edgelands' exhibition was on display at Darlington Town Hall exhibition space from 29 October 2018 to 14 December 2018, with original drawings, paintings and prints of landscapes.
31. Creative Darlington is supporting promotion of the Dover Art Prize, with Darlington Borough Council engaged in the selection process alongside other parties. The Dover Prize Fund for Artists, managed by County Durham Community Foundation, awards £10,000 to a selected proposal, with new work generated thereafter, with the support of this award to be premiered in Darlington. The deadline for applications was 6 January 2019.

### **Outreach and Arts Development**

32. Pell Ensemble and Helix Arts worked with children and young people in Darlington via Darlington Hippodrome and with the Education Village, in October and November 2018, with support from Creative Darlington. They delivered five days of participatory workshop activity in total and delivered two performances of 'Upload Unplug', at Crown Street Library.

33. The Creative Darlington budget supported four performances at The Hullabaloo of 'The Young King', by Oscar Wilde, performed by Australian theatre company, Slingsby, on 14 and 15 November 2018, for children aged 8+ and their families. Creative Darlington supports Theatre Hullabaloo in its international practice and efforts to engage children and young people in Darlington.
34. Creative Darlington supported a project in which young musicians composed a piece they then performed with saxophone soloist, Jess Gillam, as the opening act for the Royal Northern Sinfonia at Darlington Hippodrome. Through a series of workshops with a composer/music leader, several Royal Northern Sinfonia (RNS) players and an assistant/trainer music leader, a short piece of music was devised that combined all participants as an ensemble.

### **Heritage Track Programme**

35. Five days of primary school and community engagement workshops have been held as part of the 'Heritage on Track' programme, part of the Tees Valley Great Place programme, which focussed on creative exploration of local railway heritage and the heritage of communities located in close proximity to the track bed of the Stockton and Darlington Railway; including activity at the Head of Steam Railway Museum and within Darlington Indoor Market, where 'Locomotive Rhythm' performed on 24 November.
36. A new song was also generated through the programme and broadcast on BBC Tees on 24 November. Further work was also undertaken, including activity at Springfield Primary School on 11 and 12 December.

### **Libraries**

37. The Centre for Local Studies hosted a talk by Dr Ben Roberts of Teesside University who explored the forgotten tales and traditions of how the people of Darlington celebrated Christmas in the past.
38. The library has started a Lego Club for home schooled children. Children attend the club weekly and complete challenges on their Lego Card.
39. Crown Street and Cockerton Libraries held a series of Christmas parties for young children, which included music, games a visit from Santa. All children received a small gift.
40. Crown Street Library hosted a festive celebration on 15 December, where adults and children had the opportunity to make Christmas baubles, enjoy mince pies and watch a choir perform Christmas carols.
41. Over 1,200 children in Darlington have received the Bookstart Treasure Pack from the library. This comprised a picture book and activities alongside guidance for parents to encourage regular reading at home. All nurseries and pre-schools were visited and gifted the packs, alongside a story and rhyme time. The resources, worth in excess of £17,000, were given to the authority for three-four year olds.

42. The Library Service commenced discussions with the residents of the Borough on 7 January 2019, to inform the future look and direction of the town's library services.

### **Head of Steam**

43. Staff at Head of Steam engaged with Richmond and District Historical Society, Thornaby RNIB and the National Council for Women - Darlington Branch, through talks and outreach activities.
44. The 'Santa at the Station' events (15, 16, 22 and 23 December) continued to be popular, with sell out dates across the two weekends.
45. A new exhibition, 'Nostalgia of Steam' by local artist and railway enthusiast, Stephen Bainbridge, opened on 19 January. The exhibition looks back at the days of steam through the eyes of the artist and is on display until 3 March.
46. 713 children visited from schools during November and 101 in December, including three schools previously not worked with before.
47. 25 active volunteers contributed 90 hours during November.

