



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

Cabinet Agenda

5.00 pm

Tuesday, 5 December 2023

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington DL1 5QT

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

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting.
2. Declarations of Interest.
3. To hear relevant representation (from Members and the General Public) on items on this Cabinet agenda.
4. To approve the Minutes of the meeting of this Cabinet held on 7 November 2023. (Pages 3 - 14)
5. Matters Referred to Cabinet –
There are no matters referred back for reconsideration to this meeting
6. Issues Arising from Scrutiny Committee –
There are no issues referred back from the Scrutiny Committees to this Meeting, other than where they have been specifically consulted on an issue and their comments are included in the contents of the relevant report on this agenda.
7. Key Decisions - There are no Key Decisions to be considered at this meeting.
8. Children's Social Care in Darlington: Ensuring Placement Sufficiency and Enabling Creative Alternatives – Report of the Group Director of People.
(Pages 15 - 32)
9. Housing Revenue Account - Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2027/28 –
Report of the Group Director of Operations.
(Pages 33 - 52)

10. Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for Consultation –
Report of the Chief Officers Executive.
(Pages 53 - 120)
11. Mid Year Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2023/24 –
Report of the Group Director of Operations.
(Pages 121 - 136)
12. Complaints Made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the
Housing Ombudsman Service – Report of the Group Director of Operations.
(Pages 137 - 144)
13. Membership Changes - To consider any Membership Changes to Other Bodies to which
Cabinet appoints.
14. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are
of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting.
15. Questions.



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Monday, 27 November 2023

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

Councillors Curry, Harker, McCollom, McEwan, Porter, Dr. Riley, Roche and Wallis

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Lynne Wood, Elections Manager, Operations Group, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays (e-mail Lynne.Wood@darlington.gov.uk or telephone 01325 405803).

**DECISIONS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE
MONDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2023**

CABINET

Tuesday, 7 November 2023

PRESENT – Councillors Harker (Chair), Curry, McCollom, McEwan, Porter, Dr. Riley and Roche

INVITEES – Councillors Dulston, K Nicholson and Snedker

APOLOGIES – Councillors Wallis

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors Baker, Mrs Culley, Dillon, Henderson and Mammolotti

C50 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

C51 TO HEAR RELEVANT REPRESENTATION (FROM MEMBERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC) ON ITEMS ON THIS CABINET AGENDA.

No representations were made by Members or members of the public in attendance at the meeting.

C52 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS CABINET HELD ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2023

Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Cabinet held on 5 September 2023.

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

REASON – They represent an accurate record of the meeting.

C53 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET

There were no matters referred back for re-consideration to this meeting.

C54 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no issues arising from Scrutiny considered at this meeting.

C55 AUDITOR'S ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2020/21

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) presenting the Auditor's Annual Report and Certificate for 2020/21 (both also previously circulated).

The Auditors Annual Report provided a high level summary of the results from the 2020/21 audit work undertaken by Ernst and Young LLP (EY), the Council's external auditors; confirmed that the Council's accounts gave a true and fair view for the year ending 31 March 2021; and that the Council had put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in its use of resources.

A representative from Ernst and Young LLP (EY), stated that there had been a sector wide delay in signing off accounts; presented the main findings from the Annual Report; and stated that no issues or exceptions were reported.

RESOLVED - That the Auditor's Annual Report and Auditor's Certificate, both as appended to the submitted report, be noted.

REASON - To enable Cabinet to receive the results of external audit work carried out.

C56 KEY DECISION - PROCUREMENT PLAN UPDATE

Pursuant to Minute C7/Apr/23, the Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the update to the Annual Procurement Plan (also previously circulated); the assessment of contracts that are considered to be strategic or non-strategic; updating Members on the outcomes of procurement(s) previously designated as strategic; and the decisions taken by the Procurement Board to waive the Contract Procedure Rules.

The submitted report stated that any contract award decision with a value below £100,000 was delegated to officers; the annual Procurement Plan detailed all the existing and new contracts that were over £100,000 which required a tender process; that for those contracts which were over £100,000 and considered strategic, the final contract award decision would be approved by the Procurement Board and reported to Cabinet; and that one further contract had been designated as strategic and included in the update to the annual plan.

RESOLVED – (a) That the assessment of strategic and non-strategic contracts as presented in Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be approved, and it be agreed that:

- (i) further reports/ updates on the procurement process for those contracts designated as strategic (including decisions made by the Procurement Board) be brought to Cabinet;
- (ii) the contract award decisions for the contracts designated as non-strategic be delegated to the appropriate Directorate as listed in the plan at Appendix 1 to the submitted report; and
- (iii) the contract award decisions for the contracts designated as strategic, as listed in the plan at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be delegated to the Procurement Board to approve and be reported back to Cabinet.

(b) That the update of strategic procurements, Procurement Board waiver decisions, and Social Value, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

REASONS - (a) In respect of strategic / non-strategic contracts:-

- (i) the Contract Procedure Rules require Cabinet to approve the designation of contracts as strategic and non-strategic;
- (ii) contracts designated strategic are of high value and high significance in respect of the impact on residents, Health and Safety, and public safety; and
- (iii) the contracts designated non-strategic are of a lower value and lower significance in respect of the impact on residents and public safety.

(b) In respect of Procurement Board waiver decisions :-

- (i) in order to comply with the Contract Procedure Rules;
- (ii) to provide Cabinet with information about the decisions made by the Procurement Board; and
- (iii) to supplement the reports that are taken to Cabinet about proposed spend over £100,000, that are set out in the Annual Procurement Plan and the in-year update to that report.

C57 SPECIAL FREE SCHOOL AT WEST PARK, DARLINGTON

The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations and the Chief Executive (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to a strategy to enable this Council to secure ownership of, and make available to the Department for Education (DfE), 1.25 to 1.35 hectares of land at West Park for the new Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) School, also referred to as a special free school.

It was reported that approval had been received from the government to establish a new, 48 place Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) special free school in the borough for children aged between 11 to 19 years of age; as part of planning permission granted for the West Park development, land had been set aside for the provision of education and sports under a separate legal contract known as a Section 106 (s106) agreement; this contract set out measures and financial contributions the developer must make in order to lessen the impact of the development on the community; and that the land had been identified as the preferred location for the SEND school, which was within the ownership of the developer.

The submitted report outlined the conditions of the s106 agreement; the options to provide greater certainty to both the DfE and the Council in terms of delivery of the land and the project, whilst mitigating risks for both parties; the collaboration agreement; the legal charge; the proposed timetable for the delivery of the school; the costs to the local authority; the current position; and the opportunities and risks of the proposal.

RESOLVED – (a) That negotiations begin with the owners of the sports and education land with a view to documenting the obligations in the Section 106 Agreement for the land to be transferred to this Council by way of an option agreement and that the final agreement of the heads of terms be subject to Cabinet approval.

(b) That the heads of terms for a lease of 1.25 to 1.35 hectares of land to the new school, be progressed, subject to:-

- (i) agreement of the option; and
- (ii) Cabinet Approval

(c) That the Section 106 obligation to transfer land required for the school, be exercised at the appropriate time.

(d) That the Section 106 financial contribution to fund the local authority costs arising from the construction of the school, be used, and it be noted that the DfE has provided a non-exhaustive list of costs to be funded by this Council, the costs of which will be capped at a figure to be agreed.

(e) That it be acknowledged that should the amount of Section 106 financial contributions received by the Council, at the point of payment of the local authority costs, be insufficient to fully cover the cost, the Council will forward fund the remainder until the remaining contributions are received, estimated to be 2030, with the full costs and commitment to be estimated and presented for final decision prior to signing of contracts.

REASONS – (a) The option would:

- (i) enable the Council to call for the transfer of the freehold of the land required for the school at an appropriate time;
- (ii) achieve flexibility on precise location of land required, as the option would enable this Council to specify the land it wished to acquire when exercising the option;
- (iii) achieve certainty and flexibility of timescale for the transfer of the land;
- (iv) enable site investigations to be carried out across the whole Section 106 area if required; and
- (v) final agreement of heads of terms to be subject to Cabinet Approval

(b) Progressing the Heads of Terms for the lease of land to the new school would provide comfort to DfE to allow progression to the next step, the feasibility study, and subsequent local authority costs analysis.

(c) Exercising the Section 106 agreement at the appropriate time would:

- (i) be dependent upon agreement of the option;

- (ii) be linked to the timing agreed in the option; and
 - (iii) follow the correct legal process for transferring the land.
- (d) Using the Section 106 financial contribution to fund the local authority costs arising from the construction of the school would be:
- (i) an appropriate use of the Section 106 financial contribution;
 - (ii) subject to agreement of the costs with the DfE; and
 - (iii) subject to a cap on costs as agreed with the DfE.
- (e) Acknowledging that forward funding that may be required will:
- (i) allow the parties to progress negotiations in the knowledge that funding is available at the relevant point in time, should it be required at all; and
 - (ii) be subject to final update and decision when costs and payment timetables are known.

C58 RENEWAL OF DOG PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS

Pursuant to Minute C20/Jul/23, the Cabinet Member with the Stronger Communities Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Services (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the outcome of the consultation exercise to enable Members to consider the renewal of the Dog Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's).

The submitted report stated that PSPO's were introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014; a PSPO was designed to deal with a particular nuisance or problem in an area; the behaviour must be having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the community; the current dog PSPO was introduced on 31 January 2021, and it was due to lapse in January 2024; when considering the possible extension or renewal of the order, the Council must undertake statutory consultation as part of the review process; and that the consultation had been undertaken for a period of eight weeks during the summer.

In making its decision, Cabinet considered the responses received from the consultation undertaken with the public, businesses and Scrutiny; the Kennel Club advice in respect of dogs in cemeteries; and the equality and legal implications.

RESOLVED – (a) That the consultation feedback and the contents of the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the Public Spaces Protection Order, be approved and renewed, and be formally made as set out in Appendix 2 of the submitted report, namely for:

- (i) failure to remove dog faeces;
- (ii) not keeping a dog on a lead on specified land;

- (iii) not putting a dog on a lead and keeping on a lead when directed by an authorised officer; and
- (iv) permitting a dog to enter land from which dogs are excluded.

REASONS – (a) The current Dog PSPO will cease to exist by 31 January 2024.

(b) For dog control/responsible dog ownership in Darlington.

(c) To improve the quality of life of persons visiting and working in the areas covered by the PSPO.

C59 ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES - FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

The Cabinet Member with the Stronger Communities Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Services (previously circulated) providing an update to Members on new limits on Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) for environmental crimes, and requesting that consideration be given to setting new limits for waste related offences, in line with revised national limits.

The submitted report stated that the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 introduced the use of FPN's as a way of council's dealing with certain environmental offences; FPN's were currently used by Council officers to deter environmental crime; in July 2023, the Government laid out a statutory instrument, the Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023 which increased the upper limits for various FPN's to provide the ability to further deter offenders; and that the new upper penalty limits were applicable to fly tipping offences, littering, graffiti and duty of care offences.

Particular reference was made at the meeting to the early payment discount being offered for some offences and whether this could be reduced. The Cabinet Member with the Stronger Communities Portfolio responded thereon.

RESOLVED - (a) That the level of penalty for Fixed Penalty Notices be set at the maximum level, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the submitted report.

(b) That an early payment discount be available for littering and graffiti offences, if paid within seven days.

(c) That no early payment discount be available for fly tipping and duty of care offences.

REASONS – (a) To allow the new levels of penalty within the Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023 to be implemented.

(b) To set the level of penalty and any discounted charges for FPN's.

C60 HOUSING SERVICES REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE POLICY

The Cabinet Member with the Health and Housing Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy (also previously circulated).

The submitted report stated that the Council provided over 5,300 high quality homes for local residents; it was committed to providing safe, energy efficient and comfortable homes to all Council tenants; and that this would be achieved by providing a robust, efficient and effective repairs and maintenance service.

It was reported that the Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy 2023/28 set out the Council's responsibilities to all its tenants and leaseholders; how properties would be inspected and surveyed to ensure they were maintained to a good standard; arrangements in place for undertaking repairs, when issues arose; and the consultation undertaken.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That the Housing Services Repairs and Maintenance Policy 2023/28, as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

REASONS – (a) The Social Housing Regulator's Consumer Standards places a duty on social housing landlords to provide their tenants with quality, cost-effective accommodation.

(b) The adoption of a formal Repairs and Maintenance Policy is one of the ways to demonstrate how the Council will achieve this.

C61 DELIVERY OF NEW HOMES AT NEASHAM ROAD - LAND DISPOSAL AND NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY CREDITS

The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio introduced the report of the Chief Executive (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to funding the purchase of additional nutrient neutrality credits from Natural England in order to satisfy planning permission and to build out the whole of Site C, Neasham Road, of 144 new homes.

The submitted report stated that approval was obtained in July 2023 to dispose of Site C to the Council's Joint Venture (JV) partner, Hurworth Gardens JV Ltd for the development of 144 new homes (Minute C25/Jul/23 refers); contracts had been completed and work started on site; Natural England had previously advised that the nutrient neutrality credits obtained by the Hurworth Gardens JV Ltd were sufficient to build out the whole site of 144 new homes; the methodology for the assessment of credits had changed and Natural England had advised that credits obtained were only sufficient to build out 51 new homes and that additional credits for the remaining 93 new homes would be required; planning permission was granted on this basis; and that additional credits would need to be obtained to complete the development.

Particular reference was made at the meeting to the financial risks and whether those risks would be shared with the JV Company or whether they would sit with the Council. The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio responded thereon.

RESOLVED - That the purchase of additional nutrient neutrality credits required to build out

the remainder of the houses at Site C, Neasham Road, as set out in Appendix 1 of the submitted report, be agreed.

REASON - To contribute to the delivery of new housing to satisfy the Borough's housing need.

C62 COUNCIL TAX CHANGES TO EMPTY PROPERTY PREMIUMS FROM 2024-25

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Resources (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to proposed changes to the Council Tax Empty Property Premiums for 2024/25.

The submitted report stated that a 50 per cent Council Tax premium (additional charge) was introduced in April 2013 for all unoccupied and unfurnished domestic properties which had been empty for two years or more; this was the maximum the Council was permitted to charge; and that a number of changes were made to the Council Tax Empty Property Premiums following the introduction of new legislation in 2018.

It was reported that that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 contained a provision to amend the definition of long-term empty homes from 2024/25 onwards; unfurnished properties that had been empty for one year or more were liable to the Empty Property Premium; and that a 100 per cent Council Tax Premium be introduced for furnished properties periodically occupied (referred to as 'second homes') from 2025/26.

RESOLVED – (a) That the following changes to the Council Tax Empty Property Premiums be agreed, namely:

- (i) amend the definition of long-term empty homes, so that from 2024/25 onwards, unfurnished properties that have been empty for one year or more are liable to the Council Tax Empty Property Premium from 1 April 2024;
- (ii) apply a 100 per cent Council Tax Premium to second homes from 1 April 2025, this being the earliest that the new charge can apply as twelve months' notice is required to existing owners of second homes;
- (iii) implement exemptions for the second homes Council Tax Premium, as set out in paragraphs 15 and 16 of the submitted report.

(b) That it be recommended to Council that the report be approved.

REASON - To further encourage landlords and property owners to bring their empty homes back into use as soon as possible, and to penalise those owners who deliberately leave their properties empty for years.

C63 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT - SCHEME APPROVAL 2024/25

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations requesting that consideration be given to the draft Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme for 2024/25 (also previously circulated).

The submitted report stated the local CTS scheme for 2023/24 had been approved by Council (Minute 39/Nov/22 refers); the scheme became operational on 1 April 2023; and that Councils were required to set a CTS scheme each year and, as part of that exercise, consider whether any changes should be made to the existing scheme and where changes were made, consider what transitional protection, if any, should apply to anyone affected by those changes. It was reported that there were no significant changes proposed to the existing scheme,

RESOLVED - That it be recommended to Council that the draft Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/25, attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report, be approved.

REASONS – (a) The Council is required to publish a local CTS scheme for 2024/25 by 11 March 2024.

(b) The CTS schemes since 2013 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.

C64 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2023/24 - QUARTER TWO

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) providing a forecast of the 2023/24 revenue budget outturn as part of the Council's continuous financial management process.

The submitted report stated that it was the second revenue budget management report to Cabinet for 2023/24 and that the latest projections showed an overall decline of £1.119m on the 2023/27 Medium Term Financial Plan, which was due to £0.509m of additional balances following the 2022/23 outturn; £1.2m of resources returned to reserves; £2.602m of projected departmental overspends in 2023/24; and a decline in corporate reserves of £0.226m.

RESOLVED - (a) That the forecast revenue outturn for 2023/24, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That further regular reports be made to monitor progress and take prompt action if necessary.

REASONS - (a) To continue effective management of resources.

(b) To continue to deliver services to agreed levels.

C65 PROJECT POSITION STATEMENT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - QUARTER TWO 2023/24

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Group Director of Services and the Group Director of Operations (previously circulated) providing a

summary of the latest Capital resource and commitment position, to inform monitoring of the affordability and funding of the Council's capital programme; an update on the current status of all construction projects currently being undertaken by the Council; and requesting that consideration be given to a number of changes to the programme.

The submitted report stated that the projected outturn of the current capital programme was £315.846m against an approved programme of £316.805m; the investment was delivering a wide range of improvements to the Council's assets and services; the programme, including commitments, remained affordable within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2023/24 to 2026/27; the Council was managing 43 live projects, with an overall projected outturn value of £167.583m, the majority of which were running to time, cost and quality expectations, but were being monitored given the current pressures on resources in the construction sector nationally; and that the projects were managed either by the Council's in-house management team, a Framework Partner or by Consultants sourced via an open/OJEU tender process.

RESOLVED - (a) That the status position on construction projects, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(b) That the projected capital expenditure and resources, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

(c) That the adjustments to resources, as detailed in paragraph 24 of the submitted report, be approved.

REASONS - (a) To inform Cabinet of the current status of construction projects.

(b) To make Cabinet aware of the latest financial position of the Council.

(c) To maintain effective management of resources.

C66 SCHEDULE OF TRANSACTIONS

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report of the Chief Executive (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the Schedule of Transactions (also previously circulated).

RESOLVED – That the Schedule of Transactions, as detailed in the appendix to the submitted report, be approved, and the transactions be completed on the terms and conditions detailed therein.

REASONS – The terms negotiated require approval by Cabinet before binding itself contractually to a transaction.

C67 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - TO CONSIDER ANY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO OTHER BODIES TO WHICH CABINET APPOINTS.

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.

**DECISIONS DATED –
FRIDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2023**

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**CABINET
5 DECEMBER 2023**

**CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IN DARLINGTON
ENSURING PLACEMENT SUFFICIENCY AND ENABLING CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES**

**Responsible Cabinet Member –
Councillor Nick Wallis, Children and Young People Portfolio**

**Responsible Director –
James Stroyan, Group Director of People**

Purpose of the Report

1. To outline a series of proposals to reduce dependence on costly external placements, and to support and improve placement sufficiency for children and young people in Darlington.

Summary

2. Sourcing placements for looked after children is at crisis point nationally with an increasing reliance on high-cost unregulated emergency placements or expensive residential care due to a lack of more appropriate placements. This issue has been compounded in Darlington by increases in our looked after population and the mandated National Transfer Scheme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).
3. The increased number of children cared for by Darlington Borough Council, coupled with a lack of placement sufficiency has resulted in a significant increase in placement expenditure along with a reduction in placement stability for children and young people looked after by Darlington Borough Council.
4. A range of responses to these challenges have already been implemented which includes a panel to provide the needed peer challenge and ensure when a decision is made to make a child looked after, it is after all other options have been exhausted. There is a strong focus on discharging Care Orders where children are living with parents.
5. These measures on their own cannot effectively meet the scale of the pressure. Darlington do not have the in-house sufficiency to meet the diverse needs of children downstream and our baseline support offer benchmarks negatively in the region in terms of core support.

6. A number of service critical proposals have been developed in response (summarised in **Appendix 1**) which comprise the enhancement and growth of:
 - (a) The DBC foster care service.
 - (b) DBC directly provided children's residential care services.
7. The proposals avoid an overreliance on high-cost external placements and support the growth of step down and transition to adulthood provision in response to increase demand.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that Cabinet consider the report and support the proposals, and progress to Council within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process.

Reasons

9. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons: -
 - (a) The current overreliance on externally provided children's social care placements is unsustainable.
 - (b) The Council needs to diversify the range of directly provided children's social care services in order to meet the needs of Darlington children and improve placement stability.
 - (c) The proposals have a positive impact on the MTFP.

James Stroyan
Group Director of People

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Chris Bell : Extension 5852

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no implications for Crime and Disorder arising from these proposals.
Health and Wellbeing	There are positive impacts for the health and wellbeing of Darlington children and young people arising from these proposals.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no implications for Carbon Impact and Climate Change arising from these proposals.
Diversity	There are positive impacts for the health and wellbeing of Darlington children and young people arising from these proposals.
Wards Affected	The proposals are need led for all Darlington children and young people.
Groups Affected	Children and young people are positively impacted.
Budget and Policy Framework	The proposals will be incorporated into and have a positive impact on the draft MTFP for 24/25 – 27/28
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	These proposals will contribute positively to the Council Plan
Efficiency	These proposals would make us more efficient
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	These proposals will have a significant benefit for Looked After Children and Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Background

10. As at the 31 March 2023 there were 136 young people in an external placement arrangement. The costs associated with external placements are significantly higher than our internal costs:
- (a) There is a £532 per week difference (equivalent to £27,738 per placement per annum) between Darlington Borough Council foster carer and Independent Foster Agency (IFA), which will be exacerbated by a pending Consumer Price Index (CPI) award due to IFA providers in April 2024 which will see the IFA placements cost rise further.
 - (b) On average it is £773 per week cheaper to place a young person in an in-house home versus placing within the independent sector for a residential placement (equivalent to £40,304 per child per annum).
11. Having placements directly provided by the Council also has a key benefit for the young person as the level of placement stability tends to be higher and reduces the need for an out of area placement, based on placement availability alone. Placement stability has been on a declining trajectory and the council's overreliance on external

placements is one of the compounding factors. This is further exacerbated by the extreme demand for foster care and residential placements outstripping supply which is enabling external providers to be extremely selective as to which children are offered placements.

Proposal Summary

12. A number of service critical proposals have been developed in response which comprise the enhancement and growth of the DBC foster care service (Proposals 1-8). There are a number of very specific proposals to ensure the DBC foster service is viable, attractive (and can effectively reduce the number of carers leaving to go to more costly independent providers) with improved retention rates.
13. The proposals will seek to retain the current cohort of 59 Darlington Borough Council foster carers and incrementally grow the foster service by 5 carers in first year and 10 carers in subsequent years. The proposals are outlined below (correspondingly RAG rated) along with their costings.

Red RAG rated foster care proposals.

Proposal 1:

Uplift the age-related payments

Age related payments are paid towards the direct costs incurred from caring for a child and are received by foster carers, special guardianship carers, and child arrangement carers. The proposal is to increase age related payments by £10 per child per week – costing £180,671 in year 1. This would mean carers are being paid over the minimum set by the government.

Risk of not proceeding

Carers deregister or move to another Council or IFA in which case Darlington would not only lose the foster carers, but also have to correspondingly increase the payments for the new care arrangement. Foster carers would have less money for the direct care of the children in their care without this uplift.

Likelihood

High. There are instances where this has occurred already with a significant number of foster carers stating that it is their intent should an improved foster care offer not be made. However, it is felt on balance, should a commitment to proceed with the professional fee increase be made that an uplift to the age-related payment would not have as significant a prioritisation as this proposal does have a scope of carers broader than just foster carers.

Risk of proceeding

There is a risk that payments to existing foster carers are increased and there is no increase in the number of new DBC foster carers or improvement in the retention of existing carers.

Likelihood

Low. Whilst this remains a risk it is felt to be low as the primary rationale for prospective carers in not coming to foster for Darlington Borough Council or continuing to foster for Darlington Borough Council is payment rates.

Proposal rescaling opportunities

This proposal is broader than just foster carers. Should the remaining foster care specific proposals be agreed, this proposal could be removed due to its encompassment of a broader caring group which isn't experiencing the same stability risks as the in house foster service.

Proposal 2:

Restructure the professional fees that are paid to in-house foster carers to be more competitive – cost £138,171 in year 1.

Risk of not proceeding

Carers deregister or move to another Council or IFA to care and there continues to be no incentive for carers to care for more complex children.

Likelihood

Exceptionally high. There are instances where this has occurred already with a significant number of foster carers stating that is their intent should an improved foster care offer not be made. We currently have one foster carer considering transferring to DBC from an IFA, but only if an improved offer is made. There is another DBC foster carer moving to a bordering Council foster service due to the better financial offer they would receive. A Council in the Tees Valley has significantly improved their fees after losing 21 sets of carers to IFAs in 2022 and has already seen a positive change in enquiries since the new rates were put in place. On this basis uplifting the professional fees is considered to be one of highest priorities in the foster carer proposals.

Risk of proceeding

There is a risk that payments to existing carers are increased and there is no corresponding increase in the number of new DBC foster Carers or improvement in the retention of existing carers.

Likelihood

Whilst this remains a risk, the likelihood is felt to be low as the primary rationale for prospective carers in not coming to foster for Darlington Borough Council is payment rates of which the professional fee represents the most significant payment. There is a low risk that the IFAs will correspondingly increase their foster agency fees which would negate the benefit of the improved offer for Darlington Borough Council foster carers. The majority of IFAs operating in the Northeast are in a contractual arrangement with all 12 North East councils for a period up at least to 2025 and up to 2028, with pre-set pricing and the provision for annual inflationary uplifts. Other neighbouring councils who have vastly enhanced their foster carer offer and payments have seen positive benefits and did not experience a corresponding fee increase by the IFAs.

Proposal rescaling opportunities

The professional fee uplift is considered to be one of the most critical components of the revised foster care offer. Uplifting the rates is essential to stabilise the fostering service and reduce the risk of carers being lost to other Councils and IFAs. Even with the uplifted rates accounted for Darlington will benchmark in a mid-position against other local authority rates. However, it is felt that the specific component parts of the enhanced offer including, but not limited to; a council tax financial contribution and enhanced professional fees will be significant in incentivising new foster carers.

The payment structure for proposal 2 is shown in the table below.

Current payment arrangement	Proposed payment
Band A £100pw	Band A removed.
Band B £125pw	New Band 1 (Paid to new foster carers) £175pw for the first child and £100pw for subsequent children
Band C £200pw	New Band 2 (Paid to experienced carers who have successfully completed the training and development standards and are able to care for children with diverse needs) £275pw for the first child and £200pw for subsequent children
	New Band 3 (Paid to experienced carers caring for children with more complex needs, who require a very specific form of care) £375pw for the first child (very complex care needs) £300pw for subsequent children (very complex care needs)
	Discretionary additional £100pw for exceptionally challenging to place young people where the only alternative would be bespoke high cost residential.

Amber RAG rated fostering proposals.**Proposal 3:**

Provide a financial contribution towards Council Tax of up to £1,500 for people who are foster carers for Darlington Borough Council. Cost £88,500 in year 1.

Risk of not proceeding

Financial viability is becoming a key determiner for foster carers; a Tees Valley council has council tax support to this value in place for their foster carers (as part of a package of enhancements) and have successfully managed to grow their in house foster service and reduce their previous over reliance on IFAs. This is something only Councils can offer and shows the value we place on our foster carers.

Likelihood

Is felt to be high. This financial contribution offer is key to having a firm council commitment to incentive individuals to continue to foster for Darlington Borough Council and an effective incentivisation for new foster carers.

Risk of proceeding

Is felt to be low, given the continued control the council will have over the payments.

Likelihood

It reinforces the Councils commitment to being a direct provider of foster care services and the invaluable role which foster carers play in the care of Darlington children.

Payments will only be made to active DBC Foster Carers on a rolling monthly basis valued at £125 per month via the existing foster care payment run and therefore payments would cease if a carer is no longer fostering for Darlington Borough Council.

Proposal rescaling opportunities

A lower council tax financial contribution could be offered, however, £1,500 is already a rate in place by a subregional Council and would remain a factor in drawing foster carers to other localities. A value of £1,500 reinforces the very significant contribution Darlington Borough Council fosters care make to the care arrangements for Darlington children.

Proposal 4:

Give DBC foster carers the option of taking 14 days paid respite, which is in line with what is offered in the independent sector – cost £50,822 in year 1.

Risk of not proceeding

Paid respite is a consistent offer in both the IFAs, and neighbouring Councils foster care offers. Benchmarking has identified Darlington as a key outlier in not having this arrangement which also risks an increase in carer burn out and placement instability. Foster carers do not receive any payment when they take a break, and this stops people progressing to be foster carers.

Likelihood

Is felt to be high. Without the provision of paid respite, it will continue to be a factor in making it more attractive to foster for other Councils or IFAs.

Risk of proceeding

Is felt to be low, carers will be given the option as to whether this is something they would wish to be in place for their care arrangement. There is a risk that if all carers wish to have this arrangement that it would take a period of time to implement across all carers whilst new respite arrangements were developed.

Likelihood

Should a significant volume of foster carers wish to receive 14 days respite it will require a period of time to implement. The volume will be unknown until the offer is made and officers will work closely with any requesting foster carers in the implementation of this arrangement.

Proposal rescaling opportunities

A lower number of paid respite days could be offered; however, 14 days is the minimum offered by all IFAs and therefore would continue to be risk a factor in drawing carers to foster for other councils or independent providers. A lower than 14 day paid respite period would also increase the risk of carer burn out.

Proposal 5:

Increase the mileage rate paid to foster carers from 39p per mile to 45p per mile, in line with the HMRC rates - cost £3,000 in year 1.

Risk of not proceeding

Transport logistics are a key barrier in co-ordinating viable placements, mileage at HMRC rates are already in place with some regional Councils. Darlington's current mileage rate falls well below the HMRC rate. It is much more cost effective to pay for mileage than source alternative transport and costs are only incurred when transport is provided. Having an effective, reliable, and flexible transport arrangement for foster carer placements is essential to supporting school attendance and court ordered family contact time.

