



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Agenda

10.00 am, Thursday, 4 January 2024

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington. DL1 5QT

Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To approve the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 2 November 2023 (Pages 3 - 8)
4. Medium Term Financial Plan – Report of the Assistant Director Resources (Pages 9 - 78)
5. Housing Services Climate Change Strategy 2024-29 – Report of the Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues (Pages 79 - 98)
6. Discretionary Housing Payment Policy 2024-29 – Report of the Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues (Pages 99 - 110)
7. Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy 2024-29 – Report of the Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues (Pages 111 - 130)
8. Council Tax and Business Rates Recovery Strategy 2024-29 – Report of the Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues (Pages 131 - 148)
9. Work Programme – Report of the Assistant Director Law and Governance (Pages 149 - 162)
10. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting

11. Questions



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Wednesday, 27 December 2023

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

Councillors Baker, Coe, Dillon, Durham, Haszeldine, Henderson, Marshall, McGill, Ray and Mrs Scott.

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ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 2 November 2023

PRESENT – Councillors Baker (Chair), Dillon, Durham, Haszeldine, Henderson, Marshall, McGill, Ray and Mrs Scott

APOLOGIES – Councillors Coe,

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Mark Ladyman (Assistant Director Economic Growth), Brett Nielsen (Assistant Director Resources), Brian Robson (Head of Capital Projects), Anthony Sandys (Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues), Michael Conway (Mayoral and Democratic Officer) and Claire Gardner-Queen (Head of Housing)

ER62 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

ER63 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 31 AUGUST 2023

Submitted – The Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 31 August 2023

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 31 August 2023 be approved as a correct record.

ER64 MARKET UPDATES

A presentation was delivered by the Assistant Director of Economic Growth and the Managing Director of Market Asset Management with the aim of updating members on current strategies and projects and to bring new members up-to-speed on Darlington traders' markets.

Members were provided with details of current projects and points of note including details to refurbish the old town hall and goals to achieve "best market in Britain 2025".

It was highlighted that greater communication with Market Asset Management would be preferred with members noting that information was published in the Northern Echo before they were made aware. However, Members were assured that this was published without Market Asset Management input. Members highlighted some concern over progress which has been slow since the initial proposals from Market Asset Management, 6 years ago and were informed that many delays were due to the impact of COVID and attempts to avoid incurring greater costs. However, the number of traders at the external market has increased and the Misfit Market is now attracting around thirty independent traders, but difficulties remain in sourcing independent traders in general.

Members were assured that loan repayments would recommence after the completion of phase 3 as agreed in July 2022.

RESOLVED – That the presentation and update be noted.

ER65 ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY AND IMPACT REPORTS

A presentation was delivered by the Business Growth and Investment Manager to update members on the Darlington Economic Growth Strategy, the impact of Darlington Economic Campus and an overview of the Office Demand Study.

Members were provided with an overview of the Darlington Economic Growth Strategy with an emphasis on the focus on inclusive growth driving a strong and fair local economy. It was highlighted that property is at a premium in Darlington at present with funding streams currently in a transitional period between government funding schemes and officers are looking to accelerate the delivery of funding.

Members were informed of the local impact of the Darlington Economic Campus (DEC), points of note being that investment inquiries saw a notable increase of both the speculative and serious nature with several legal firms moving to Darlington. An update was provided on the numbers of jobs created from DEC. With DEC jobs being around 80% local hires with 20% relocations from the south with wages at 15% above the Darlington average and 800 additional jobs created locally as a knock-on from the Treasury's presence.

Members were pleased to hear that we received a positive response from the Treasury after submitting the Local Impact Study.

Details were provided of the Office Demand Study which provided data to articulate the increase in office space demand and accommodation trends in Darlington. It was highlighted that in comparison to past trends, we are seeing a steep increase in demand for office space with around 15,000 square meters required over the next ten years to meet demand with recommendations to develop the Northern Echo Building and former Sports Direct site.

In relation to the Office Demand Study, members questioned as to whether the increase in DEC employees is having a negative impact currently and going forward – we were informed that DEC recruitment has recently slowed and that they are looking at reasonable locations in and around the town. The question was also raised around utilising Council office space freed up through hybrid working with assurance given that all possible useable space is being considered including DBC-owned facilities.

Discussion was held with regards to private developers looking to develop office space in town and querying whether such interested tenants all require brand new or high-level office facilities. We were informed that officers are working with several interested parties with the certainty of the Treasury giving a boost in this and with interest being shown in various forms of office space.

Members voiced their gratitude for the concise and informative insight provided by the presentation.

RESOLVED – That the presentation and updates be noted.

ER66 TOWNS FUND UPDATE

Members received an overview and progress update of the town investment plan, initially submitted 2020, delivered by the Assistant Director of Economic Growth.

Members were informed that there are currently nine projects in total being undertaken with a focus on maintaining the town's heritage aspects and interesting spaces. Early focus being placed on the yards to create space for residents to relax and the implementation of free Wi-Fi in the town centre and a £4.5m investment into the Rail Heritage Quarter.

An update was provided on the purchase and development of local buildings. In relation to the Northern Echo Building, purchase is now completed and tenders from the procurement exercise to be returned by 8 November 2023 after which, steps to develop the facility can progress, completion predicted for 2025/26

Members were also given an update on the progress to date on the acquisition of Northgate House to develop a joint commercial / residential area. In addition, members were updated on proposals for the former Pease House and d156 Northgate.

A discussion was raised with regards to placing coverings over the fascia of purchased buildings to boost cosmetic appearance and to inform public of development projections of the buildings in question. Officers agreed to make enquiries regarding this.

Members also held a discussion with regards to Northgate house development timescales with a response that development plans are to be issued in the new year 2024.

Questions were raised with regards to the developments of Skinnergate and the Yards and the current funding situation. Members were informed that if addition funding was required officers would look at underspends in other projects as a means of supporting future works.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

ER67 PROJECT POSITION STATEMENT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - QUARTER 2 2023/24

The Head of Capital Projects provided a summary of the latest Capital resource and commitment position and an update on affordability and funding of the Council's capital programme prior to consideration on 7 November 2023 Cabinet.

Members noted the status of current projects and departmental overviews. It was also noted that the programme, including commitments remains affordable within the Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 – 2026/27. The Council currently has 43 live projects with an overall projected outturn value of £167.583m. The majority of projects are running to time, cost and quality expectations but are being monitored given the current pressures on resources in the construction sector nationally.

Members raised questions with regards to timeframes for completion of Eastbourne Sports Complex and were informed that only final electrical and draining work is left to be completed before sign-off. Further questions were raised as to whether penalties are present in contracts for contractors, for which there are.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and that members considered the content of the report to satisfaction prior to its presentation on 7 November 2023 Cabinet.

ER68 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT - SCHEME APPROVAL 2024-25

Members received the report of the Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues prior to recommendation by Cabinet on 7 November 2023 and approval by Council on 30 November 2023.

Members were given an overview of Council Tax Support (CTS) and informed that the CTS scheme is required to be set each year including considering whether any changes should be made to the current scheme. No significant changes are being proposed to the existing scheme on this occasion. The scheme is required to be published by 11 March 2024.

A question was raised as to whether there have ever been any issues with the scheme in the past and members were informed that there have been no issues previously with the scheme being subject to full public consultation at the time of establishing.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and members considered the content of the report to satisfaction prior to its presentation on 7 November 2023 Cabinet.

ER69 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - QUARTER 4 2022/23

The Assistant Director – Resources presented the report with the purpose of providing performance information aligned with key priorities. 22 indicators are reported to the committee, four of which are annual and eighteen on a six-monthly basis.

Members were provided with a summary including outcomes and comparisons with previous years' indicators. Some points of note included the reduction in average town centre footfall with areas for development being highlighted. A reduction in major planning applications decided within 13 weeks or within an agreed time (100% to 85%). An increase in percentage of non-major planning developments decided within 8 weeks or within agreed time (88.5% to 92.7%) and a reduction in monthly unemployment claimant count (4.57% to 4.33%).

Members raised a question with regards to current average income in Darlington and if the impact of Darlington Economic Campus is becoming visible, officers believe that the average wage has increased but this will be confirmed once new data is available.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

ER70 COUNCIL TAX CHANGES TO EMPTY PROPERTY PREMIUMS 2024-25

The Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues presents the report prior to presentation at Cabinet on 7 November 2023 and approval by Council on 30 November 2023 to consider proposed changes to Council Tax Empty Property Premiums for 2024-25.

Members were provided with proposals to change the Council Tax Empty Property Premiums from 2024-25 with points of note being that royal ascent has now been given. The definition of long-term empty homes has been amended to include unfurnished properties that have

been empty for one year or more and that definition will also include empty furnished homes, referred to as “second homes.

Discussions were held with points including that empty properties can potentially undermine regeneration efforts and actions to re-occupy properties should be supported. A further point being that additional income could be hoarded and not used to bring empty properties back into use.

Members raised questions regarding the definitions between furnished and unfurnished properties and the ways in which the Council finds out a property is empty for which officers provided satisfactory responses.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and members considered the content of the report to satisfaction prior to its presentation on 7 November 2023 Cabinet.

ER71 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2023/24 - QUARTER 2

The Assistant Director – Resources presents this report prior to presentation at Cabinet on 7 November 2023. The purpose of the report being to provide a forecast of the 2023/24 revenue budget outturn as part of the Council’s continuous financial management process.

Members were provided with details of the report with points of note being an update on the Council’s current reserves (£16.003m) which has shown a decline of £1.119m on the planned balances in the 2023-27 MTFP. Summaries of individual departments were provided with a £3.8m overspend in People Group being noted from increased demand and complexity of need in Children’s Services. However, it was noted that the overspend experienced in Childrens’ Social Care is an issue being experienced nationally.