### **Environmental Services**

#### **Volunteering**

48. During 2018 a significant amount of time from the residents of Darlington has been dedicated to the local environment. We have 99 active Street Champions who have regularly collected litter in their locality, keeping the area clean and tidy for all. Through Darlington Cares and The Great Parks Auction, a total of 2,135 employee volunteering hours were dedicated to improving four of the town's parks:
- (a) Cummins pledged 465 hours to Eastbourne Park;
  - (b) EE donated 750 hours to The Denes;
  - (c) Darlington Building Society offered 500 hours to North Lodge Park; and
  - (d) Capita volunteered 420 hours to Green Park.
49. In total, 921 volunteers ended up donating a massive 3,376 hours to the various parks. The benefits of this initiative have seen significant improvements within these four parks, allowing far more local residents to enjoy the outdoor environment.
50. The various friends groups across the Borough, as well as many other organisations, groups and individuals have donated their time to help maintain and improve the environment of Darlington. This is something I am immensely proud of and offer my thanks to them all, and look forward to similar efforts in 2019.

### **Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) Awards**

51. At the recent APSE Awards, I am delighted to advise that Darlington was declared the Winner in the 'Most Improved Refuse/Recycling Collection Service' category. Nine Authorities were shortlisted for the awards on 6 December, with Darlington coming out on top. Refuse and Recycling Collection is constantly reviewed to ensure routes are efficient with the required safe systems of work in place.

### **Keep Britain Tidy Awards**

52. In the forthcoming Keep Britain Tidy Awards (February 2019), the Council has been nominated in the 'Best Community Initiative' category for work completed alongside Darlington Cares, as part of 'The Great Parks Auction'.

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

## **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.

### **Care Quality Commission (CQC)**

2. A representative of the Care Quality Commission, the Independent regulator of health and adult social care in England, gave us a presentation on the purpose and role of that organisation in making sure that health and social care services in England provided people with safe, effective and compassionate, high quality care.
3. The organisation monitors, inspects and regulates services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety and its findings are published, including performance ratings which help people to choose their care. Where poor care is identified, it will use its powers to take action against those responsible
4. The service regulates care homes, hospitals, domiciliary care, doctors/GP's dentists, clinics, community services and mental health services and there are eight inspectors working across the Darlington, Durham and Hartlepool local authority areas. Working closely with the public and local relationships and partnerships is vital to its work and helps identify good practice and also raise standards of care.

### **Development of the Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2019-24**

5. We have been advised of the work being undertaken to develop a new Preventing Homelessness Strategy to cover the period 2019-2024, which is being developed taking into account the changes that have been introduced through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
6. The Strategy focusses on five key areas which reflect the current national and local policy context of prevention by intervening at an earlier stage and ensuring that there are the right types and levels of housing and support available to reduce the risk of homelessness. This is an area which was included in the Council's current strategy and will continue a path that the Council has already adopted with positive results.
7. There has been an increase of 94 applicants approaching the Council for assistance between 2016/17 and 2017/18, however the numbers going on to make a homeless application have been reduced and this is attributed to the success of the preventative work undertaken once an applicant has approached the Council for assistance. The Council has a number of programmes to ensure that no-one in Darlington needs to sleep rough including programmes that intervene at an early stage to avoid the crisis of losing a home.

8. A recent rough sleeper count found only three people sleeping rough in Darlington, all of whom refused assistance when approached. Support will continue to be available to them.
9. We were concerned that begging in the Town Centre is associated with homelessness, however, this is not the case. The Council's Housing Options Service ensures that anyone who is found to be begging is approached to see what assistance can be given to them and they have found that virtually all those begging in the Town have a home and work is on-going to address the begging issue through a multi-agency approach.
10. It is anticipated that the full draft strategy will be available for public consultation in February 2019.