Likelihood

Is felt to be high without an increase in mileage rate there is no incentive for carers who can directly transport to do so as the reimbursement rate has not kept pace with the costs incurred.

Risk of proceeding

Payments will only be made where a foster carer has undertaken journeys as a direct result of undertaking their foster role.

Likelihood

Is felt to be low. Mileage costs will only be paid where transport has been a direct requirement of the fostering role.

Proposal rescaling opportunities

HMRC is the accepted standard rate for mileage costs incurred through professional activity and therefore it wouldn't be possible to scale down from the current proposal.

Proposal 6:

Develop a refer a friend scheme to pay £250 upon completion of assessment and a further £250 upon the first placement for any foster carer who recommends a friend to foster for Darlington Borough Council - cost £1,500 in year 1.

Risk of not proceeding

It is well known that the most effective form of foster carer recruitment is word of mouth. Costs would only be incurred when carers are fully registered with DBC and as a one-off payment when the first placement is made. North Yorkshire are currently offering £500 welcome payments to new foster carers.

Likelihood

It is highly likely that without a refer a friend scheme there is little incentive for existing carers to support the DBC foster care recruitment through word of mouth.

Risk of proceeding

Is felt to be low, costs will only be incurred when foster carers are recruited and once a placement is made.

Likelihood

It would be very unlikely that a new foster carer incentivisation arrangement for existing foster carers does not have a positive impact.

Proposal rescaling opportunities

The above rates are aligned with the offers in place from other fostering providers to support service growth, to reduce further would negate any benefit.

Green RAG rated fostering proposals.**Proposal 7:**

Introduce an appreciation payment of £250 to our foster carers to be paid every 5 years – cost £12,750 in year 1.

Risk of not proceeding

Overall costs are very low, and it is an effective way of reinforcing the value of DBC foster carers on an periodic basis. It also acts a further incentive mechanism for carers to remain as Darlington Borough Council foster carers.

Likelihood

Is felt to be high. Appreciation payments are a positive enhancement to the offer, to continue to keep momentum with foster carers, but not as critical to ensure service stability as some of the higher priority rated foster care proposals.

Risk of proceeding

Is felt to be very low. Costs will be fixed and only be incurred on a 5 yearly cycle.

Likelihood

Appreciation payments form part of key message of the ongoing value the council places on the contribution of foster carers.

Proposal rescaling opportunities

The time period for the appreciation payment could be extended for example every 7 years, however, given the nominal cost it would have little material gain.

Proposal 8:

Offer an on-call fee of £30 per bank holiday and weekend to our foster carers to improve placement accessibility in an emergency – cost £5,400 in year 1.

Risk of not proceeding

There will continue to be no incentive for carers to give up their time and be restricted in their leisure pursuits to be on call for emergency need. This in turn impacts the resilience of the foster care service in times of urgent need, not having an on-call fee is out of kilter with neighbouring Councils foster carer offer.

Likelihood

Is felt to be high. It will continue to be the case that should a fair acknowledgement via a financial payment not be made to reflect the personal life restrictions from being on call. The rationale for this being rag rated green was due to the fact that it was a separate component to the critical measures to ensure the viability of the DBC foster care service.

Risk of proceeding

Is felt to be low, cost will only be incurred when a small group of foster cares are on-call. The is risk is the on-call payment does not attract a sufficient group of foster carers to have a viable and robust on call rota, the risk of this occurring will be higher however, if no payment is offered.

Likelihood

Offering an on call fee is unlikely to not attract a small group of on call foster carers.

Proposal rescaling opportunities

No scaling opportunities have identified given the comparatively nominal rate the on-call fee has been proposed at.

14. Further service critical proposals have been developed in response which comprise the enhancement and growth of the DBC provided residential services to avoid an overreliance on high-cost external placements and support the growth of step down and transition to adulthood provision in response to increase demand. These proposals are outlined below along with their costings.

All residential service proposals are RAG rated Red.

Proposal 9:

Increasing the number of taster flats for Care Leavers- in response to increased demand as an effective mechanism to support the throughput from external placements. Cost year 1 - £43,774.

Risk of not proceeding

The existing taster flat capacity is insufficient for the volume of placement need.

Likelihood

Is felt to be high. Taster flats are Ofsted regulated (for 16/17-year-old Care Leavers and Looked After Children) and are critical in supporting preparation for adulthood, they also act as very cost-effective mechanism for stepping children down from external residential care. Without expansion young people will continue to remain in high-cost external placements unnecessarily.

Risk of proceeding

Is felt to be Low, the taster flats are rented by Children's Services, a number from Darlington Borough Council Housing Services and the remainder from local Housing Associations. All rents are set at affordable rent levels. The longest notice period to exit an accommodation arrangement is 3 months. The greatest risk in proceeding will be

securing the required volume of properties owing to the current housing stock pressures which are particularly acute for small affordable rental properties.

Likelihood

A small number of potential properties have already been identified at affordable rent levels which could be used for this purpose.

Proposal rescaling opportunities

The number of taster flats are expected to double through this proposal (an additional 7). A lower number of taster flats could be secured, however, that would impact young people's care plans and be more costly as it will reduce throughput and step-down opportunities from higher cost placements.

Proposal 10:

Expansion of Cedars to 7 days a week – Cedars is an Ofsted registered 3 bed residential service providing in-reach, outreach, and overnight provision (both in the form of planned short breaks and (where required) regulated emergency accommodation provision). Cedars is constrained by currently only operating on a weekend which has resulted in missed opportunities for young people to be supported. The total cost of this in year 1 is £240,531.

Risk of not proceeding

Is felt to be high. Cedars is a regulated service and already very effectively demonstrating positive cost avoidance impact, not being available as a 7-day service is constraining service effectiveness and opportunities have been missed for young people and their families to be supported.

Likelihood

Without moving to a 7-day provision service impact will be constrained and during the days when there is a need, but the service isn't operational alternative external care will need to be sourced in an emergency which will be very significantly higher cost than Cedars. This scenario is already being experienced, where an urgent external care expenditure could have been avoided if Cedars had been available during the week, this external care could only be secured weekly cost of £11k per week.

Risk of proceeding

Is felt to be low. Due to the diversity of the needs of children, it may be the case that a child's needs are so specific they cannot be met via Cedars. It may also be unsafe or inappropriate to provide care to certain children together and therefore a level of more costly external bespoke care provision will continue to be required from time to time for certain children. Depending on the level of alternative care required Cedars could move from cost saving towards cost neutral. The service staffing will be aligned with need and usage requirements.

Likelihood

Based on demand levels and care requirements over previous years it is not considered to be a likely scenario that Cedars operating 7 days doesn't have a demonstrable positive impact on care planning and the volume of urgent cost care requirements.

Proposal rescaling opportunities

Should the expansion to 7 days not have the evidential impact expected, the service could revert to weekend operating only or be decommissioned (this is considered exceptionally unlikely given the positive benefit from the current weekend operation).

Proposal 11:

Repurpose of Gilling Children’s Home Building—: As part of the incremental replacement of DBC children’s homes to new build accommodation. The existing Gilling children’s home (staff and children) will move to a more spacious new build accommodation, envisaged to take place summer 2024. This will leave the current Ofsted registered Gilling building vacant. DBC becoming a larger direct provider is key to the current overreliance on external placements and the strategic approach being pursued by local authorities across the country and in particular in the NE region. The proposal is to repurpose the Gilling building in response to an identified gap in provision for younger children who have a care plan of stepping down to foster care or home and will include additional therapeutic input and support. Cost in year 1 is £642,768.

Risk of not proceeding:

Darlington will not have the diversification in their directly provided children’s home to meet the needs of our children. This repurpose will provide a care arrangement in an area where we are presently solely reliant on independent providers. The building is well established in the community and there are no capital investment requirements. External children’s homes are not as invested in readying children for step down to foster care and without this we will see more children in long term residential care. Given the increase in younger children entering residential care (now from the age of 7) this will be a significant future pressure with current placement costs for a single child at £351k per annum for a period potentially of up to 10 years.

Likelihood

Is felt to be high. If Gilling isn’t re-purposed our reliance on the independent sector for high-cost placements for children who could in time be stepped down from residential care will not reduce. Children’s social care will also lose a well-established asset which could not be easily re-provided at a future point due to the community consultation aspects of the planning process and pressures on accommodation provision.

Risk of proceeding

Is felt to be Low, the house in which the residential care service is provided from is well settled in the community and owned by the Council. The staffing for the home would be able to be deployed to other service delivery pressures across children’s social care in the unlikely event that the home was under occupied.

Likelihood

There has been a consistent need from younger Darlington children for a step-down residential care home and therefore underutilisation is unlikely.

Proposal rescaling opportunities

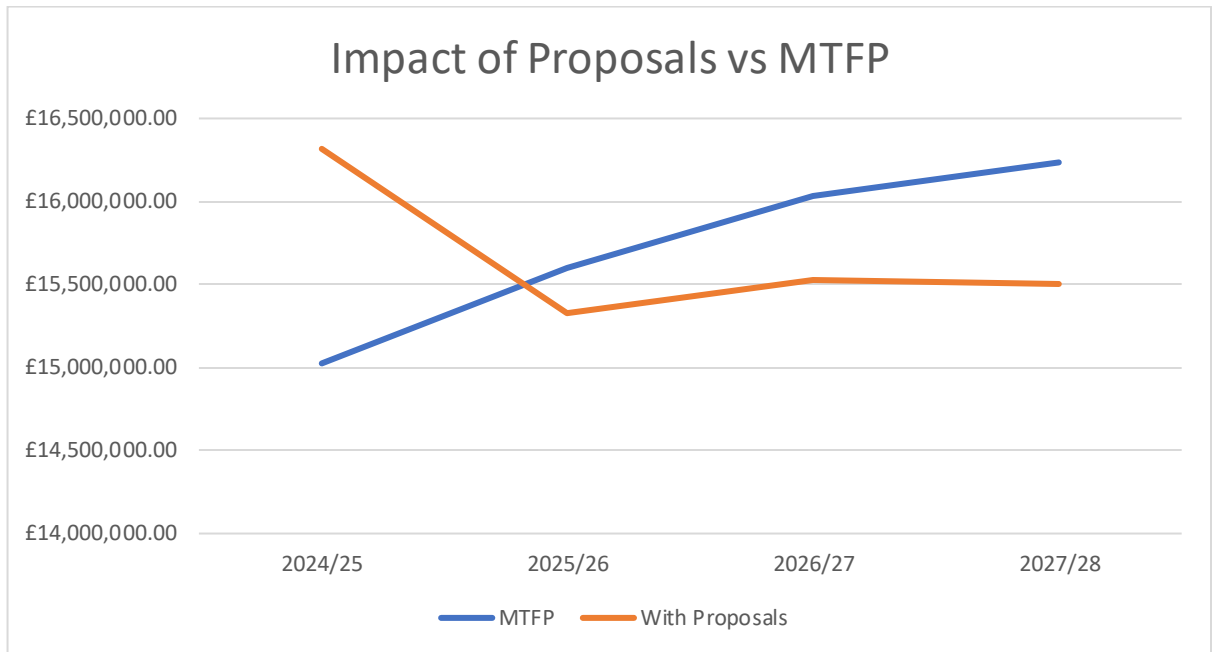
Should the remodelling of Gilling building not have the evidential and positive sufficiency impact expected, the service could be repurposed or decommissioned.

15. A summary of the proposals can be seen in the table at **Appendix 1**









Financial Implications




16. The impact for these proposals on the MTFP is outlined in the table and chart below:

Impact on the Draft MTFP	Cost				Cost Avoidance				Potential Financial Benefit			
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Inhouse Fostering												
Uplift foster payments	180,671	186,091	189,813	193,610								
Restructure Professional Fees	138,171	138,171	138,171	138,171								
Council Tax exemption	88,500	88,500	88,500	88,500								
14 days respite	50,822	50,822	50,822	50,822	(115,490)	(346,470)	(577,450)	(808,430)	365,324	127,014	(100,244)	(327,427)
Mileage	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000								
Refer a friend	750	750	750	750								
Refer a friend passed assessment	750	750	750	750								
Appreciation payment	12,750	0	0	0								
On Call fee	5,400	5,400	5,400	5,400								
Subtotal In House Fostering	480,814	473,484	477,206	481,003	(115,490)	(346,470)	(577,450)	(808,430)	365,324	127,014	(100,244)	(327,427)
Inhouse Residential												
Taster Flats	43,774	39,164	40,184	41,235	0	(63,796)	(66,118)	(68,458)	43,774	(24,632)	(25,934)	(27,223)
Cedars	240,531	250,896	261,945	273,565	0	(486,204)	(483,882)	(481,542)	240,531	(235,308)	(221,937)	(207,977)
Gilling Crescent	642,768	684,199	703,927	724,232	0	(821,705)	(862,791)	(897,303)	642,768	(137,506)	(158,864)	(173,071)
Subtotal Inhouse Residential	927,073	974,259	1,006,056	1,039,032	0	(1,371,705)	(1,412,791)	(1,447,303)	927,073	(397,446)	(406,735)	(408,271)
Total	1,407,887	1,447,743	1,483,262	1,520,035	(115,490)	(1,718,175)	(1,990,241)	(2,255,733)	1,292,397	(270,432)	(506,979)	(735,698)



17. In 2024/25 we would anticipate an additional cost pressure of £1,292,397 as a result of these proposals. In 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 we would anticipate costs savings of £270,432, £506,979 and £735,698 respectively. This assessment has been made on the impact when set against the draft MTFP for 2024/25 – 2027/28 and is based on current and projected children. The in-house fostering investment is expected to see a growth of 35 new DBC foster carers in the period 2024/25 to 2027/28.

Proposal	RAG rating	Risk of not proceeding	Likelihood	Risk of proceeding	Likelihood	Cost (year 1)
Foster Carer proposals						
1. Uplift the age-related payments		Carers deregister/ move to another Council	High	No increase in new foster carers	Low	£180,671
2. Restructure the professional fees		Carers deregister/ move to another Council	Exceptionally high	No increase in new foster carers	Low	£138,171
3. Provide a Council Tax financial contribution		Financial viability will continue to be a determiner for carers/Council commitment not as evident	High	Limited given the council control over the payments paid in monthly instalments	Low	£88,500
4. Give foster carers option to take 14 days paid respite		Carers move to other areas, burn out and placement instability	High	If all carers wish to have this arrangement that it would take a period of time to implement	Low	£50,822
5. Increase the mileage rate paid to foster carers		It is much more cost effective to pay for mileage than source alternative transport	High	Payments will only be made where a foster carer has undertaken journeys as a direct result of undertaking their foster role	Low	£3,000
6. Develop a refer a friend scheme		No incentive for word-of-mouth recruitment	High	Costs only incurred when foster carers are recruited and once a placement is made	Low	£1,500
7. Introduce an appreciation payment of £250		Carers do not feel appreciated on an ongoing basis	High	Overall cost is low and costs will be fixed and only be incurred on a 5 yearly cycle.	Low	£12,750
8. Offer an on-call fee of £30 per bank holiday and weekend		No incentive for carers to give up their time and be restricted in their leisure pursuits to be on call for emergency need	High	The is risk is the on-call payment does not attract a sufficient group of foster carers to have a viable and robust on call rota.	Low	£5,400

Proposal	RAG rating	Risk of not proceeding	Likelihood	Risk of proceeding	Likelihood	Cost (year 1)
Residential Service proposals						
9. Increasing the number of taster flats for Care Leavers		The existing taster flat capacity is insufficient for the volume of placement need.	High	Affordable rent properties with short exit provisions.	Low	£43,774
10. Expansion of Cedars to 7 days a week		Service impact will be constrained by restricted opening times, resulting in a higher volume of high cost urgent care being required.	High	Children will not always be able to be matched together and therefore a reduced level of higher cost care will still be required.	Low	£240,531
11. Repurpose of Gilling Children's Home Building		Darlington will continue to not have the diversification in their directly provided children's home to meet the needs of our children	High	The staffing for the home would be deployed to other service delivery pressures across children's social care in the unlikely event that the home was under occupied.	Low	£642,768

RAG rating keyRed Amber Green 

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CABINET
5 DECEMBER 2023

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – MTFP 2024-25 TO 2027-28

**Responsible Cabinet Member –
Councillor Matthew Roche, Health and Housing Portfolio**

**Responsible Director –
Elizabeth Davison, Group Director of Operations**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider proposals for the revenue budget, capital programme, rent levels and service charges for the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the financial year 2024-25 in the context of the HRA Medium Term Financial Plan to 2027-28 and the 30-year Business Plan.

Summary

2. Darlington Borough Council is the largest provider of social housing in the borough, providing 5,278 homes to local residents. Our homes offer a high standard of accommodation that meets the Decent Homes Standard, and we provide a range of quality services to tenants, including a responsive repairs and maintenance service, lifeline services and emergency call out provision.
3. We are proud of our housing and want to continually improve so in addition to the day to day maintenance, significant investment is made in our housing stock each year to maintain and improve those standards, enhance the energy efficiency of our homes to reduce our carbon impact and help our tenants reduce their energy consumption and bills, whilst ensuring we have the financial capacity to continue with our ambitious programme of building new Council homes.
4. The high quality of our homes and the services provided mean they are in high demand, which is why we have an ambitious programme to build new Council homes in Darlington. Our new build Council housing programme is funded through capital receipts from right to buy sales, grant funding from Homes England and through estimated borrowing of £13.5m.
5. This report sets out the key decisions for the HRA for 2024-25, which includes:
 - (a) Proposed revenue expenditure of £31.783m, including
 - (i) £6.179m to fund our responsive repairs and maintenance service, and

- (ii) £13.455m contribution to the capital programme.
- (b) A proposed capital programme of £27.270m, including
 - (i) £1.286m for heating system replacements,
 - (ii) £1.851m for property adaptations, structural works, external works, and roofing,
 - (iii) £1.495m for windows and door replacements,
 - (iv) £2.898m for kitchen and bathroom replacements,
 - (v) £3.068m to deliver energy efficiency measures to help reduce tenants' energy bills and to tackle climate change,
 - (vi) £15.815m to deliver our new build Council housing programme.
- 6. The key decision regarding the HRA each year is the balance between setting rent and service charge levels that are affordable to our tenants, whilst ensuring we have sufficient resources to invest in our housing stock, tackle climate change, meet the challenges of new Decent Homes Standards and new Fire Safety Regulations, and maintain services.
- 7. Councils have the discretion to increase rents each year by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%. CPI for September 2023 was 6.7%, which means for 2024-25 Members could increase rents by up to 7.7%.
- 8. Members will recall that a 5% rent increase was agreed in February 2023 for the current financial year, although rents could have been increased by 7%. This was in recognition of the ongoing economic pressures facing our tenants. CPI for September 2022 was 10.1%, which meant for 2023-24 Members would have usually been able to increase rents by up to 11.1%. However, the Government placed a rent increase cap of 7% for 2023-24.
- 9. The Council has faced substantial financial pressures over the last 12 months particularly around inflation and the cost of materials and services to maintain our homes, the most significant increases being in roofing, door and window replacements, and general day to day repairs, with an average overall increase in cost of 7.9%. These costs are anticipated to increase by a further 5.1% in 2024-25, as detailed in the main report.
- 10. Taking into account the current economic pressures facing our tenants and balancing this with the increased costs of maintaining and improving our housing and the need to deliver our ambitious capital and energy efficiency programmes, an increase of 6.7% is recommended, or an average of £5.54 each week. It is also recommended to increase service charges by an appropriate inflationary amount.

Recommendations

- 11. It is proposed that the following recommendations are agreed for wider consultation:-

- (a) An average weekly rent increase of 6.7% for 2024-25 be implemented giving an average social rent of £83.98 and affordable rent of £94.17.
- (b) Garage rents and service charges are increased as shown in **Table 3**.
- (c) The revenue budget at **Appendix 1** is approved.
- (d) The Housing Business Plan at **Appendix 2** is agreed.
- (e) The capital programme at **Appendix 3** is approved.

Reason

- 12. To enable the Council to deliver an appropriate level of services to tenants to meet housing need and to support the economic growth of the Borough through housing development.

Elizabeth Davison
Group Director of Operations

Background Papers

Regulator of Social Housing - Rent Standard

Anthony Sandys: Ext 6926

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues
Health and Well Being	By ensuring our housing stock is in good condition we are making a positive contribution to the health and well-being of our tenants
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are a range of energy efficiency measures included in the business plan which will have a positive carbon impact
Diversity	There are no diversity issues
Wards Affected	This will have an effect on all Wards in the Borough with Council Housing
Groups Affected	All Council tenants and Lifeline service users
Budget and Policy Framework	The issues contained within this report require Council approval and the report will be presented to Council in February 2024
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an executive decision
Council Plan	This report contributes to the Council Plan by involving Members in the plans to build new Council houses and ensuring the existing Council housing stock is maintained to a high standard and is environmentally friendly by maximising rental and service charge income
Efficiency	As the HRA is a ring fenced budget every effort is made to maximise income and identify savings in order to maintain a high quality service
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	No impact

MAIN REPORT

Background

13. Darlington Borough Council is the largest provider of social housing in the borough, providing 5,278 homes to local residents. Our homes offer a high standard of accommodation that meet the Decent Homes Standard and provides a range of quality services to tenants including a responsive repairs and maintenance service, lifeline services and emergency call out provision.
14. In addition, significant investment is made in our housing stock each year to maintain and improve those standards. A comprehensive capital programme delivers a range of home improvements to tenants, improves the energy efficiency of our homes to reduce our carbon impact and reduce the energy bills of our tenants, whilst ensuring we have the financial capacity to continue with our ambitious programme of building new Council homes. Over 50% of households in Council housing have one or more person with a disability and we are therefore committed to providing good quality homes with generous space standards and lifetime homes principles to support people to live independently and maintain a good quality of life.

15. The high quality of our homes and the services provided mean they are in high demand, which is why we have an ambitious programme to build new Council homes in Darlington.
16. The key decision regarding the HRA each year is the balance between setting rent and service charge levels that are affordable to our tenants, whilst ensuring we have sufficient resources to invest in our housing stock, tackle climate change and maintain services.

Setting the MTFP for the HRA

Projected HRA Expenditure for 2024-25

17. Detailed estimates have been prepared based on current service levels and the following expenditure amounts for the revenue account are proposed for 2024-25:

Area	£m	Description
Operational costs	4.859	This includes all the costs associated with the provision of our housing management, housing income, tenancy sustainment and tenancy enforcement services, central support services and other associated support costs such as ICT, buildings, and insurance.
Service charges	3.377	This covers services charged to tenants such as grounds maintenance and Lifeline charges to a range of clients. All service charges are fully recoverable. It also includes recharges that will be recovered through additional income including court costs and recharges to the General Fund for grounds maintenance.
Responsive repairs and maintenance	6.179	This covers the on-going general repairs to our 5,278 Council properties, which is an average of £1,171 for each property in 2024-25. The continued investment in a good quality repairs and maintenance service is essential to maintaining the high standards of our housing stock, whilst also ensuring we meet all the statutory requirements to provide for the health and safety of our tenants.
Capital financing	3.911	Historic and ongoing cost of paying for borrowing undertaken to fund capital expenditure.
Bad debt provision	0.250	Provision to cover rents that are deemed to be unrecoverable.
Revenue contribution to the capital programme	13.455	This represents the amount by which the HRA can fund major capital works. A breakdown of the proposed Capital Programme for 2024-25 is given below in 'Housing Business Plan'.

Housing Business Plan

18. All Housing Capital schemes are funded fully from the HRA, and this section explains what future capital investment is planned. The priorities are identified through the Housing Business Plan, which is constantly reviewed to ensure investment is targeted in the area of most need. The funding proposals for 2024-25 are:

Area	£m	Description
Adaptations and lifts	0.214	This budget delivers adaptations to Council homes to enable tenants with a disability to remain in their own home and live independently. In addition, the budget also covers any unplanned works to passenger lifts within sheltered and extra care schemes.
Heating replacement	1.286	To fund new condensing boilers and central heating upgrades that are due for replacement and in addition, to any unplanned replacements required due to boiler failure before their due replacement date. This work for 2024-25 will predominantly be completed in the Bank Top and Lascelles, Eastbourne and Cockerton wards.
Structural works	0.427	This budget will be used to address structural issues identified within the year.
Lifeline services	0.250	This budget will to continue fund any upgrades required to Lifeline equipment.
Repairs before painting	0.066	This budget will be invested in joinery repair works in anticipation of the cyclical external painting programme. This work for 2024-25 will predominantly be completed in the Bank Top and Lascelles, Park East, Harrowgate Hill and Stephenson wards.
Roofing and repointing work	1.050	This budget will fund the replacement of flat and pitched roofs and the replacement of fascia's, soffits, and rainwater goods. In addition, it will also fund loft insulation work, where appropriate. This work for 2024-25 will predominantly be completed in the Houghton and Springfield ward.
Garages	0.050	This budget will be invested in improvements to the Council's garage blocks including demolition where they are beyond economical repair. This work for 2024-25 will predominantly be completed in the Bank Top and Lascelles and Red Hall and Lingfield wards.
External works	0.210	Used to provide new rear dividing fences and new footpaths to Council properties based on their condition, in various locations across the borough.

Area	£m	Description
Pavements	0.027	To fund any identified work to upgrade or adapt any pavements (including requirements for dropped kerbs for Council properties) across the Borough.
Window and door replacement	1.495	To fund the window and external door replacement programme, including replacement fire doors in communal areas. This budget will also fund any window and door replacements required as a result of a responsive repair. This work for 2024-25 will predominantly be completed in the Sadberge and Middleton St. George, Bank Top and Lascelles, Whinfield and North Road wards.
Internal planned maintenance (IPM)	2.898	This budget will fund kitchen and bathroom replacements that are due. This budget will also fund any kitchen and bathroom renewal works for properties as required, including any void properties that require this work before letting. This work for 2024-25 will predominantly be completed in the Red Hall and Lingfield and Cockerton wards.
Communal works	0.160	This budget will fund any work required to communal areas and will also be used to carry out upgrades to card entry systems. This work for 2024-25 will predominantly be completed in the Park East and Cockerton wards.
Energy efficiency improvements	3.068	This budget will continue to fund energy efficiency improvements such insulation and heating systems. This will also include any match funding required for Government energy grant bids (see the 'Climate Change' section below).
New build	15.815	This budget will continue to fund the new build Council housing programme (see the 'New Build' section below).

19. The purpose of the Housing Business Plan is to ensure that Housing Services has a sustainable medium-term financial plan, which focuses investment on our strategic priorities. The following proposals will outline our strategic priorities and how resources will be aligned against these priorities (subject to final decisions on rent levels).

New Build

20. Darlington Borough Council has set an ambitious programme to build additional new Council homes to meet increasing demand for social housing in the area. Since the programme began, 293 new Council properties have already been delivered at various locations around Darlington, providing exceptionally high quality homes to local residents. Demand for our properties continues to be high, with over 1,192 Darlington residents on the Housing Allocations register.

21. Since the abolition of the HRA borrowing cap, we have been able to prudentially borrow and have included estimated additional borrowing of £13.5m in 2024-25 to build new affordable homes. Our new build council housing programme is funded through capital receipts from right to buy sales, grant funding from Homes England and prudential borrowing.
22. The Housing Business Plan is funded by the rents and service charges received from Council properties and the loss of income from ongoing right to buy sales would put the Business Plan at risk if these properties were not replaced.
23. The following new build work is planned to be delivered in 2024-25:
 - (a) Phase 2 of the Sherbourne Close site is due to commence in 2024, delivering an additional 14 new homes. Development of the site was due to commence in January 2023 but has been delayed due to nutrient neutrality issues. Phase one of this site has already delivered 18 new homes.
 - (b) Work on the Skinnergate site is due to commence in 2024, delivering 16 new homes and will initially require some demolition work of existing commercial buildings. Development of the site was due to commence in 2022 but has been delayed as a result of ongoing legal issues in regard to adjoining commercial and residential properties, nutrient neutrality issues and enquiries raised by Historic England.
 - (c) Work on the Neasham Road site commenced in September 2022 and will deliver 150 new homes by 2025-26. The first new Council homes on the site are due to be completed in March 2024.
24. As noted previously, the new build programme for 2024-25 will partly be funded through additional borrowing. In addition, grant funding bids to Homes England's Affordable Housing Programme will also provide around 25% of the overall costs. It is difficult to predict exact grant funding levels as decisions are made by Homes England on a site by site basis, therefore grant projections are based on previous successful bids. In order to reduce financing costs, unallocated balances will be used before borrowing, however this is purely for treasury management purposes, as all new build schemes are self-financing.

Housing for Vulnerable People

25. Each year, Housing Services complete a range of minor and major adaptations to individual Council properties where a need has been identified by an Occupational Therapist. Works range from the provision of lever taps and grab rails to semi-permanent ramps, stair lifts, hoists, and ground floor extensions.
26. The HRA adaptations budget reflects the fundamental role adaptations play in supporting vulnerable people to continue to live independently, reducing the need for expensive care packages and prevent a premature move into residential or care accommodation. These high levels of need have also been considered in developing our new build housing programme and properties are built in accordance with Lifetime Homes standards.
27. Inexpensive features include flush door entrances at the front and rear for wheelchair access, and raised sockets, as well as low level windowsills and openings. Increased space

standards allow for hallways wide enough for 360° wheelchair turning circles, wider doors, and ground floor toilets. Occupational Therapists and Housing Officers also work closely with individuals to meet their needs where appropriate, such as bespoke lowered kitchens and specific bathing requirements before they move in, wherever possible.