Members raised questions including as to whether there will be any changes to the MTFP timetable and were informed that this will continue to follow the established timetable. A further question was raised as to whether the Council will run out of reserves and were informed by officers that in the MTFP the reserves would be used up during 2026/27 and the process for setting the 2024-28 MTFP was underway, and the reserves position is reviewed as part of this process.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and members considered the content of the report to satisfaction prior to its presentation on 7 November 2023 Cabinet.

ER72 WORK PROGRAMME

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

RESOLVED - Members agreed the following:

- (a) Economy and Resources MTFP item will be included in the Committee’s 4 January 2024 meeting.

- (b) A special meeting of the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee has been arranged for 11:00 Thursday 18 January 2024 at which all MTFP scrutiny responses will be considered and for which the chairs of the other committees will also be invited.

**ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
4 JANUARY 2024**

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 – 2027/28

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2024/25 to 2027/28.

Summary

2. Attached at **Appendix 1** is the MTFP report which has been approved by Cabinet as a basis for consultation.
3. Members received a briefing on this Plan by the Assistant Director Resources on 13 December, 2023.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that:
 - (a) Members are requested to consider the MTFP 2024/25 to 2027/28 and forward any views, and in particular those in relation to the services and finances which are specifically within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee.
 - (b) That the Chair, in consultation with the Lead Scrutiny Officers supporting this Scrutiny Committee, be given authority to agree the Minutes of this Scrutiny Committee, to enable the Minutes to be considered at a Special Meeting of the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee scheduled to be held on 18 January 2024.

**Brett Nielsen
Assistant Director Resources**

Background Papers

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

Brett Nielsen: Extension 5403

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no specific crime and disorder implications in this report.
Health and Wellbeing	There are no issues relating to health and wellbeing which this report needs to address.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no specific carbon impact issues in this report.
Diversity	The report does not contain any proposals that impact on diversity issues.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected.
Groups Affected	No specific groups are particularly affected.
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	The report does not require a key decision.
Urgent Decision	The report does not require an urgent decision.
Council Plan	The report contributes to the Council Plan in a number of ways through the involvement of Members in contributing to the delivery of the Plan.
Efficiency	The report contains updated information regarding efficiency savings contained in the MTFP.
Impact of Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. Cabinet at its meeting held on 5 December 2023, approved the attached Medium Term Financial Plan as a basis for consultation.
6. Each of the Council's Scrutiny Committees are meeting to discuss and consider the overall contents of the MTFP, however, Members are asked to particularly consider those services and finances within the plan which specifically relate to those areas within their remit, and forward any views to a Special Meeting of this Committee for consideration.
7. Once all the Scrutiny Committees have met, a further Special Meeting of this Committee will be held on 18 January 2024, to agree a formal response to Cabinet on behalf of all the Scrutiny Committees as part of the consultation. The Chairs of the other Scrutiny Committees will be invited to attend this meeting to present their findings and answer any questions.
8. In view of the timescales involved in responding to the consultation, it is not possible for the individual Scrutiny Committees to formally approve their Minutes prior to the Special Meeting of the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 18 January 2023, and it is therefore being suggested that authority be given to the Chairs, in consultation with the Lead Scrutiny Officers, to agree the Minutes in advance of the next Ordinary Meetings. The Minutes will still be an item on the agenda of the next meeting for formal approval as usual.

**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

<u>Summary of Savings</u>	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.

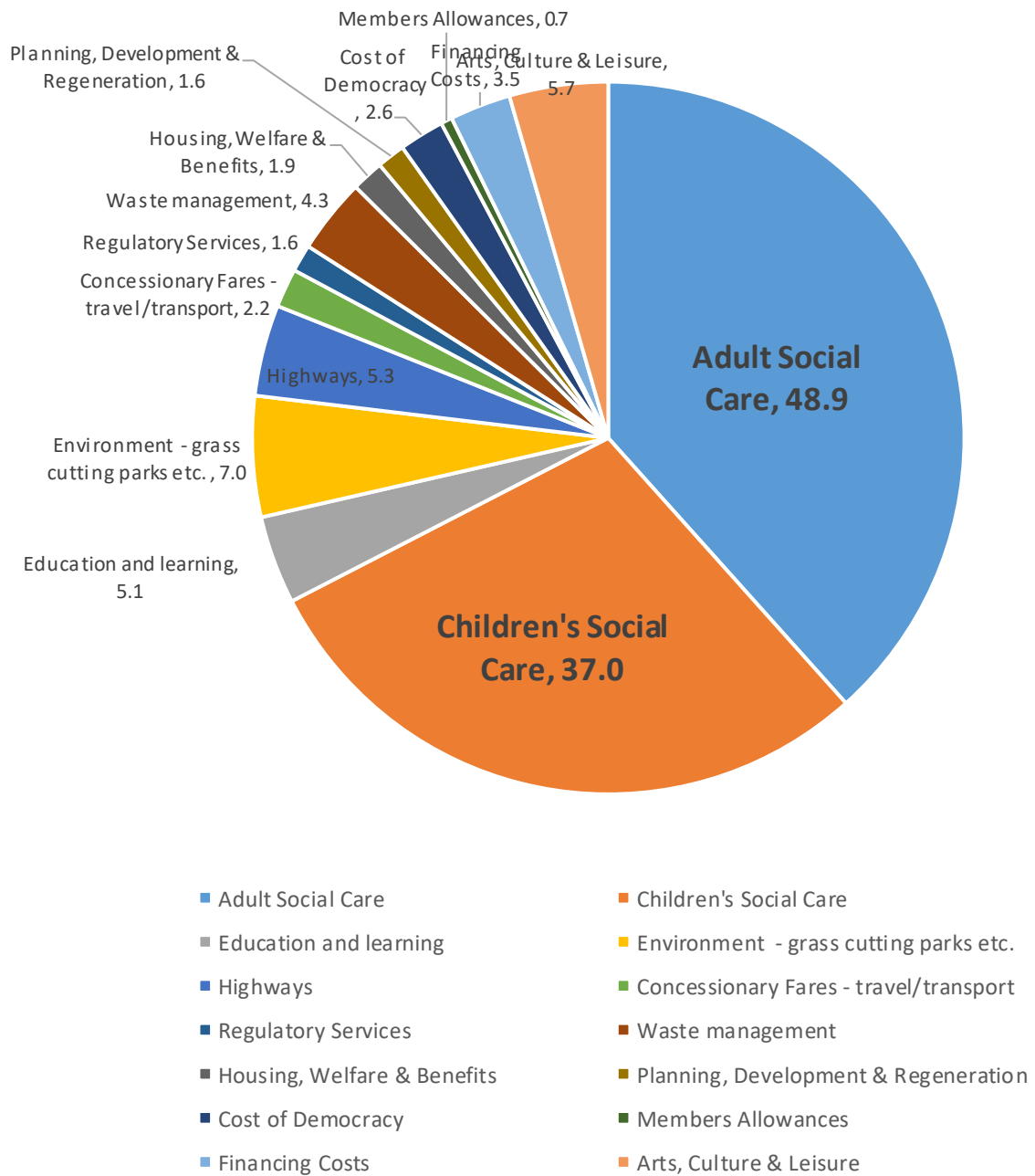
Total Expenditure

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 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
People Services	84.432	86.880	89.906	92.790
Chief Executives Office & Economic Growth Services	1.472	1.566	1.416	1.448
Operations	25.147	26.070	26.735	27.372
Financing costs	13.580	13.964	14.268	14.571
Investment Returns - Joint Venture	3.529	3.704	3.521	3.450
Council Wide Pressures	(1.517)	(1.828)	(1.750)	(1.452)
Council Wide Contingencies	0.631	0.643	0.658	0.669
	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
Children & Adult Services					
Transformation & Performance	883	846	(53)	0	793
Business Support	1,572	1,661	(13)	0	1,648
Children's Services					
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
Development & Commissioning					
Commissioning	2,530	2,352	(198)	(187)	1,967
Voluntary Sector	294	350	0	(57)	293
Education					
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
Public Health					
Public Health	0	9,271	(32)	(9,239)	0
Adult Social Care & Health					
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> 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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						
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	
				Minimal
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				
<u>Permit Type – The following fees are set by statute and will be revised as changed nationally</u>				
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 Only				
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 Preistgate (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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**ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
4 JANUARY 2024**

HOUSING SERVICES CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2024-2029

**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 the draft Housing Services Climate Change Strategy 2024-2029 before approval by Cabinet on 9 January 2024.

Summary

2. In July 2019, Darlington Borough Council declared a climate emergency. In relation to our Council housing, tackling climate change and reducing our tenant's fuel bills are high priorities for the Council. We also need to ensure that we meet the Government targets of achieving an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C for all our homes by 2030 and net zero carbon by 2050. However, this presents significant challenges for the Council.
3. Due to the long-term nature of this strategy and given there are still many unknowns in relation to funding, developing technology and capacity, it is difficult to provide precise targets as to how or when we will achieve net zero carbon for all our homes. Therefore, the Housing Services Climate Change Strategy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** covers the initial actions required over the next 3 to 5 years and will be continually updated to ensure we remain on course.
4. This strategy was also considered by Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee on 3 January 2024.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that:
 - (a) Members consider the draft Housing Services Climate Change Strategy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** and agree its onward submission to Cabinet.

- (b) Agree to review progress against the action plan contained within the strategy on an annual basis.

Reasons

- 6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) The Council, as a social housing provider, is required to meet Government targets in relation to climate change, specifically achieving an EPC rating of C for all our Council housing by 2030 and net zero carbon by 2050.
 - (b) The adoption of a formal Housing Services Climate Change Strategy will help to monitor progress towards these goals.
 - (c) Tackling climate change and reducing our tenant’s fuel bills are high priorities for the Council.