### **Customer Engagement in Housing Services**

11. The Council has a regulatory requirement to review the way in which it engages with its tenants and leaseholders and a review of the current arrangements is currently being undertaken.
12. The Government's Housing Green Paper which was published in the Summer, largely focussed on the future role of tenant involvement in the light of the Grenfell Tower Fire, particularly in relation to health and safety and service provision and this will need to be taken into account in the review along with the need for the increased use of digital means of engagement as a form of communication.
13. As Members will be aware, the Council currently engages through a number of formal panels which are made up of volunteers, however, it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit to these panels and further work will be undertaken with the Tenant's Customer and Scrutiny Panels to develop options for how we engage with tenants in the future.
14. It is proposed that the final recommendations from the review are submitted to a joint meeting of our Scrutiny Committee and the Tenants Panel representatives in March 2019.

### **Syrian Refugees and Asylum Seekers Update**

15. We have been advised of the current position in relation to the Council's role in rehousing and supporting Syrian refugees and the Asylum Seeker Project operated by G4S.
16. The Syrian refugee project was established in 2016 as a result of the Syrian conflict and the Council agreed to accept and support ten families initially, which has now increased to 14 to enable families to be reunited, with 54 individuals currently being supported through the programme. Overall, the project has gone well with all the families integrating well into their locality and communities.
17. In addition, there are another 92 asylum seekers being supported in Darlington through the Government's contract with G4S. The Council is not directly involved in this project and only privately rented properties are used to house the individuals, however, they have been approaching housing for support and advice in relation to housing, education and health and, although, where possible, they are signposted

back to G4S, this is placing an additional support on services and an additional Support Volunteer has been employed on a temporary basis to cope with the increasing demand and to liaise more closely with G4S and its clients.

### **Performance Indicators Quarter 2 – 2018/19**

18. We have received information on the Quarter 2 performance against those key performance indicators for 2018/19 which are within the remit of our Scrutiny Committee.
19. In relation to both Housing Services and Adult Social Care, Officers were satisfied with the Quarter 2 performance across their areas.

### **Medium-Term Financial Plan**

20. As with all Scrutiny Committees we have had the opportunity to respond to Cabinet on its proposals in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2019/20.
21. The delivery of the core offer remains extremely challenging with some significant pressures arising in Children's social care, however, through innovative financial investments and increased income from economic growth, the Council can still deliver the agreed balanced plan, extend the MTFP and a further £0.600 million has been identified which could be used to bolster the Futures Fund themes or be returned to reserves.
22. There are a number of risk pressures which have been identified, however, it is not clear at this stage whether they will definitely come to fruition, however, if they do they are of significant value. Given the potential impact it has been considered prudent to recognise them in the budget and, following a review of these risks, it has been recommended that a prudent level would be to include 60 per cent of the total value in the risk contingency line.
23. It is pleasing to note the significant work that has been undertaken through the Adult Social Services transformation project to ensure people receive the right level of care and are able to stay in their homes longer, which has reduced the reliance on residential care placements and subsequent savings exceeds the estimated target for that area. Winter pressures funding of £0.501 million has also been received for adults in 2018/19 and 2019/20, how this funding is utilised must be agreed in a plan with the NHS.
24. Our response as part of the consultation will be to support Cabinet's proposal in relation to the proposed increase in Council tax of 2.99 per cent for 2019/20 and the proposed schedule of fees and charges.

## **Housing Revenue Account**

25. Cabinet has agreed to consult on proposals in relation to the revenue budget; rent levels and service charges for the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the financial year 2019/20 in the context of the HRA Medium Term Financial Plan to 2022/23 and the 30 year Business Plan and we have agreed to support those proposals.
26. We were advised that the proposals were in line with the Government's requirement for all social landlords to implement an average weekly rent reduction each year for four years from 2016/17 of one per cent, which would give an average weekly rent for 2019/20 of £70.53.
27. As Members will be aware, the Government has lifted the borrowing cap on the HRA and, in 2019/20 alone this will enable us to increase our housing capital programme by around £12 million. This can be supplemented with the Homes England grant to provide more than 1000 much need Council homes at affordable rents over the next ten years.
28. Over 180 households have already benefited from the Council's current new build programme which has taken place at various locations across the Town and demand for these houses has been exceptionally high.