Existing Stock Investment and Responsive Repairs

28. Previously, a percentage of our housing stock has been surveyed by an independent specialist organisation every five years and detailed analysis of the data takes place to help inform our priorities. However, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) has recommended that social housing providers should have an accurate record of all their stock, and in response, we have recruited a dedicated Stock Condition Surveyor who will undertake a rolling programme of surveys to inform our provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for our tenants.
29. Overall, our properties have been assessed as being in good condition, reflecting our significant annual investment as part of a structured programme for both on-going capital improvements and responsive repairs and maintenance. Our annual stock condition surveys will continue to shape our Business Plan and energy efficiency priorities.
30. All our properties comply with Decent Homes Standards. This can be largely attributed to a central heating programme providing A-rated combi-boilers and a planned maintenance programme which ensures properties benefit from cavity wall insulation and 300mm of loft insulation. Properties have also been targeted in recent years for a more comprehensive package of energy efficiency measures including double glazed UPVC windows, composite doors, and loft insulation. In addition, all our properties comply with health and safety legal requirements and part of the cyclical maintenance programme includes statutory gas and electrical safety checks.
31. The Housing Business Plan identifies a capital works budget of around £59m over the next four years and £472m budget for capital works over the next 30 years, including the New Build Programme (see **Appendix 2**).
32. The Business Plan also anticipates the number of responsive repairs will remain at current levels, with an annual inflationary increase for costs and so allocates a budget of £26.4m for responsive repairs and maintenance over the next four years.

Climate Change

33. We are committed to improve the energy efficiency of our homes, reduce our carbon impact, and help tackle climate change, and reduce tenant's fuel bills. However, significant investment is required to achieve Government targets to ensure all our homes:
 - (a) Achieve a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C by 2030.
 - (b) Achieve a net zero carbon rating by 2050.
34. An independent consultant was commissioned in 2021 to produce a zero carbon study, to retrofit our housing stock to meet Government targets over the next 30 years. The full cost of retrofitting all properties is difficult to determine at this stage, but estimates are in

excess of £100m. To meet the EPC target of C, an estimated £2.1m to 4.1m additional investment is required each year up to 2030. The study recognised that the majority of this amount will need to come from Government funding.

35. The Council has already committed £1m of capital expenditure to tackle climate change in the current financial year and this has been supplemented with Government funding from successful bids through the Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) to deliver improvements to Council homes as follows:
- (a) The LAD(1b) scheme delivered loft insulation and double glazed windows to 709 Council homes using £1.08m of Government funding and £0.62m of capital expenditure.
 - (b) The LAD(2) scheme delivered Air Source Heat Pumps, Smart heating controls, loft insulation and solar panels to 28 Council homes using £0.17m of Government funding and £0.07m of capital expenditure.
 - (c) The SHDF (wave 1) scheme delivered external and cavity wall insulation, Air Source Heat Pumps, loft insulation and solar panels to 23 Council homes using £0.24m of Government funding and £0.28m of capital expenditure.
 - (d) The SHDF (wave 2) scheme is currently delivering external and cavity wall insulation, solar panels, loft insulation, double glazing, and low energy lighting to 130 Council homes using £1.27m of Government funding and £1.27m of capital expenditure.
36. In addition, all single glazed windows in Council properties were replaced with double glazing and this work was completed earlier this year. To meet the Government's targets, £3.1m investment is recommended for 2024-25 in the HRA MTFP, increasing by inflation to £3.4m by 2027-28. Investing in the energy efficiency of our homes will also help to reduce our tenant's energy bills and will deliver the following improvements:
- (a) Replacing timber front and back doors with composite doors.
 - (b) Improvements to external wall insulation.
 - (c) Installation of solar panels and air source heat pumps.
 - (d) Loft insulation upgrades as part of our roofing and IPM programmes.
37. All Government funding bids require match funding from the Council, usually on a 50/50 basis. Our initial objective is to ensure the EPC rating for all our Council homes is at a minimum of C. Over 3,400 Council properties currently have an EPC rating of D or lower, although it is recognised that many of these properties just fall short of an EPC rating of C where minimal investment is required to achieve this. Our Housing Services Climate Change Strategy is currently being developed and will identify what actions are required from 2024-25 onwards to deliver this and is due to be considered by Cabinet in January 2024.

Income

Rents

38. All registered providers of social housing (including Councils) must set rents in accordance with the Government's Rent Standard guidance. The guidance allows social housing providers to increase rents, by CPI plus 1%, which means for 2024-25, Councils would have the discretion to increase rents by up to 7.7%.
39. Members will recall that a 5% rent increase was agreed in February 2023 for the current financial year, although rents could have been increased by 7%. This was in recognition of the ongoing economic pressures facing our tenants. CPI for September 2022 was 10.1%, which meant for 2023-24 Members would have usually been able to increase rents by up to 11.1%. However, the Government placed a rent increase cap of 7% for 2023-24.
40. The Council has faced substantial financial pressures over the last 12 month around inflation, energy and the rising cost of materials and services to maintain our homes, the most significant increases being in roofing, door and window replacements, and responsive day to day repairs, with an average overall increase in costs of 7.9% (see **Table 1**). These costs are anticipated to increase by a further 5.1% in 2024-25, as shown in **Table 2** below.

Table 1: Cost increases 2023-24

Item	Average cost 22-23	Average cost 23-24	Estimated properties	Total cost 22-23	Total cost 23-24	Percentage increase
Roofing	£8,000	£8,800	100	£800,000	£880,000	10.0%
Kitchen / bathroom	£9,329	£10,040	220	£2,052,380	£2,208,900	7.6%
Heating	£3,600	£3,871	200	£720,000	£774,200	7.5%
External doors	£737	£788	230	£169,510	£181,350	7.0%
Windows	£3,000	£3,333	250	£750,000	£833,250	11.1%
Painting	£255	£280	1,000	£255,000	£280,250	9.9%
Responsive repairs	£170	£182	25,000	£4,250,000	£4,552,000	7.1%
Total				£8,996,890	£9,709,950	7.9%

Table 2: Estimated cost increases 2024-25

Item	Total cost 23-24	Estimated total cost 24-25	Percentage increase
Roofing	£880,000	£880,000	0.0%
Kitchen / bathroom	£2,208,900	£2,329,300	5.5%
Heating	£774,200	£816,000	5.4%
External doors	£181,350	£194,050	7.0%
Windows	£833,250	£891,600	7.0%
Painting	£280,250	£299,900	7.0%
Responsive repairs	£4,552,000	£4,791,000	5.3%
Total	£9,709,950	£10,201,850	5.1%

41. The Council recognises that the last few years have been a difficult time for all our tenants and in the current economic climate the pressures on fuel and price inflation in general puts a strain on family finances. Conversely, rising prices also means the cost of repairs, maintenance, contractor, and material costs to maintain and invest in our stock are also increasing. Without any rise there would be an impact on our ability to maintain and invest in our tenant’s homes and the ability to implement the significant energy efficiency measures required to lower tenants’ energy bills and tackle climate change.
42. In addition, new Decent Homes Standards are due to be published in 2024 and the Regulator of Social Housing is consulting on new Consumer Standards that place greater emphasis on social landlords to provide good quality homes to their tenants, including tackling issues such as damp and mould. New Fire Safety regulations also require us to replace all our doors in communal housing schemes over the next few years. It is worth noting that over 70% of our tenants will have their rent and most service charges covered by Universal Credit or Housing Benefit payments. This means that the full amount of any increase will be covered by those benefits.
43. Taking into account the current economic pressures facing our tenants, the recent increase in CPI and balancing this with the need to deliver our ambitious capital and energy efficiency programmes, an increase of 6.7% is recommended for 2024-25, an average of £5.54 each week. It is also recommended to increase service charges by an appropriate inflationary amount. The proposed increases reflect the rising cost of wages, building materials and contracted services. We anticipate that our average rents will continue to be lower than other social housing providers in Darlington and the latest published figures confirm this (see **Tables 3 and 4** below).

Table 3: Average Weekly Social Rents 2022-23 (no service charges included)

House size	Darlington BC	All Other Registered Providers in Darlington
1 bedroom	£66.45	£71.21
2 bedroom	£75.41	£85.07
3 bedroom	£83.91	£89.84
4 bedroom	£89.70	£109.54

Table 4: Average Weekly Affordable Rents 2022-23 (including service charges)

House size	Darlington BC	All Other Registered Providers in Darlington
1 bedroom	£90.03	£92.90
2 bedroom	£94.68	£103.65
3 bedroom	£105.89	£115.19
4 bedroom	£134.76	£126.31

44. In addition to the income from rent and service charges, in 2024-25 we plan to borrow an additional £13.5m to help fund our new build programme. This will be supplemented with grants from Homes England, which usually cover around 25% of the new build costs. We also plan to continue to bid for available Government funding to improve the energy

efficiency of our homes and reduce our carbon impact. Even with the proposed 6.7% rent increase for 2024-25, our reserves are estimated to reduce from £20.7m in 2024-25 to £11.1m by 2027-28.

Garage Rents and Service Charges

45. The proposed service charges shown at **Table 5** below and achieves full recovery of costs from those tenants who directly benefit from the services provided. In most cases, this means an inflationary increase is necessary that either matches or is below CPI but in some instances, a higher increase is needed to maintain current levels of service.
46. For 2023-24, the heating charge for sheltered and extra care schemes was increased to £42.88 each week to reflect the North East Procurement Organisation’s (NEPO) estimate of gas price increases in 2023-24. However, Members agreed to review this amount during 2023 and amend the service charge to reflect actual heating costs for the schemes. Following a review, the heating charge was reduced to £28.85 from 1 October 2023 and it is proposed to keep this charge for 2024-25 at the same level.
47. Any additional costs will be covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit for the approximate 70% of tenants who are eligible. The HRA funds a Tenancy Sustainment Service and Income Management Team to address the financial challenges facing a considerable number of Council tenants. Referrals are also made to CAB for independent financial advice as well as to food banks and furniture recycling schemes. Those tenants, particularly first-time tenants who require more sustained intensive support, will be referred to the Housing Plus Team.

Table 5: Garage Rents and Service Charges

Description	Current Weekly Charge (23/24)	Proposed Weekly Charge (24/25)	Percentage Increase
	£	£	%
Garage Rents	8.74	9.76	12%
Building Cleaning – Flats	2.30	2.62	14%
Building Cleaning – Sheltered Schemes	4.09	4.66	14%
Building Cleaning – Extra Care	14.56	16.63	14%
Grounds Maintenance – General Housing	2.06	2.20	7%
Grounds Maintenance – Blocks of Flats	2.06	2.20	7%
Heating – Wardens schemes*	42.88	28.85	-33%
Heating – Blocks of flats	6.21	3.29	-47%
Administration – Leaseholders	1.99	2.12	7%
Furnishings and Fittings – Comprehensive Schemes	2.42	2.53	5%
Furnishings and Fittings – Good Neighbour Schemes	1.11	1.24	12%

Description	Current Weekly Charge (23/24)	Proposed Weekly Charge (24/25)	Percentage Increase
Lifeline Response	7.58	7.92	4%
Lifeline – Sheltered and Extra Care Housing	27.59	28.38	3%
Pavement Crossings and Hard standings	4.72	5.12	9%
Mid-day Meal – Extra Care (Residents only)	45.43	48.61	7%
Mid-day Meal – Extra Care (Non-Residents only)	54.51	58.33	7%
Guest Rooms in Sheltered Schemes	98.85	105.48	7%
Door Entry Systems	0.86	0.93	9%
TV Aerials	0.24	0.26	9%
Furniture Charge	12.00	14.08	17%
Housing Plus Service	20.62	22.60	10%

* Reduced from £42.88 to £28.85 each week from October 2023.

Consultation

48. The Annual Review of the HRA Business Plan, together with the recommendation to increase rents and service changes is developed in consultation with Council tenants through our Tenants Panel and tenant surveys. The specific proposals included in this report have not yet been considered by the Tenants Panel, but the outcome of consultation will be reported to Cabinet in the February 2024 report.

Financial Implications

49. The estimates included in this report represent a fair view of ongoing plans and commitments although Members will appreciate some budgets are subject to volatility and will continue to be monitored closely.

50. With the proposed increase in rents the expenditure plans presented are affordable and the level of revenue balances projected in this report represent an adequate level of risk.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - MTFP

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>Income</u>				
Rents Of Dwellings (Gross)	(23,640)	(24,606)	(25,393)	(25,966)
Sundry Rents (Including Garages & Shops)	(497)	(512)	(527)	(543)
Charges For Services & Facilities	(3,377)	(3,528)	(3,641)	(3,768)
Contribution towards expenditure	(887)	(909)	(924)	(936)
Interest Receivable	(6)	(6)	(6)	(6)
Total Income	(28,407)	(29,562)	(30,492)	(31,220)
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Operational Costs	4,859	4,954	5,092	5,222
Service Charges	3,377	3,528	3,641	3,768
Capital Financing Costs	3,911	3,971	3,941	3,912
Increase in Bad Debt Provision	250	263	270	278
HRA Revenue Repairs	6,179	6,490	6,685	7,048
Revenue Contribution to Capital (R.C.C.O.)	13,455	12,668	12,535	12,956
	0			
Contribution to/(from) balance	(3,625)	(2,312)	(1,673)	(1,965)
Total Expenditure	28,407	29,562	30,492	31,220
(Surplus) / Deficit	0	0	0	0
Opening balance	20,702	17,077	14,765	13,091
Contribution to/(from) balance	(3,625)	(2,312)	(1,673)	(1,965)
Closing balance	17,077	14,765	13,091	11,127
Estimated closing dwelling numbers	5,329	5,397	5,387	5,461
Closing balance per dwelling	£3,204.48	£2,735.70	£2,430.19	£2,037.46

APPENDIX 2

30 YEAR HOUSING BUSINESS PLAN 2024/25 - 2053/54

	Years 1-10 (£000)	Years 11-20 (£000)	Years 21-30 (£000)	Total Spend (£000)
Adaptations and Lifts	2,492	3,355	4,508	10,355
Communal Works	1,869	2,516	3,505	7,890
Decoration following IPM	483	888	1,194	2,565
External Works (footpaths, fencing, etc.)	2,450	3,298	4,517	10,265
Garages	331	378	493	1,202
Heating Replacements	15,007	20,201	27,149	62,357
Internal Planned Maintenance (IPM)	33,811	51,388	67,324	152,523
Repairs before painting	769	1,036	1,353	3,158
Roofing and Repointing Work	8,222	9,911	13,320	31,453
Structural Works	4,984	6,709	9,346	21,039
Lifeline Services	1,390	748	1,042	3,180
Energy Efficiency	38,394	40,253	53,467	132,114
Professional Fees	2,931	3,934	5,705	12,570
Pavements	315	424	591	1,330
New Build / Acquisitions	26,328	2,000	0	28,328
Total expenditure	139,776	147,039	193,514	480,329

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – CAPITAL PROGRAMME

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
<u>Scheme / Project</u>				
Adaptations / Lifts	214	224	231	238
Heating replacement programme	1,286	1,351	1,391	1,433
Structural works	427	449	462	476
Lifeline Services*	250	210	202	213
Repairs before painting	66	69	71	136
Roofing	1,050	1,103	683	703
Garages	50	50	26	27
External Works (footpaths, fencing, fabric etc.)	210	221	227	234
Pavement Crossing	27	28	29	30
Window and Door Replacement Programme	1,495	1,570	1,617	1,666
IPM works	2,898	3,043	3,134	3,228
Energy Efficiency	3,068	3,221	3,318	3,418
Communal Works	160	168	173	178
New build (net of HE grant)/regeneration	15,815	2,513	1,000	1,000
Fees	254	265	274	279
Total spend	27,270	14,485	12,838	13,259
<u>Resourced by:</u>				
Capital Receipts	303	303	303	303
RCCO	13,455	12,668	12,535	12,956
Additional Borrowing	13,512	1,514	0	0

EXAMPLES OF WEEKLY RENT CHANGES FOR 2024/25

Area		Property Type	Approved Rent 2023/24	Proposed Rent 2024/25	Increase between 23/24 & 24/25	Increase between 23/24 & 24/25
					£	%
<u>Middleton St George</u>						
	Mount Pleasant Close	1 Bedroom Bungalow	87.55	93.41	5.87	6.7%
	Pounteys Close	2 Bedroom House	83.52	89.12	5.60	6.7%
	Thorn tree Gardens	3 Bedroom House	95.27	101.65	6.38	6.7%
<u>Cockerton</u>						
	Newton Court	1 Bedroom Flat	68.97	73.59	4.62	6.7%
	Elvet Place	2 Bedroom House	80.77	86.19	5.41	6.7%
	Minors Crescent	3 Bedroom House	87.03	92.86	5.83	6.7%
<u>Haughton</u>						
	Ted Fletcher Court	1 Bedroom Flat	69.55	74.21	4.66	6.7%
	Lyonette Road	2 Bedroom Flat	78.79	84.07	5.28	6.7%
	Nightingale Avenue	2 Bedroom House	81.55	87.01	5.46	6.7%
	Rockwell Avenue	2 Bedroom House	78.79	84.07	5.28	6.7%
	Dunelm Walk	3 Bedroom House	89.17	95.14	5.97	6.7%
<u>Branksome</u>						
	Branksome Hall	1 Bedroom Flat	69.08	73.71	4.63	6.7%
	Whitby Way	1 Bedroom Flat	69.08	73.71	4.63	6.7%
	Malvern Crescent	2 Bedroom House	79.24	84.55	5.31	6.7%
	Rosedale Crescent	3 Bedroom House	90.08	96.12	6.04	6.7%
	Sherborne Close	2 Bedroom Flat	93.40	99.66	6.26	6.7%
<u>Lascelles</u>						
	Coxwold House	1 Bedroom Flat	68.28	72.85	4.57	6.7%
	Gilling Crescent	2 Bedroom Flat	68.28	72.85	4.57	6.7%
	Aldbrough Walk	2 Bedroom House	87.58	93.45	5.87	6.7%
	Caldwell Green	3 Bedroom House	86.51	92.31	5.80	6.7%
	Fenby Avenue	3 Bedroom House	105.87	112.96	7.09	6.7%
<u>Bank Top</u>						
	Graham Court	1 Bedroom Flat	69.52	74.18	4.66	6.7%
	Graham Court	3 Bedroom House	89.08	95.05	5.97	6.7%
<u>Redhall</u>						
	Bramall House	1 Bedroom Flat	66.70	71.17	4.47	6.7%
	Aviemore Court	2 Bedroom Flat	73.35	78.26	4.91	6.7%
	Murrayfield Way	2 Bedroom House	76.40	81.52	5.12	6.7%
	Aintree Court	2 Bedroom House	74.97	79.99	5.02	6.7%
	Aintree Court	3 Bedroom House	96.43	102.89	6.46	6.7%

Area		Property Type	Approved Rent 2023/24	Proposed Rent 2024/25	Increase between 23/24 & 24/25	Increase between 23/24 & 24/25
					£	%
<u>Eastbourne</u>						
	West Moor Road	1 Bedroom Flat	65.51	69.90	4.39	6.7%
	Tansley Gardens	2 Bedroom Flat	72.97	77.86	4.89	6.7%
	Firthmoor Crescent	2 Bedroom House	75.99	81.08	5.09	6.7%
	Brignall Moor Crescent	3 Bedroom House	82.25	87.76	5.51	6.7%
<u>Skerne Park</u>						
	Trent Place	2 Bed House	82.22	87.73	5.51	6.7%
	Humber Place	3 Bed House	83.03	88.59	5.56	6.7%
<u>Parkside</u>						
	Wordsworth Road	1 Bedroom Flat	69.61	74.27	4.66	6.7%
	Shakespeare Road	2 Bedroom House	85.03	90.73	5.70	6.7%
	Ruskin Road	3 Bedroom House	88.25	94.16	5.91	6.7%

* Affordable rent properties - these rents include applicable service charges

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**CABINET
5 DECEMBER 2023**

**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP)
FOR CONSULTATION**

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Stephen Harker
Leader and all Cabinet Members**

Responsible Directors – Chief Officers Executive

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To propose a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2024/25 to 2027/28 for consultation, including setting a budget and Council Tax increase for 2024/25.

Summary

2. The Council is facing unparalleled financial challenges stemming from reductions in public spending between 2010 and 2019 where the Council's budget was reduced by £46m in real terms, a 36% reduction in budget. This financial position has been further compounded in the aftermath of covid and the current economic climate, the cost of living is increasing, and income deprivation and poverty rising. It is a challenge for everyone including the Council with a spiralling increase in demand for children's social care, high inflation, and rising interest rates, all of which have a direct impact on the Council's contracted expenditure.
3. The Council has previously met the challenges faced head on through value for money service delivery, shared services, economic growth, and strong financial management and has utilised built up reserves to continue to provide vital services for the residents of Darlington. However, the additional demands and inflationary increases are putting an unprecedented pressure on affordability and our reserves will be fully depleted by the end of 2025/26.
4. Unless additional government funding is forthcoming the Council will need to undertake a fundamental review over the course of 2024 to decide what and how services will be delivered in the coming years. Extensive consultation with residents, staff, charities, businesses and key stakeholders will be carried out to explore how we can deal with the scale of the financial challenge we face.
5. Over two thirds of our expenditure is spent on Adult and Children's social care, caring for our most vulnerable residents and children. The rise in inflation and interest rates directly impacts on our adult care contracts which increased by 15.6% over the last year, in addition, since the pandemic there has been a continual rise in the demand for children's care services. We are seeing more vulnerable children with increasingly complex needs

requiring help and support, there has been a 33% increase in children in our care since pre pandemic levels. These are our largest budgets, and we have a statutory requirement to provide the services, but they only touch 4% of our population.

6. Darlington has the second lowest Council Tax in the North East and as such we cannot raise sufficient income from Council Tax charges to fund the spending pressures we face, every 1% increase in Council Tax increases revenue by £0.625m. Darlington has a low tax base with 44% of our properties in Band A and 79% Band A - C, this along with the council tax level means we generate significantly less Council Tax than some other more affluent areas. If Darlington had the average England Band D Council Tax level, we would generate an additional £8.7m per year. This highlights the disparity in how local government is funded.
7. To protect services as far as possible and push back the impending cliff edge, all budgets have been reviewed and challenged and savings of £4.019m achieved through back office efficiencies, restructures and income generation which do not affect front line service delivery. In addition a proposed Council Tax increase of 2.99% and a 2% social care precept to help fund adult social care has been made which would generate £1.869m and £1.250m respectively to help continue to provide vital services.
8. Darlington has some significant inequalities challenges across the borough from a financial as well as a health perspective. Duncan Selbie, the prior Chief Executive of Public Health England said the best thing you can do to improve health is a good home, a good job, and a good friend. The Council is determined to address inequalities, and to have the best possible chance of doing this we need to continue to grow the Darlington economy, attract businesses and companies to the area helping to create more better paid jobs and provide energy efficient affordable homes to ensure inclusive growth for our residents.
9. However, this ambition is not an overnight fix, inclusive economic growth takes time, particularly in this economic climate. We have made a great start over the last 10 years, the structural landscape of Darlington has changed, new businesses and government departments have relocated to the town bringing high quality jobs, and 293 new Council houses have been built providing good quality affordable housing. There is significant investment going into Darlington station paving the way for improved rail services for the town and wider area as well as the redevelopment of Darlington's railway heritage quarter, both of which will help regeneration and jobs. But more needs to be done and we will allocate the resources we do have into realising this ambition.
10. This report has been prepared before the 2024/25 Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) which is likely to be received late December 2023, however in October 2021, the spending review announced a three-year local government settlement, albeit only a one-year financial settlement that year. Subsequently the Chancellors 2022 Autumn Statement confirmed this spending review still stands on a cash flat basis, with inflation of 1% to follow from 2025/26 along with additional grant funding for social care and changes to the Council Tax referendum limits which were increased to 3% for Council Tax and 2% for Social Care Precept. The Chancellors 2023 Autumn Statement gave no indication this position would change.
11. The Local Government Finance Settlement is not anticipated until late December, consequently this draft 2024/25 Budget and MTFP has an eye to future years but does not

seek to presume what the future will look like. It aims to ensure that the Council can set a legal budget in 2024/25 and continue to provide our core offer level of services to the residents of Darlington.

12. The Council has performed well in responding to the financial challenges over the years, taking early action to ensure that it is ahead of the curve and not therefore pushed into short term decisions. However the overwhelming demand for services, increased contract costs linked to inflation and living wage increases is making future budgets untenable without additional government funding.
13. Darlington is not alone in facing these pressures, Council's across the country are struggling with the same issues which have been widely reported in the media over the last year with a number indicating the inability to balance their books. A review of local government finances was discussed by Government in 2019 however proposals have been postponed over the years and it is not clear when, or if, a fundamental review will take place. The financial pressures faced have been raised with the Local Government Association and the Department for Levelling up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) directly.
14. The Council operates a core offer which is at a statutory service level with a small provision for discretionary services and this is the base level the new MTFP has been prepared on. A healthy level of reserves had been maintained for medium term stability and this is now a crucial component of the budget strategy given the unprecedented pressures faced in the coming year. The reserves will be utilised to meet the 2024/25 funding gap and allow time for detailed work to be completed on savings options during 2024 if no government funding is forthcoming.
15. In summary, if the recommendations are agreed, the Council can deliver a 2024/25 budget which will allow net revenue investment in Darlington and its residents of £127m and new capital investment of £98m to add to the current capital programme of £317m. It also allows time to undertake a detailed review of all service provision during 2024/25 to deliver savings required in future years.

Recommendation

16. It is recommended that Cabinet approve for consultation the Revenue MTFP as set out in **Appendix 6** and the Capital Programme as set out in **Appendix 7**, including the following:
 - (a) A Council Tax increase of 2.99% plus a 2% Adult Social Care Precept to help fund social care for 2024/25.
 - (b) The Schedule of Charges as set out in **Appendix 3**.
 - (c) Funding for Children's Services to address the dependence on expensive external provision and improve placement sufficiency for children and young people in Darlington as noted in paragraphs 40 - 45.

Reasons

17. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons:

- (a) The Council must set a budget for the next financial year.
- (b) To enable the Council to continue to plan services and finances over the medium term.
- (c) To ensure decisions can be made in a timely manner.
- (d) To reduce the pressures on the MTFP in the medium term.
- (e) To ensure investment in our assets is maintained.

Chief Officers Executive

Background Papers

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

Elizabeth Davison: Extension 5830

S17 Crime and Disorder	The report contains proposals to continue to allocate resources in support of the Council's Crime and Disorder responsibilities
Health and Well Being	The report contains proposals to continue to allocate resources in support of the Council's Health and Well Being responsibilities
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	The proposals in the report seek to continue to support the Council's responsibilities and ambitions to reduce carbon impact in the Council and the Borough.
Diversity	There are no specific proposals that impact on diversity issues.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected
Groups Affected	All groups are affected by the Council Tax increase.
Budget and Policy Framework	The MTFP, Budget and Council Tax must all be decided by full Council
Key Decision	The MTFP, Budget and Council Tax must all be decided by full Council
Urgent Decision	The MTFP, Budget and Council Tax must all be decided by full Council
Council Plan	Within the constraints of available resources, it is necessary for the Council to make decisions involving prioritisation. The proposals contained in this report are designed to support delivery of the Council Plan within those constraints.

Efficiency	Efficiency savings which do not affect service levels have been included in the MTFP.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Children’s social care continues to be resourced to provide good outcomes for Looked after Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

Background and context

18. The Council is facing unparalleled financial challenges stemming from reductions in public spending between 2010 and 2019 where the Council’s budget was reduced by £46m in real terms, a 36% reduction in budget. This financial position has been further compounded in the aftermath of covid and the current economic climate, the cost of living is increasing, and income deprivation and poverty rising. It is a challenge for everyone including the Council with a spiralling increase in demand for children’s social care, high inflation, and rising interest rates, all of which have a direct impact on the Council’s contracted expenditure.
19. The Council has previously met the challenges faced head on through value for money service delivery, shared services, economic growth and strong financial management and has utilised built up reserves to continue to provide vital services for the residents of Darlington. However, the additional demands and inflationary increases are putting an unprecedented pressure on affordability and our reserves will be fully depleted by the end of 2025/26.
20. Over two thirds of our expenditure is spent on Adult and Children’s social care, caring for our most vulnerable residents and children. The rise in inflation and interest rates directly impacts on our adult care contracts which increased by 15.6% over the last year, in addition, since the pandemic there has been a continual rise in the demand for children’s care services. We have seen more vulnerable children with increasingly complex needs requiring help and support, referrals have increased by 118% and early help assessments by 165% in the last two years alone, and there has been a 33% increase in children in our care since pre pandemic levels. These are our largest budgets, and we have a statutory requirement to provide the services, but they only touch 4% of our population.
21. Darlington is not alone in facing these pressures, Council’s across the country are struggling with the same issues which have been widely reported in the media over the last year with a number of Councils indicating the inability to balance the books. A fundamental review of how local government is financed (the Fair Funding Review) was announced by government back in 2019 with but it has continually been postponed with no indication on when or if this will happen. The pressures Darlington faces have been raised with the Local Government Association and DLUHC directly.
22. The Council’s core offer budget, which is based on statutory service provision along with a small discretionary provision, is the starting position for the 2024/25 budget. Back in 2014 it was recognised that strong economic growth was needed to help the Council’s overall financial position but that it takes time to realise so we needed to maintain reserves as far

as possible. This strategy to preserve reserves worked well to date allowing time for the financial impact of the economic growth strategy to come to fruition, however, the additional demands and increased costs have escalated the financial pressures faced to unprecedented levels and our reserves will be fully depleted by the end of 2025/26. Unless additional government funding is forthcoming the core offer will be unaffordable, and the Council will need to undertake a fundamental review over the course of 2024 to decide what and how services will be delivered in the coming years.

23. Income and resource levels are discussed in detail later in this paper, however as the Local Government financial settlement will not be received until late December, along with the turbulent times we find ourselves in, it makes it challenging to predict expenditure and income levels moving forward. Consequently, best estimates have been used and assumptions made on the impact of inflation and demand in 2023/24 going into 2024/25 and the income and resources we will receive in future years.