Anthony Sandys
Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues

Background Papers

- (i) Darlington Borough Council Climate Change Strategy

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues
Health and Wellbeing	There are no issues
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	This report supports the Council’s Climate Change Strategy and will have a positive impact on the energy efficiency of our Council homes
Diversity	There are no issues
Wards Affected	All wards with Council housing
Groups Affected	Council tenants and leaseholders
Budget and Policy Framework	The issues contained within this report do not represent a change to Council budget or the Council’s policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This report supports the Council Plan to deliver the Council’s Climate Change Strategy and action plan
Efficiency	The delivery of this strategy to meet the Government’s climate change targets represent a significant financial challenge to the Council
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. In July 2019, Darlington Borough Council declared a climate emergency. The residential housing sector accounts for 22% of the UK's carbon emissions. As the largest social housing provider in Darlington, we are committed to ensure our housing stock (which makes up approx. 10% of all the residential dwellings in Darlington) meets the Government's targets for energy efficiency and net zero carbon.
8. However, this presents a significant challenge for the Council. We need to ensure that we meet the Government targets of achieving an EPC rating of C for all our Council housing by 2030 and net zero carbon by 2050.
9. This strategy sets out our approach to achieving these goals. Due to the long-term nature of this strategy and given there are still many unknowns in relation to funding, developing technology and capacity, it is difficult to provide precise targets as to how or when we will achieve net zero carbon for all our homes. Therefore, this strategy covers the initial actions required over the next 3 to 5 years and will be continually updated to ensure we remain on course.
10. The Housing Services Climate Change Strategy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** sets out the actions required to achieve the initial phase of our plans, and covers the following areas:
 - (a) **Data Quality and Validation.** We need to ensure the data we hold regarding our stock and its condition is accurate and up to date, to help shape and inform decisions we need to make to reach our targets. We also need to ensure we fully understand what is required, how we can deliver this and who will do it, so a comprehensive review and validation of data we hold is required.
 - (b) **Fabric First.** A fabric first approach allows for simple changes considering the design, construction and building fabric of a home to produce an efficient and low energy building. The building fabric refers to the roof, walls, windows, floors, and doors of a home. Using this method, we can prepare a programme of work to help us achieve EPC C for all our properties by 2030. We will also be able to effectively deliver measures and engage with our tenants, whilst monitoring the effectiveness of work and re-evaluating where necessary.
 - (c) **Funding, Bidding and Capital Programme.** Significant investment will be required for us to implement our plans and we will need to source this through our own Housing Revenue Account (HRA) resources and our capital programme. This must be managed effectively alongside continually reviewing our energy efficiency budget. We will continue to bid for available grant funding and provide supported matched funding to ensure the delivery of schemes. Our capital programme will be reviewed on an annual basis, and we will consult our tenants about our planned expenditure. This will include a review of existing timescales for the replacement of key building assets

(such as kitchens and bathrooms) and what work can increase EPC ratings to align with our Housing Asset Management Strategy. From this, we will create a new business plan considering new technologies and the lifespans of assets. We will also review funding for the upskilling of internal staff, to compliment the introduction of our energy efficiency measures.

- (d) **Retrofit and Technology.** Retrofit is the introduction of new materials, products and technologies into an existing building, to reduce the energy needed. When retrofitting our homes, we aim to increase their energy efficiency by implementing improvements to reduce energy consumption and provide our tenants with a warm, comfortable home. Retrofitting will include:
- (i) Reviewing new technologies as they emerge onto the market (such as new heating systems).
 - (ii) Reviewing and upskilling our workforce, to ensure we have capacity to install and maintain new technologies.
 - (iii) Ensuring our tenants have the right information and support to use new technologies.
 - (iv) Ensure we have robust supply chains in place for the supply and maintenance of new technologies.
- (e) **Biodiversity.** Biodiversity is the term used to describe all life on Earth, in all its variety. There's a growing mountain of evidence to show that green spaces are good for our mental and physical wellbeing, as well as supporting carbon offsetting. We will consider how we can encourage biodiversity such as wildflower meadows. We will also consider using Housing land, which we are not able to develop, to plant trees and support the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy, which will make areas more attractive.

Financial Implications

11. The recommendation in paragraph 5 have already been factored into the HRA MTFP. An allocation for energy efficiency work has been accounted for in the 30-year business plan and the annual amounts proposed for 2024-25 onwards is treble that allocated in 2023-24.

Outcome of Consultation

12. The Tenants Panel were consulted about this strategy on 14 November 2023 and have given it their full support.

Housing Services

Climate Change Strategy

2024 - 2029

Introduction

In July 2019, Darlington Borough Council declared a climate emergency and we are committed to become a carbon neutral council by 2040. The residential housing sector accounts for 22% of the UK's carbon emissions¹. As the largest social housing provider in Darlington, we are committed to ensure our housing stock (which makes up approx. 10% of all the residential dwellings in Darlington) meets the Government's targets for energy efficiency and net zero carbon.

However, this presents a significant challenge for the Council. Nationally, the requirement to meet a minimum of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of C in all homes by 2030 is estimated at £3.5 bn based on an average compliance of 69% and £7,700 for each property to carry out the works². To achieve net zero carbon, the total investment requirement is £78 bn, or £50,000 for each property over 30 years. This would increase by £9 bn if net zero is targeted by 2040.

This strategy sets out our approach to achieving these goals. Due to the long-term nature of this strategy and given there are still many unknowns in relation to funding, developing technology and capacity, it is difficult to provide precise targets as to how or when we will achieve net zero carbon for all our homes. Therefore, this strategy covers the initial actions required over the next 3 to 5 years and will be continually updated to ensure we remain on course.

Background

In November 2021, we commissioned a Zero Carbon Study report from Savills to evaluate the Council's ability to meet the Government's targets of achieving an EPC rating of C for all our Council housing by 2030 and net zero carbon by 2050 (at the time the report was drafted).

The key findings from the report were as follows:

- The Council should adopt a "fabric first" approach in the first stage of its strategy by reducing energy demand in dwellings that will also achieve a minimum of EPC C. This will involve upgrading insulation, including loft insulation, external walls, windows and doors. This should be combined with additional ventilation to avoid the potential risk of increased damp and mould.

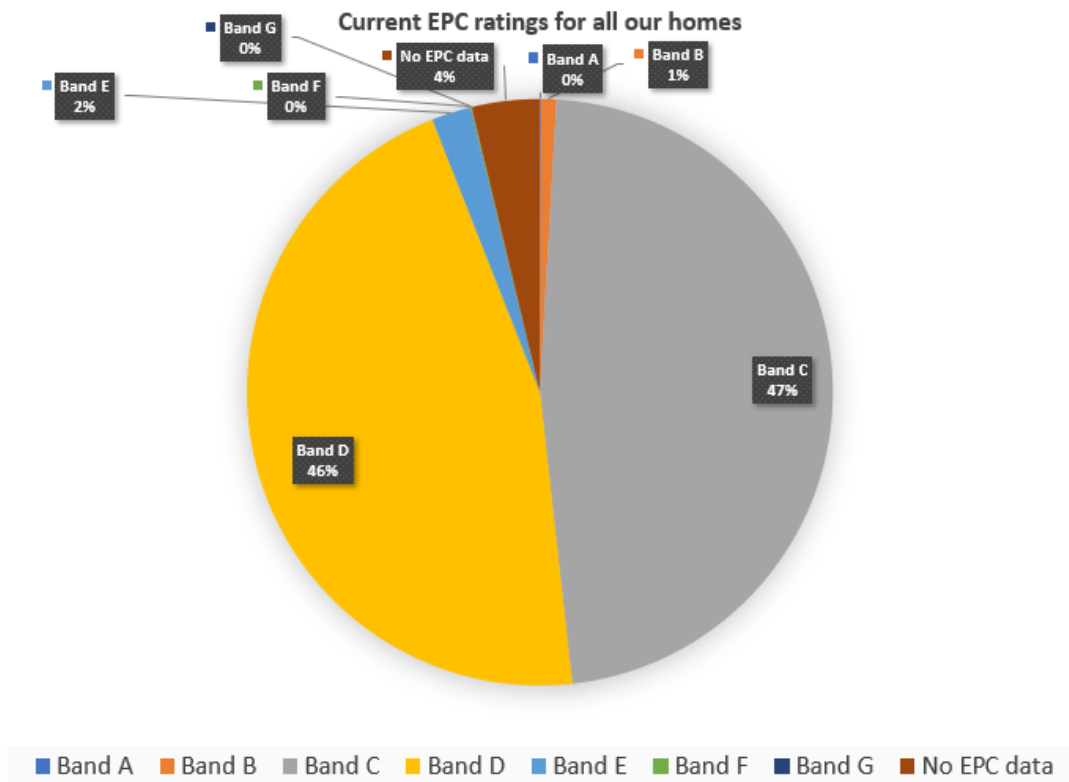
¹ Sustainable Energy Association

² Local Government Research: Housing Revenue Account Expenditure 2023

- The second stage of the strategy will be to install alternative zero carbon heating systems. The most likely option, at the time the report was written, will be heat pumps. However, Savills recognised that technology innovation will determine the actual solutions that we will adopt in the future, also taking into consideration the different property types in our stock. The adoption of solar PV panels on our housing stock could help us to meet our targets earlier, but this will require additional investment and will not be appropriate for some of our properties.
- Net zero carbon is unlikely to be achieved until the national electricity grid can also be decarbonised. In addition, the electricity grid has insufficient current capacity to take over from all domestic gas heating and therefore, the switch from gas will need to be phased. The implementation of new technology will require unprecedented levels of investment to achieve the Government's targets and will present huge challenges in its delivery in terms of different skill sets for the workforce and a current lack of capacity to deliver at scale nationwide. The switch to alternative heating systems could also increase fuel poverty, as electricity is more expensive, and the Government will need to review its subsidy arrangements for electricity, compared to gas. Therefore, existing gas boilers should probably be retained until they are due for life cycle replacement.
- Calculations show that these measures combined, will reduce the total CO₂ emissions from our housing stock by around 85%, from a current (2021) base position of approx. 15,650 tonnes of CO₂ each year to 2,360 tonnes each year, with average carbon emissions for each property reducing from approx. 2.5 tonnes of CO₂ each year to around 0.4 tonnes each year. This residual CO₂ emission is due to the fact that the national grid has not yet been decarbonised.
- The budget to become "near zero carbon" is estimated at £142m, depending on the technologies adopted, but could increase to £167m, if we also considered ground floor insulation. This cost equates to an average of between £26,707 to £31,410 for each property. These costs exclude any solar photovoltaic (PV) options, which would cost an additional £3,000 to £4,000 for each property (or an additional £10m overall).
- However, taking into consideration the related work contained in the current 30-year stock condition forecast and business plan, the additional budget requirement reduces to an estimated £91m (or £17,115 for each property) to £116m (or £21,817 for each property). A further review with more detailed data analysis is required to determine the exact scope of work required.
- The current average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating across the whole stock is 64, which equates to a mid-EPC D. Based on the current data, approx. 2,500 of our properties are below EPC C (or 48%). Of these, approx. 680 properties are

only just below EPC C and require minimal work. Our initial strategy should, therefore, be to upgrade the remaining stock to EPC C. However, there are some properties where achieving EPC C may be challenging, and therefore, the Council may want to consider demolition, sale or rebuild as an option.