## **Autism Task and Finish Review**

29. We have concluded our Task and Finish Review Group into the support and advice services available in Darlington for adults with autism and I would like to thank all those who were involved and contributed to our findings.
30. The recommendations from the Review will now be forwarded to Cabinet for approval.

## **Work Programme**

31. We are still continuing to collate information on the potential effects of the introduction of Universal Credit to residents of Darlington and a joint piece of work has commenced with the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee in relation to End of Life and Palliative Care.

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

## **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.

### **Childcare Sufficiency Review 2018/19**

2. We noted the findings of the 2018/19 Childcare Sufficiency Review and the authority's 2018/19 Action Plan as a result of the findings.
3. Local authorities are required by the Department for Education's 'Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities June 2018' to ensure sufficient childcare as far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 or up to 18 for disabled children; and to report annually to elected Members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and to make this report available and accessible to parents.
4. Factors which affect childcare demand include the number of parents in work in the Borough and recent trends showed an improving picture regarding skills and productivity of Darlington residents with an increase in the employment rate and a reduction in the unemployment rate. The number of regeneration projects and availability of appropriate family housing and residential development in the Borough and the number of new dwellings can also affect childcare demand.
5. Supply data for 2018 revealed that the early education and childcare market in Darlington has remained fairly stable; however feedback from a pre-school childcare gap analysis carried out in Summer 2018 showed that there was a latent demand for childcare in the Borough with cost being the main barrier to high take up of private hours.
6. Analysis of the overall volume of supply showed that there was sufficient capacity to meet demand; and parent and provider feedback also suggested that there was sufficient capacity to meet overall demand for 30 Hour places.
7. There is evidence to indicate that providers are under increasing financial pressure with several settings reporting that their operating costs were higher than funding rates; financial pressures were also impacting on the capacity for some providers to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities; and feedback from parents and employers called for greater flexibility and lower childcare costs.
8. We discussed the unmet demand for after-school provision and holiday childcare and the unmet demand for places for those children with special educational needs and disabilities and the rising cost of childcare; the reduction in schools being able to provide extra curricula activities after school; and the submission by Whinfield Primary School to the Department for Education's School Nurseries Capital Fund

for a 52 full time equivalent place nursery with wrap around at the start and end of the day and on-site holiday provision.

### **Special Education Needs – Accessibility Strategy 2017/20**

9. We received an update on progress to date against the delivery of the Special Educational Needs Accessibility Strategy 2017/20 and the actions required to comply with legislation.
10. All local authorities are required by Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 to prepare an accessibility strategy in relation to schools for which it is the responsible body and this was approved by Council in 2017. The Strategy sets out how we will work with schools to increase the extent to which disabled children and young people can participate in the school curriculum and improve the physical environment of schools for these pupils.
11. Although the Strategy is in relation to this authority's maintained schools the authority has developed a Traded Service for Academies providing advice and guidance and within the first year of offering this service two academies have already come on board and there is some interest among the Primary Forum.
12. The submitted report also outlined some key messages which have been received from supporting and guiding educational settings in their development of Accessibility Plans which underpin the strategy.