Financial Analysis

Projected Expenditure

24. As noted previously the core offer budget is the level of service provision the MTFP is based upon. Estimates attached at **Appendix 1** have been prepared based on current service levels and include known pressures and the savings proposed which are summarised below and detailed in **Appendix 2**. The most significant are discussed in the following paragraphs. The assumptions used when preparing the estimates are set out at **Appendix 4**.

<u>Summary of Pressures</u>	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
Service Demand	4.049	5.287	5.634	5.776
Price Inflation	1.629	2.776	3.309	4.745
Reduced Income	0.555	0.400	0.492	0.427
Pay award	1.808	1.857	1.920	1.966
Other	0.421	0.434	0.448	0.464
Total	8.462	10.754	11.803	13.378

Pressures

25. There are some significant pressures emerging which fall into one of five categories being increased demand, price inflation, reduced income, pay award and other.
26. **Increased Service demand** – The largest area by far regarding increased demand is Children’s Services, accounting for £3.631m of the 2024/25 pressure, and £18.889m across the MTFP. The past year has seen a 36% increase in the number of contacts (from partner agencies and the public concerned for a child’s welfare) compared to pre covid numbers in 2019/20. This has led to an increase in referrals of over 71% which must statutorily be responded to by a social work assessment. The increases in demand have subsequently led

to an increase in the numbers of Children in Care, which at the time of writing is a 33% increase from pre pandemic levels.

27. Darlington is not alone in seeing these pressures and Councils across the country are experiencing the same issues. Darlington has been proactive and partnered with Leeds City Council and the Department for Education in 2019 to develop Strengthening Families, a restorative and relational approach designed to improve family partnership working and reduce the need for children to become looked after. The approach we are taking is one of three nationally recognised best practice approaches and whilst increases to Children in Care has been experienced, it is the view of the service that the increases would have been much greater had the approach not been in place. Through the approach we have significantly increased the number of children being diverted from care through our Keeping Families Together Edge of Care Team and our Family Group Conferencing Team, both of whom have won prestigious national awards over recent years.
28. It is also worth noting that the governments independent review of children's social care (the MacAllister review) concluded that children's social care needed to be reset and to do that required an investment of £2bn. To date only £200m had been allocated.
29. **Price Inflation** – is a significant strain on the budget at £1.629m next year and £12.459m over the MTFP. 93% of that strain is related to our adult and children's social care contracts. The Adults care contracts are linked to various inflation factors including the Consumer Price Index which in October stood at 4.6%, the national living wage of £11.44 per hour from 1 April 2024 – an increase of 9.8%, which automatically feeds through to the care providers. Also, the residential care contract contains an additional factor for interest rates increasing by 7.25% which impacts on the contract rate. Whilst this is a significant pressure on the Council's finances the pressure on the care sector is recognised and these uplifts are required to ensure stability in a very fragile market.
30. In the increased demand section, the rise in the number of children looked after was highlighted, whilst the number of children requiring help and support and in particular care has increased significantly, so too has the availability of care placements and the costs of care placements for children. The cost of commissioning external foster placements and external residential placements for children, which Darlington are heavily reliant upon due to our own limited number of in-house placements have increased by 17% and 33% respectively.
31. As a proactive measure to reduce the reliance on costly external provision a proposal has been put forward to reduce dependency on these placements for children as noted in paragraph 40 below.
32. **Reduced Income** - The main area of reduced income is crematorium fees with a reduction in numbers of people using the service, some of this is due to new facilities opening in the nearby area. There has also been slippage in Joint Venture investment returns which have been deferred for a year due to slower progress on schemes because of nutrient neutrality issues.
33. **Pay Award** – the 2023/24 pay award was settled at a flat rate of £1,925 per employee. The percentage increase was therefore different depending upon base salary; however, the average increase was approximately 6.5%. The 2023/24 MTFP budgeted for a 5%

increase hence the pressure which is recurring each year. Given the high inflation rates a 4% award has been budgeted for in 2024/25 reverting back to 2% thereafter. Together this is a significant pressure of £7.551m over the life of the MTFP.

34. **Other** – this section includes a number of smaller pressures across all service areas, the main one being an increase in external audit fees of £110k, a 151% increase. This is due to the fragile state of the external audit market and an attempt by Public Sector Audit Appointments to alleviate the backlogs. The Government are looking to reset the system and take action to address the backlog and make the system more sustainable and timelier. The increase in fees should address the issue in part.

Savings

Summary of Savings	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
Back office efficiencies & general house keeping	(2.420)	(1.801)	(1.869)	(1.901)
Energy savings	(0.550)	(0.550)	(0.550)	(0.550)
Increased income	(1.049)	(1.747)	(1.859)	(1.601)
Total	(4.019)	(4.098)	(4.278)	(4.052)

35. To protect front line services to our residents as far as possible we continually work to maximise savings and efficiencies across the Council. In total over £4m per year has been identified, £16.447m across the MTFP.
36. By reducing costs in management, back office, general housekeeping, £2.420m has been identified in 2024/25, and £7.991m over the life of the MTFP. These savings come from staffing vacancies through redesign of service provision, removal of historic underspends and reduction in supplies and services budgets e.g. subscriptions, travel, printing, stationary, furniture and equipment.
37. Energy usage has been closely monitored over the year given the substantial increase and £2.200m in savings over the MTFP are anticipated following reduced rates and usage savings.
38. We have also reviewed income streams and anticipated an additional £1.049m in 2024/25 £6.256m over the MTFP. This includes additional income from partners, rental income, increases in sales income at our leisure facilities, increase car parking patronage and additional income from garden waste collections.

Previous budget provision

39. **Stronger Communities Fund** – the stronger communities fund was established in 2021/22 to assist in grass roots projects and initiatives in each of the elected members wards with £0.001m made available to each member to utilise as they see fit in their communities and reviewed on an annual basis. At this point no provision has been made in the estimates

but the utilisation will be reviewed over the next few months with a recommendation on the future of the fund included in the final draft for recommendation in February 2024.

Children's sufficiency investment

40. Sourcing placements for looked after children is at crisis point nationally with an increasing reliance on high-cost unregulated emergency placements or expensive residential care due to a lack of more appropriate placements. This issue has been compounded in Darlington by increases in our looked after population and the mandated National Transfer Scheme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).
41. The increased number of children cared for by Darlington Borough Council, coupled with a lack of placement sufficiency has resulted in a significant increase in placement expenditure along with a reduction in placement stability for children and young people looked after by Darlington Borough Council.
42. A range of responses to these challenges have already been implemented which includes a panel to provide the needed peer challenge and ensure when a decision is made to make a child looked after, it is after all other options have been exhausted. There is a strong focus on discharging Care Orders where children are living with parents.
43. These measures on their own cannot effectively meet the scale of the pressure. Darlington do not have the in-house sufficiency to meet the diverse needs of children downstream and our baseline support offer benchmarks negatively in the region in terms of core support.
44. A number of proposals have been developed in response which comprise the enhancement and growth of the Darlington Borough Council foster care service along with the expansion of Darlington's own residential support provision.
45. The proposals are detailed in the Children's Sufficiency Cabinet report discussed earlier on the Cabinet agenda ([Children's Social Care Cabinet report](#)), but in summary the proposals require a net investment of £1.292m in 2024/25 which is anticipated to deliver savings of £0.270m, £0.507m and £0.736m in 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28 respectively.

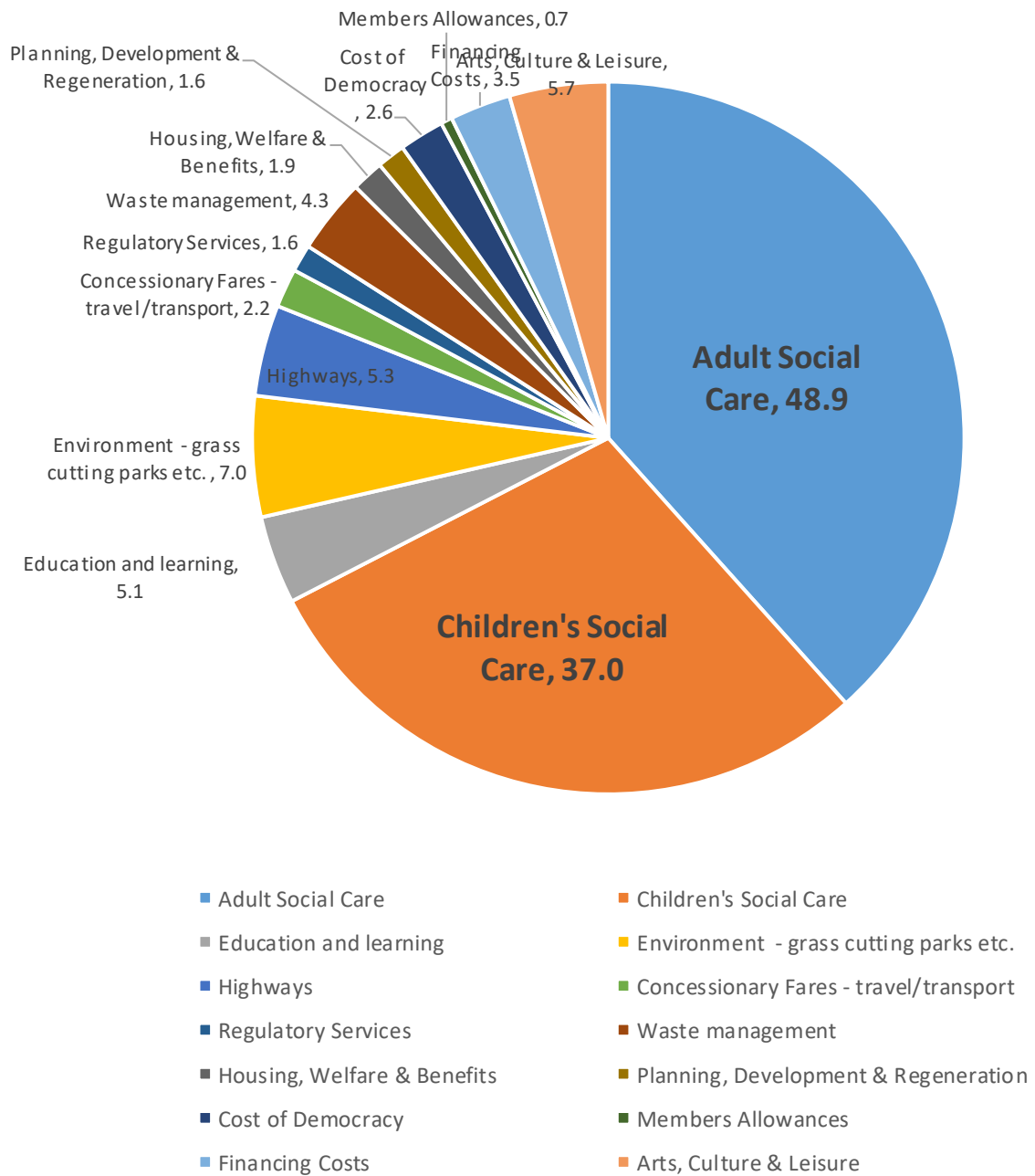
Total Expenditure

46. Taking the above savings, pressures and children’s sufficiency proposal into account the summarised projected expenditure is shown in the table below:

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£m	£m	£m	£m
People Services	84.432	86.880	89.906	92.790
Chief Executives Office & Economic Growth	1.472	1.566	1.416	1.448
Services	25.147	26.070	26.735	27.372
Operations	13.580	13.964	14.268	14.571
Financing costs	3.529	3.704	3.521	3.450
Investment Returns - Joint Venture	(1.517)	(1.828)	(1.750)	(1.452)
Council Wide Pressures	0.631	0.643	0.658	0.669
Council Wide Contingencies	0.202	0.202	1.655	1.664
Total Expenditure	127.476	131.201	136.409	140.512

47. This proposed net investment in services of £127m in 2024/25 covers a wide range of areas from adult residential care to refuse collection, from Childrens services to street lighting and grass cutting to our Leisure and Culture provision. The chart below shows the split of investment and as can be seen Social Care, both Children’s and Adults, are the most significant proportion of funding, accounting for two thirds of the overall budget.

WHERE THE MONEY WILL BE SPENT ON SERVICES FOR 2024/25 £m



Projected Income

Spending Review and Local Government Finance Settlement

48. This report has been prepared before the 2024/25 Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) which is likely to be received late December 2023, however in October 2021, the spending review announced a three-year local government settlement, although there was only a one-year financial settlement that year. Subsequently the Chancellors 2022 Autumn Statement confirmed this spending review still stands on a cash flat basis, with inflation of 1% to follow from 2025/26 along with additional grant funding for social care and changes to the Council Tax referendum limits which were increased to 3% for Council Tax and 2% for Social Care Precept. The Chancellors 2023 Autumn Statement gave no indication this position would change.
49. The draft 2025/26 – 2027/28 MTFP has therefore been based on the 2023/24 finance settlement, given it is the most up to date information available at the time of writing, and will be updated in the MTFP proposals at the February 2024 Cabinet meeting. All assumptions are summarised in **Appendix 4** and detailed in the sections below, however the overriding principle is that we will receive cash equivalent grant funding for all government funding streams unless otherwise stated.

Core Grant funding to Local Government

50. **Revenue Support Grant (RSG)** has become a reducing element of the Council core funding over recent years; however, it has been assumed this will continue into future years with a Consumer Price Index (CPI) linked rise in 2024/25 and annual inflationary increase of 2%.
51. **Better Care fund and Adult Social Care Support Grant**- these funds were in recognition of the significant challenges faced in the Adult Social care sector and were initially time based. They have however been included as core funding for the last couple of years so it has been assumed this funding will continue into future years on a cash equivalent basis.
52. **Services Grant** – was announced in 2021 as an un-ringfenced package of support for Local Government, the Council received £1.579m in 2022/23 reduced to £0.926m in 2023/24. It has been assumed this level will continue into future years on a cash flat basis.
53. **Social Care Grant** - this funding was announced in two tranches in the 2021 and 2022 spending reviews and can be spent on children's and adult social care. Whilst the 2022 grant was repurposed monies from delaying the charging reforms in 2023/24 and 2024/25 it is anticipated this funding will continue into future years given the significant pressures on the system.

Council Tax Income

54. Due to reduction and reliance on Government funding over the last ten years, Council Tax is now by far the largest single funding stream and will increase further as a percentage over the coming years representing 59% of projected resources anticipated by 2027/28. The ongoing increases reflect the Cabinet's view that income from Council Tax needs to increase to protect key service provision and enable investment in vital services. Members will recall that a 1% increase in Council Tax equates to an annual revenue of £0.625m.

55. In recognition of the significant pressures facing local authority budgets particularly in regard to social care with contract inflation, demographic demand and increased complexity of needs, the Chancellor announced in the 2022 Autumn Statement that further flexibilities would be given to Councils in both Council Tax and the Social Care Precept for two years with the referendum limit set at 5%, 3% for Council Tax and 2% for the Social Care Precept.
56. This MTFP assumes a Council Tax increase of 2.99% for 2024/25 reducing to 1.99% thereafter and an Adult Social Care precept of 2% for 2024/25 reverting to 1% thereafter. As can be seen in the chart in paragraph 47, Adult Social Care is by far our largest overall budget with a spend of £49m. The precept will raise £1.2m which is crucial to meet the overall costs and pressure faced in this service area.
57. Darlington has the second lowest Council Tax in the North East, to put this in perspective if Darlington had the average North East Band D level the Council would generate an additional £3.3m per annum, and if we had the average England band D level, we would generate an additional £8.7m per annum.
58. Darlington has a low Council Tax Base with 44% of our properties in Band A and 79% of our homes in Band A – C, meaning we are limited to the amount we can collect.
59. Nutrient Neutrality has had an impact on the Council Tax Base with planning permissions stalled whilst mitigation schemes or credits are obtained by developers. It was also anticipated there would be an impact on housing demand due to rising interest rates and mortgage costs however we are still seeing a buoyant housing market and moving forward planning estimates anticipate growth levels to be an average of 511 Band D equivalent properties over the period of this plan which is a growth on the tax base of 1.4% per annum. These figures have been used to prepare the estimates; clearly should this be any different income levels will differ. The collection rate (of collectable debt) is anticipated to remain at 99% in 2024/25.

National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

60. The Council retains 49% of NNDR collected and can gain or lose depending on whether the net tax collected increases or decreases. The Government via the valuation office sets rateable values and the rate paid in the pound is increased each year in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The business tax-base is far 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.
61. Growing the economy is the key priority for the Council and the Economic Strategy gives priority to increasing business within the borough and significant effort has been put into achieving growth. This has been rewarded with a positive net increase in NNDR collection. Sites such as Symmetry Park and Central Park are all contributing to the growth and the new Darlington Economic campus has been confirmed at Brunswick Street in 2026 housing His Majesty’s Treasury Department along with several other government departments including the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities. This is providing a boost to the town with other employers looking to relocate to Darlington.

62. Notwithstanding these major developments, attracting businesses into the town by their very nature takes time and upfront investment and therefore is an area which needs continued prioritisation and pump prime funding so growth can continue. It needs to be remembered that net growth in NNDR collected relies on growth outstripping revaluations and reductions which can be very challenging in the current economic climate.
63. One area of uncertainty is the business rate reset. The business rates system changed in 2013 and Councils received 49% of the NNDR collected above the base level, this was to incentivise Councils to drive economic growth. The system was due to be reviewed in 2020, with the intention of resetting the baseline and a review of need across the board and a subsequent redistribution of funding. This was part of the Fair Funding Review which has been postponed for several years now and there is no indication if this will happen in 2024/25. As Darlington has seen a healthy increase in business rates any reset would likely reduce funding in this area. Given the review has been postponed and there would need to be consultation on any new formula system, it has been assumed this would not impact on Darlington until 2026/27.
64. The in-year collection rate target for NNDR is 98.0% and as at the end of October 2023 is 67.9% and on track to achieve the target.

Collection Fund

65. The Collection Fund account reflects the statutory requirements for the Council to maintain a separate fund in relation to the operation of Council Tax and the Business Rates Retention Scheme (BRRS). The Fund records all the transactions for billing in respect of National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) and Council Tax, exemptions and discounts granted, provision for bad debts and appeals and payments made to the Council's General Fund, the Police and Fire and Rescue precept authorities and Central Government.

Other Grants

66. Set out below are the estimated specific grants which as the title suggests are for specific areas of expenditure as dictated by the government and cannot be used for other areas; the main areas being the Dedicated Schools Grant which funds Darlington's maintained schools, special educational needs and early years provision and Public Health Grant, both which are ring-fenced. These grants are included in service estimates at Appendix 1.

Description	2024/25 £m
Public Health Grant	9.239
PFI Grant	3.200
Market Sustainability & Improvement Fund	1.764
Youth Justice Board	0.272
Local Reform & Community Voices	0.057
Adult & Community Learning	1.142
Staying Put	0.056
Remand Grant	0.037
Garden Village	0.088
Pupil Premium	1.662
Dedicated Schools Grant	29.704
Virtual Headteacher	0.150
School Improvement	0.040
Domestic Abuse	0.051
Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children	0.356
Homeless	0.184
Home Office Anti-Social Behaviour	0.120
Towns Fund	0.087
	48.209

Fees and charges

67. The proposed fees and charges of the Council are set out in **Appendix 3** the increases proposed are based on the cost of providing the services and take account of inflation and market conditions. Overall, the proposed increases are anticipated to generate approximately £300,000 of income to help offset the cost of service provision.

Total Income

68. The table below summarises the Council's estimated income for the period of this plan which thanks to continued economic growth and house building activity, and the subsequent increases in Council Tax and NNDR, confirms a much-needed increase in income given our expenditure pressures.

Resources - Projected and assumed	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
Council Tax	65.647	68.546	71.737	74.950
Business rates retained locally	25.063	24.989	16.110	16.110
Top Up Grant	8.509	8.988	15.816	15.817
RSG	4.381	4.469	4.558	4.649
New Homes Bonus	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Better Care Fund	4.488	4.488	4.488	4.488
Adult Social Care Support Grant	3.753	3.753	3.753	3.753
Social Care Grant	6.034	6.034	6.034	6.034
Services Grant	0.926	0.926	0.926	0.926
Strengthening Families Grant	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total Resources	119.301	122.193	123.422	126.727

Projected MTFP

69. Set out in the table below are the projections based on the income and expenditure analysis discussed in the previous sections, as can be seen there is a significant funding gap in each financial year. We are anticipating having £16m reserves which can be utilised to support the plan which would cover the position until 2025/26, however it is clear significant expenditure reductions will be required in future years if additional government funding is not forthcoming.

	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
Estimated Expenditure	121.741	124.815	129.391	131.922
Children's Sufficiency	1.292	(0.270)	(0.507)	(0.736)
Pressures / Additional Savings	4.443	6.656	7.525	9.326
Projected Total Expenditure	127.476	131.201	136.409	140.512
Projected Total Resources	(119.301)	(122.193)	(123.422)	(126.727)
Projected budget deficit	8.175	9.008	12.987	13.785

Revenue Balances

70. The projected revenue outturn for 2023/24 detailed at **Appendix 5**, after taking into account the Risk Reserve of £5.350m, it is anticipated we will have £16m of reserves which will be fully utilised at the end of 2025/26. This is not a sustainable position, and a full review of service provision will need to be undertaken during 2024/25 to reduce expenditure and increase income unless further government funding is received.
71. In light of the significant financial pressures the Council is facing, efficiency measures and savings to reduce expenditure in areas which do not directly hit service provision has been undertaken and services are continually reviewed in this regard, a number of those savings at £4.019m are noted in the paragraphs above.
72. The Council has reviewed its earmarked reserves and there are three areas where it has been determined the provision can be released or partially released. £0.826m was held in the Covid reserve, £0.315m in the EU exit preparation reserve, both of these can be released fully. There is also £0.151m in the insurance reserve which it is felt prudent to release. In total, £1.292m will be transferred into general fund balances as show below.

Revenue Balances	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
Opening balance	16.003	10.120	1.112	(11.875)
Net contribution from Collection Fund	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Release of Earmarked Reserves	1.292	0.000	0.000	0.000
Contribution to/(from) balances	(8.175)	(9.008)	(12.987)	(13.785)
Closing balance	10.120	1.112	(11.875)	(25.660)

Capital Expenditure

73. The Council has an extensive capital programme with significant resources invested to purchase, improve, protect, and maintain our assets, to enable the Council to deliver its priorities, for example purchasing land to enable road improvements or investing in modernising school buildings and housing. The Council continues to deliver a significant capital investment programme in the main funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and grant or other external funding which is targeted at specific schemes and programmes such as Transport and Schools. Furthermore, investment from the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) along with other external funding sources are being used for economic growth initiatives.
74. The Council can also supplement these funding sources with its own resources such as capital receipts or prudential borrowing where there is a need, however as capital receipts are limited, and prudential borrowing comes with future revenue implications there must be a strong case for doing so.

75. In recent years there has been significant investment in economic growth either funded or pump primed by the Council; schemes such as Central Park including the National Biologics Centre and Business Central along with the Development of Feethams House which is now the temporary home for the Darlington Economic Campus, and recent Town Centre purchases funded from the Towns Fund and Indigenous Growth Fund are helping to make Darlington a more vibrant place to be. The Council's Investment Fund and Economic Growth Investment Fund are both being utilised to invest in these areas which ultimately increases business rates and the finances of the Council helping vital services to be funded.
76. The current capital programme stands at £317m as summarised in Table 1 below. The programme is monitored monthly and reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis; the latest available monitoring report for 2023/24 was presented to Cabinet on 7 November 2023 and noted there was a projected £0.728m underspend on the approved capital programme.

Table 1

	Construction				Other Schemes/Not Allocated			Total
	Live Schemes 75k & Over	Annualised Schemes	Completed Schemes awaiting review	Live Schemes under 75k	Non construction	Capital investment fund	Housing New Build - not yet allocated	
Area	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Housing	60.099	10.021	0.627	0.033	1.205	0.000	15.673	87.658
Economic Growth	41.593	0.080	3.388	0.337	10.817	33.481	3.476	93.172
Highways/Transport	63.152	10.011	14.949	1.380	1.645	1.877	1.512	94.526
Leisure & Culture	29.883	0.000	2.618	0.176	0.000	0.000	0.000	32.677
Education	5.279	0.230	0.007	0.361	0.079	0.000	0.290	6.246
Adult Social Care	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.071
Other	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.455	0.000	0.000	2.455
Total	200.006	20.342	21.589	2.287	16.272	35.358	20.951	316.805

77. In addition to the current agreed programme the Council looks ahead to future capital requirements based on the principles of the capital strategy. A four-year timeframe has been adopted to fall in line with the revenue Medium Term Financial Plan. Attached at **Appendix 7** are the priority proposals for addition to the plan along with the funding methods. The majority of schemes are focused on 'Housing and Transport, funded via the HRA and government grants respectively; there are also a number of Council funded corporate schemes that have already been approved.
78. The following paragraphs describe the major elements of the capital programme priorities for approval. Specific scheme funding release will be subject to detailed reports to Cabinet.

Corporate Schemes – funding required.

79. As noted previously the Council can supplement government capital funding, albeit options are limited in the current financial climate. Funding can come from prudential borrowing, repaid via revenue, which puts additional pressure on the revenue account or from capital receipts. Given the financial position of the Council only schemes that are a

health and safety risk or that are self-funding have been considered while there is uncertainty over the overall funding envelope.

80. The risk assessed usable capital receipts over the next four years are in the region of £10m although they are not guaranteed.
81. There will be many competing priorities against the available resources for both regeneration and refurbishment and these schemes will emerge over the coming year/s. At this stage Members are requested to make capital provision for three priority schemes with a total value of £1.930m, which will be subject to full reports to Cabinet in due course, these are:
- (a) **A167 Victoria Road culvert repairs - £1.400m** - B19 Victoria Road Culvert is a large structure that carries the A167 over the River Skerne through Darlington. It was designed 60 years ago for modern weights and traffic volume; however it is overdue major maintenance to maintain its structural function. It requires replacement of its 20 expansion joint and concrete repairs and reinforcement due to water ingress caused by the failure of its expansion joints. Currently these repairs can be carried out from inside the culvert without affecting traffic flows or full carriageway reconstruction and resurfacing that would be necessary should more major works be necessary due to further deterioration.
 - (b) **Changing places accessible toilet at the Hippodrome - £0.030m** – for the provision of a changing places accessible toilet large enough to allow parents and carers to change their children in a safe environment. The total cost is £0.070m due to the positioning of the toilet and the complexity of the work in the space, however £0.040m has been received in grant so the ask is £0.030m.
 - (c) **Capitalised repairs - £0.500m** – £0.250m is required for repairs on the Council building stock in 2026/27 and 2027/28 to ensure it is fit for purpose. This is a rolling programme and funding has already been agreed for 2024/25 – 2025/26. Details on specific areas of spend will be brought to Cabinet for consideration.

Government Funding

82. Set out below are details of the levels of Government funding available for investment by the Council in 2024/25 and an outline of the proposed use of these funds.

	2024/25 £m
Children’s Services	
School Condition Allocation	0.067
Transport	
Local Transport Plan	3.068
Other	
Disabled Facilities Grant	1.063

Total Capital Grant Available	4.198

School Condition Allocations

83. The Local Authority now only receives school condition funding for Maintained Schools. Maintenance funding for Academies is available through other routes. The funding received by the Local Authority will be spent in line with key priorities identified with each maintained school through the locally agreed asset management planning (LAMPA) process, carried out each January. There are no strict spend deadlines for these small-scale condition related projects which are prioritised and completed as funding becomes available.

Transport and Highways

84. A new Local Transport Plan for the Tees Valley was endorsed by the Tees Valley Cabinet in 2021. This will help set the spending plans for the funding allocations from the Department for Transport and from the Devolution deal. The Integrated Transport Programme (ITP) of TVCAs Investment plan identifies £256.7m of investment over the next 10 years. There will be projects and initiatives delivered in Darlington from this fund.
85. The new Tees Valley Local Transport Plan has a number of accompanying documents that set the strategy and vision for different modes of transport. Each Local Authority is required to produce a Local Improvement Plan, which will effectively replace the local authority Local Transport Plan. These plans will cover local priorities and maintenance requirements. Prior to this year the Council received funding via TVCA that was based on needs formula. However, all the funding has now been merged into the new City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), which is a 5-year allocation of funding. The Tees Valley have been allocated £310m. The details of this allocation have been finalised and the Council has been awarded £15.340m over the 5 years to 2026/27. The annual amount of £3.068m is based on the following breakdown which includes £0.893m for the Integrated Block, £1.206m for the Highways Maintenance Block plus £0.969m for the Pothole action programme. The new CRSTS will provide the opportunity to deliver larger improvement schemes in Darlington identified in the Tees Valley and Darlington transport plans and these are currently being developed on an individual scheme basis.

Disabled Facility Grants

86. These grants are available if you are disabled and need to make changes to your home with examples being:
- (a) Widen doors and install ramps,
 - (b) Improve access to rooms and facilities – e.g., stair lifts or a downstairs bathroom,
 - (c) Provide a heating system suitable for your needs, and
 - (d) Adapt heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use.

Housing

87. All Housing capital schemes are funded fully from the Housing Revenue Account. The priorities identified through the Housing Business Plan will be funded from the estimated capital resources for 2024/25. Further detail is given in the Housing Revenue Account financial plan but in summary includes:

- (d) Adaptations and lifts - £0.214m
- (e) Heating Replacement - £1.286m
- (f) Structural Works - £0.427m
- (g) Lifeline Services - £0.250m
- (h) Repairs before Painting - £0.066m
- (i) Roofing and Repointing work - £1.050m
- (j) Garages - £0.050m
- (k) External Works - £0.210m.
- (l) Pavements - £0.027m
- (m) Window & Door Replacement - £1.495m
- (n) Internal planned maintenance (IPM) - £2.898m
- (o) Communal Works - £0.160m
- (p) Energy Efficiency Improvements - £3.068m
- (q) New Build housing - £15.815m
- (r) Fees -£0.254m

Consultation

88. This report will be available for public viewing from the 27 November with official consultation running from 5 December 2023 to 22 January 2024.