- The cost of undertaking this work is significant and we need to review our asset management strategy to evaluate the performance of our stock against our existing business plans. We need to give careful consideration to the long-term future of any lower performing stock together with the lifecycles for asset replacements and the high levels of investment required.
- In summary, improving building fabric and insulation levels should be the first strategic phase towards the net zero carbon target and during this phase, Savills suggested that gas boilers would be retained for possibly one further life cycle replacement up to 2035, after which they should be switched to an alternative system



What have we done so far?

We continually bid for government funding to maximise our investment and upgrade our properties. Some of the work undertaken recently is as follows:

- In March 2021, we were successful in securing £1.25m of funding under the Local Authority Delivery (LAD1b) and Local Authority Delivery (LAD2) schemes, with match

funding of £0.68m. This enabled us to carry out upgrades to 737 of our homes with measures including double glazing, loft insulation, solar PV, Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) and smart heating control upgrades. All properties were able to achieve an EPC C rating following those works.

- In March 2022, we successfully secured £0.24m of funding under a consortium bid with the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 1 from the Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), with match funding of £0.28m. We upgraded 23 of our homes with solar PV, external wall insulation or internal wall insulation, dependant on the building type, double glazing, loft insulation, low energy lighting and new front and back external lights. These measures have made these homes a lot warmer and reduced energy consumption. The 23 properties were chosen as part of the pilot scheme, based on property types that would have most benefit from carrying out these energy efficient measures. We aim to conduct more of these pilot schemes and have been successful in future rounds of funding.
- Due to the number of properties benefitting from funding in 2022-23, we were able to upgrade all our remaining single glazed homes to double glazing from our planned investment programme. An additional 1,232 Council homes had double glazing fitted to replace single glazed windows, at a cost of £2.7m.
- In March 2023, we secured an additional £1.27m funding under the SHDF wave 2 scheme that will enable us to upgrade 130 of our homes with measures including external wall insulation and low energy lighting over the next 2 years. We will be match funding this with £1.27m from our own planned investment programme.
- A Stock Condition Survey was carried out in 2022-23 by an external contractor. 10% of our stock was surveyed, which equates to 550 properties. This survey confirmed that our properties are of a good standard.
- However, we have now recruited our own full-time Stock Condition Surveyor, who will carry out a rolling programme of stock condition surveys covering 100% of Council homes, ensuring we have a more up to date and complete picture of the condition of our properties. This information will be used to evaluate what measures are required to bring each property up to EPC C.
- We have updated our existing planned investment program specifications to meet current energy efficient standards. This includes upgrading loft insulation and low energy lighting on our internal planned maintenance programme (replacing kitchens and bathrooms).

- We have also introduced Air Source Heat Pumps where the property is not connected to the gas supply, usually in rural areas.
- We have started updating our specifications to cover the installation of external wall insulation, cavity wall insulation, solar PV, and energy efficient gas boiler replacements, where funding and investment allows for appropriate properties.
- We have also updated our approach to improving the ventilation in our homes. Alongside installing Positive Input Ventilation (PIV) units, we will also install extractor fans in our kitchens and bathrooms as standard.

New Builds

We have set an ambitious programme to build additional new Council homes to meet increasing demand for social housing in Darlington. We build to a high specification to ensure we are providing new tenants with exceptionally high quality homes that meet lifetime standards, including wider doorways and larger bathrooms to make them wheelchair accessible with level access showers.

We have recently updated our new build specification and all of our new homes will now include Air Source Heat Pumps, alongside our original specification for energy efficient windows, doors and insulation. Our new build homes all achieve a minimum EPC B rating.

Visions/Aims

How will we get there?

- **Data Quality and Validation**

We need to ensure the data we hold regarding our stock and its condition is accurate and up to date, to help shape and inform decisions we need to make to reach our targets. We also need to ensure we fully understand what is required, how we can deliver this and who will do it, so a comprehensive review and validation of data we hold is required.

- **Fabric First**

A fabric first approach allows for simple changes considering the design, construction and building fabric of a home to produce an efficient and low energy building. The building fabric refers to the roof, walls, windows, floors, and doors of a home. Using this method, we can prepare a programme of work to help us achieve EPC C for all our properties by 2030. We will also be able to effectively deliver measures and engage with our tenants, whilst monitoring the effectiveness of work and re-evaluating where necessary.

- **Funding, Bidding and Capital Programme**

Significant investment will be required for us to implement our plans and we will need to source this through our own Housing Revenue Account (HRA) resources and our capital programme. This must be managed effectively alongside continually reviewing our energy efficiency budget. We will continue to bid for available grant funding and provide supported matched funding to ensure the delivery of schemes. Our capital programme will be reviewed on an annual basis, and we will consult our tenants about our planned expenditure. This will include a review of existing timescales for the replacement of key building assets (such as kitchens and bathrooms) and what work can increase EPC ratings to align with our Housing Asset Management Strategy. From this, we will create a new business plan considering new technologies and the lifespans of assets. We will also review funding for the upskilling of internal staff, to compliment the introduction of our energy efficiency measures.

- **Retrofit and Technology**

Retrofit is the introduction of new materials, products and technologies into an existing building, to reduce the energy needed. When retrofitting our homes, we aim to increase their energy efficiency by implementing improvements to reduce energy consumption and provide our tenants with a warm, comfortable home. Retrofitting will include:

- Reviewing new technologies as they emerge onto the market (such as new heating systems).
- Reviewing and upskilling our workforce, to ensure we have capacity to install and maintain new technologies.
- Ensuring our tenants have the right information and support to use new technologies.
- Ensure we have robust supply chains in place for the supply and maintenance of new technologies.

- **Biodiversity**

Biodiversity is the term used to describe all life on Earth, in all its variety. There's a growing mountain of evidence to show that green spaces are good for our mental and physical wellbeing, as well as supporting carbon offsetting. We will consider how we can encourage biodiversity such as wildflower meadows. We will also consider using Housing land, which we are not able to develop, to plant trees and

support the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy, which will make areas more attractive.

Action Plan

Area	Action	Timescale	Responsible Officer(s)	Expected Outcome
Data Quality and Validation	Identify new energy efficiency measures to mainstream energy efficiency into the capital programme	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager 	This will become standard practice within the capital programme
	Review specifications of our planned work including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Planned Maintenance • Heating Replacement • Void Properties • New Builds 	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager 	Increase in energy efficient measures delivered as standard
	Engage with our tenants and develop a communications plan	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Head of Housing 	Tenants are aware and involved in decision making around Climate Change
	Understand the impact of SAP10 (and other SAP changes) and the impact this will have on EPC ratings	2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager 	Clear understanding of SAP10 and EPC ratings
	Review new Decent Homes Standards	2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager • Head of Housing 	Our plans will be adapted to work within the new standards
	Assess what energy efficiency measures are needed for each property and the related costs	2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager 	Improved data quality for our bidding and business planning

	Review staffing resource and understand training requirements	2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager • Housing Buildings Manager 	Staff aligned to clear roles and appropriately trained
	Review carbon reductions for our properties and the cost savings for our tenants	2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager 	Reporting will show how the energy efficiency measures have potentially reduced the cost of heating our homes and the carbon reductions
	Survey all Council properties to identify the stock condition	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Surveying Manager 	We will hold accurate, good quality data for reporting, analysis and planning
	Use stock condition data to identify properties that can't get to EPC C. Evaluate and provide options	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager 	Appropriate options for those properties are considered and progressed
Fabric First	Prepare programmes of work based on improved stock data and evaluate the financial implications	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager 	Business plans and capital programmes updated with investment options identified
	Deliver programmes of work	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager • Housing Building Manager 	Homes will be more energy efficient with an improved EPC rating. Plans on course to achieve EPC C for all Council properties by 2030
	Monitor the effectiveness of work (re-evaluate)	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager 	Identified and evaluated what has gone well and lessons learned. Plans adapted to take these into account

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Surveying Manager 	
	Evaluate green credentials of contractors	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager 	The impact of climate change evaluated and considered through the procurement and contracting process
	Evaluate the capacity of contractors, supply chains and energy efficiency skills externally	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager 	Better understanding of the skills and capacity gaps
Funding, Bidding and Capital Programme	Review energy efficiency budgets	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager 	Budgets established for each year
	Continue to bid for grant funding and ensure sufficient match funding is available	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager 	Successful grant funding bids
	Implement the Housing Asset Management Strategy including reviewing lifecycles for asset replacements	2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager 	Housing Asset Management Strategy implemented
	Review funding for upskilling and training	2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager 	Skilled and knowledgeable workforce
	Identify and develop partnership opportunities	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager 	Partnerships in place to support delivery, procurement, engagement, and knowledge.
Retrofit and Technology	Review technologies available for each property type and how this	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager 	Good understanding of the impact of new technologies on our stock and business plan

	affects the lifecycle replacements and costs to install and maintain		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Surveying Manager 	
	Review actions to support the Council's Climate Change Agenda such as electric charging points and fleet management	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager 	Good understanding of how the Council's Climate Change objectives impact on Housing Services
	Participate in regional and national groups to identify best practice and carry out benchmarking	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager 	Good understanding of how we are performing against our peers and best practice used to develop our plans
	Review skills of workforce to understand the educational and training offer available	2024-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager • Housing Building Manager 	Increased skills and knowledge base
	Upskilling our tenants and Housing Staff	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Housing 	Staff and tenants trained in the new technologies and measures as they are rolled out
	Provide website updates and guidance materials	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Head of Housing 	Website updated regularly and guidance available
	Monitor and review supply chains and market	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes and Performance Manager • Building Surveying Manager 	Good understanding of supply chains and market
Biodiversity	Review housing open spaces to support the Council's woodland strategy	2024-29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Housing 	Improvements to housing open spaces with more trees and wildflowers where appropriate

Challenges and Risks

What are the challenges to net carbon zero for us as a landlord?