### **Special Educational Need Strategy and Funding/Travel Assistance Policy Consultation Review Group**

13. The findings and recommendations of the Review Group established to examine the proposals and submit comment on the Special Educational Needs (SEND) Strategy and Funding consultation process and plans to consult on the SEND Travel Assistance Policy were presented to Members for approval.
14. Members of this Scrutiny Committee have attended the various public consultation events that were organised during the consultation period of 17 October to 28 November 2018 and the Review Group Members met on 26 October 2018 to discuss the feedback received at the various consultation events and to propose our response to the proposals in the Strategy.
15. Members of the Review Group concluded that there was support for the proposals in the SEND Strategy and Funding from both parents and Members, however we felt that there were some improvements that could be made to the services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
16. Our main concern was the lack of local resource bases and we agreed that now was an appropriate time to review this provision which was last commissioned in 2010 and we also proposed a key person responsible for accountability and communication between parents and schools.
17. The Head of Education and Inclusion discussed the recommendations in detail with Members and confirmed that they would be included as part of the consultation on the strategic plan for delivering better outcomes for children and young people with

special educational needs and proposed amendments to the application of the High Needs Block in relation to those children and young people.

## **Performance Indicators Quarter 2 2018/19**

18. Members examined performance against key performance indicators for Quarter 2 (July to September).
19. Areas that were performing well were contacts completed within 24 working hours at 97.8 per cent, an increase of 25.4 percent compared to last year; 93.6 per cent who had a Review Health Assessment due received their assessment within the required month; 98 per cent of Initial Child Protection Conferences were held within 15 working days; 100 per cent Child Protection reviews had been completed within the required timescales; 100 per cent of children with a Child Protection Plan and Children Looked After have an allocated Social Worker; 98.7 per cent of Looked After reviews were completed within timescale; 90.1 per cent of statutory visits of Looked After Children were completed in timescale, which was above the target of 90 per cent; 8.7 per cent of Looked After Children had three or more placement moves within the last 12 months, an improvement of 3.3 per cent when compared to the end of Quarter 2 2017/18 and in line with benchmark data for statistical neighbours at 9.5 per cent and the national average at 10 per cent; and 25 per cent of Care Leavers were not in employment, education or training (NEET).
20. Areas where there was a need for further improvement included the percentage of dental health checks completed which was currently at 78.5 per cent (73 out of 93), which showed good progress from Quarter 1 however was still an area to undergo close scrutiny; and 80.4 per cent of child protection statutory visits were completed within timescale at the end of Quarter 2 which was slightly behind Quarter 1 performance at 86 per cent and will continue to be closely monitored and managed.
21. We particularly noted the continuing increase in demand for Children and Young People services and the possible reasons for this increase and added pressures on the service and the Assistant Director of Children's Services confirmed that this was an area that officers were monitoring closely and the Edge of Care wrap around support that was due to go live in January had a number of projects with the intention of actively working towards reducing these numbers.
22. Members also discussed the number of children and young people coming into this authority from out of the area and the number of private children's homes and independent fostering places within the authority. As the number of private homes was increasing Members agreed that this and the planning restrictions imposed on the setting up of private homes may be an area for further examination by this Scrutiny.

## **Work Programme**

23. We continue to give consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee and taking into account the ambitious programme of change across the Council and the key role of Scrutiny in ensuring that the programme is able to deliver the service improvements and the budget savings necessary.

**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.

### **Council Tax Recovery**

2. The collection of a Council tax is a key priority for the Council and we have received an update on the Council's recovery process and collection performance.
3. Council Tax collection has been particularly challenging over the last few years with the difficult economic climate and the introduction of the Council Tax Support Scheme in 2013, however, overall collection performance is good and we found that the collection of arrears of Council Tax are well managed, with dedicated recovery staff who actively pursue the higher debts and those who deliberately avoid paying.
4. Following questions by Members, we were advised that the collection of Council Tax for those in receipt of support was generally successful, with in-year collection of Council Tax for these people being around 80 per cent. However, for those people who are in genuine financial difficulties, the Council does offer support to help them.

### **Performance Indicators**

5. We have received information on the Quarter 2 performance against those key performance indicators for 2018/19 which are within the remit of our Scrutiny Committee.
6. It is pleasing to note that the sickness absence figures are on track at the end of quarter 2 to achieve the year-end target and we discussed the proactive work undertaken by the Human Resources Division and Managers in relation to this and the various health and well-being initiatives in place.