Conclusion

89. The Council has faced significant financial challenges over the last decade, with significant reductions in government funding followed by the financial instability during the pandemic, but to date has risen to these challenges well which has previously enabled a balanced MTFP.
90. 2023 has presented further challenge with continued high inflation, and demand for services increased since the pandemic, particularly in children's social care where there is a £4.5m overspend this financial year anticipated to increase in 2024/25.
91. The future of Local Government financing is still uncertain; there have been a number of Councils issuing a section 114 notice and evidence of more to come, however, it is clear from the Autumn Statement that public funding will not keep up with inflation. The Council can deliver a balanced position until 2025/26 utilising reserves as per our financial strategy, however there is a significant annual budget deficit which is not sustainable and will need to be addressed. Unless additional government funding is forthcoming the Council will need to undertake a fundamental review over the course of 2024 to decide what and how services will be delivered in the coming years.
92. Planning beyond the current year is extremely difficult, given the uncertainty around future funding and the review of the new Local Government financial system, inflation, and economic uncertainty. Current planning suggests reserves will be depleted in 2025/26 and there will be a budget deficit of £11.9m the year after, however for the reasons above,

this will certainly change. At this stage it is not possible to know whether this will be a positive or negative position.

93. In summary, the Council continues to face significant financial challenges which have increased substantially over the last year due to the demand in children's services. However, due to the healthy reserves position which now play a crucial role in the budget strategy, the Council can afford a 2024/25 budget and have reserves available enabling time to achieve the savings required for future years. Making these savings will be challenging, there are no easy options and there are risks given current economic uncertainty and estimated impacts of interest rates, inflation and demand have been factored in, if these change plans will need to be adjusted.
94. As the Council's Statutory Chief Financial Officer, the Group Director of Operations must advise the Council on the robustness of the budget and adequacy of reserves. The budget presented to Members in this report has been based on the most accurate information available at this point in time, therefore the Director is confident that they are an accurate reflection of the Council's financial position. Notwithstanding this there is a significant degree of uncertainty about the future economic position and local government funding so the position presented whilst as accurate as possible will change, however at this juncture I cannot be sure if that will be for the better or worse.
95. General Fund reserves are adequate for the coming financial year; however, the Council is carrying a significant financial risk over the lifetime of the plan with an unsustainable annual deficit which will need to be met from changes in service provision and/or increased income if no further government funding is realised. It is essential we maximise income where possible, ensure we are providing our services in the most efficient manner, and address the growing pressures in social care through transformation, as the Council needs to preserve reserves and allow as much time as possible to reduce the ongoing annual funding gap.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Detailed Revenue Estimates 2024/25
Appendix 2	Budget Pressures/Savings
Appendix 3	Fees and Charges Proposals 2024/25
Appendix 4	Assumptions used to prepare estimates
Appendix 5	Projected Revenue Outturn 2023/24
Appendix 6	Proposed MTFP 2024/25 to 2027/28
Appendix 7	Capital Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 – 2027/28

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REVENUE ESTIMATES 2024/25 -SUMMARY

APPENDIX 1

	2023/24	2024/25			
	Net Budget	Gross Budget	Income	Grants	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
People Group	76,459	150,700	(18,574)	(47,694)	84,432
Services Group	28,356	61,836	(36,569)	(120)	25,147
Operations Group	13,887	48,188	(34,388)	(220)	13,580
Chief Executive Office & Economic Growth Group	1,799	3,916	(2,269)	(175)	1,472
Group Totals	120,501	264,640	(91,800)	(48,209)	124,631
Financing Costs	3,477	3,529	0	0	3,529
Investment Returns - Joint Ventures	(1,816)	(1,517)	0	0	(1,517)
Council Wide Pressures / Savings	1,359	631	0	0	631
Contingencies	1,131	202	0	0	202
Grand Total	124,652	267,485	(91,800)	(48,209)	127,476

PEOPLE GROUP - Revenue Estimates 2024/25

	2023/24	2024/25			
	Net Budget	Gross Budget	Income	Grants	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Group Director of People	598	611	0	0	611
<u>Children & Adult Services</u>					
Transformation & Performance	883	846	(53)	0	793
Business Support	1,572	1,661	(13)	0	1,648
<u>Children's Services</u>					
Children's Services Management & Other Services	662	711	(30)	0	681
Assessment Care Planning & LAC	4,355	4,645	0	(165)	4,480
First Response & Early Help	3,827	3,622	(35)	0	3,587
Adoption & Placements	16,750	21,718	0	(284)	21,434
Disabled Children	1,230	1,473	(152)	0	1,321
Youth Offending	317	711	(132)	(272)	307
Quality Assurance & Practice Improvement	138	253	(114)	0	139
<u>Development & Commissioning</u>					
Commissioning	2,530	2,352	(198)	(187)	1,967
Voluntary Sector	294	350	0	(57)	293
<u>Education</u>					
Education	481	31,177	(1,589)	(28,886)	702
Schools	0	7,012	0	(7,012)	0
Transport Unit	3,089	3,165	(54)	0	3,111
<u>Public Health</u>					
Public Health	0	9,271	(32)	(9,239)	0
<u>Adult Social Care & Health</u>					
External Purchase of Care	32,784	50,292	(12,966)	(1,440)	35,886
Intake & Enablement	677	3,072	(2,175)	0	897
Older People Long Term Condition	1,604	2,157	(495)	0	1,662
Physical Disability Long Term Condition	15	41	(27)	0	14
Learning Disability Long Term Condition	2,034	2,272	(19)	0	2,253
Mental Health Long Term Condition	1,218	1,637	(474)	0	1,163
Service Development & Integration	1,070	1,220	0	(152)	1,068
Workforce Development	331	431	(16)	0	415
Total People Group	76,459	150,700	(18,574)	(47,694)	84,432

SERVICES GROUP - Revenue Estimates 2024/25

	2023/24	2024/25			
	Net Budget	Gross Budget	Income	Grants	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Group Director of Services	174	184	0	0	184
<u>Transport & Capital Projects</u>					
AD Transport & Capital Projects	136	138	(27)	0	111
Building Design Services	54	588	(526)	0	62
Capital Projects	408	663	(289)	0	374
Car Parking R&M	583	612	0	0	612
Concessionary Fares	2,791	2,249	(2)	0	2,247
Flood & Water Act	249	89	0	0	89
Highways	4,665	5,368	(1,130)	0	4,238
Highways - DLO	(478)	9,181	(9,618)	0	(437)
Investment & Funding	558	202	(112)	0	90
Sustainable Transport	175	166	(70)	0	96
<u>Community Services</u>					
AD Community Services	150	99	0	0	99
Allotments	16	27	(8)	0	19
Building Cleaning - DLO	206	941	(685)	0	256
Cemeteries & Crematorium	(974)	1,063	(1,893)	0	(830)
Dolphin Centre	1,018	4,655	(3,682)	0	973
Eastbourne Complex	24	260	(224)	0	36
Emergency Planning	103	105	0	0	105
Head of Steam	291	433	(64)	0	369
Hippodrome	285	5,704	(5,482)	0	222
Indoor Bowling Centre	31	19	0	0	19
Libraries	908	988	(42)	0	946
Move More	48	137	(106)	0	31
Outdoor Events	572	555	(33)	0	522
Community Catering - DLO	78	339	(257)	0	82
Strategic Arts	125	122	0	0	122
Street Scene	6,148	8,267	(2,081)	0	6,186
Transport Unit - Fleet Management	205	273	(81)	0	192
Waste Management	3,681	3,909	0	0	3,909
Winter Maintenance	615	609	(24)	0	585
<u>Community Safety</u>					
CCTV	264	758	(474)	0	284
Community Safety	825	918	(17)	(120)	781
General Licensing	7	174	(174)	0	0
Parking	(1,639)	283	(2,332)	0	(2,049)
Parking Enforcement	(20)	188	(170)	0	18
Private Sector Housing	132	122	(10)	0	112
Stray Dogs	50	55	(1)	0	54
Taxi Licensing	58	233	(205)	0	28
Trading Standards	258	266	(6)	0	260
<u>Building Services</u>					
Construction - DLO	(307)	6,094	(6,460)	0	(366)
<u>Corporate Landlord</u>					0
Corporate Landlord	5,644	4,595	(284)	0	4,311
<u>General Support Services</u>					
Works Property & Other	114	76	0	0	76
<u>Joint Levies & Boards</u>					
Environment Agency Levy	125	129	0	0	129
Total Services Group	28,356	61,836	(36,569)	(120)	25,147

OPERATIONS Group - Revenue Estimates 2024/25

	2023/24	2024/25			
	Net Budget	Gross Budget	Income	Grants	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Group Director of Operations	130	230	(94)	0	136
Resources					
AD Resources	115	120	0	0	120
Financial Services	1,649	2,031	(433)	0	1,598
Financial Assessments & Protection	279	380	(43)	(36)	301
Xentrall (D&S Partnership)	1,830	2,617	(649)	0	1,968
Human Resources	896	1,051	(371)	0	680
Health & Safety	193	240	(39)	0	201
Head of Strategy Performance & Communications					
Communications & Engagement	1,154	1,183	(139)	0	1,044
Systems	1,162	1,132	0	0	1,132
Law & Governance					
AD Law & Governance	131	136	0	0	136
Complaints & FOI	297	330	0	0	330
Democratic Services	1,316	1,398	(17)	0	1,381
Registrars	(23)	268	(294)	0	(26)
Administration	595	644	(94)	0	550
Legal	1,669	1,921	(153)	0	1,768
Procurement	183	250	(55)	0	195
Coroners	278	321	0	0	321
Xentrall Shared Services					
ICT	1,076	1,013	(202)	0	811
Maintenance					
Maintenance DLO	(646)	7,085	(7,769)	0	(684)
Housing & Revenues					
Local Taxation	468	956	(483)	0	473
Rent Rebates / Rent Allowances / Council Tax	(132)	21,543	(21,675)	0	(132)
Housing Benefits Administration	433	1,122	(671)	0	451
Customer Services	329	525	(201)	0	324
Homelessness	349	1,382	(852)	(184)	346
Service, Strategy & Regulation and General Services	156	310	(154)	0	156
Total Operations Group	13,887	48,188	(34,388)	(220)	13,580

CHIEF EXECUTIVES OFFICE & ECONOMIC GROWTH - Revenue Estimates 2024/25

	2023/24	2024/25			
	Net Budget	Gross Budget	Income	Grants	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Chief Executive					
Chief Executive	209	216	0	0	216
Darlington Partnership	74	188	(103)	0	85
AD Economic Growth					
AD - Economic Growth	149	155	0	0	155
Building Control	168	405	(213)	0	192
Consolidated Budgets	265	46	0	0	46
Development Management	23	758	(706)	0	52
Economy	310	346	0	(87)	259
Environmental Health	352	376	(25)	0	351
Place Strategy	665	717	(26)	(88)	603
Property Management & Estates	(416)	709	(1,196)	0	(487)
Total Chief Executives Office & Economic Growth	1,799	3,916	(2,269)	(175)	1,472

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Analysis of Pressures/Savings	Estimate 24/25 £m	Estimate 25/26 £m	Estimate 26/27 £m	Estimate 27/28 £m
Savings				
Consolidated Budgets - reduced budget	(0.145)	(0.145)	(0.145)	(0.145)
People Services - reduced running costs	(0.478)	(0.464)	(0.427)	(0.408)
Operations - reduced running costs	(0.384)	(0.384)	(0.455)	(0.494)
Concessionary Fares & Sustainable Transport - reprofiled expenditure	(0.779)	(0.544)	(0.578)	(0.590)
Services - reduced running costs	(0.550)	(0.264)	(0.264)	(0.264)
Financing Costs - reduced borrowing costs on property funds	(0.084)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Corporate Landlord - reduced utility prices	(0.450)	(0.450)	(0.450)	(0.450)
Street Lighting - reduced utility prices	(0.100)	(0.100)	(0.100)	(0.100)
Adults - additional OT grant	(0.170)	(0.170)	(0.170)	(0.170)
People Service - increased partner income	(0.155)	(0.155)	(0.155)	(0.155)
Children's Services - additional Youth Offending Grant	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.051)
JV Investment Returns - additional income/reprofile	0.000	(0.698)	(0.620)	(0.322)
Car Parking - additional income from patronage	(0.380)	(0.380)	(0.380)	(0.380)
Dolphin Centre & Eastbourne Sports Complex - additional income from patronage	(0.194)	(0.194)	(0.194)	(0.194)
Estates - income from Feethams House	0.000	0.000	(0.190)	(0.229)
Waste Service - increase garden waste income	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Registrars - increase ceremony income	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)
Council Tax/NNDR - increased penalty charges	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.051)
	(4.019)	(4.098)	(4.278)	(4.052)
Increased Demand				
Adults - Packages of Care - increased overall package costs	0.368	0.352	0.338	0.409
Childrens Service's - Packages of Care - increased overall package costs	3.427	3.832	4.212	4.237
Childrens Service's - increased numbers of families/children requiring support	0.079	0.044	0.002	0.002
Children's Services - social work increased caseload demand	0.025	0.025	0.026	0.026
Strengthening Families Team - increase in children needing support	0.000	0.832	0.851	0.869
Children's Legal Fees - increased demand and complexity of cases	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100
Systems Team - staffing changes	0.000	0.050	0.052	0.054
Waste Disposal - increased growth with new builds	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.024
Waste Disposal - increased demand from DIY waste	0.050	0.052	0.053	0.055
	4.049	5.287	5.634	5.776
Price Inflation				
Adult - Packages of Care - contractual inflation	0.760	1.453	1.686	2.979
Economic Growth - contractual inflation and fixed rental income	0.001	0.001	0.039	0.059
Children's - Packages of Care/Contracts - contractual inflation	0.813	1.193	1.333	1.348
School Transport - contractual inflation	(0.064)	0.003	0.030	0.054
Operations - contractual inflation	0.014	0.014	0.018	0.034
Services - contractual inflation	(0.035)	(0.032)	0.054	0.118
Waste Disposal - contractual inflation	0.140	0.144	0.149	0.153
	1.629	2.776	3.309	4.745
Reduced Income				
Estates - rent slippage and rent review	0.041	0.041	0.010	0.010
Education - reduction in grant income	0.029	0.030	0.031	0.032
Educational Psychology - reduction in traded income	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041
Financing Costs - lower investment returns	0.000	0.040	0.157	0.086
JV Investment Returns - slipped schemes	0.201	0.000	0.000	0.000
Customer Services - reduced income from the DFE	0.020	0.020	0.020	0.020
Crematorium - reduced income from competition & changes in regulatory services	0.165	0.170	0.175	0.180
Tree Team - reduced levels of work from other service areas	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058
	0.555	0.400	0.492	0.427
Other and Contingencies				
LD Day Service - increase in rent and cleaning	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.077
Economic Growth - staffing changes	0.010	0.012	0.013	0.014
Corporate Management - members allowance review due 2024/25	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010
External Audit Fees - increased contract cost	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110
Operations - staffing changes	0.078	0.085	0.094	0.103
Customer Services - additional security	0.011	0.012	0.013	0.014
Archives Service - increased charge from DCC	0.020	0.021	0.021	0.021
Coroners Service - increased charge from DCC	0.035	0.036	0.037	0.041
Street Scene - fly tipping and back lane clearance	0.070	0.071	0.073	0.074
	0.421	0.434	0.448	0.464
Pay Award				
Pay Award 2023/24	0.660	0.713	0.752	0.778
Additional Estimated Pay Award 2024/25	1.148	1.144	1.168	1.188
	1.808	1.857	1.920	1.966
Total Net Pressures	4.443	6.656	7.525	9.326

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SCHEDULE OF CHARGES 2024/25				
Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
LEARNING SKILLS - LEARNING FOR LIFE				
Fees Policy: August 2023 to July 2024 (Next Review July 2024)				
Full Fees (including enrolment and tuition fees) per hour	L	3.00	3.00	NIL
<p>Accredited Learning Full accreditation fee (if applicable) - if the course has a qualification there will be additional fees to pay for registration and certification.</p> <p>No fees will be charged for publicly subsidised courses where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learners are aged 16-18 (on 31st August of the academic year) 2. Learners are aged 19-24 (on 31st August of the academic year) with a learning difficulty and / or disability as evidenced through an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan or Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) 3. Learners are aged 19 or older where the learning aim is up to and including level 2, and the learner is studying English or Maths 4. Learners are aged 19-23 (on their first day of study) and are studying their first 'full' level 2 or first 'full' level 3, excludes English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) 5. Learners are aged 19 or older where the learning aim is up to and including level 2 (including ESOL), the skills training will help them into work, and the learner is classed as unemployed and one of more of the following apply: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. They receive Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) - this includes those receiving National Insurance credits only, or b. They receive Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and the learner is in the work-related activity group (WRAG), or c. They receive of Universal Credit, earn less than 16 times the national minimum wage or £330 a month and are determined by Jobcentre Plus (JCP) as being in one of the following groups: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. All Work Related Requirements Group ii. Work Preparation Group iii. Work Focused Interview Group d. They are released on temporary licence (RoTL) and studying outside a prison environment and not funded through the Offender's Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) <p><i>Evidence required: Letter of entitlement from Job Centre Plus indicating the date and claim or for copy of licence (RoTL) from Probation Service</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Learners aged 19-24 who are unemployed and on a Traineeship <p>Courses with no public subsidy For learners aged 19 or above and where the learning aim is level 3 or above (except for exclusion above), learners may need to take out an Advanced Learning Loan, subject to funding availability. Further details can be found on our Student Loans page. Asylum Seekers - individuals will be assessed for eligibility in conjunction with SFA guidance Special fees - some courses have special fees, cost on application. FE course - NVQ and similar price on application. The following courses are free: Family Learning, Functional Skills, Distance Learning, Continuing Professional Development, Learning for Inclusion, Bespoke Employer Led Programmes, Multiply, Study Programme and courses which are funded through external projects. Additional Learning Support (ALS) Is intended to enable disadvantaged learners to achieve their learning goal by providing funding, on top of programme funds, to help them overcome their barriers to learning. The funding is intended to be flexible and to help support learners who have a range of learning difficulties and / or disabilities.</p>				

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, MARRIAGES AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS				
The following fees do not incur VAT				
Marriages				
Entering a Notice of Marriage or Civil Partnership	N			
For a Registrar to attend a Marriage at the Register Office	N			
Civil Partnership Registration	N			
Incumbents for every Entry Contained in Quarterly Certified Copies of Entries of Marriage	N			
Registrars fee for attending a marriage at a registered building or for the housebound or detained	N			
Superintendents Registrar fee for attesting a notice of marriage away from his office for housebound or detained	N			
Superintendents Registrar fee for attending the marriage of the housebound or detained	N	These charges set nationally by Statute and will be charged at the advised rate for 2023/24	These charges set nationally by Statute and will be charged at the advised rate for 2024/25	
Certification for Worship and Registration for Marriages				
Place of Meeting for Religious Worship	N			
Registration of Building for Solemnisation of Marriage	N			
Certificates issued from Local Offices				
Standard Certificate (SR)	N			
Standard Certificate (RBD) (at time of Registration)	N			
Standard Certificate (RBD) (after Registration)	N			
Short Certificate of Birth (SR)	N			
Short Certificate of Birth (RBD)	N			
Certificates of Civil Partnership (at time of Ceremony)	N			
Certificates of Civil Partnership (at later date)	N			
General Search fee	N			
Each Verification	N			
Civil Partnership Ceremony	N			
All Ceremonies – Approved Premises				
Application Fee for licence as an approved venue (valid for 3 years)	N	1,750.00	1,750.00	
Fee for Attendance - All days including Bank Holidays	L	580.00	610.00	
Non-refundable booking fee (inclusive of VAT)	L	50.00	50.00	
All Ceremonies – Town Hall				
The Council Chamber (Monday to Saturday)	L	310.00	325.00	
The Council Chamber Foyer (Monday to Saturday)	L	140.00	147.00	
REGISTER OF ELECTORS, OPEN REGISTER AND MONTHLY UPDATES - SALE				
The following fees do not incur VAT.				
Register – Printed Form	N	10.00	10.00	
Per 1,000 Names – Printed	N	5.00	5.00	
Register – Data Form	N	20.00	20.00	
Per 1,000 Names – Data	N	1.50	1.50	
LIST OF OVERSEAS ELECTORS – SALE				
The following fees do not incur VAT.				
List – Printed Form	N	10.00	10.00	
Per 1,000 Names – Printed	N	5.00	5.00	
List – Data Form	N	20.00	20.00	
Per 1,000 Names – Data	N	1.50	1.50	
MARKED COPY OF THE REGISTER OF ELECTORS AND MARKED ABSENT VOTERS LIST - SALE				
The following fees do not incur VAT				
Register – Printed Form	N	10.00	10.00	
Per 1,000 Names – Printed	N	2.00	2.00	
Register – Data Form	N	10.00	10.00	
Per 1,000 Names – Data	N	1.00	1.00	
				8,000

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
TOWN HALL				
Hire of Committee Rooms – all charges shown exclusive of VAT. Charges will be made plus the appropriate VAT rate.				
All rooms are to be charged by the hour, rather than by session				
Committee Rooms per hour	L	33.00	33.00	
				NIL
LAND CHARGES				
The following fees are inclusive of VAT				
Search Fees				
Standard Search - Residential Property (post or DX)	L	95.50	95.50	
Standard Search – Residential Property (electronic)	L	93.50	93.50	
Standard Search – Commercial Property (post or DX)	L	145.50	145.50	
Standard Search – Commercial Property (electronic)	L	143.50	143.50	
Con 29 Required				
Residential Property				
One Parcel of Land	L	80.00	80.00	
Several Parcels of Land – Each Additional Parcel	L	25.00	25.00	
Commercial Property				
One Parcel of Land	L	130.00	130.00	
Several Parcels of Land – Each Additional Parcel	L	25.00	25.00	
Con 29 Optional				
Each Printed Enquiry	L	6.00	6.00	
Own Questions	L	6.00	6.00	
Official Search – LLCI	L	15.00	15.00	
Official Search – NLIS (National Land Information Service) or email	L	13.00	13.00	
Expedited Search (Residential)	L	172.00	172.00	
Expedited search (Commercial)	L	234.00	234.00	
Personal Search	L	No charge	No charge	
				NIL

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
FINANCIAL PROTECTION SERVICES				
Category				
I. Work up to and including the date upon which the court makes an order appointing a deputy for property and affairs	N	745.00	745.00	
II. Annual management fee where the court appoints a local authority deputy for property and affairs, payable on the anniversary of the court order:				
- for the first year	N	775.00	775.00	
- for the second and subsequent years	N	650.00	650.00	
where the net assets are below £16,000, the local authority deputy for property and affairs will take an annual management fee not exceeding 3% of the net assets on the anniversary of the court order appointing the local authority as deputy				
Where the court appoints a local authority deputy for health and welfare, the local authority will take an annual management fee not exceeding 2.5% of the net assets on the anniversary of the court order appointing the local authority as deputy for health and welfare up to a maximum of £500.				
III. Annual property management fee to include work involved in preparing property for sale, instructing agents, conveyancers, etc or the ongoing maintenance of property including management and letting of a rental property	N	300.00	300.00	
IV. Preparation and lodgement of an annual report or account to the Public Guardian	N	216.00	216.00	
V. Conveyancing Costs				
Where a deputy or other person authorised by the court is selling or purchasing a property on behalf of P, the following fixed rates will apply except where the sale or purchase is by trustees in which case, the costs should be agreed with the trustees:	N	See Description	See Description	
A value element of 0.15% of the consideration with a minimum sum of £350 and a maximum sum of £1,500, plus disbursements				
Travel Rates are allowed at a fixed rate per hour for travel costs	N	40.00	40.00	
Please note that these rates are set by The Office of Public Guardian and are the rates as of 1st April 2017, these may be amended during 2024/25				
Administration Fee				
Administration fee for arranging the care and support needs for those with capital in excess of the upper capital limit or those who have chosen not to disclose their financial information.	L	119.00	127.00	
DEFERRED PAYMENT FEES				
Administration cost for setting up a Deferred Payment Agreement	L	365.00	390.00	
plus cost of valuation (this will be dependant on property type)	L	Actual cost of valuation	Actual cost of valuation	
Minimal				

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
LIBRARIES				
Fines On Overdue Items				
Adults – per day	L	No charge	No charge	
Maximum charge per book	L	No charge	No charge	
Senior Citizens – per day	L	No charge	No charge	
Children – per day	L	No charge	No charge	
Non-collected reservations				
Per item	L	0.50	0.50	
Reservation Fees for Books Obtained from Outside the Authority				
Single charge for all books obtained from other libraries	L	6.00	6.00	
Repeat Fee for Renewal of Books from Outside the Authority				
Single Charge for all books obtained from other local authorities	L	6.00	6.00	
Replacement Tickets				
Adults	L	1.50	1.50	
Senior Citizens	L	1.50	1.50	
Children/Unemployed	L	1.50	1.50	
Language Courses (per element)				
Subscription for whole course to be paid in advance	L	1.35	1.35	
Local History Research				
Look Up Service	L	5.00	5.00	
Photocopies				
A4 B&W	L	0.20	0.20	
A3 B&W	L	0.40	0.40	
Printing				
Text Printouts				
A4 B&W	L	0.20	0.20	
A3 B&W	L	0.40	0.40	
Test Printouts				
A4 colour	L	0.60	0.60	
Reproduction of Images from Stock				
Digital copies for Private/Study purposes – per photo	L	5.50	5.50	
Digital copies for small local commercial use – per photo	L	5.50 + 2 copies of publications	5.50 + 2 copies of publications	
Digital copies for local commercial use - per photo	L	10.50 + 2 copies of book	10.50 + 2 copies of book	
Digital copies for national/international commercial	L	110.00	110.00	
Scan and e-mail Service				
First sheet	L	1.00	1.00	
Each subsequent sheet	L	0.50	0.50	
Hire of Locker				
	L	0.50	0.50	
Internet Use				
Library members First 60 minutes FREE , Members & Non Members £1.00 per 30 minutes hereafter	L	1.00	1.00	
Lost & Damaged Items				
	L	Full current Replacement Cost (non-refundable)	Full current Replacement Cost (non-refundable)	
Room Hire				
Per hour	L	20.00	20.00	
Partner organisations per hour	L	15.00	15.00	
				NIL

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
PLANNING FEES Planning fees are set nationally				
PLANNING – PRE APPLICATION ADVICE All charges include VAT at 20%				
Large Major Development (200+) for a written response, including up to 2 meetings	L	1,200.00	1,200.00	
Small Major Development (10-199) for a written response, including up to 2 meetings	L	600.00	600.00	
Minor Development for a written response to include a meeting if necessary	L	400.00	400.00	
Other Developments				
Minerals Processing	L	Based on areas above	Based on areas above	
Change of use for a written response to include a meeting if necessary	L	50.00	50.00	
Householder developments	L	36.00	36.00	
Advertisements	L	25.00	25.00	
Listed Building consents (to alter/extend/demolish)	L	Free	Free	
Certificates of lawful development	L	Application advice not appropriate	Application advice not appropriate	
Telecommunications Notifications	L	126.00	126.00	
Other Charges				
Pre-Application meeting involving Planning Committee Members	L	1,000.00	1,000.00	
				NIL

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
LICENSING The following fees do not incur VAT				
Prosecution Costs				
Hourly rate for Preparation of Case Reports	L	50.00	60.00	
General Licensing				
Pavement Café Licence, per person				
1-20	L	0.00	100.00	
21-40	L	0.00	100.00	
41-60	L	0.00	100.00	
61-80	L	0.00	100.00	
81-99	L	0.00	100.00	
100 or over	L	0.00	100.00	
Duplicate licence fee	L	0.00	50.00	
Transfer of licence	L	0.00	50.00	
Change of detail	L	0.00	30.00	
Variation of Covers	L	0.00	100.00	
Goods on Highway Licence	L	155.00	155.00	
Sex Shop Grant of application	L	3,885.00	3,885.00	
Sex Shop Renewal	L	1,260.00	1,260.00	
Sex Shop transfer	L	1,260.00	1,260.00	
Cosmetics				
Premise Grant	L	294.00	294.00	
Personal Grant	L	68.00	68.00	
Variation	L	68.00	68.00	
Scrap Metal Dealers				
Collectors Licence (3 years) - grant	L	158.00	158.00	
Collectors Licence (3 years) – renewal	L	158.00	158.00	
Major Variation	L	53.00	53.00	
Minor Variation	L	16.00	16.00	
Site Licence (3 years) Grant	L	368.00	368.00	
Additional Sites (per site per year of licence)	L	205.00	205.00	
Site licence (3 years) – renewal	L	284.00	284.00	
Additional sites (per site per year of licence)	L	205.00	205.00	
Minor Variation Site	L	16.00	16.00	
Major Variation Site	L	53.00 + 68.00 per additional site per year	53.00 + 68.00 per additional site per year	