Achieving net carbon zero by 2040 will be one of the most significant projects for Housing Services in the coming decades.

We want to provide homes that are energy efficient, affordable, comfortable, and safe to our tenants. However, achieving net zero carbon for our homes is a complex project with several key challenges and risks for delivery.

We have highlighted below the following key challenges, risks and mitigations that we need to consider as we plan to meet our targets.

Challenges	Risks	Mitigations
<p>We will need sufficient budget within our business plans to meet the cost of achieving net zero carbon</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient Government Grants available to meet the costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby Government through regional representative groups such as NECCo
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient funding within our Capital Programme to match fund Government bids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore ways to allocate more resource within the Capital Programme to energy efficiency measures • Review our Housing Asset Management Strategy in relation to the timescales for replacement of key building assets
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competing priorities for our financial plans in relation to new Decent Homes Standards, new RSH Consumer Standards and new Health and Safety Regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what components of these new standards and regulations can contribute to the energy efficiency of homes (such as new fire doors)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of materials and resources continue to increase above inflation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review financial plans on an annual basis and update Members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent increase caps limit the amount of available financial resource to energy efficiency work 	
<p>We will need sufficient capacity within the Council and with contractors to meet the demands of the Climate Change programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient resource within our own Repairs and maintenance team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources to be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure we have sufficient capacity to meet demand
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient resource for grant funding bids, procurement and contract monitoring 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient capacity in the commercial sector to tender for contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the capacity of potential contractors to be undertaken before any major Capital works is planned • Establish partnerships with local housing providers to make work programmes more efficient for contractors

Our workforce will require upskilling to enable us to install and maintain new technologies and to support our tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient capacity within the Council to provide adequate training for existing staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programmes and personal training plans to be reviewed as new technologies emerge
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleges not offering the right courses for new staff and apprenticeships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with local colleges to ensure they have the capacity to provide the right training courses and qualifications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants will be unable to use new heating systems effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the need for a specialist tenant liaison officer to undertake this role
We will need robust and reliable supply chains in place to ensure we have sufficient stock to meet demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppliers unable to meet demand for new technologies and parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the capacity of potential suppliers to be undertaken before any new heating systems are procured
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity grid unable to meet extra demand for electric heating systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with Government agencies to understand the capacity of the electricity grid before any new heating systems are procured
We will need to consider the extent of work needed for each home to achieve EPC C and/or net zero carbon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some homes are not able to achieve EPC C and/or net zero carbon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a stock survey of all properties to understand the level of work required. • Understand the impact of each measure to plan work effectively • Consider the long-term future of any lower performing stock together with the lifecycles for asset replacements and the high levels of investment required • Consider all available options such as decants, selling or demolishing the property
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works may be extensive and require decant during the work 	
We will need to consider the effect of any upgrades on our tenant's utility bills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy bills may increase through additional electricity consumption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider if a range of measures are needed to offset any increases, such as solar PV

Monitoring and Review of the Strategy

Effective monitoring reporting of this strategy will help us understand if our climate change activities are making a difference. Therefore, we will measure and report on the effectiveness of this strategy by doing the following:

- We will expect to see an increase in the number of properties achieving EPC C or above. We will measure and report on this through KPI reporting via our website, Housing Connect magazine and an annual report to Members and our tenants.
- We will evaluate the progress of climate change activities at regular intervals throughout the year to ensure these are working effectively.
- We will publish the details of our climate change and energy efficiency opportunities through an annual plan, regularly reporting on how we are progressing.
- We will publish the records of meetings and decisions made.
- We will provide an annual report to the Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee on the progress against our strategy.
- We will ensure climate change energy efficiency forms a core competency for housing staff and is reflected in all job roles and training plans.
- We will ensure our performance is monitored against the overall Darlington Council Climate Change Action Plan.
- We will review and update our Tenant Engagement Strategy to ensure our tenants are involved and empowered to help us shape our plans towards net zero carbon.

**ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
4 JANUARY 2024**

DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT POLICY 2024-2029

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

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the draft Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Policy 2024-2029 before approval by Cabinet on 9 January 2024.

Summary

2. DHP is a scheme which aims to provide residents who receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, with additional financial assistance with their rental costs. The operation of the scheme is at the Council's discretion and funding is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), so is cash limited.
3. The existing DHP Policy has been in place since April 2013 and so is due for review, although no significant changes are proposed to the existing policy.
4. The DHP Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** sets out the aims of the scheme and the priorities for awards, although all applications are decided on their own individual merits.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Members consider the draft DHP Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** and agree its onward submission to Cabinet.

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) The Council is responsible for administering DHPs in accordance with the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001.

- (b) The DWPs DHP Guidance Manual provides guidance and advice on good practice when considering payment of DHPs, including consistency of decision making and how we should publicise the scheme. The adoption of a formal DHP policy will help to demonstrate how we will achieve this.

Anthony Sandys
Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues

Background Papers

- (i) Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001
- (ii) DWPs DHP Guidance Manual

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues
Health and Wellbeing	There are no issues
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There is no impact in this report
Diversity	The DHP Policy identifies priority groups for awards, some of which will have protected characteristics
Wards Affected	All wards are affected but in particular, those with higher numbers of people claiming Housing Benefit and Universal Credit
Groups Affected	People in receipt of Housing Benefit and Universal Credit with housing costs towards rental liability
Budget and Policy Framework	The issues contained within this report do not represent a change to Council budget or the Council's policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This report supports the Council Plan to support the most vulnerable in the borough when needed
Efficiency	Payments of DHP are fully funded by the DWP up to a financial limit, set annually
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Care leavers are specifically referred to as a group with priority for DHPs

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. The Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 allows Councils to make payments by way of financial assistance (DHPs) to people who are entitled to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (with housing costs towards rental liability) and appear to the Council to

require some further assistance to meet their housing costs.

8. The existing DHP Policy has been operational since April 2013 and is therefore due for review and update, although no significant changes are proposed to the existing policy.
9. The DHP Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** sets out how the Council will administer the scheme and covers the following areas:
 - (a) The main features of the DHP scheme that apply to all applications. The Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 sets out the circumstances in which DHP awards may or may not be made.
 - (b) The aims of the scheme, including the priority groups for DHP awards, although all applications will be assessed on their own individual merits.
 - (c) The process for claiming a DHP, decision making and appeals.
 - (d) The factors used to decide the amount and period of a DHP award.
 - (e) Monitoring arrangements, publicising the DHP scheme and managing the budget.
10. The DWP provides an annual ringfenced grant to fund DHPs and any unspent grant must be returned to the DWP at the end of the financial year. The DWP also set an annual upper limit for DHP awards, although there is no identified budget in the MTFP to make DHP awards above the DWP grant level.
11. **Table 1** below provides details of DHP awards and expenditure each year since 2016.

Table 1: DHP awards and expenditure

Year	Applications	Awards	Total Paid	DWP funding
2022-23	586	364	£135,280	£154,394
2021-22	665	543	£193,239	£217,837
2020-21	256	145	£280,579	£287,586
2019-20	604	366	£195,191	£199,553
2018-19	672	477	£239,116	£239,759
2017-18	691	562	£292,799	£293,056
2016-17	730	463	£212,595	£218,184

Financial Implications

12. The recommendation in paragraph 5 will not have any significant financial implications and therefore it is not intended to amend the budget in the MTFP.

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DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

2024 to 2029

DRAFT

Introduction

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) is a scheme, which aims to provide customers with further financial assistance with their housing costs.

For the purpose of the scheme, housing costs means rental liability not met in full by Housing Benefit (HB) or Universal Credit (UC) entitlement.

DHPs cannot be made towards Council Tax liability.

The main features of the scheme are that:

- It is completely separate from the HB/UC schemes
- To qualify for a DHP the customer must:
 - be entitled to HB; or
 - be entitled to UC; and
 - have a rental liability; and
 - have a shortfall in their eligible rent
- The amount of a DHP cannot exceed the maximum eligible rent that would normally be met by HB/UC
- DHPs cannot be made in respect of housing costs that are otherwise not eligible for HB/UC, for example fuel charges
- The operation of the scheme is at the Council's discretion
- Customers do not have a statutory right to a DHP
- Customers do not have the same appeal rights for a DHP decision, as they do with HB/UC decisions
- The total amount of DHPs that the Council can pay out in any financial year is cash limited by the Secretary of State.

The types of shortfalls that can be covered by a DHP include:

- Reductions in HB/UC as a result of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) restrictions
- Reductions in HB/UC where the benefit cap has been applied
- Reductions in HB/UC as a result of under occupation in social rented sector tenancies (the 'bedroom tax')
- Reductions in HB/UC as a result of Rent Officer restrictions
- Reductions in HB/UC due to non-dependant deductions
- Other shortfalls in HB/UC
- Rent in advance payments.