### **Medium-Term Financial Plan**

7. As with all Scrutiny Committees we have had the opportunity to respond to Cabinet on its proposals in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2019/20.
8. The delivery of the core offer remains extremely challenging with some significant pressures arising in Children's social care, however, through innovative financial investments and increased income from economic growth, we are advised that the Council can still deliver the agreed balanced plan, extend the MTFP and a further £0.600 million has been identified which could be used to bolster the Futures Fund themes or be returned to reserves.
9. We discussed a number of risk pressures which have been identified, however, it is not clear at this stage whether they will definitely come to fruition, if they do they

are of significant value. Given the potential impact Officers have considered it prudent to recognise them in the budget and, following a review of these risks, it has been recommended that a prudent level would be to include 60 per cent of the total value in the risk contingency line.

10. We will be holding a meeting in February 2019 to formulate a response on behalf of all the Scrutiny Committees to Cabinet.

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

## **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.

### **Telehealth and Darlington Healthy New Towns**

2. We received a presentation from Catherine McShane, Project Manager, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust on Telehealth and Darlington Healthy New Towns and the use of technology to improve health outcomes.
3. The presentation highlighted the single platform of services designed to integrate with local care systems so they are substitutive, not additive; the benefits of digital enablement and the development of services in Darlington to digitally improve self-management.
4. We noted the up and coming work including linking with Care Connect and Electronic Patient Records, mapping out MiHealthCoach for smoking cessation in pregnancy and various patient monitoring services and the challenges being faced with the Healthy New Towns programme; and the regional development of Health Call, a platform that allows physicians, health systems, hospitals and ancillary providers to collaborate and deliver truly patient centric care.
5. Following the presentation we expressed our concerns at the lack of progress to date and the challenges being faced in particular with the GP services. The Project Manager acknowledged our concerns but confirmed that progress was being made and a good response had been received from the practices in Darlington as part of Healthy New Towns.
6. The Director of Commissioning, NHS Darlington CCG confirmed the local authority and the health services were working together on Healthy New Towns and community procurement and the introduction of digital technology without taking away face to face contact.
7. The Public Health Principal also acknowledged the work to date on digital personalised health care and confirmed that it will take time and digital health will not necessarily work for everyone.

### **Clinical Assessment and Peer Review System (CASPeR)**

8. Members received a presentation from Katie McLeod, the Head of Strategy and Commissioning, NHS Darlington CCG on the Clinical Assessment and Peer Review System (CASPeR) which highlighted the challenges facing NHS services; NHS England's Demand Management 'good practice guide'; the aim of CASPeR; the speciality services; CASPeR usage and the initial effectiveness; and the next steps.

9. The three programmes from the 'good practice guide' that CASPeR are focusing on are the Peer Review of Referrals, alternatives to Outpatient appointments and the management and monitoring of outpatient follow up appointments.
10. Best practice pathways have also been developed with other local authorities to reduce inappropriate first outpatient referrals to secondary care and all practices, bar one had agreed to implement the Peer Review as part of their triage process.
11. The Director of Commissioning, NHS Darlington CCG confirmed that there has been a reduction in first outpatient referrals and an overall evaluation of the Referral Management System will be made in 2020 and Members have requested an update on the final evaluation.

### **Exercise and Activity Undertaken at the Gold Tea Dance**

12. We considered the results of the exercise and activity survey undertaken at the recent GOLD Tea Dance and were very encouraged by results and that for those aged over 60 years and over, which was 83.6 per cent of those that completed the survey undertook 30 minutes of exercise a day. Members agreed to promote the benefits of exercise.