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
Caravan Sites				
New Application for a permanent residential site licence;	L			
1-5 pitches	L	210.00	210.00	
6-20 pitches	L	236.00	236.00	
21-50 pitches	L	252.00	252.00	
Greater than 50 pitches	L	273.00	273.00	
Annual Fees associated with administration and monitoring of site licences;				
1-5 pitches	L	No charge	No charge	
6-50 pitches	L	231.00	231.00	
Greater than 50 pitches	L	273.00	273.00	
Cost of Laying Site Rules	L	26.00	26.00	
Cost of Variation/Transfer	L	105.00	105.00	
Zoo Licensing Act				
New Application (4 years) or renewal (6 years) for a Zoo Licence (excluding the inspection costs of appointed inspector)	L	473.00	473.00	
Animal Welfare				
Breeding of Dogs - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	258.00	258.00	
2 Year Licence	L	305.00	305.00	
3 Year Licence	L	352.00	352.00	
Breeding of Dogs - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	226.00	226.00	
2 Year Licence	L	273.00	273.00	
3 Year Licence	L	320.00	320.00	
Pet Vending Commercial - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	265.00	265.00	
2 Year Licence	L	312.00	312.00	
3 Year Licence	L	359.00	359.00	
Pet Vending Commercial - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	233.00	233.00	
2 Year Licence	L	280.00	280.00	
3 Year Licence	L	327.00	327.00	
Pet Vending Home - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	258.00	258.00	
2 Year Licence	L	305.00	305.00	
3 Year Licence	L	352.00	352.00	
Pet Vending Home - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	226.00	226.00	
2 Year Licence	L	273.00	273.00	
3 Year Licence	L	320.00	320.00	
Keeping or Training Animals for Exhibition - Grant of Licence				
3 Year Licence	L	247.00	247.00	
Keeping or Training Animals for Exhibition - Renewal of Licence				
3 Year Licence	L	226.00	226.00	
Hiring Out of Horses - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	278.00	278.00	
2 Year Licence	L	325.00	325.00	
3 Year Licence	L	372.00	372.00	
Hiring Out of Horses - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	247.00	247.00	
2 Year Licence	L	294.00	294.00	
3 Year Licence	L	341.00	341.00	
Boarding of Dogs and Cats Commercial - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	321.00	321.00	
2 Year Licence	L	368.00	368.00	
3 Year Licence	L	415.00	415.00	
Boarding of Dogs and Cats Commercial - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	289.00	289.00	
2 Year Licence	L	336.00	336.00	
3 Year Licence	L	383.00	383.00	

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
Boarding of Dogs and Cats Home - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	258.00	258.00	
2 Year Licence	L	305.00	305.00	
3 Year Licence	L	352.00	352.00	
Boarding of Dogs and Cats Home - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	226.00	226.00	
2 Year Licence	L	273.00	273.00	
3 Year Licence	L	320.00	320.00	
Boarding of Dogs Day Care Up to 7 Dogs - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	258.00	258.00	
2 Year Licence	L	305.00	305.00	
3 Year Licence	L	352.00	352.00	
Boarding of Dogs Day Care Up to 7 Dogs - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	226.00	226.00	
2 Year Licence	L	273.00	273.00	
3 Year Licence	L	320.00	320.00	
Boarding of Dogs Day Care 8+ Dogs - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	320.00	320.00	
2 Year Licence	L	367.00	367.00	
3 Year Licence	L	414.00	414.00	
Boarding of Dogs Day Care 8+ Dogs - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	289.00	289.00	
2 Year Licence	L	336.00	336.00	
3 Year Licence	L	383.00	383.00	
		137.00 + 11.00	137.00 + 11.00	
		per host +	per host +	
		68.00 per host	68.00 per host	
Dog Boarding Franchise in Darlington - Grant of Licence	L	inspection fee	inspection fee	
		+ 47.00 annual	+ 47.00 annual	
		enforcement	enforcement	
		fee per year	fee per year	
		105.00 + 11.00	105.00 + 11.00	
		per host +	per host +	
		68.00 per host	68.00 per host	
Dog Boarding Franchise in Darlington - Renewal of Licence	L	inspection fee	inspection fee	
		+ 47.00 annual	+ 47.00 annual	
		enforcement	enforcement	
		fee per year	fee per year	
Dog Boarding Franchise out of Darlington - Grant of Licence	L	63.00 + 63.00	63.00 + 63.00	
		per host	per host	
Dog Boarding Franchise out of Darlington - Renewal of Licence	L	58.00 + 63.00	58.00 + 63.00	
		per host	per host	
Additional Fees				
Cost per additional licensable activity - Grant and Renewal (each)	L	68.00	68.00	
Mandatory mid licence inspection fee - Grant and Renewal (each)	L	32.00	32.00	
Variation of licence where no inspection is required (each)	L	37.00	37.00	
Variation of licence where inspection is required (each)	L	95.00	95.00	
Application for Re-Rating (each)	L	74.00	74.00	
Copy Licence	L	16.00	16.00	
Administration Fee	L	37.00	37.00	
Dangerous Wild Animals (not including vets fee)	L	126.00	126.00	

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
Street Trading				
November / December - Full Calendar Month	L	1,024.00	1,024.00	
- Week	L	404.00	404.00	
- Day (minimum of 4 days)	L	89.00	89.00	
January / October - Full Calendar Month	L	693.00	693.00	
- Week	L	284.00	284.00	
- Day (minimum of 4 days)	L	63.00	63.00	
Note- The above to apply to Itinerant traders. For regular all year round traders - fees as follows				
Annual Consent - Town Centre	L	7,350.00	7,350.00	
If Paying Monthly	L	651.00	651.00	
If Paying Weekly	L	179.00	179.00	
Buskers selling CD's – Half Day	L	25.00	25.00	
Full Day	L	45.00	45.00	
Mobile vehicles (moving or lay-by)	L	273.00	273.00	
New Vendor Permits	L	35.00	35.00	
Skips, Scaffolding and Hoardings				
Place a skip on the highway (less than 3 days notice)	L	40.00	40.00	
Place a skip on the highway (more than 3 days notice)	L	25.00	25.00	
Erection of scaffolding	L	60.00	60.00	
Hoardings	L	60.00	60.00	
Administration Charge (per hour or part thereof)	L	37.00	37.00	
Statutory Fees				
Petroleum Licences				
Less than 2,500 litres	L	45.00	45.00	
2,500 – 50,000 litres	L	61.00	61.00	
More than 50,000 litres	L	128.00	128.00	
Gambling Act				
Statutory Fees- The following gambling fees are set within statutory bands and will be revised as changed nationally.				
Adult Gaming Centres – Annual Fee	N	600.00	600.00	
New Application	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Variation	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Transfer	N	1,200.00	1,200.00	
Provisional Statement	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Licence Reinstatement	N	1,200.00	1,200.00	
Betting Shops - Annual Fee	N	550.00	550.00	
New Application	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Variation	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Transfer	N	1,200.00	1,200.00	
Provisional Statement	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Licence Reinstatement	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Bingo Halls - Annual Fee	N	600.00	600.00	
New Application	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Variation	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Transfer	N	1,200.00	1,200.00	
Provisional Statement	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Licence Reinstatement	N	1,200.00	1,200.00	
Family Entertainment Centres – Annual Fee	N	550.00	550.00	
New Application	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Variation	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Transfer	N	950.00	950.00	
Provisional Statement	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Licence Reinstatement	N	950.00	950.00	
Betting (tracks) – Annual Fee	N	550.00	550.00	
New Application	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Variation	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Transfer	N	950.00	950.00	
Provisional Statement	N	1,300.00	1,300.00	
Licence Reinstatement	N	950.00	950.00	

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
<i>Permit Type – The following fees are set by statute and will be revised as changed nationally</i>				
Small Society Lottery Registration	N	40.00	40.00	
Small Society Annual Fee	N	20.00	20.00	
FEC gaming machine – Renewal fee	N	300.00	300.00	
FEC gaming machine – Change of name	N	25.00	25.00	
Prize gaming – Application fee	N	300.00	300.00	
Prize gaming – Renewal fee	N	300.00	300.00	
Prize gaming – Change of name	N	25.00	25.00	
Prize gaming – Copy permit	N	15.00	15.00	
Gaming machines (3 or more) - application Fee	N	100.00	100.00	
Gaming machines (3 or more) - variation Fee	N	100.00	100.00	
Gaming machines (3 or more) - transfer Fee	N	25.00	25.00	
Gaming machines (3 or more) - annual Fee	N	50.00	50.00	
Change of name	N	25.00	25.00	
Copy Permit	N	15.00	15.00	
Notice of intent 2 or less gaming machines available	N	50.00	50.00	
Club Premises cert (S 72f Licencing Act 2003) application fee	N	100.00	100.00	
Club Premises cert (S 72f Licencing Act 2003) renewal fee	N	100.00	100.00	
Other applicants - application fee	N	200.00	200.00	
Other applicants - renewal fee	N	200.00	200.00	
Variation fee	N	100.00	100.00	
Annual fee	N	50.00	50.00	
Copy permit	N	15.00	15.00	
Initial fee	N	40.00	40.00	
Annual fee	N	20.00	20.00	
Temporary use notice	N	500.00	500.00	
Copy/replacement/endorsed copy of notice	N	25.00	25.00	
Licensing Act Fees				
Statutory Fees- The following gambling fees are set within statutory bands and will be revised as changed nationally.				
Premises Licences				
Band A (RV £0 - £4,300) - Initial fee	N	100.00	100.00	
- Annual fee	N	70.00	70.00	
Band B (RV £4,301 - £33,000) - Initial fee	N	190.00	190.00	
- Annual fee	N	180.00	180.00	
Band C (RV £33,001 - £87,000) - Initial fee	N	315.00	315.00	
- Annual fee	N	295.00	295.00	
Band D (RV £87,001 - £125,000) - Initial fee	N	450.00	450.00	
- Annual fee	N	320.00	320.00	
Band E (RV > £125,001) - Initial fee	N	635.00	635.00	
- Annual fee	N	350.00	350.00	
Band D with Multiplier - Initial fee	N	900.00	900.00	
- Annual fee	N	640.00	640.00	
Band E with Multiplier - Initial fee	N	1,905.00	1,905.00	
- Annual fee	N	1,050.00	1,050.00	
Club Premises Certificates				
Band A (RV £0 - £4,300) - Initial fee	N	100.00	100.00	
- Annual fee	N	70.00	70.00	
Band B (RV £4,301 - £33,000) - Initial fee	N	190.00	190.00	
- Annual fee	N	180.00	180.00	
Band C (RV £33,001 - £87,000) - Initial fee	N	315.00	315.00	
- Annual fee	N	295.00	295.00	
Band D (RV £87,001 - £125,000) - Initial fee	N	450.00	450.00	
- Annual fee	N	320.00	320.00	
Band E (RV > £125,001) - Initial fee	N	635.00	635.00	
- Annual fee	N	350.00	350.00	

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
Large Scale Events				
5,000 to 9,999 - Initial fee	N	1,000.00	1,000.00	
- Annual fee	N	500.00	500.00	
10,000 to 14,999 - Initial fee	N	2,000.00	2,000.00	
- Annual fee	N	1,000.00	1,000.00	
15,000 to 19,999 - Initial fee	N	4,000.00	4,000.00	
- Annual fee	N	2,000.00	2,000.00	
20,000 to 29,999 - Initial fee	N	8,000.00	8,000.00	
- Annual fee	N	4,000.00	4,000.00	
30,000 to 39,999 - Initial fee	N	16,000.00	16,000.00	
- Annual fee	N	8,000.00	8,000.00	
40,000 to 49,999 - Initial fee	N	24,000.00	24,000.00	
- Annual fee	N	12,000.00	12,000.00	
50,000 to 59,999 - Initial fee	N	32,000.00	32,000.00	
- Annual fee	N	16,000.00	16,000.00	
60,000 to 69,999 - Initial fee	N	40,000.00	40,000.00	
- Annual fee	N	20,000.00	20,000.00	
70,000 to 79,999 - Initial fee	N	48,000.00	48,000.00	
- Annual fee	N	24,000.00	24,000.00	
80,000 to 89,999 - Initial fee	N	56,000.00	56,000.00	
- Annual fee	N	28,000.00	28,000.00	
> 90,000 - Initial fee	N	64,000.00	64,000.00	
- Annual fee	N	32,000.00	32,000.00	
Other Licensing Act 2003 Fees & Charges				
Minor Variations	N	89.00	89.00	
Personal Licence	N	37.00	37.00	
Provisional Statement	N	315.00	315.00	
Temporary Event Notice (TEN)	N	21.00	21.00	
Theft / Loss of Licence / Notice	N	10.50	10.50	
Variation of DPS	N	23.00	23.00	
Transfer of Premises Licence	N	23.00	23.00	
Change of Name / Address	N	10.50	10.50	
Notification of Interest	N	21.00	21.00	
Notification of Alteration of Club Rules	N	10.50	10.50	
Interim Authority Notice	N	23.00	23.00	
Explosives Act/Fireworks Annual Registration	N	52.00	52.00	
				Minimal

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
HACKNEY CARRIAGES				
Taxi Licencing				
Taxi licensing fees are agreed annually by licensing committee normally between January to March and will be published separately as part of this process. Existing licence holders will be notified accordingly.				
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH				
Pest Treatment Charges – All charges shown exclusive of VAT. Charges will be made plus the appropriate VAT rate				
Insects – per Treatment	L	58.50	58.50	
Rodents in Private Premises	L	8.33	8.33	
Re-rating Food Hygiene Inspections	L	150.00	150.00	
Prosecution Costs				
Hourly Rate for preparation of case reports and carrying out works in default of legal notices	L	50.00	60.00	
Environmental Searches				
Environmental search 1 or 2 report includes environmental information held by the Council on a site (additional charges apply for sites larger than 10,000m2 and distance buffer greater than 250m radius)	L	65.00	65.00	
Additional photocopying for example copies of site investigation reports;				
A4 B&W	L	0.10	0.10	
A3 B&W	L	0.20	0.20	
A4 Colour	L	1.00	1.00	
A3 Colour	L	2.00	2.00	
Scanned Copy	L	Free	Free	
LAPPC and LAIPPC Permits				
Charges are annually set by Defra in March and are subject to change. Current charges as known are;				
LAPPC Charges				
Application Fee;				
Standard process (includes solvent emission activities)	N	1,650.00	1,650.00	
Additional fee for operating without a permit	N	1,188.00	1,188.00	
PVRI, SWOBs and Dry Cleaners	N	155.00	155.00	
PVR I & II combined	N	257.00	257.00	
VRs and other Reduced Fee Activities	N	362.00	362.00	
Reduced fee activities: additional fee for operating without a permit	N	71.00	71.00	
Mobile plant**	N	1,650.00	1,650.00	
for the third to seventh applications	N	985.00	985.00	
for the eighth and subsequent applications	N	498.00	498.00	
Where an application for any of the above is for a combined Part B and waste application add an extra to the above amounts	N	310.00	310.00	
Annual Subsistence Charge;				
Standard process Low*	N	772.00 (+104.00)	772.00 (+104.00)	

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
Standard process Medium*	N	1,161.00 (+156.00)	1,161.00 (+156.00)	
Standard process High*	N	1,747.00 (+207.00)	1,747.00 (+207.00)	
*the additional amounts must be charged where a permit is for a combined Part B and waste installation				
PVRI, SWOBs and Dry Cleaners Low	N	79.00	79.00	
PVRI, SWOBs and Dry Cleaners Medium	N	158.00	158.00	
PVRI, SWOBs and Dry Cleaners High	N	237.00	237.00	
PVR I & II combined Low	N	113.00	113.00	
PVR I & II combined Medium	N	226.00	226.00	
PVR I & II combined High	N	341.00	341.00	
VRs and other Reduced Fees Low	N	228.00	228.00	
VRs and other Reduced Fees Medium	N	365.00	365.00	
VRs and other Reduced Fees High	N	548.00	548.00	
Mobile plant, for the first and second permits Low**	N	626.00	626.00	
for the third to seventh permits Low	N	385.00	385.00	
eighth and subsequent permits Low	N	198.00	198.00	
Mobile plant, for the first and second permits Medium**	N	1,034.00	1,034.00	
for the third to seventh permits Medium	N	617.00	617.00	
eighth and subsequent permits Medium	N	316.00	316.00	
Mobile plant, for the first and second permits High**	N	1,551.00	1,551.00	
for the third to seventh permits High	N	924.00	924.00	
eighth and subsequent permits High	N	473.00	473.00	
Late payment fee	N	52.00	52.00	
Where a Part B installation is subject to reporting under the E-PRTR Regulation add an extra to the above amounts	N	104.00	104.00	
Transfer and Surrender;				
Standard process transfer	N	169.00	169.00	
Standard process partial transfer	N	497.00	497.00	
New operator at low risk reduced fee activity	N	78.00	78.00	
Surrender: all Part b activities	N	0.00	0.00	
Reduced fee activities: transfer	N	0.00	0.00	
Reduced fee activities: partial transfer	N	47.00	47.00	
Temporary transfer for mobiles;				
First transfer	N	53.00	53.00	
Repeat following enforcement or warning	N	53.00	53.00	
Substantial change;				
Standard process	N	1,050.00	1,050.00	
Standard process where the substantial change results in a new PPC activity	N	1,650.00	1,650.00	
Reduced fee activities	N	102.00	102.00	
**Not using simplified permits				
LAPPC mobile plant charges (not using simplified permits)				
Number of permits 1 to 2;				
Application fee	N	1,650.00	1,650.00	
Subsistence fee Low	N	646.00	646.00	
Subsistence fee Medium	N	1,034.00	1,034.00	
Subsistence fee High	N	1,506.00	1,506.00	
Number of permits 3 to 7;				
Application fee	N	985.00	985.00	
Subsistence fee Low	N	385.00	385.00	
Subsistence fee Medium	N	617.00	617.00	
Subsistence fee High	N	924.00	924.00	
Number of permits 8 and over;				
Application fee	N	498.00	498.00	
Subsistence fee Low	N	198.00	198.00	
Subsistence fee Medium	N	316.00	316.00	
Subsistence fee High	N	473.00	473.00	

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
LA-IPPC charges				
Every subsistence charge below includes the additional £104 charge to cover LA extra costs in dealing with reporting under the E-PRTR Regulation				
Application	N	3,363.00	3,363.00	
Additional fee for operating without a permit	N	1,188.00	1,188.00	
Annual Subsistence Low	N	1,447.00	1,447.00	
Annual Subsistence Medium	N	1,611.00	1,611.00	
Annual Subsistence High	N	2,334.00	2,334.00	
Late Payment Fee	N	52.00	52.00	
Variation	N	1,368.00	1,368.00	
Transfer	N	235.00	235.00	
Partial Transfer	N	698.00	698.00	
Surrender	N	698.00	698.00	
Subsistence charges can be paid in four equal quarterly instalments paid on 1st April, 1st July, 1st October and 1st January. Where paid quarterly the total amount payable to the local authority will be increased by £38.00				
Newspaper adverts may be required under EPR at the discretion of the LA as part of the consultation process when considering an application. This will be undertaken and paid for by the LA and the charging scheme contains a provision for the LA to recoup its costs				
				Minimal
TRADING STANDARDS				
Please note that VAT may be added to some charges. Check with the service before the work is agreed.				
Prosecution Costs				
Hourly rate for Preparation of Case Reports	L	50.00	60.00	
Measures				
Linear measures not exceeding 3m each scale	L	15.00	16.50	
Not exceeding 15kg	L	40.50	44.00	
Exceeding 15kg but not exceeding 100kg	L	70.50	76.50	
Exceeding 100kg but not exceeding 250kg	L	84.50	91.50	
Exceeding 250kg but not exceeding 1 tonne	L	147.00	159.00	
Exceeding 1 tonne but not exceeding 10 tonnes	L	235.50	254.50	
Exceeding 10 tonnes but not exceeding 30 tonnes	L	494.00	533.50	
Exceeding 30 tonnes but not exceeding 60 tonnes	L	734.00	792.00	
Charge to cover any additional costs involved in testing incorporating remote display or printing facilities based on the above fee plus a charge per hour (minimum charge of 2 hours)	L	70.00 per hour	76.00 per hour	
Measuring Instruments for Intoxicating Liquor				
Not exceeding 150ml	L	23.50	25.50	
Other	L	27.00	29.50	

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
Measuring Instruments for Liquid Fuels and Lubricants				
Container Type (un-subdivided)				
Multi-grade (with price computing device):	L	102.00	110.50	
Single Outlets	L	139.50	151.00	
Solely Price Adjustment	L	255.00	275.50	
Otherwise				
Other Types – Single Outlets				
Solely Price Adjustment	L	112.00	121.00	
Otherwise	L	152.00	164.00	
Other Types – Multi Outlets:				
1 Meter Tested	L	162.50	176.00	
2 Meters Tested	L	267.00	288.50	
3 Meters Tested	L	365.00	394.00	
4 Meters Tested	L	465.00	502.00	
5 Meters Tested	L	562.00	606.50	
6 Meters Tested	L	660.00	712.50	
7 Meters Tested	L	746.00	805.00	
8 Meters Tested	L	861.00	929.50	
Charge to cover any additional costs involved in testing ancillary equipment such as payment acceptors based on the above fee plus a charge per hour (minimum of 2 hours)	L	70.00 per hour	76.00 per hour	
Special Weighing and Measuring Equipment				
For all specialist work undertaken by the service which is not included above a charge per hour on site (minimum charge of 2 hours) plus cost of provision of testing equipment applies	L	70.00 per hour	76.00 per hour	
Discounts				
Fees from Measures to Certification Calibration will be discounted as follows :-				
a) Where more than a single item is submitted on one occasion the second and subsequent fees will be reduced by 20%				
b) Where tests are undertaken using appropriately certified weights and equipment not supplied by the Borough Council the fees will be reduced by 20%				
c) Special rates can be negotiated for multiple submissions or where assistance with equipment or labour is provided				
NB – Where different fees are involved the highest fee will be charged in full and any discounts calculated from the remaining lesser fees				
Licensing – VAT not applicable				
Explosives and Fireworks Licences (Statutory Fee)				
Licence for the storage of explosives	N	**See Note	**See Note	
Licence for the sale of fireworks all year round	N	**See Note	**See Note	
**These are statutory rates that are set centrally in April				
				Minimal

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
PARKING – all off-street charges are inclusive of VAT at 20%				
Car Parks (Short Stay) – per hour (Mon to Sun)				
Abbotts Yard	L	1.00	1.00	
Commercial Street East & West	L	1.00	1.00	
Feethams Multi Storey Car Park	L	1.00	1.00	
Winston Street North & South & West	L	1.00	1.00	
Town Hall	L	1.00	1.00	
Car Parks – Mixed Charges (Mon to Sat)				
Archer Street, Garden Street, Kendrew Street East & West, Hird Street, St Hilda's & Park Place East & West				
Per hour	L	1.00	1.00	
Per day	L	4.00	4.00	
Per week	L	16.00	16.00	
East Street				
Per hour	L	1.00	1.00	
Per day	L	2.00	2.00	
Sunday				
Archer Street, Garden Street, Kendrew Street East & West, Hird Street, St Hilda's & Park Place East & West & East Street				
L		1.00	1.00	
Car Parks – Long Stay (Mon to Sun)				
Chestnut Street				
Cars per hour	L	1.00	1.00	
Cars per day	L	2.00	2.00	
Cars per week	L	8.00	8.00	
HGV/coach per day	L	Free	Free	
HGV/coach per night (6pm-8am)	L	4.00	4.00	
Park Lane				
Per day (Mon to Sat)	L	5.00	5.00	
Per day (Sun)	L	1.00	1.00	
Central House				
Saturday all day	L	4.00	4.00	
Bank Holiday all day	L	4.00	4.00	
On Street Parking Mon to Sun (up to 2 hours no return within 1 hour EXCEPT for Grange Road & Northumberland Street up to 3 hours no return within 1 hour and East Row 30 minutes maximum no return within 1 hour)				
Per 30 mins	L	0.50	0.50	

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
Car Parks – Contract Parking – all charges are inclusive of VAT at 20%				
Parking locations as determined by the Director of Services.				
Per year one space	L	950.00	950.00	
Per year two spaces	L	900.00	900.00	
Per year three spaces	L	860.00	860.00	
Per year four spaces	L	830.00	830.00	
Per year five to nine spaces	L	800.00	800.00	
Per year ten or more spaces	L	700.00	700.00	
Four Riggs				
Per calendar month	L	64.00	64.00	
Morton Palms				
Per year one space	L	300.00	300.00	
Silver Street				
Per year one space	L	600.00	600.00	
Car Parks – Staff & Members per year	L	173.04	173.04	
Residents Parking Permits (excluding Town Centre)				
3 month temporary permit	L	12.00	12.00	
6 month permit	L	24.00	24.00	
12 month permit	L	40.00	40.00	
Residents Parking Permits (Town Centre only)				
12 month permit	L	350.00	350.00	
Tradesmen Parking Permits				
Daily Waiver	L	5.00	5.00	
3 month permit	L	50.00	100.00	
6 month permit	L	90.00	150.00	
12 month permit	L	150.00	250.00	
				Minimal

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
BUILDING CONTROL				
Items inclusive of VAT at 20%				
Letter confirming exemption	L	Free	Free	
Letter confirming enforcement action will not be taken	L	Free	Free	
Decision/Approval Notice (Building Control)				
Responding to request for historical information from electronic databases (email response)	L	Free	Free	
Responding to request for historical information from electronic databases (letter response)	L	1.00	1.00	
Responding to request for historical information from manually recorded data (email response)	L	Free	Free	
Personal searches (email response)	L	Free	Free	
The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 Plus VAT at 20%				
Work charged on individual job basis	L	As agreed with client	As agreed with client	
				NIL

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
DOLPHIN CENTRE				
Pricing based on the introduction of a leisure card.				
Swimming				
Adult swim				
Card holder	L	4.40	4.55	
Non card holder	L	5.05	5.20	
Concession	L	3.30	3.45	
Junior Swim	L	2.80	3.00	
Family swim junior rate discount (up to 4 children accompanying 1 adult)				
Per card holder	L	2.00	2.10	
Per non card holder	L	2.45	2.55	
Under 12 months	L	Free	Free	
Lessons	L	50.00	52.50	
Fitness Areas				
The Gym				
Card holder	L	5.50	5.75	
Non card holder	L	5.95	6.25	
Concession	L	4.10	4.30	
Junior Gym	L	4.10	4.30	
Concession	L	3.20	3.35	
Health & Fitness Classes				
Health & Fitness Classes				
Card holder	L	4.55	4.75	
Non card holder	L	5.25	5.50	
Concession	L	3.45	3.60	
Half Main Hall				
Adult				
Card holder	L	44.50	47.00	
Non card holder	L	51.00	53.50	
Junior (1 hour courts only)	L	31.00	32.50	
Weekday lunchtime				
Card holder	L	39.00	41.00	
Non card holder	L	43.00	45.00	
Badminton				
Adult				
Card holder	L	8.85	9.15	
Non card holder	L	10.10	10.40	
Concession	L	6.70	6.90	
Junior (1 hour courts only)	L	5.00	5.15	
Concession (1 hour courts only)	L	3.85	4.00	
Equipment Hire				
Footballs	L	Free	Free	
Footballs – Deposit (FOC for card holders)	L	5.00	5.00	
Badminton	L	2.00	2.00	
Badminton – Deposit (FOC for card holders)	L	5.00	5.00	
Table Tennis Bats	L	1.40	1.40	
Table Tennis Bats – Deposit (FOC for card holders)	L	5.00	5.00	
Pram Lock	L	Free	Free	
Pram Lock – Deposit (FOC for card holders)	L	5.00	5.00	

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
Children's Activities				
Soft play admissions	L	5.25	5.50	
Sensory Room	L	5.25	5.50	
Parent/toddler (Soft play)	L	5.25	5.50	
Other Activities				
Showers				
Card holders	L	2.50	2.65	
Non card holders	L	2.85	3.00	
Fit 4 Life Packages				
12 month Full Membership	L	323.40	323.40	
12 month Seniors	L	252.00	252.00	
12 month Student	L	204.00	204.00	
6 Month Full	L	207.00	207.00	
12 Month Upfront	L	299.00	299.00	
Swimming Pools				
Main Pool - per hour	L	105.00	110.00	
Diving Pool - per hour	L	60.00	63.00	
Teaching Pool - per hour	L	60.00	63.00	
Gala - per hour				
Swimming Galas - whole complex				
Normal opening hours - per hour	L	335.00	352.00	
Outside normal opening hours - per hour	L	176.00	185.00	
Swimming Galas - Schools, Junior Clubs and Organisations				
Main Pool - Peak	L	235.00	247.00	
Main Pool - Off Peak	L	166.00	175.00	
Main Pool and Teaching Pool - Peak	L	196.00	206.00	
Main Pool and Teaching Pool - Off Peak	L	202.00	212.00	
Electronic Timing	L	99.00	104.00	
Ten Pin Bowling				
Adult Standard - 1 game	L	7.45	7.70	
Juniors (under 16) - 1 game	L	5.95	6.15	
Students & Seniors - Off Peak - 1 game	L	5.95	6.15	
Family Package - Peak - 1 game	L	23.50	24.60	
Family Package - Off Peak - 1 game	L	21.50	23.00	
Adult, Students, Seniors - Peak - 2 game	L	14.90	15.40	
Adult, Student, Seniors - Off Peak - 2 game	L	10.50	10.75	
Juniors (under 16) - Peak - 2 game	L	11.90	12.30	
Juniors (under 16) - Off Peak - 2 game	L	10.50	10.75	
Disabled and carer - Off Peak - 1 game (per person)	L	4.95	4.95	
Disabled and carer - Off Peak - 2 game (per person)	L	9.90	9.90	
Dry Sports Hall				
Main Sports Hall - per hour	L	110.00	115.50	
Special Events - per hour Weekends	L	362.00	367.00	
Preparation - per hour Weekends	L	189.00	194.00	
Special Events - Schools - per hour off peak	L	49.00	52.00	
Function Room	L	N/a	28.00	
Seminar Room/Stephenson Suite meeting rooms	L	36.00	38.00	
Pease Suite/Studio	L	N/a	48.00	
Central Hall				
All Events (except commercial, exhibitions and local societies)	L	115.00	121.00	
Exhibitions - commercial - per hour	L	150.00	157.50	
Local Societies event - per hour	L	80.00	84.00	
				48,000