Where the amount of UC covering housing costs is not separately identified in a UC payment, the Council will decide the shortfall in rental liability (and therefore the maximum DHP award), based on the information available.

Aims of the scheme

The Council has the discretion to award DHPs to customers whose circumstances meet the criteria outlined in this policy. However, **all applications will be assessed on their own individual merits.**

The Council will operate this policy to:

- Alleviate poverty
- Encourage and sustain people in employment
- Sustain people's tenancies and prevent homelessness
- Safeguard people in their own homes
- Keep families together
- Support elderly or vulnerable people in the local community
- Help people through personal and difficult times
- Support young people in the transition to adult life
- Promote good educational outcomes for children and young people
- Alleviate any negative impacts of Welfare Reforms
- Ensure DHPs are awarded to those most in need.

Nothing contained within this policy is intended to conflict with any other Council policy.

Although applications will be considered on their own individual merits, priority will be given to the following groups (this list is not in order of priority):

- People in need of treatment, care or support who would otherwise have to move away from health care provision, social care provision or support networks as a result of a shortfall in their HB/UC
- People with dependant children who would otherwise have to move away from schools or child care provision as a result of a shortfall in their HB/UC
- Older people who would otherwise have to move away from health care provision, social care provision or support networks as a result of a shortfall in their HB
- Pregnant women affected by LHA restrictions or reductions in their HB/UC as a result of under occupation in the social rented sector
- People who are affected by LHA restrictions or reductions in their HB/UC as a result of under occupation in the social rented sector, who have been placed in accommodation, or advised to stay in accommodation by the Council, to alleviate or prevent homelessness
- People who have moved due to domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, or hate crime and are affected by LHA restrictions or reductions in their HB/UC as a result of under occupation in the social rented sector
- People in employment who would otherwise have to move away from their work place as a result of a shortfall in their HB/UC
- People starting employment who require assistance to move nearer to their work place
- Disabled people in significantly adapted properties affected by LHA restrictions or reductions in their HB/UC as a result of under occupation in the social rented sector, who would otherwise have to move as a result of a shortfall in their HB/UC
- Couples who are unable to share a bedroom, due to a disability or long-term limiting illness, affected by LHA restrictions or reductions in their HB/UC as a result of under occupation in the social rented sector
- Households with a disabled person or disabled child, where one or more bedrooms are being used to store disability related equipment or are required for additional needs relating to the disability, affected by LHA restrictions or reductions in their HB/UC as a result of under occupation in the social rented sector
- Households needing to move to cheaper or more suitable alternative accommodation
- Care leavers who experience difficulties in meeting their housing costs

- Ex-armed forces personnel who experience difficulties in meeting their housing costs.

Legislation protects certain groups from LHA restrictions and reductions in HB/UC as a result of under occupation in the social rented sector. DHPs would therefore not usually be required in these circumstances. These include:

- Disabled children who are unable to share a bedroom
- Approved foster carers who have an additional bedroom for foster children
- Households who require an extra bedroom for a non-dependant in the armed forces who is away on operations.

Claiming a DHP

A claim for a DHP can be made in the following ways:

- By completing an online DHP claim form on the DBC website
- By letter
- By e-mail
- By telephone call
- By an appointment in the Customer Contact Centre at the Town Hall
- During a visit by Council staff to a customer's home.

If the claim is received by letter, e-mail or telephone call, the customer may be asked to complete an online DHP claim form, or provide the Council with further information to make a decision. In addition, the Council may request additional evidence to support the DHP claim that it considers reasonable.

The DHP claim should be made by the person claiming HB/UC. However, the claim can also be made by a third party, such as an appointee, support worker, social worker or housing officer. The Council may contact third parties in relation to the DHP claim, where the customer has consented to this. The Council may also refer or signpost the customer to specialist advice agencies, where appropriate.

Decision making and appeals

Once a decision on the DHP claim has been made, the customer will be notified of the outcome in writing. The notification letter will include the following:

- Where a DHP is awarded, the amount and period of the award
- Where a DHP does not cover the full shortfall of rental liability, or the amount claimed, the reasons will be explained to the customer
- Where a DHP is not awarded, the reasons will be explained to the customer
- Their appeal rights
- Information on who to contact if they need further help or advice
- The duty to notify the Council of any changes in their circumstances, which may affect their DHP award.

Because DHPs are not payments of HB or UC, they are not subject to the statutory appeals

procedures that govern those benefits. The Council will deal with appeals about DHP decisions in the following ways:

- The person who claimed the DHP can ask the Council to explain its decision at any time. The Council will contact the customer to explain its decision within one month of receiving the request
- An appeal about a DHP decision should be made within one calendar month of the notification of the decision being made, or such longer time as the Council considers reasonable
- The appeal can be made by completing an online Enquiry form on the DBC website, in writing, verbally or by e-mail
- Where an appeal is made, the Council will conduct a review of the decision. This will be done by an officer different to the one who made the initial decision and the outcome will be notified in writing
- The Council may review a DHP decision at any time if the decision was made in error or in ignorance of a material fact.

Period of a DHP award

Both the level and duration of the DHP award will be at the Council's discretion, but will relate to:

- The date on which the Council received the DHP claim
- The date on which the HB/UC commenced
- The period of the tenancy
- The amount of the housing cost shortfall, not met by normal benefit entitlement
- Other relevant factors, depending on the merits of each individual case

In the majority of cases, a DHP will be awarded to alleviate hardship in the short-term. However, in some cases (for example where the award relates to a disability related need) DHP awards could be made for longer periods.

Long-term DHP awards are those likely to last more than 12 months and these will be reviewed on at least an annual basis. There are no circumstances in which a DHP will be awarded 'indefinitely'.

Factors used to decide the amount of a DHP

When deciding the length and amount of the DHP award, the Council may take into account the following factors (this list is not exhaustive):

- The amount of any shortfall in housing costs
- Whether the customer could afford the rent before the HB/UC claim
- What advice, if any, the customer sought before taking up a tenancy
- The circumstances surrounding the customer's move, if applicable
- Details of previous accommodation and rent charged, if applicable
- Whether there is a particular reason the customer chose to live in that accommodation
- The financial, medical and social circumstances of the customer and their household, if these are relevant to the DHP claim
- Whether the customer is adversely or disproportionately affected by welfare reforms

- The income and essential expenditure of the customer and their household
- The purpose of any disability related benefits in payment, and whether the money from those benefits has been committed to other liabilities associated with disability
- Any savings and investments held by the customer and their household, which could be used to help their financial situation
- Whether other family members external to the household could help in any way towards the customer's financial expenditure
- Whether the customer and their household could reduce expenditure on non-essential items
- Whether the customer and their household are entitled to other welfare benefits but are not claiming them
- The level of indebtedness of the customer and their household
- Whether the customer and their household are taking long-term action to help their problems in meeting their housing costs
- Whether a DHP would prevent homelessness
- Whether a DHP would help the customer be able to access or maintain employment, education or training
- Whether a DHP would prevent a move that would have detrimental effects on the customer and their household, for example children's schooling, health, support networks or employment
- Any steps taken by the customer to help themselves, for example:
 - Negotiating with their landlord for a reduction in their rent
 - Looking for alternative suitable or cheaper accommodation
 - Financial advice they have sought to alleviate their situation, such as from Citizens Advice Bureau or Welfare Rights
 - Housing advice they have sought, such as from First Stop Darlington or the Council's Housing Options Team
- Whether their ethnicity or disability is having, or has had, an adverse effect on their housing options or financial circumstances
- The impact of not awarding a DHP or restricting payment of a DHP may have on the customer and their household.

The Council will also consider:

- The amount of DHP budget available for the remainder of the financial year
- Other DHP claims and awards being made and the overall impact on the remaining DHP budget available.

An award of DHP does not necessarily make the customer eligible to receive an award again once the initial DHP award runs out, as each DHP claim is decided on the individual merits at that time. This applies even if the customer's circumstances remain the same.

Changes of Circumstances

Customers in receipt of a DHP are required to notify the Council of any changes in their circumstances which may be relevant to them receiving DHPs. This could be a change in their circumstances that does not affect their HB/UC entitlement.

Ending a DHP award

The Council may decide to end an award of DHP before the notified period end date. This could be where:

- The customer's entitlement to HB/UC changes or ends
- The customer's liability to pay rent ends
- The customer's LHA rate changes
- The customer has a change in their circumstances relevant to their DHP award
- The customer has misrepresented or failed to disclose a material fact, fraudulently or otherwise
- A DHP has been awarded in error
- The Council has reached its DHP limit before the end of the financial year.

Overpaid DHPs

The Council may decide to recover any overpaid awards of DHP, depending on the circumstances of each case, for example:

- Whether the overpayment is as a result of a misrepresentation or failure to disclose a material fact, fraudulently or otherwise
- Whether the customer has failed to report a change in their circumstances
- Whether the customer's entitlement to HB/UC has changed or ended
- Whether the overpayment was a result of an official error.

The Council will use its discretion to recover any amount of overpaid DHP that it considers is recoverable.

Monitoring arrangements and managing the DHP fund

The Council will undertake monitoring of the number, amount and period of DHP awards in relation to the available DHP budget. This will include awards made in a previous financial year that continue into the current financial year. The purpose is to ensure the Council has sufficient funds to meet demands on the DHP budget throughout the financial year.

The Council will also monitor cases where a DHP claim has been refused, to ensure decisions are being made fairly and consistently, in accordance with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Publicising DHPs

The Council will publicise the availability of DHPs through its own publications, notifications, social media, website and over the telephone, and by working in partnership with voluntary and statutory organisations.