### **Health Inequalities in Darlington: Narrowing the Gap**

13. We gave our consideration to the Director of Public Health 2017 statutory annual report which is the fourth annual report following the transfer of public health responsibilities from the NHS to local government.
14. The report highlighted that the life expectancy gap between the richest and poorest wards in Darlington was almost twelve years and explores the breadth and extent of those 'health gaps' and proposes measures to narrow that gap.
15. The recommendations contained in the report aim to address inequality whether at a geographical level or the health inequality which is experienced across protected characteristics including ethnicity, gender, age and sexual orientation.
16. Dr Moffatt, Public Health Registrar attended the meeting and gave us a very interesting presentation which highlighted the life expectancy for men and women by Ward within Darlington and gave further detail on the recommendations to address the inequalities across the life course being the Best Start in Life, Living and Working Well and Healthy Ageing.
17. Dr Moffatt also referred to the Health and Wellbeing Plan for Darlington 2017-2022 which has a strong focus on the need to address inequalities and the importance of doing so through 'upstream' activity and addressing the wider determinants of health following the Starting Well, Living Well, Ageing Well life course approach.

## **Voluntary and Community Sector Funding: Pilot Community Based Initiatives**

18. Members requested an overview of the planned implementation of pilot community based initiatives utilising Future Fund and Voluntary Sector Development Fund monies.
19. The report outlined the funding opportunities that had been made available to Community and Voluntary Sector organisations following the implementation of the Medium Term Financial Plan in June 2016 and the process that had been undertaken to identify ways in which the funding could be utilised to improve outcomes for local people.
20. Following a series of workshops attended by local statutory and voluntary sector organisations it was agreed to focus on two key issues: preventing social isolation in adults and older people and supporting vulnerable families with children and young people at the earliest opportunity.
21. We considered the six community based initiatives proposed for funding and Members requested that we receive a further update following the monitoring and evaluation phase of this work in 2019.

## **Performance Indicators Quarter 2 2018/19**

22. We received Quarter 2 performance data against key performance indicators for 2018/19.
23. Members were advised that of the 30 indicators that are reported to this Scrutiny Committee, five are Culture indicators and 25 Public Health indicators.
24. The majority of the indicators are reported annually and all the Public Health indicators are reported in line with the Public Health Framework National reporting schedule which means the data is at least one year in arrears or related to aggregate periods.
25. Members discussed in particular Performance Indicator Number CUL 063 – Number of school pupils participating in the sports development programme which was showing performance better than Quarter 2 last year; and CUL 064 – Number of individuals participating in the community sports development programme which was showing performance worse than at Quarter 2 last year.
26. In relation to Public Health Indicators Members noted that Performance Indicator Number PHB 044 – Admissions episodes for alcohol related conditions which shows data for 2016/17 had increased from the previous year; PBH 046 – Cumulative percentage of eligible population aged 40-74 offered an NHS Health Check who received an NHS Health Check in the five year period showed data better than when last reported in 2016/17; and PBH 052 – Adjusted antibiotic prescribing in primary care by the NHS showed data worse than last reported for 2016.

## **Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP) 2019/20**

27. As with all Scrutiny Committees we have had the opportunity to respond to Cabinet on its proposals in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2019/20.
28. The delivery of the core offer remains extremely challenging with some significant pressures arising in Children's social care, however, through innovative financial investments and increased income from economic growth, the Council can still deliver the agreed balanced plan, extend the MTFP and a further £0.600 million has been identified which could be used to bolster the Futures Fund themes or be returned to reserves.
29. We noted the significant work which had been undertaken to achieve economic growth within the Borough, particularly in relation to Symmetry Park, which had been rewarded with a positive net increase in the projected National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) collected over the coming MTFP.
30. It was reported that there were no proposed reductions in service levels within the 2019/20 MTFP and there were some only minor changes to the proposed schedule of fees and charges.
31. Members also noted the additional monies identified for winter pressures amounting to £50,000 this year and for next year to be divided between residential and domiciliary care and requested an update to this Scrutiny on the spend in due course.
32. Our response as part of the consultation will be to support Cabinet's proposal in relation to the proposed increase in Council tax of 2.99 per cent for 2018/19 and the proposed schedule of fees and charges.