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
PARKS				
Football - Hire of Hundens Park Pitch Seniors' Match	L	25.00	26.00	
Juniors Match	L	15.00	16.00	
				Minimal
EASTBOURNE SPORTS COMPLEX				
3G Pitch				
Non Charter Standard Pay and Play				
1/2 3G Pitch - Adult (1 hour)	L	50.00	50.00	
1/2 3G Pitch - Junior (1 hour)	L	40.00	40.00	
Full 3G pitch per hour – Adult	L	80.00	80.00	
Full 3G pitch per hour – Junior	L	55.00	55.00	
Charter Standard and Partner Clubs				
1/2 3G Pitch (1 hour)	L	25.00	25.00	
Full 3G pitch per hour	L	50.00	50.00	
Off Peak Summer Prices (May to August) Charter Standard and Partner Clubs				
1/2 3G Pitch (1 hour)	L	25.00	25.00	
Full 3G pitch per hour	L	50.00	50.00	
Grass Pitch				
Adult per match	L	25.00	26.00	
Junior per match	L	15.00	16.00	
Athletics Track				
Non club rate				
Adult	L	5.00	5.00	
Junior	L	4.00	4.00	
Full track per hour	L	120.00	120.00	
Club rate				
Adult	L	4.00	4.00	
Junior	L	4.00	4.00	
Full track per hour	L	65.00	75.00	
Other				
Shower	L	2.20	2.40	
Function room and pavilion hire per hour (exclusive of VAT)	L	22.00	23.00	
Multi Purpose Studio per hour (exclusive of VAT)	L	16.00	17.00	
				1,000

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
HIPPODROME & HULLABALOO				
Hire & Conferencing (all pricing exclusive of VAT)				
John Wade Group Lounge - max capacity 40 (theatre style) - per hour	L	38.75	38.75	
John Wade Group Lounge - max capacity 40 (theatre style) - day hire**	L	231.75	231.75	
Living Water Tower Room - max capacity 18 - per hour	L	33.25	33.25	
Living Water Tower Room - max capacity 18 - day hire**	L	198.50	198.50	
Hippo Lounge - max capacity 70 - per hour	L	46.25	46.25	
Hippo Lounge - max capacity 70 - day hire**	L	277.75	277.75	
Hippo Education Space - max capacity 40 (workshop of approx. 25) - per hour	L	38.75	38.75	
Hippo Education Space - max capacity 40 (workshop of approx. 25) - day hire**	L	231.75	231.75	
Hullabaloo Rehearsal Space - max capacity 35 - per hour	L	38.75	38.75	
Hullabaloo Rehearsal Space - max capacity 35 - day hire**	L	231.75	231.75	
Hullabaloo Café - max capacity 70 - per hour	L	46.25	46.25	
Hullabaloo Café - max capacity 70 - day hire**	L	277.75	277.75	
Hippodrome Theatre Hire - max capacity 1,000 - w/end full day	L	2,095.00	2,200.00	
Hippodrome Theatre Hire - max capacity 1,000 - w/end half day	L	1,047.50	1,100.00	
Hippodrome Theatre Hire - max capacity 1,000 - w/day full day	L	1,929.50	2,025.00	
Hippodrome Theatre Hire - max capacity 1,000 - w/day half day	L	965.00	1,015.00	
Hullabaloo Theatre Hire - max capacity 150 - per hour	L	68.50	72.00	
Hullabaloo Theatre Hire - max capacity 150 - day hire**	L	496.50	520.00	
**day hire - 9am to 6pm				
Community Rate may be applicable for charities, NHS, children's groups and local artists if qualifying criteria met. This equates to 30% reduction on the above charges.				
				4,000

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
HEAD OF STEAM (closed for refurbishment)				
Re-opening Summer 2024 and new pricing will be published accordingly				
REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL				
Refuse sacks (per 25) (Exclusive of VAT)	L	118.50	126.80	
Garden Waste Sacks (Non VATable) (for collection of 10 bags)	L	12.80	13.70	
Bulky Household Collection up to 6 items	L	21.40	22.90	
Garden Waste Service	L	39.00	45.00	
Cost of replacement (inclusive of 20% VAT)				
360L Wheeled Bin	L	60.60	60.60	
240L Wheeled Bin	L	23.90	23.90	
Caddie	L	8.50	8.50	
Glass Box	L	6.00	6.25	
55L Box	L	6.00	6.25	
Lid for recycling box	L	2.50	2.50	
Lid for 240L bin	L	6.00	7.50	
				51,000

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
CEMETERIES				
Burial fees without exclusive right of burial (these fees will be tripled where the deceased is a non-resident of Darlington at time of death)				
Individual foetal remains	N	No Charge	No Charge	
Stillborn or child not exceeding 12 months	N	No Charge	No Charge	
Person over 12 months up to 18 years	N	No Charge	No Charge	
Person over 18 years	L	990.00	1,050.00	
Burial fees with exclusive right of burial (these fees will be doubled where the deceased is a non-resident of Darlington at time of death)				
Individual foetal remains	N	No Charge	No Charge	
Child not exceeding 12 months	N	No Charge	No Charge	
Person over 12 months up to 18 years	N	No Charge	No Charge	
Person over 18 years	L	990.00	1,050.00	
Cremated remains	L	220.00	230.00	
Exclusive rights of burial (these fees will be doubled if the purchaser is a non-resident of Darlington if not purchased at time of first interment).				
Exclusive burial rights (50 years)	L	1,010.00	1,040.00	
Exclusive burial rights for a bricked grave	L	2,020.00	2,080.00	
Other charges				
Scattering of cremated remains	L	50.00	50.00	
Indemnity form (to produce duplicate grant)	L	50.00	50.00	
Use of Cemetery Chapel	L	120.00	125.00	
Use of Crematorium Chapel for burial/memorial service	L	N/a	250.00	
After post mortem remains	L	220.00	230.00	
Exhumation of a body (excl. re-interment)	L	2,150.00	2,215.00	
Exhumation of cremated remains (excl. re-interment)	L	550.00	565.00	
Grave Maintenance (inclusive of 20% VAT)				
Initial payment	L	50.00	55.00	
Annual Maintenance	L	38.00	40.00	
Memorials (fees will be doubled where the deceased to whom the memorial/inscription refers was non-resident of Darlington at time of death)				
Memorial rights including first inscription (30 years)	L	220.00	230.00	
Provision of kerbs – traditional sites only)	L	100.00	100.00	
Vases not exceeding 300mm	L	80.00	85.00	
Additional inscription	L	80.00	85.00	
Total financial effect for Cemeteries				12,500

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
CREMATORIUM				
Crematorium fees (inclusive of certificate of cremation, use of organ and scattering of remains in Gardens of Remembrance at an unreserved time)				
Individual foetal remains	N	No charge	No charge	
Hospital arrangement – foetal remains	L	220.00	230.00	
Stillborn or child not exceeding 12 months	N	No charge	No charge	
Person over 12 months up to 18 years	N	No charge	No charge	
Person over 18 years	L	960.00	1,050.00	
Direct Cremation	L	700.00	550.00	
After post mortem remains	L	220.00	230.00	
Other charges				
Medical Referee Fee	N	22.00	22.00	
Postal Carton	L	20.00	20.00	
Metal Urn	L	40.00	40.00	
Wooden Casket	L	50.00	50.00	
Baby Urn	L	10.00	10.00	
Extended use of Crematorium Chapel	L	120.00	125.00	
Scattering of remains at reserved time	L	50.00	50.00	
Webcasts (inclusive of 20% VAT)				
Live Webcast and watch again	L	54.00	55.00	
Keepsake (DVD, Blu-ray, USB or audio CD)	L	60.00	60.00	
Extra copies of Keepsake	L	30.00	30.00	
Tributes (inclusive of 20% VAT)				
Single Tribute	L	N/a	15.00	
Tribute Slideshow	L	N/a	45.00	
Tribute Slideshow set to music	L	N/a	80.00	
For every additional 25 images	L	N/a	20.00	
Tribute Keepsake	L	N/a	20.00	
Book of Remembrance (inclusive of 20% VAT)				
Single Entry (2 lines)	L	70.00	75.00	
Double Entry (3 or 4 lines)	L	110.00	115.00	
Additional lines	L	25.00	25.00	
Crest or floral emblem	L	115.00	120.00	
Memorial Cards (inclusive of 20% VAT)				
Single entry card (2 lines)	L	25.00	30.00	
Double entry card (3 or 4 lines)	L	30.00	35.00	
Additional lines	L	5.00	5.00	
Crest of floral emblem	L	70.00	80.00	
Personal photographs – set up	L	50.00	50.00	
Additional photographs – after set up	L	10.00	10.00	
Memorial Books (inclusive of 20% VAT)				
Single entry book (2 lines)	L	80.00	85.00	
Double entry card (3 or 4 lines)	L	85.00	90.00	
Additional lines	L	5.00	5.00	
Crest of floral emblem	L	70.00	80.00	
Personal photographs – set up	L	50.00	50.00	
Additional photographs – after set up	L	10.00	10.00	
Other Memorial Schemes				
Replacement kerb vase plaque	L	300.00	300.00	
Replacement flower holder	L	5.00	5.00	
Wall plaques	L	250.00	250.00	
Planter plaques	L	370.00	370.00	
Lease of space for memorial plaques (per annum)	L	26.00	26.00	
Total financial effect for Crematorium				125,000

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
ALLOTMENTS & STABLES				
Rent per year	L	195.00	200.00	
				Minimal
HIGHWAYS				
Private apparatus in the Highway (Section 50 Licence, new installations)	L	550.00	550.00	
Private Road Openings (repair existing)	L	225.00	225.00	
Vehicle Crossings – estimate fee (taken as part of payment if go ahead with the works)	L	25.00	25.00	
Vehicle Crossings (plus actual construction costs)	L	100.00	100.00	
Vehicle Crossings if planning permission required on a classified road (plus actual construction costs)	L	150.00	150.00	
Temporary Traffic Regulation Notices (road closures etc)	L	175.00	184.00	
Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (road closures etc) (plus advertising)	L	288.00	302.00	
Emergency Traffic Regulation Orders	L	136.00	143.00	
Application to Secretary of State for TTRO extension (plus advertising)	L	100.00	105.00	
Personal Search - Highways (by email) per question	L	6.00	6.00	
Street Naming Royal Mail Income (per address, Nationally agreed price LGIH)	L	1.00	1.00	
Street Naming & Numbering of Properties:				
- Per road name (developer suggests)	L	173.00	182.00	
- Per road name (council names)	L	210.00	221.00	
- Per plot	L	16.00	16.00	
Street Naming & Numbering of Properties:				
- Per plot or renaming of a property	L	37.00	37.00	
Rechargeable Works	L	Actual cost + 10%	Actual cost + 10%	
Temporary Traffic Light Applications	L	No Charge	No Charge	
Section 50 Licence associated bond costs	L	Individually priced based on requirements	Individually priced based on requirements	
Access protection markings	L	No charge	No charge	
Tourist Sign (plus actual cost of sign)	L	£75.00 + VAT	£75.00 + VAT	
Accident Data Requests	L	£75.00 + VAT	£75.00 + VAT	
Traffic Count Data	L	75.00	75.00	
Street Lighting Design Service	L	Individually priced based on charge out rate	Individually priced based on charge out rate	
Oversailing Licence	L	No charge	No charge	
Banner Licence	L	No charge	No charge	
Placing Goods on the Highway	L	155.00	155.00	
Deposits upon the Highway	L	No charge	No charge	
Temporary Development Signs – Admin Fee	L	200.00	200.00	
Temporary Development Signs – DBC undertake work on behalf of developer	L	Actual costs	Actual costs	
Switch off / on traffic signal / pelican crossings – per visit	L	150.00	150.00	
Unauthorised marks or affixing of signs to street furniture	L	No charge	No charge	

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
Section 278 Highway works agreement	N	6% of works + legal if delivered by developer	6% of works + legal if delivered by developer	
Section 116 Stopping Up of the Highway	N	Actual Costs	Actual Costs	
Section 38 Road Adoption agreement	N	6% of works + legal if delivered by developer	6% of works + legal if delivered by developer	
NRSWA Defect Charges	N	Nationally set scale of charges	Nationally set scale of charges	
NRSWA Road Opening Inspection Charges (sample)	N	Nationally set scale of charges	Nationally set scale of charges	
Section 74 – charges for overstay	N	Nationally set scale of charges	Nationally set scale of charges	
				1,000
PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY				
Public Path Orders (HA 80 S 118 and 119, TCPA 90 s247, 257)				
Actual cost based on charge out rate plus advertising and legal costs		3,000.00 (minimum)	3,000.00 (minimum)	
PROW Temporary Closures – as Highways fees and charges				
Landowner Rights of Way Statement and Declaration s31.6				
One parcel of land, includes 2 notices	L	250.00	250.00	
Additional parcel	L	50.00	50.00	
Additional notice	L	50.00	50.00	
Authorisation for installing a new gate or stile (HA 80 s147)	L	100.00	100.00	
Path Orders under Deregulation Act				
Actual cost based on charge out rate plus advertising and legal costs, to include but not restricted to pre-application advice, processing the application, resolving objections, making the order, confirmation of the order, and any subsequent Public Inquiry or Hearing				
				NIL
SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT				
Charges for Concessionary Travel (ENCTS);				
Replacement pass for lost/stolen without a CRN	L	10.00	10.00	
Production, placement and retrieval of notices when bus stops are temporarily per bus stop	L	60.00	60.00	
Production and placement of bus timetable information when bus services have to be re-registered due to road closures – up to 6 timetables	L	84.00	84.00	
				NIL

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
TRANSPORT SERVICES				
Charges for Taxi Licensing;				
Taxi Vehicle Test	L	53.00	56.00	
Taxi Vehicle Test and MOT	L	63.00	66.00	
Failure to attend (less than 48 hours' notice)	L	53.00	56.00	
Re-test	L	26.00	27.00	
Re-test including emissions	L	37.00	39.00	
Re-test emissions only	L	11.00	12.00	
Charges for General Public;				
MOT for Standard Car Class IV	L	35.00	37.00	
MOT for Class V Vehicles	L	40.00	42.00	
MOT for Class VII Vehicles	L	40.00	42.00	
				3,000
PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING				
Works in default & statutory activities per hour				
	L	50.00	60.00	
Housing inspections & consultancy per hour (inclusive of VAT)				
	L	60.00	60.00	
Charge for the service relevant Housing Act 2004 legal notice				
	L	450.00	450.00	
Securing empty homes (addition of VAT by agreement)				
	L	300.00	300.00	
Houses in Multiple Occupation Activities;				
HMO licence fee per letting/let/tenancy				
	L	187.00	187.00	
Other relevant HMO activities per hour				
	L	50.00	60.00	
Variation of HMO licence				
	L	50.00	60.00	
Housing Immigration Inspections;				
Within 10 working days (including VAT)				
	L	150.00	150.00	
Fast Track within 5 working days (including VAT)				
	L	200.00	200.00	
General Enforcement Activities:				
Hourly rate for preparation of case reports/prosecutions				
	L	50.00	60.00	
Additional copies of legal notices via post				
	L	10.00	10.00	
Additional copies of legal notices - Scanned copy by Email				
	L	Free	Free	
The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022				
Fines for failing to provide a working smoke or carbon monoxide alarm. Offence by the same individual or organisation;				
First	N	500.00	500.00	
Second	N	1,000.00	1,000.00	
Third	N	2,000.00	2,000.00	
Fourth	N	3,000.00	3,000.00	
Fifth or more	N	5,000.00	5,000.00	
The Redress Schemes for Letting Agency Work and Property Management Work (England) Order 2014;				
Fines for failing to join an approved letting and management redress scheme;				
Businesses that have been served with a notice of intent and failed to join an approved scheme				
	N	5,000.00	5,000.00	
Businesses that have joined an approved scheme following the service of the notice of intent				
	N	4,000.00	4,000.00	
Businesses that have joined an approved scheme prior to enforcement action being taken, after the 1st October 2014				
	N	3,000.00	3,000.00	
**The Redress Scheme is currently undergoing a national review and may be replaced prior to April 2024 by a new civil penalty policy				

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015				
Penalty (less than 3 months in breach) renting a non-compliant property	N	Up to 2,000.00 and/or publication penalty	Up to 2,000.00 and/or publication penalty	
Penalty (3 months or more in breach) renting out a non-compliant property	N	Up to 4,000.00 and/or publication penalty	Up to 4,000.00 and/or publication penalty	
Providing false or misleading information on the PRS Exemptions Register	N	Up to 1,000.00 and/or publication penalty	Up to 1,000.00 and/or publication penalty	
Failing to comply with a compliance notice	N	Up to 2,000.00 and/or publication penalty	Up to 2,000.00 and/or publication penalty	
Housing and Planning Act 2016				
Failure to comply with an Improvement Notice (under section 30 of the Housing Act 2004)				
Failure to comply with a Prohibition Order (under section 32 of the Housing Act 2004)				
Breach of a banning order made under section 21 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016	N	Civil penalties of up to 30,000 per offence as an alternative to prosecution	Civil penalties of up to 30,000 per offence as an alternative to prosecution	
Using violence to secure entry to a property (under section 6 of the Criminal Law Act 1977)				
Illegal eviction or harassment of the occupiers of a property (under section 1 of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977)				
COST OF REVENUE COLLECTION				
Council Tax – All Charges do not incur VAT				
Issue of Summons for Liability Order	L	38.00	40.00	
Issue of Liability Order	L	47.00	50.00	
Issue of Summons for Committal Hearing	L	99.00	105.00	
Issue of Statutory Demand	L	173.00	184.00	
Schedule 3 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992				
Penalty where				
- A person is requested to supply information and fails to	L	0.00	70.00	
- A person knowingly supplies inaccurate information	L	0.00	70.00	
- A person fails to notify a material change without a reasonable excuse	L	0.00	70.00	
Where a penalty has been imposed and there is a further request for the same information a further penalty				
- A person fails to supply information	L	0.00	280.00	
- A person knowingly supplies inaccurate information	L	0.00	280.00	
Business Rates (NNDR) – All Charges do not incur VAT				
Issue of Summons for Liability Order	L	38.00	40.00	
Issue of Liability Order	L	47.00	50.00	
Issue of Summons for Committal Hearing	L	99.00	105.00	
Issue of Statutory Demand	L	173.00	184.00	
				Minimal
				51,000

APPENDIX 4

**KEY ASSUMPTIONS USED IN PROJECTED
RESOURCES, EXPENDITURE AND INCOME 2024/25-2027/28**

Factor	Assumption
Resources	
Council Tax base	Variable depending on projected additional properties.
Council Tax	2.99% increase in 2024/25 and then 1.99% to 2027/28
Adult Social Care Precept	2% increase in 2024/25 and then 1% to 2027/28
Council Tax collection	99% collected
Government Grants	Government grants, as indicated in the final Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24 for 2024/25 and indicative figures for 2025/26 – 2027/28.
	Increase in Business Rates Scheme Top Up Grant of 4.3% in 2024/25, 5.6% in 2025/26, reset in 2026/27 & flatlined from 2027/28.
	Revenue Support Grant uplifted for 6% inflation in 2024/25 and then 2% to 2027/28.
	Continuation of Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) at 2023/24 rates.
	Continuation of 2023/24 Adult Social Care Support Grant of £3.753m in total, flatlined and assumed to continue to 2027/28.
	Spending Review 21 Government Funding of £1.162m to continue at 2023/24 rates until 2027/28.
	Services Grant assumed to continue until 2027/28 at same rate as 2023/24
	Social Care Grant, indicative from 2023 settlement at £4.872m in 2024/25 and flatlined to 2027/28.
	New Homes Bonus (NHB) legacy payments ended 2023/24.
	Supporting People Grant estimated at 2023/24 rate for 2024/25, then ceases.
Expenditure	
Pay inflation	2024/25 4% and thereafter 2% in line with national scheme.
Price inflation	Only contractual inflation on running costs
Local Government Pension Scheme	Contribution rate of 18.3% for 2024/25 until next triennial revaluation in 2025/26.
Financing Costs	
Interest rates payable	Average rate on existing debt 2024/25 of 3.87%; 2025/26 of 3.64%, 2026/27 of 3.45% & 2027/28 of 3.45%.
Interest rates payable on new debt – 10 year rate	2024/25 of 4.50%; 2025/26 of 3.78%, 2026/27 of 3.53% & 2027/28 of 3.50%.
Interest rates receivable	4.70% in 2024/25, 3.00% in 2025/26, 2.80% in 2026/27 & 3.05% in 2027/28.
Income	
Inflationary increases	Various based on individual service considerations

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REVENUE BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2023/24

<u>Projected General Fund Reserve at 31st March 2024</u>		
		2023-27
		MTFP
		(Feb 2023)
Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) :-		£000
MTFP Planned Opening Balance 01/04/2023		23,397
Approved net contribution from balances		(6,275)
Planned Closing Balance 31/03/2024		17,122
Increase in opening balance from 2022-23 results		509
Projected corporate underspends / (overspends) :-		
Council Wide		(551)
Contingencies		0
Additional Income Received		325
Services Group Rebase		700
People Group Rebase		500
Projected General Fund Reserve (excluding Departmental)	at 31st	18,605
March 2024		
Planned Balance at 31st March 2024		17,122
Improvement		1,483

<u>Departmental projected year-end balances</u>		
		Improvement / (decline)
		compared with 2023-27 MTFP
		£000
People Group		(3,867)
Services Group		1,116
Operations Group		112
Chief Executive		37
TOTAL		(2,602)

<u>Summary Comparison with :-</u>		
		2023-27
		MTFP
		£000
Corporate Resources - increase in opening balance from 22/23 results		509
Corporate Resources - additional in-year Improvement/(Decline)		(226)
Quarter 1 Budget Rebase		1,200
Departmental - Improvement / (Decline)		(2,602)
Improvement / (Decline) compared with MTFP		(1,119)
Projected General Fund Reserve at 31st March 2024		16,003

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MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL TERM 2024 TO 2028

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£m	£m	£m	£m
People Group	84.432	86.880	89.906	92.790
Chief Executives Office & Economic Growth	1.527	1.623	1.495	1.512
Services Group	19.725	20.584	21.131	21.675
Operations Group	18.947	19.393	19.793	20.203
Financing costs	3.529	3.704	3.521	3.450
Investment Returns - Joint Venture	(1.517)	(1.828)	(1.750)	(1.452)
Council Wide Pressures/(savings)	0.631	0.643	0.658	0.669
Council Wide Contingencies	0.202	0.202	1.655	1.664
Contribution to/(from) revenue balances	(8.175)	(9.008)	(12.987)	(13.785)
Total Net Expenditure	119.301	122.193	123.422	126.727
<u>Resources - Projected and assumed</u>				
Council Tax	65.647	68.546	71.737	74.950
Business rates retained locally	25.063	24.989	16.110	16.110
Top Up	8.509	8.988	15.816	15.817
RSG	4.381	4.469	4.558	4.649
NHB	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
BCF	4.488	4.488	4.488	4.488
Adult Social Care Support Grant	3.753	3.753	3.753	3.753
Social Care Grant	6.034	6.034	6.034	6.034
Services Grant	0.926	0.926	0.926	0.926
Strengthening Families Grant	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total Resources	119.301	122.193	123.422	126.727

<u>Balances</u>				
Opening balance	16.003	10.120	1.112	(11.875)
Release of Earmarked Reserve - LCTS	1.292	0.000	0.000	0.000
Net contribution to GF from Collection Fund	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Contribution to/(from) balances	(8.175)	(9.008)	(12.987)	(13.785)
Closing balance	10.120	1.112	(11.875)	(25.660)

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Capital Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 - 2027/28					APPENDIX 7
	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	Total £'000
Children, Families & Learning					
School Condition Allocations	67	67	67	67	268
	67	67	67	67	268
Housing					
Adaptations / Lifts	214	224	231	238	907
Heating replacement programme	1,286	1,351	1,391	1,433	5,461
Structural works	427	449	462	476	1,814
Lifeline Services	250	210	202	213	875
Repairs before painting	66	69	71	136	342
Roofing	1,050	1,103	683	703	3,539
Garages	50	50	26	27	153
External Works (footpaths, fencing, etc.)	210	221	227	234	892
Pavement Crossing	27	28	29	30	114
Window and Door Replacement Programme	1,495	1,570	1,617	1,666	6,348
IPM works	2,898	3,043	3,134	3,228	12,303
Energy Efficiency	3,068	3,221	3,318	3,418	13,025
Communal Works	160	168	173	178	679
New build (net of HE grant)/regeneration	15,815	2,513	1,000	1,000	20,328
Fees	254	265	274	279	1,072
	27,270	14,485	12,838	13,259	67,852
Transport					
Highway Maintenance	1,206	1,206	1,206	1,206	4,824
Integrated Transport	893	893	893	893	3,572
Pothole Funding	969	969	969	969	3,876
	3,068	3,068	3,068	3,068	12,272
Other Capital Programmes					
Disabled Facility Grants	1,063	1,063	1,063	1,063	4,252
	1,063	1,063	1,063	1,063	4,252
Council funded Schemes					
A167 Victoria Road Culvert	1,400	-	-	-	1,400
Hippodrome Accessible changing	30	-	-	-	30
Advanced Design Fees (Already approved to 2025/26)	150	150	-	-	300
Economic Growth Investment Fund (Already approved to 2025/26)	500	500	-	-	1,000
Capitalised Repairs (Already approved to 2025/26)	250	250	250	250	1,000
Total Council Funded Schemes	2,330	900	250	250	3,730
Self Financing Scheme					
Development of Office Block at Prestigate (Already approved to 2025/26)	2,000	8,000	-	-	10,000
Total Self Financing Schemes	2,000	8,000	-	-	10,000
Total Spending Plans	35,798	27,583	17,286	17,707	98,374
Funded by:					
Capital Grants	4,198	4,198	4,198	4,198	16,792
HRA Revenue Contributions	13,455	12,668	12,535	12,956	51,614
HRA Capital Receipts	303	303	303	303	1,212
Borrowing	13,512	1,514	-	-	15,026
Corporate Resources	2,330	900	250	250	3,730
Self Financing	2,000	8,000	-	-	10,000
Total Resources	35,798	27,583	17,286	17,707	98,374
Commitments - see above	35,798	27,583	17,286	17,707	98,374
Resources Available for Investment	-	-	-	-	-

14486

Figures shown in italics are estimates, awaiting confirmation of funding streams.

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**CABINET
5 DECEMBER 2023**

**MID YEAR PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT
MONITORING REPORT 2023/24**

**Responsible Cabinet Member –
Councillor Mandy Porter, Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director –
Elizabeth Davison, Group Director of Operations**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks approval of the revised Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and provides a mid-yearly review of the Council's borrowing and investment activities. Cabinet are requested to forward the revised Strategy and indicators to Council for their approval and note changes to the MTFP with regard to the Treasury Management Budget (Financing Costs).

Summary

2. The mandatory Prudential Code, which governs Council's borrowing, requires Council approval of controls, called Prudential Indicators, relating to capital spending and borrowing. Prudential Indicators are set in three statutory annual reports, a forward looking annual treasury management strategy, a backward looking annual treasury management report and this mid-year update. The mid-year update follows Council's approval in February 2023 of the 2023/24 Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy.
3. The key objectives of the three annual reports are:
 - (a) To ensure the governance of the large amounts of public money under the Council's Treasury Management activities:
 - (i) Complies with legislation.
 - (ii) Meets high standards set out in codes of practice
 - (b) To ensure that borrowing is affordable.
 - (c) To report performance of the key activities of borrowing and investments.

4. The key proposed revisions to Prudential Indicators relate to:
 - (a) The Operational Boundary will reduce to £148.025m and the Authorised Limit to £245.331m which will allow for any additional cashflow requirement.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that:
 - (a) The revised prudential indicators and limits within the report in Tables 1 to 6, 8, 10 and 12 to 17 are examined.
 - (b) The Treasury Management Budget (Financing Costs) projected outturn shown in Table 11 is noted.
 - (c) That this report is forwarded to Council with comments from this committee, in order for the updated prudential indicators to be approved.

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) In order to comply with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities;
 - (b) To inform Members of the performance of the Treasury Management function;
 - (c) To comply with the Local Government Act 2003;
 - (d) To enable further improvements to be made in the Council's Treasury Management function.

Elizabeth Davison
Group Director of Operations

Background Papers

- (i) Capital Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24
- (ii) Prudential Indicators & Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24
- (iii) Accounting records
- (iv) The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities

Judith Murray: Extension 5204

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for S17 Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	This report has no implications for the Council's Health and Well Being agenda.
Carbon Impact	There are no carbon impact implications in this report.
Diversity	There are no specific implications for the Council's diversity agenda.
Wards Affected	All Wards.
Groups Affected	All Groups.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report must be considered by Council.
Key Decision	This is not an executive decision.
Urgent Decision	For the purposes of call in this report is not an urgent decision.
Corporate Plan	This report has no particular implications for the Corporate Plan.
Efficiency	The report refers to actions taken to reduce costs and manage risks.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report does not impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. This mid-year review report meets the regulatory framework requirement of treasury management. It also incorporates the needs of the Prudential Code to ensure monitoring of the capital expenditure plans and the Council's prudential indicators (PIs). The Treasury Strategy and the PIs were previously reported to Council on 16 February 2023.
8. This report concentrates on the revised positions for 2023/24. Future year's indicators will be revised when the impact of the MTFP 2024/25 onwards is known.
9. A summary of the revised headline indicators for 2023/24 is presented in Table 1 below. More detailed explanations of each indicator and any proposed changes are contained in the report. The revised indicators reflect the movement in the Capital MTFP since its approval in February 2023 and the means by which it is financed.