To raise awareness of DHPs, the Council will publicise the availability of the scheme as follows:

- On HB decision notices where there is a shortfall in rent due to the LHA rate used in the

calculation, the benefit cap or a size restriction due to under occupation in a social rented sector tenancy

- When customers come into the Council for appointments to discuss their HB claim
- When customers telephone the Council to discuss their HB claim
- When visits are made to the customer's home
- On the Council's website
- By raising awareness with internal and external partners, such as Customer Services, Housing, Social Services, Welfare Rights, Citizens Advice Bureau and other advice agencies, Registered Housing Providers, private landlords and support providers.

The Council will ensure that frequent training is provided for its front-line staff to ensure their knowledge of the scheme is both relevant and up to date.

What DHPs cannot cover

The following elements of a customer's rent or Council Tax will not be met by DHPs:

- Service charges contained within a customer's housing costs that are ineligible for HB/UC
- Increases in rent due to outstanding rent arrears
- Any sanctions or reductions in benefit due to:
 - A Reduced Benefit Direction for failure to comply with the Child Support Agency in arranging maintenance
 - Non-attendance at a work-focussed interview
 - A Jobseekers Allowance or UC employment sanction, if they have contributed towards their unemployed status
 - A Jobseekers Allowance or UC sanction for 16/17 year olds
 - A loss of benefit sanction
 - A breach of a community service order
- Where HB/UC has been suspended
- Shortfalls caused by HB/UC overpayment recovery
- Rent deposits (as help with securing a tenancy can be obtained via the Darlington Bond scheme).

**ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
4 JANUARY 2024**

COUNCIL TAX AND BUSINESS RATES DISCRETIONARY RELIEF POLICY 2024-2029

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

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the draft Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy 2024-2029 before approval by Cabinet on 9 January 2024.

Summary

2. Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 provides the Council with discretionary powers to reduce a person's Business Rates liability in cases of hardship. In addition, section 69 of the Localism Act 2011 amends the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to allow Councils the discretion to award discretionary relief to all types of businesses.
3. Section 13a (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides the Council with discretionary powers to reduce a person's Council Tax liability to such an extent as we think fit.
4. The Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** sets out the aims of the Council's discretionary powers and the priorities for awards, although all applications are decided on their own individual merits.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Members consider the draft Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** and agree its onward submission to Cabinet.

Reasons

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

- (a) The Council is responsible for administering discretionary relief in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Localism Act 2011 and the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- (b) The adoption of a formal Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy will help to demonstrate how we will exercise our discretionary powers and ensure consistency of decision making and appeals.

Anthony Sandys
Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues

Background Papers

- (i) Local Government Finance Act 1988
- (ii) Localism Act 2011
- (iii) Local Government Finance Act 1992

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues
Health and Wellbeing	There are no issues
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There is no impact in this report
Diversity	The Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy aims to provide financial assistance to low income and vulnerable groups
Wards Affected	All wards are affected
Groups Affected	People with liability to pay Council Tax and Business Rates
Budget and Policy Framework	The issues contained within this report do not represent a change to Council budget or the Council's policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This report supports the Council Plan to support the most vulnerable in the borough when needed and maximising the benefits of a growing economy
Efficiency	Awards of Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Relief are fully met from the Council's collection fund
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Care leavers under 25 are eligible for 100% Council Tax Discretionary Relief

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

Business Rates

7. Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 provides the Council with discretionary powers to reduce a person’s Business Rates liability in cases of hardship. In addition, section 69 of the Localism Act 2011 amends the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to allow Councils the discretion to award discretionary relief to all types of businesses.

8. The Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** sets out how the Council will administer Business Rates Discretionary Relief and covers the following areas:
 - (a) Making discretionary awards to provide short-term assistance to businesses that are suffering unexpected hardship, arising from circumstances beyond their control and outside of the normal risks associated with running a business of that type, to the extent that the viability of the business would be threatened if an award were not made.

 - (b) Making discretionary awards to help existing businesses in Darlington retain jobs and grow their business. Specifically, awards will be made to encourage and support the retention and improvement in employment delivering inclusive growth. Additionally, supporting businesses that can demonstrate financial sustainability and a focus on social value.

 - (c) Making discretionary awards to help attract firms, investment and jobs to Darlington. Specifically, awards will be made to encourage economic development to attract investment into designated areas in and around the town centre, to support growth from the independent sector and to enhance Darlington’s offer to shoppers and visitors.

 - (d) The process for claiming Business Rates Discretionary Relief, decision making and appeals.

 - (e) The factors used to decide the amount and period of a Business Rates Discretionary Relief award.

9. There is no separate budget for these awards, they are financed by Council Tax payers within the borough and are paid from the Council’s Collection Fund.

10. **Table 1** below provides details of Business Rates Discretionary Relief expenditure each year since 2016.

Table 1: Business Rates Discretionary Relief expenditure

Year	Total Paid	Awards
2022-23	£0	0

2021-22	£2,877	1
2020-21	£0	0
2019-20	£0	0
2018-19	£2,329	1
2017-18	£0	0
2016-17	£0	0

Council Tax

11. Section 13a (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides the Council with discretionary powers to reduce a person’s Council Tax liability to such an extent as we think fit.
12. The Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** sets out how the Council will administer Council Tax Discretionary Relief and covers the following areas:
 - (a) Making discretionary awards to care leavers under 25. A decision was made by Council on the 24 November 2022 to grant a Council Tax exemption for Care Leavers using the Council’s discretionary powers, from 1 April 2023.
 - (b) Making discretionary awards to Council Tax Payers experiencing severe financial hardship.
 - (c) Making discretionary awards to Council Tax Payers who, through no fault of their own, have experienced a crisis or event that has made their home uninhabitable, and do not have insurance which covers their Council Tax liability.
 - (d) The process for claiming Council Tax Discretionary Relief, decision making and appeals.
 - (e) The factors used to decide the amount and period of a Council Tax Discretionary Relief award.
13. There is no separate budget for these awards, they are financed by Council Tax payers within the borough and are paid from the Council’s Collection Fund.
14. **Table 2** below provides details of Council Discretionary Relief expenditure each year since 2016. The Council Tax exemption for care leavers did not come into effect Until April 2023, so the additional applications in 2022-23 are purely down to increased hardship claims.

Table 2: Council Tax Discretionary Relief expenditure

Year	Total Paid	Awards
2022-23	£34,091	64
2021-22	£9,989	33
2020-21	£6,777	17
2019-20	£15,428	47

2018-19	£12,546	34
2017-18	£3,575	10
2016-17	£4,444	11

Financial Implications

15. The recommendation in paragraph 5 will not have any significant financial implications and therefore it is not intended to amend the budget in the MTFP.

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DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy

2024 to 2029

DRAFT

Introduction

Legislation provides Councils with the ability to award discretionary relief to Business Rate payers and to Council Tax payers in a number of circumstances.

This policy sets out the criteria for making such awards of relief, which are subject to the discretion of the Council.

This policy will be split into 2 Sections. Section 1 will deal with Business Rates and Section 2 will deal with Council Tax

Section 1 Business Rates

This policy sets out the criteria for making awards of Discretionary Relief to ratepayers, where:

- The ratepayer is experiencing hardship, or
- It would help existing businesses retain jobs and grow their business, or
- It would help to attract firms, investment, and jobs to Darlington.

The aim is to provide clarity around the administration of applications for discretionary relief, identifying the key criteria that will be used to decide awards.

Legislation

Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, provides the Council with the following discretionary powers:

A billing authority may—

- reduce any amount a person is liable to pay to it under section 43 or 45 (of the Act), or
- remit payment of the whole of any amount a person would otherwise be liable to pay to it under section 43 or 45 (of the Act).

But an authority may not act under this section unless it is satisfied that—

- the ratepayer would sustain hardship if the authority did not do so, and
- it is reasonable for the authority to do so, having regard to the interests of persons liable to pay Council Tax set by it.

In addition, section 69 of the Localism Act 2011 amends the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to allow Councils the discretion to award discretionary relief to all types of businesses. The new wording in section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 states that the only condition to make an award of discretionary relief is:

- the billing authority may make the decision only if it is satisfied that it would be reasonable for it to do so, having regard to the interests of persons liable to pay Council

Tax set by it.

The intention in the Localism Act is to give Councils more freedom to offer relief to help businesses retain jobs and grow their business, and to attract firms, investment and new jobs. Whilst the Council will ordinarily need to meet the cost of any discount from local resources, it may decide that the immediate cost of the discount is outweighed by the long-term benefits to Darlington.

General Criteria

Business Rates legislation provides a wide range of discounts, exemptions and reductions that have the effect of reducing the level of Business Rates due. Rate payers will be expected to have exhausted all other options before making an application under this policy. When applying this policy, the Council will similarly consider whether alternative actions should be undertaken before applying this policy.

The Council has the discretion to award relief to rate payers whose circumstances meet the criteria outlined in this policy. However, **all applications will be assessed on their own individual merits.**

The Council will consider requests for relief from rate payers who are experiencing hardship or where, in the Council's opinion, an award of discretionary relief will help businesses retain jobs and grow their business, and attract firms, investment and jobs into Darlington.

Discretionary relief is intended as a temporary measure and will not be considered as a way of reducing Business Rates liability indefinitely. In addition, it will not be used to artificially sustain a failing business.

Priority may be given to businesses that provide the only goods or services of that type in the local area or where the business is a niche business supplying specialist goods or services that are not widely available.

If the Business Rate account is in arrears, the Council must be satisfied that non-payment was not due to wilful refusal or culpable neglect to pay their liability.

Hardship

The purpose of discretionary awards under this section of the policy is to provide short-term assistance to businesses that are suffering unexpected hardship, arising from circumstances beyond their control and outside of the normal risks associated with running a business of that type, to the extent that the viability of the business would be threatened if an award were not made.

Discretionary relief will only be awarded where it is considered that:

- The rate payer would sustain hardship if the Council failed to grant discretionary relief, and

- It is reasonable to grant discretionary relief having regard to the interest of Council Tax payers.

The test of 'hardship' is not restricted to financial hardship and the Council will consider all relevant factors affecting the ability of the business to meet its Rates liability.