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

## **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.

### **Performance Indicators Quarter 2 – 2018/19**

2. We have received information on the Quarter 2 performance against those key performance indicators for 2018/19 which are within the remit of our Scrutiny Committee and the Officers present gave an overview of the current position in respect of their individual areas.
3. For the 21 indicators which are reported either quarterly or six monthly at quarter 2 for which there was information available, 15 have targets and 13 of these indicators are on target to achieve their year-end target and two are not, six indicators do not have targets however, one is showing performance which is better than the same period last year and five have either no previous data to compare with or no data has been submitted for this quarter.
4. The indicator Town Centre footfall trend (rolling 12 months) has been replaced with Town Centre footfall trend from previous year as it is considered that this will provide more useful data for us in the future and we have also asked Officers to look at including an additional indicator in relation to the Housing Delivery Test which will measure the number of homes delivered on sites allocated within the local plan.
5. We did discuss the indicator in relation to the number of ward Members who were leading or involved in a litter or grounds maintenance based project which was showing low performance and it was highlighted that the figure reported was based on those Members involved in the initial pilot and that improved reporting of activities which were taking place in wards was needed. If Members are involved in any work of this nature, please contact the Officers to make them aware.

### **Road Safety**

6. The Assistant Director, Highways, Design and Projects gave us a presentation on the systems and processes used to measure trends and patterns in relation to road safety accidents within the Borough, through the North East Regional Road Safety Resource
7. The Road Safety Resource, which is based at Gateshead Council and which was set up and funded under the Department for Transport's Road Safety Grant Scheme, provides information and data analysis to support road safety education, training and publicity at a regional level, however, specific local information can be obtained through the interactive map and the dashboard. If Members wish to view any of this information it can be accessed via <http://www2.gateshead.gov.uk/ne->

8. Our Scrutiny Committee has previously been interested to see information in relation to accidents at the Stonebridge Junction since its opening and we were advised that in the four years prior to 2015, there had been 21 accidents and, in the four years since, there had been 11, one fatal, one serious and nine slight.
9. In terms of comparative information, a public satisfaction survey had highlighted that Darlington was performing above the national average in respect of road safety; was ranked number one out of 113 authorities taking part in relation to road safety education, number ten in relation to road safety environment and 28 in relation to road safety locally.

### **Medium Term Financial Plan**

10. As with all Scrutiny Committees we have had the opportunity to respond to Cabinet on its proposals in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2019/20.
11. The delivery of the core offer remains extremely challenging with some significant pressures arising in Children's social care, however, through innovative financial investments and increased income from economic growth, the Council can still deliver the agreed balanced plan, extend the MTFP and a further £0.600 million has been identified which could be used to bolster the Futures Fund themes or be returned to reserves.
12. It is pleasing to note the significant work that has been undertaken to achieve economic growth within the Borough, particularly in relation to Symmetry Park, which has been rewarded with a positive net increase in the projected National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) collected over the coming MTFP. The Council currently retains 49 per cent of the NNDR collected, however, the business tax base is much more volatile than the Council Tax base and requires very close monitoring. In addition, to the potential to lose income due to business closures, the Council also carries the risk of losing appeals by businesses against valuations.
13. Our response as part of the consultation will be to support Cabinet's proposal in relation to the proposed increase in Council tax of 2.99 per cent for 2018/19 and the proposed schedule of fees and charges.

### **Work Programme**

14. We have reviewed our work programme and have requested that, in addition to the scheduled reports, additional reports be submitted to future meetings in relation to the development of a vision/strategy for bus services in the Tees Valley; the Town Centre Retail Offer/Strategy (to include the indoor and outdoor markets) and the car parking strategy.
15. We will also be holding a Task and Finish Review as part of the Local Plan consultation once the timeline for its consideration has been agreed.