Table 1 Headline Indicators

	2023/24 Original Estimate	2023/24 Revised Estimate
	£m	£m
Capital Expenditure (Tables 2 and 3)	45.493	81.296
Capital Financing Requirement (Table 4)	235.933	233.649
Operational Boundary for External Debt (Table 4)	181.077	148.025
Authorised Limit for External Debt (Table 6)	247.730	245.331
Ratio of Financing Costs to net revenue stream- General Fund (Table 14)	3.82%	4.47%
Ratio of Financing Costs to net revenue stream- Housing Revenue Account (HRA)(Table 14)	12.78%	12.78%

10. The capital expenditure plans and prudential indicators for capital expenditure are set out initially, as these provide the framework for the subsequent treasury management activity. The actual treasury management activity follows the capital framework and the position against the treasury management indicators is shown at the end.
11. The purpose of the report supports the objective in the revised CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities Investment Guidance which state that Members receive and adequately scrutinise the treasury service.
12. The underlying economic environment remains difficult for Councils. It is essential that the Council continues to monitor its cashflow in these times of high inflation and interest rates. Borrowing rates are higher than investment returns and this background encourages the Council to continue investing over the shorter term and with high quality counterparties, but also limit any borrowing to only that which is essential and for the shorter term where possible until interest rates start to fall.

Key Prudential Indicators

13. This part of the report is structured to update:
- (a) The Council’s capital expenditure plans
 - (b) How these plans are financed
 - (c) The impact of the changes in the capital expenditure plans on the PI’s and the underlying need to borrow
 - (d) Compliance and limits in place for borrowing activity
 - (e) Changes to the Annual Investment Strategy
 - (f) The revised financing costs budget for 2023/24

Capital Expenditure PI

14. Table 2 shows the revised estimates for capital expenditure and the changes since the capital programme was agreed at the budget.

Table 2

Capital Expenditure by Service	2023/24 Original Estimate	2023/24 Revised Estimate
	£m	£m
General Fund	20.874	56.727
HRA	24.585	24.535
Total Estimated Capital Expenditure	45.459	81.262
Loans to Joint Ventures	0.034	0.034
Total	45.493	81.296

15. The changes to the 2023/24 capital expenditure estimates have been notified to Cabinet as part of the Capital Budget monitoring process (Quarterly Project Position Statement Report).
16. The current capital programme that has not already been financed now stands at £156.697m, but this includes a number of schemes that will be spent over a number of years not just in 2023/24. A reduction of £76.401m has been allowed for schemes which are known will be finalised in future years, but it is likely that other schemes will also slip into future years.

Impact of Capital Expenditure Plans

Changes to the financing of the Capital Programme

17. Table 3 draws together the main strategy elements of the capital expenditure plans shown above, highlighting the original elements of the capital programme, and the expected financing arrangements of this capital expenditure. The borrowing element (Borrowing Need) increases the underlying indebtedness of the Council by way of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). Borrowing need has reduced for 2023/24 due to schemes

that have been estimated to have slipped into future years. This direct borrowing need may also be supplemented by maturing debt and other treasury requirements.

Table 3

Capital Expenditure	2023/24 Original Estimate	2023/24 Revised Estimate
	£m	£m
General Fund	20.874	56.727
HRA	24.585	24.535
Loans to Joint Ventures	0.034	0.034
Total Capital expenditure	45.493	81.296
Financed By:		
Capital Receipts - Housing	0.303	0.433
Capital Receipts –General Fund	2.950	5.158
Capital grants	7.890	32.851
JV Repayments	2.260	1.000
HRA Revenue Contributions	12.609	24.077
GF Revenue Contributions	0.000	0.403
Self-Financing - GF	6.400	16.036
Total Financing	32.412	79.958
Borrowing Need	13.081	1.338

The Capital Financing Requirement (PI), External Debt (PI) and the Operational Boundary

18. Table 4 shows the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), which is the underlying external need to borrow for capital purposes. It shows the expected actual debt position over the period. This is called the Operational Boundary. The reduction in Borrowing Need (Table 3) is around £11.7m and currently actual borrowing for the Council is £148.014m. The reduction is due to slippage in the Housing programme. It is proposed to set an actual borrowing figure of £141.014m this will accommodate the additional borrowing need and any debt requirements for cash flow purposes. Other Long-term liabilities (the PFI scheme) will be added to give the revised operational boundary for 2023/24.

Prudential Indicator- External Debt/ Operational Boundary**Table 4**

	2023/24 Original Estimate	2023/24 Revised Estimate
	£m	£m
Prudential Indicator- Capital Financing Requirement		
Opening CFR- Post Audit of Accounts	230.542	228.660
CFR General Fund	128.723	147.259
CFR General Fund PFI/Leasing IFRS	21.051	7.011
CFR – Housing	76.798	76.631
CFR – Loans to Joint Ventures	9.361	2.748
Total Closing CFR	235.933	233.649
Net Movement in CFR	5.391	4.989
Borrowing	160.026	141.014
Other long-Term Liabilities	21.051	7.011
Total Debt 31 March- Operational Boundary	181.077	148.025

Limits to Borrowing Activity

19. The first key control over the treasury activity is a PI to ensure that over the medium term gross borrowing should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2023/24 and the next two financial years. As shown in **Table 5** below.

Table 5

	2023/24 Original Estimate £m	2023/24 Revised Estimate £m	2024/25 Revised Estimate £m	2025/26 Revised Estimate £m
Gross borrowing	160.026	141.014	151.014	166.014
Plus Other Long Term Liabilities	21.051	7.011	5.912	4.817
Total Gross Borrowing	181.077	148.025	156.926	170.831
CFR* (year-end position)	235.933	233.649	236.815	236.056

* includes on balance sheet PFI schemes and finance leases

20. The Group Director of Operations reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current and future years in complying with this PI.
21. A further PI controls the overall level of borrowing, this is the Authorised Limit which represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited and needs to be set and revised by Members. It reflects the level of borrowing which while not desirable, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. The Authorised Limit is currently set 5% above the Capital Financing Requirement to allow for any additional cashflow needs, the revised figure for 2023/24 has been raised by 5% of the new CFR total.

Whilst it is not expected that borrowing would be at these levels this would allow additional borrowing to take place should market conditions change suddenly and swift action was required. This is a Statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

22. It is proposed to move the Authorised Limit in **Table 6** in line with the movement in the overall Capital Financing Requirement.

Table 6

Authorised Limit for External Debt	2023/24 Original Indicator £m	2023/24 Revised Indicator £m
Capital Financing Requirement	235.933	233.649
Additional headroom to Capital Financing Requirement	11.797	11.682
Total Authorised Limit for External Debt	247.730	245.331

23. A forecast of future interest rates is provided by the Council's treasury management advisors Link Asset Services. Updates are provided by Link throughout the year. The following forecast was provided on the 25 September and is therefore an update to the previous forecast which was included in the report to Audit Committee. It is prudent that Cabinet receive the most up to date information.

Interest Rate Forecasts Provided by Link Asset Services (as at 25th September 2023)

Table 7

	Bank Rate	PWLB rates for borrowing purposes*			
		5 year	10 year	25 year	50 year
	%	%	%	%	%
2023/24					
Sept 2023	5.25	5.60	5.20	5.40	5.30
Dec 2023	5.25	5.10	5.00	5.40	5.20
March 2024	5.25	5.00	4.90	5.20	5.00
2024/25					
June 2024	5.25	4.90	4.80	5.10	4.90
Sept 2024	5.00	4.70	4.60	4.90	4.70
Dec 2024	4.50	4.40	4.40	4.70	4.50
March 2025	4.00	4.20	4.20	4.40	4.20
2025/26					
June 2025	3.50	4.00	4.00	4.30	4.10
Sept 2025	3.00	3.90	3.80	4.10	3.90
Dec 2025	2.75	3.70	3.70	4.00	3.80
March 2026	2.75	3.70	3.60	3.90	3.70

*PWLB rates above are for certainty rates (which are provided for those authorities that have disclosed their borrowing/capital plans to the government. Darlington Borough Council will be able to access these certainty rates which are 0.2% below PWLB's normal borrowing rates.

24. The latest Bank Rate increase was implemented on the 3 August. After a 6-3 vote in favour, Bank Rate shifted up 25bps from 5.00% to 5.25%, but the MPC was careful to keep its options open regarding future decision-making (also note that one vote was for no increase and two voted in favour of a 50bps increase).
25. The bank rate has subsequently remained at 5.25% at the last 2 MPC meetings, the latest being on 2 November 2023.
26. In terms of Key Assumptions and Risks past increases in Bank Rate, and the higher path of market interest rates on which the forecast is conditioned, weigh to an increasing degree on the UK economy in coming quarters. GDP growth remains below pre-pandemic rates in the medium term, reflecting relatively weak potential supply and a waning boost from fiscal policy.
27. The UK economy has been in excess demand over recent quarters, but an increasing degree of economic slack is expected to emerge after the middle of next year. The second-round effects in domestic prices and wages are also likely to take longer to unwind than they did to emerge.
28. Inflation is expected to continue to fall in Q3 and Q4 to 4.9%. In the modal forecasts conditioned on market interest rates, increasing degree of slack in the economy and declining external cost pressures – the Bank sees CPI returning to 2% target by Q2 2025 and below target inflation in the medium term but this has a lesser degree of certainty than thought back in May.
29. In the aftermath of the MPC decision markets have concluded that it is more than likely rates have peaked at 5.25% although there does remain an outside chance of one more increase to come before the tightening cycle is concluded.
30. Investors will likely remain nervous about the impact of inflation until there is unambiguous evidence it is falling materially and consistently and whilst a further increase in the bank rate it is likely that the bank rate will stay on hold for the best part of a year at 5.25%. The pace of any future decreases will very much depend upon wage and inflation data and if inflation starts to push upwards or remains overly-sticky then further tightening in policy would be required.
31. Furthermore there is the matter of a General Election late next year so Government fiscal policy may potentially loosen at the same time as the Bank's monetary policy is still trying to take momentum out of the economy.
32. Of course, what happens outside of the UK remains critical to movement in gilt yields as well. The European Central Bank has made it abundantly clear that policy tightening is at, or close to, the terminal rate (currently 4%) whilst the US FOMC has held its bank rate equivalent in the range of 5.25%-5.5%.
33. From a practical standpoint those looking to borrow will, most probably, need to continue to focus on optimising their cashflow forecasts, and given the elevated level of rates right across the curve at present, seek to fund either temporarily from local authorities or with short-dated loans from the PWLB. In term of borrowing advice although temporary

borrowing rates will remain elevated for some time to come it may prove the best option whilst the market continues to wait for inflation and therein gilt yields to drop back later in 2023 and 2024.

Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24 and Annual Investment Strategy Update

34. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, (TMSS), for 2023/24 was approved by Council on 16 February 2023.
35. There are no policy changes to the TMSS.
36. The details in this report update the position in the light of the updated economic position and budgetary changes already approved.

Debt Activity during 2023/24

37. The expected net borrowing need is set out in **Table 8**

Table 8

	2023/24 Original Estimate £m	2023/24 Revised Estimate £m
CFR (year-end position) from Table 4	235.933	233.649
Less other long term liabilities PFI and finance leases	21.051	7.011
Net adjusted CFR (net year end position)	214.882	226.638
Expected Borrowing	160.026	141.014
(Under)/ Over borrowing	(54.856)	(85.624)

38. The Council has taken on £20m of new short debt in the current year to date which will be repaid using short term maturing investments.
39. The amount borrowed by the Council now stands at £141.014m, this excludes any additional cashflow loans which may be required.
40. There will still be an element of under-borrowing by the Council at the end of March 2024.

Debt Rescheduling

41. Debt rescheduling opportunities have been very limited in the current economic climate given the consequent structure of interest rates and following the increase in the margin added to gilt yields which has impacted PWLB new borrowing rates since October 2010. No debt rescheduling has therefore been undertaken to date in the current financial year.

Annual Investment Strategy 2023/24

Investment Portfolio

42. In accordance with the Code, it is the Council’s priority to ensure security of Capital and liquidity, and to obtain an appropriate level of return which is consistent with the Council’s risk appetite. Successive interest rises over the past year have meant that current investment returns are much higher than we have seen in previous years and in line with the current bank rate of 5.25%. During this period of greater returns the Council are actively investing where possible.

Treasury Management Activity from 1 April 2023 to 31 August 2023

43. Current investment position – The Council held £57.339m of investments at 31/08/2023 and this is made up of the following types of investment.

Table 9

Sector	Country	Up to 1 year £m
Banks	UK	20.000
AAA Money Market Funds	Sterling Funds	7.340
Property Funds - CCLA	UK	10.000
Hermes		10.000
Lothbury	UK	9.999
Total		57.339

Short Term Cashflow Investments

44. Cash balances are invested on a daily basis to maximise the benefit of temporary surplus funds. These include investments in Money Market Funds, the Government’s Debt Management Office and bank short term notice accounts. A total of 66 investments were made in the period 1 April 2023 to 31 August 2023 totalling c£105m these were for short periods of up to 180 days and earned interest of £0.526m on an average balance of £26.940m which equated to an annual average interest rate of 4.69%.

Investment returns measured against the Service Performance Indicators

45. The target for our investment returns is to better or at least match a number of external comparators, this performance indicator is also known as yield benchmarking. As can be seen from Table 10, the short term investment achievements (up to 6 months) are above market expectations.

Table 10

	Cashflow Investments %
Darlington Borough Council - Actual	4.69%
External Comparators	
Sterling Overnight Index Average (SONIA) – 6 months	4.63%

Treasury Management Budget

46. There are three main elements within the Treasury Management Budget:-

- (a) Longer term capital investments interest earned – a cash amount of which earns interest and represents the Councils revenue balances, unused capital receipts, reserves and provisions, this will now include Property Funds.
- (b) Cash flow interest earned – the authority has consistently had a positive cash flow. Unlike long term capital investments it does not represent any particular sum but it is the consequence of many different influences such as receipt of grants, the relationship between debtors and creditors, cashing of cheques and payments to suppliers.
- (c) Debt serving costs – this is the principal and interest costs on the Council’s long term debt to finance the capital programme.

Table 11 - Changes to the Financing Costs Budget 2023/24

	£m	£m
Original Financing Costs Budget 2023/24		3.477
Add Increased debt costs	0.207	
Less Increased returns on Investments	(0.159)	
Add increased returns on Property Funds	(0.048)	
Total adjustments		0.000
Revised Treasury Management Budget 2023/24		3.477

47. This statement concludes that the Treasury Management budget is forecast to Outturn on budget in 2023/24, this will be reflected in the current MTFP projections.

Risk Benchmarking

48. A regulatory development is the consideration and approval of security and liquidity benchmarks. Yield benchmarks are currently widely used to assess investment performance and these are shown in Table 12. Discrete security and liquidity benchmarks are also requirements of member reporting.

49. The following reports the current position against the benchmarks originally approved.

50. **Security** – The Council’s maximum security risk benchmarks for the current portfolio of investments, when compared to historic default tables were set as follows;

0.077% historic risk of default when compared to the whole portfolio

Table 12

Maximum	Benchmark 2023/24	Actual May	Actual July
Year 1	0.077%	0.013%	0.006%

N.B. this excludes Property Funds

51. The counterparties that we use are all high rated therefore our actual risk of default based on ratings attached to counterparties is very low.

52. **Liquidity** – In respect of this area the Council set liquidity facilities/ benchmark to maintain

- (i) Bank overdraft - £0.100M
- (ii) Liquid short term deposits of a least £3.000M available within a weeks notice
- (iii) Weighted Average Life benchmark is expected to be 0.4 years with a maximum of 1 year

53. The Group Director of Operations can report that liquidity arrangements have been adequate for the year to date as shown in Table 13

Table 13

	Benchmark 2023/24	Actual May	Actual July
Weighted Average Life	0.4 – 1 year	0.45 years	0.45 years

54. The figures are for the whole portfolio of cash flow investments deposited with Money Market funds on a call basis (i.e. can be drawn on without notice) as well as call accounts that include a certain amount of notice required to recall the funds.

Treasury Management Indicators

55. **Actual and estimates of the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream** – This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital (financing costs net of interest and investment income) against the net revenue stream.

Table 14

	2023/24 Original Indicator	2023/24 Revised Indicator
General Fund	3.82%	4.47%
HRA	12.78%	12.78%

Treasury Management Prudential indicators

56. **Upper Limits on Variable Rate Exposure** – This indicator identifies a maximum limit for variable interest rates based upon the debt position net of investments.

57. **Upper Limits on Fixed Rate Exposure** – Similar to the previous indicator this cover a maximum limit on fixed interest rates

58. Historically for a number of years this Council has used these percentages; together they give flexibility to the treasury management strategy allowing the Council to take advantage of both fixed and variable rates in its portfolio whilst ensuring that its exposure to variable rates is limited.

Table 15

	2023/24 Original Indicator	2023/24 Revised Indicator
Limits on fixed interest rates	100%	100%
Limits on variable interest rates	40%	40%

59. **Maturity Structures of Borrowing** - These gross limits are set to reduce the Council’s exposure to large fixed rate loans (those instruments which carry a fixed interest for the duration of the instrument) falling due for refinancing. The higher limits for longer periods reflect the fact that longer maturity periods give more stability to the debt portfolio.

Table 16 - Maturity Structures of Borrowing

	2023/24 Original indicator	2023/24 Actual to Date	2023/24 Revised Indicator
Under 12 months	40%	15%	20%
12 months to 2 years	50%	15%	40%
2 years to 5 years	60%	21%	60%
5 years to 10 years	80%	27%	80%
10 years and above	100%	100%	100%

60. **Total Principal Funds Invested** – These limits are set having regard to the amount of reserves available for longer term investment and show the limits to be placed on investments with final maturities beyond 1 year. This limit allows the authority to invest for longer periods if they give better rates than shorter periods. It also allows some stability in the interest returned to the Authority.

Table 17 - Principal Funds Invested

	2023/24 Original Indicator	2023/24 Revised Indicator
Maximum principal sums invested greater than 1 year	£50m	£50m

Conclusion

61. The prudential indicators have been produced to take account of the Council’s borrowing position. The key borrowing indicator (the Operational Boundary) is £148.025m. The Council’s return on investments has been good, exceeding both of the targets. Based on

the first five months of 2023/24 the Council's borrowing and investments is forecast to be on target on the approved 2023/24 budget.

62. The Council's treasury management activities comply with the required legislation and meet the high standards set out in the relevant codes of practice.

Outcome of Consultation

63. No consultation was undertaken in the production of this report.

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**CABINET
5 DECEMBER 2023**

**COMPLAINTS MADE TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN,
AND THE HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE**

Responsible Cabinet Members

**Councillor Stephen Harker, Leader
Councillor Libby McCollom, Local Services Portfolio
Councillor Nick Wallis, Children and Young People Portfolio
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy Portfolio
Councillor Matthew Roche, Health and Housing Portfolio
Councillor Mandy Porter, Resources Portfolio
Councillor Anne Marie Curry, Adults Portfolio
Councillor Dr Amanda Riley, Stronger Communities Portfolio**

Responsible Directors

**Ian Williams, Chief Executive
Elizabeth Davison, Group Director of Operations
James Stroyan, Group Director of People
Dave Winstanley, Group Director of Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update of the outcome of cases which have been determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) since the preparation of the previous report to Cabinet on 5 September 2023.

Summary

2. This report sets out in abbreviated form the decisions reached by the LGSCO and the HOS between 1 April 2023 and 30 September 2023 and outlines actions taken as a result.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that the contents of the report be noted.

Reasons

4. The recommendation is supported as it is important that Members are aware of the outcome of complaints made to the LGSCO and the HOS in respect of the Council's activities.

Elizabeth Davison
Group Director of Operations

Background Papers

Correspondence with the LGSCO and HOS is treated as confidential to preserve anonymity of complainants.

Lee Downey : Extension 5451

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Crime and Disorder.
Health and Wellbeing	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Health and Well Being.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Carbon Impact and Climate Change
Diversity	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Diversity.
Wards Affected	This report affects all wards equally.
Groups Affected	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there is no impact on any particular group.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend any changes to the Budget or Policy Framework.
Key Decision	This is not a Key Decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent Decision.
Council Plan	This report contributes to all the priorities in the Council Plan.
Efficiency	Efficiency issues are highlighted through complaints.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Background

5. Cabinet has previously resolved that they would consider reports on the outcome of cases referred to the LGSCO and HOS during the Municipal Year on a bi-annual basis.
6. The opportunity is normally taken to analyse the areas of the Council's functions where complaints have arisen. It is appropriate to do that in order to establish whether there is any pattern to complaints received or whether there is a particular Directorate affected or a type of complaint which is prevalent. If there were a significant number of cases in any one particular area, that might indicate a problem which the Council would seek to address.

Information and Analysis

7. Between 1 April 2023 and 30 September 2023, the LGSCO determined 14 complaints.
8. Between 1 April 2023 and 30 September 2023, the HOS determined 1 complaints.
9. The LGSCO has updated the decisions they use. As a result it is not possible to make a direct comparison with previous years. However, the new decisions in ***bold/italics*** in the table below are broadly comparable to those previous decisions in *italics* in the table below.
10. The outcome of cases on which the LGSCO reached a decision is shown in the table below.

LGSCO Findings	No. of cases April – Sept 2023	No. of cases 2022/23	No. of cases 2021/22	No. of cases 2020/21
Closed after initial enquiries: no further action	7	9	9	4
Closed after initial enquiries: out of jurisdiction	2	4	1	1
<i>Not upheld: no fault</i>	0	1	N/A	N/A
<i>Not upheld: No further action</i>	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Not upheld: no maladministration</i>	0	1	1	2
<i>Upheld: fault and injustice</i>	2	4	N/A	N/A
<i>Upheld: Maladministration and Injustice</i>	0	0	4	2
Upheld: Maladministration, No Injustice	0	0	0	1
<i>Upheld: fault and injustice – no further action, organisation already remedied</i>	1	1	N/A	N/A
<i>Upheld: maladministration and injustice - no further action, satisfactory remedy provided by the org</i>	0	0	1	0

<i>Upheld: no further action, organisation already remedied</i>	1	1	N/A	N/A
<i>Upheld: not investigated - injustice remedied during Body in Jurisdiction's complaint process</i>	0	0	0	1

11. The outcome of cases on which the HOS reached a decision is shown in the table below.

HOS Findings	No. of cases April – Sept 2023	No. of cases 2022/23	No. of cases 2021/22	No. of cases 2020/21
Maladministration	1	0	0	0
No Maladministration	0	0	0	0
Service Failure	0	0	2	1

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

Closed after initial enquiries: no further action

12. In this case the LGSCO concluded, they would not investigate a complaint about the care and support provided by a care provider. This was because an investigation would not lead to different findings or outcomes. In addition, the LGSCO concluded the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) was better placed to consider a complaint about the care provider sharing confidential information.
13. In response to a complaint about the Council's decision not to issue the complainant with a pre-payment card to access their funds, the LGSCO concluded there was not enough evidence of fault in the Council's decision-making process to warrant them investigating. The LGSCO also noted the Court of Protection or the Office of the Public Guardian were also the bodies better placed to consider the complaint.
14. In their reply to a complaint about the Council's actions regarding a debt for adult social care fees, the LGSCO concluded they would not investigate because they had previously investigated the concern and the case had since been to court. The complainant said they was raising new issues, but the LGSCO found they were all in relation to the same matter. The LGSCO also concluded they would not investigate the Council's suggestion that it might invoke its unreasonably persistent complainant procedure, because it has acted in accordance with that procedure in providing the complainant with a warning about their behaviour. Though the complainant disagreed with the Council's action, the LGSCO's concluded it was unlikely they would find fault.
15. Following a complaint about the Council's advertising for a theatre show being misleading, the LGSCO concluded they would not investigate because the complainant had not suffered a significant injustice which would justify an investigation.
16. The LGSCO concluded they would not investigate a complaint about the way the Monitoring Officer dealt with a complaint about the conduct of a councillor, because it was unlikely they would find fault.

17. With regard to a complaint about the Council's consideration of a school transport appeal, the LGSCO concluded an investigation by them would not find that the original panel that considered the appeal should have awarded transport, and thus they could not say that the complainant had incurred the costs claimed as a result of fault by the Council.
18. The LGSCO decided they would not investigate a complaint about Children's Services not protecting the complainant's family from risks of harm because of the actions of other public services towards them. The LGSCO concluded there was not enough evidence of fault in the Council's actions or of the Council causing the complainant's family significant injustice. The LGSCO also concluded they could not investigate the actions of other bodies involved or matters the Council is not responsible for and an investigation could not achieve the outcome the complainant wanted.

Closed after initial enquiries: out of jurisdiction

19. In this case the LGSCO concluded they would not investigate a complaint about damage caused to the complainant's property due to a Sycamore tree belonging to the Council. This was because the courts are best placed to determine any liability for damages, therefore it was reasonable to expect the complainant to take their claim for damages to court.
20. With regards to a complaint about the Council's response to a freedom of information request, the LGSCO concluded it was reasonable for the complainant to complain to the ICO which is the proper authority to consider information access complaints.

Not upheld: No further action

21. In relation to a complaint about the Council wrongly considering a change to a grant of planning permission as a non-material amendment rather than inviting a new application, the LGSCO concluded the complainant did not live close enough to be significantly affected by the change and discontinued their investigation.

Upheld: fault and injustice

22. In the first case upheld the complainant was dissatisfied with the Council's decision to refuse their child school transport for the 2021 – 2022 school year. The LGSCO concluded, the third appeal panel to consider the matter had also failed to do so correctly.
23. To remedy the complaint the Council agreed to reconsiders the application for transport for 2021 – 2022, paying particular attention to its power to provide transport in those cases that do not meet the criteria in legislation, government guidance and its policy. The Council agreed that if it decided not to provide transport for 2021 – 2022, it would offer the complainant a fresh appeal and any appeal panel would give reasons for their decision to explain how the Council applied its policy and how it exercised its discretion. The Council also agreed to consider whether it was necessary to produce guidance for transport officers and appeal panels to explain the concept of 'discretion' and to ensure future decisions are sound and properly recorded.
24. In a previous complaint about this matter, from the same individual, the Council agreed to make a substantial payment to acknowledge the complainant's time and trouble pursuing

the complaint and the avoidable uncertainty, anxiety and distress they had suffered. The LGSCO recognised the Council was quick to arrange the last appeal, however, recommended the Council make a further payment of £250 to recognise the complainant's time and trouble pursuing another complaint after once again receiving an inadequate decision.

25. The second upheld complaint concerned the Council delaying providing the complainant's child with school transport; failing to reimburse transport costs; delaying in issuing an education, health and care plan (EHCP); failing to commission the necessary reports; failing to offer a personal budget; failing to ensure their child's special educational needs provision was implemented; failing to provide alternative education when their child was out of school; and delaying in responding to the complaint.
26. The LGSCO concluded there were delays in the transport and education; health and care plan processes; dealing with the complaint; a failure to provide alternative education; and a failure to discuss personal budgets at reviews.
27. To remedy the complaint the Council agreed to apologise; provide mileage forms to claim back transport costs; complete a risk assessment for the school transport to make sure it was suitable; pay the complainant £1,000 to reflect the missing provision from their child's EHCP as a result of the delay issuing a final plan; provide a refund of the complainant's costs in educating their child; pay the complainant £500 to reflect their distress and time and trouble; send a reminder to officers dealing with reviews of EHCPs to remind them of the need to discuss the option of a personal budget at the review meeting; and to send a reminder to complaints officers of the need to adhere to the timescales set out in the Council's complaints procedure and to keep those who have complained up-to-date when delays occur.

Upheld: fault and injustice – no further action, organisation already remedied

28. Following a complaint about an invoice received for care, the LGSCO concluded their investigation having made a finding of fault by the Council. Although the individual was liable for the care fees, the LGSCO found the Council failed in its duty to appropriately inform the individual about the liability. The LGSCO said the Council had made a satisfactory award to the complainant to acknowledge the impact this had and has made service improvements to prevent similar occurrences. On this basis the LGSCO did not make any further recommendations to the Council.

Upheld: no further action, organisation already remedied

29. In this case the LGSCO decided they would not investigate a complaint about Children's Services sharing incorrect information with another Local Authority. This was because the Council had accepted fault and offered an appropriate remedy and further investigation by them would not lead to a different outcome.

Housing Ombudsman Services (HOS)

30. This complaint concerned the landlord's (Council's) handling of the resident's reports of anti-social behaviour and harassment; the landlord's handling of repairs in readiness for, and after, letting; and the landlord's associated complaint handling. The HOS concluded

that while some of the landlord's investigations into the resident's reports of anti-social behaviour and harassment were appropriate, it failed to conduct a risk assessment during the lengthy period of anti-social behaviour reports and this meant that it did not provide the resident's household with sufficient support and communications. That the landlord did not let the property in a suitable condition prior to the resident's tenancy and delayed unreasonably in completing repairs once they moved in. However, its compensation award and service improvement measures offered sufficient redress given the circumstances of the case. The HOS also concluded the landlord delayed unreasonably in providing the resident with its stage 2 response.

31. The HOS ordered the Council to arrange for a senior member of the landlord's staff to apologise to the resident in writing for the failings identified in this report; pay the resident £1,050 compensation; and carry out a review of its handling of the resident's anti-social behaviour and harassment reports to determine what action it should take to prevent a reoccurrence of the failings identified. The HOS also recommended the Council review the internal training it delivers on its obligations in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that staff are clear about their responsibilities to vulnerable residents; review any potential Equality Act 2010 considerations as a matter of standard procedure when considering a resident's complaint; and assess its internal recording procedures against the recommendations of the HOS's Spotlight report on Knowledge and Information Management.
32. Since the issues highlighted in this complaint, Housing Services had introduced a new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. In light of the HOS's findings, the Council has undertaken a further review of that policy, in particular considering whether it properly addresses customers vulnerabilities, taking into consideration the Housing Ombudsman's Spotlight on Noise, in particular the section 'Respect'. As a result of the review, the Council has improved the process of risk assessments in relation to both victims and perpetrators.

Analysis

33. Between 1 April and 30 September 2023 the Council received two Upheld: Fault and Injustice decisions from the LGSCO, compared to a total of four Upheld: Fault and Injustice decisions in 2022/23.
34. Between 1 April and 30 September 2023 the Council received one Maladministration decisions from the HOS, compared to zero in 2022/23.
35. The organisational learning identified as a result of these complaints should ensure there is not a re-occurrence.

Outcome of Consultation

36. The issues contained within this report do not require formal consultation.

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