The 'interest' of Council Tax payers may go wider than direct financial interest and the Council will consider all relevant factors. For example, where employment prospects in an area would be worsened by a rate payer going out of business, or the amenities in an area might be reduced by, for instance, the loss of a neighbourhood shop.

The Council will expect that businesses will take prompt action to mitigate any factors giving rise to hardship. This may include, seeking financial advice, reviewing pricing and negotiating with creditors. Applications may be declined in circumstances where the business is unable to demonstrate that it is taking reasonable steps to alleviate hardship.

In addition, the Council will expect businesses to exercise due diligence to anticipate circumstances that may give rise to hardship, financial or otherwise, and to put in place measures to prevent or mitigate those circumstances.

The Council may request the business to provide a full breakdown of income and expenditure, together with supporting evidence, such as the last set of audited accounts.

The Council may decide not to award discretionary relief where the business has access to loans or capital that could be realised and used to pay their rates liability.

Retain Jobs and Grow Business

The purpose of discretionary awards under this section of the policy is to help existing businesses in Darlington retain jobs and grow their business. Specifically, awards will be made to encourage and support the retention and improvement in employment delivering inclusive growth. Additionally, supporting businesses that can demonstrate financial sustainability and a focus on social value.

Applications for discretionary rate relief will normally only be considered where the Council is satisfied that an award will result in tangible benefits to local residents and in particular, where the award will directly result in job retention and employment improvement.

Businesses interested in applying for relief under this section of the policy should meet the following criteria:

- Be an existing business, occupying a business premises in Darlington
- Demonstrate that the business is committed to retain jobs and the employment of their current workforce
- Must not be a business which is a charity shop, betting shop, off license, e-cigarette shop, pawnbroker, short-term high interest loan company or similar.

Priority will be given to the following:

- Businesses that can demonstrate financial sustainability and a coherent plan to improve employment and deliver growth
- Businesses that can demonstrate a focus on social value and deliver benefits for local residents.

Growth, Investment and Jobs

The purpose of discretionary awards under this section of the policy is to help attract firms, investment and jobs to Darlington. Specifically, awards will be made to encourage economic development to attract investment into designated areas in and around the town centre, to support growth from the independent sector and to enhance Darlington's offer to shoppers and visitors.

Applications for discretionary rate relief will normally only be considered where the Council is satisfied that an award will result in tangible benefits to local residents and in particular, where the award will directly result in attracting businesses, investment, or jobs to Darlington.

Businesses interested in applying for relief under this section of the policy should meet the following criteria:

- Be new to Darlington town centre; not currently occupying a business premises in Darlington town centre.
- Want to occupy a currently empty ground floor retail unit or business premises in Darlington town centre.
- Must not be a business which is a charity shop, betting shop, off license, e-cigarette shop, pawnbroker, short-term high interest loan company or similar.
- Must agree and inform Darlington Borough Council of timescales in terms of moving into the vacant premises.

Priority will be given to the following:

- Businesses going into vacant units or business premises, preferably in a prominent ground floor location.
- Independent traders.
- Businesses able to source a level of financial contribution from the landlord, such as rent free periods.

State Aid

Discretionary relief will not be awarded in any circumstances where it appears that an award will result in the rate payer receiving state aid above the current de minimis level. Every application for discretionary relief must be accompanied by a statement from an appropriate person in the business or person representing the rate payer, setting out the amount of state aid that they have received in the previous three years. Applications will not be considered until this statement is received.

Exceptions

Discretionary relief will not be awarded to owners or landlords of empty properties, unless the purpose of the award is to assist in the occupation of that property.

Discretionary relief will not be awarded in respect of hereditaments that cannot be occupied, such as advertising hoardings, bus shelters, ATMs and telephone masts.

Making an application

Applications to discretionary relief under the 'hardship' provisions of this policy will be accepted from the business or their representative. Applications will only be accepted where the discretionary rate relief e-form on the Darlington Borough Council website has been completed.

Applications to discretionary relief under the 'retain jobs and grow business' and 'growth, investment and jobs' provisions of this policy will also be accepted from the business or their representative. Applications from the business or their representative will only be accepted where the discretionary rate relief e-form on the Darlington Borough Council website has been completed and where the application is supported by the Economic Growth section of the Council. Awards of discretionary relief under these provisions may also be made following a direct referral from the Economic Growth section of the Council, without the need for an application form being completed. However, in these cases the business or their representative must have made a statement as to the amount of state aid they have received in the previous three years.

There is no deadline by which the application must be made, but rate payers are encouraged to apply as soon as possible, as recovery of Business Rates will not be suspended whilst awaiting an application.

A rate payer awarded discretionary relief is required to notify the Council of any change of circumstances that may be relevant to their ongoing award.

Further applications can be made under this policy once an award has expired, or if a rate payer's circumstances change, or worsen if they have previously been refused. When deciding a repeat application, the Council will consider what actions the rate payer has taken to improve their circumstances and what efforts they have made to pay their Business Rates, such as keeping to agreed payment arrangements.

Amount and period of award

Both the amount and period of the award of discretionary relief is at the discretion of the Council.

The amount of the award will not exceed the full Business Rates liability. Awards of discretionary relief will not be made beyond 31st March of the financial year in which the award is made. A new application must be made for each financial year; however, awards are intended to provide short-term relief and will not usually exceed 12 months.

When making decisions on applications to discretionary relief, the Council will consider the rate payer's circumstances, including:

- The rate payer's Business Rates payment history (if applicable), and what efforts they have made to pay their rates liability.
- Whether or not all other avenues of financial assistance have been pursued.
- Whether or not the rate payer has engaged with the application process and provided all the relevant and requested information to support the application, including the statement relating to state aid.
- Any difficulties experienced by the rate payer, which prohibits them from being able to meet their rates liability and the length of time that this difficulty is expected to exist.
- The financial position of the business, including any outstanding debts.
- Any steps taken by the rate payer to help themselves, such as seeking financial advice, reviewing pricing and negotiating with creditors.
- Whether discretionary relief will help prevent hardship.
- Whether discretionary relief will help existing businesses in Darlington retain jobs and grow their business.
- Whether discretionary relief will help to attract firms, investment or jobs to Darlington.
- The impact of not awarding discretionary relief or restricting an award of discretionary relief may have on the rate payer and their business.

The above list is not exhaustive, and any other relevant factors and circumstances will be considered. The weight to be placed upon any factor considered by the Council will be a matter for the Council in its discretion.

An award of discretionary relief does not guarantee that a further award will be made at a later date, even if the rate payer's circumstances do not change.

Applications may be refused, or the level of award may be reduced if:

- The Council does not consider the rate payer's circumstances to be exceptional
- The rate payer has failed to comply with the application process
- The Council considers that the rate payer has sufficient income or capital to meet their rates liability
- The Council considers that the rate payer can make financial savings in other areas of expenditure or outgoings
- The rate payer's expenditure is considered unreasonable or excessive
- The rate payer has wilfully refused to pay their Business Rates liability, or has not kept up with agreed payment arrangements, without good cause
- The Council is not satisfied that it would be reasonable for it to do so, having regard to the interests of persons liable to pay Council Tax set by it
- The Council is not in a financial position to make an award.

The above list is not exhaustive, and any other relevant factors and circumstances may be considered and may be used to refuse an application.

Discretionary relief is applied as a reduction in Business Rates liability. The reduction will be applied to the rate payer's Rates account and a revised bill will be issued.

Notification of decisions

The rate payer will be notified in writing whether the application is successful or not. Where the application is refused, the letter will contain the Council's reason for refusing the application.

The Council will notify the rate payer of the outcome of the application normally within one month of the application being received, or as soon as practicable.

Reviewing Decisions

There will be no right of appeal against a discretionary relief decision. The decision will only be reviewed if the ratepayer has new or further information they wish to have considered.

There is no automatic right of appeal against the Council's use of discretionary powers, this would be by way of an application of Judicial Review to the high court.

Ending a discretionary relief award

The Council may decide to end an award of discretionary relief before the notified period end date. This could be where:

- The rate payer's liability to Business Rates ends.
- The rate payer has a change in their circumstances relevant to their discretionary relief award.
- The rate payer has misrepresented or failed to disclose a material fact, fraudulently or otherwise.
- Discretionary relief has been awarded in error.
- The rate payer wilfully refuses to pay their Business Rates, or does not keep up with agreed payment arrangements, without good cause.
- The Council is no longer in a financial position to continue to make an award.

Finance

There is no separate budget for these awards, they are financed by Council Tax payers within the borough and are paid from the Council's Collection Fund.

Section 2 Council Tax

This policy sets out the criteria for making awards of Discretionary Relief to Council Tax payers in exceptional circumstances, where:

- Council Tax payers are in receipt of Council Tax Support and are experiencing severe financial hardship
- Council Tax payers who, through no fault of their own, have experienced a crisis or event that has made their home uninhabitable.

However, all applications will be assessed on their own individual merits.

Legislation

Section 13a (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003) provides the Council with the following discretionary powers:

- Where a person is liable to pay Council Tax in respect of any chargeable dwelling, the billing authority in which the dwelling is situated, may reduce the amount to such an extent as they think fit
- This includes power to reduce an amount to nil, and
- May be exercised in relation to particular cases or by determining a class of cases in which liability is to be reduced to an extent provided by the determination.

Accordingly, Darlington Borough Council can apply discretionary relief in respect of any amount of Council Tax liability.

Purpose of the Policy

Part 1 of this section details the application of section 13a (1) (c) discretion to certain classes of Care Leaver.

Part 2 of this section details the conditions that should be satisfied in order for the Council to consider relief under section 13a (1) (c) for all other cases not covered in Part 1.

Part 3 of this section details reviewing decisions relating to parts 1 and 2.

Part 4 of this section details how discretionary awards are financed.

The policy is intended to enable the Council to provide relief to those in the most extreme financial hardship.

Part 1 Discretionary Relief for Care Leavers

A decision was made by Council on the 24 November 2022 to grant a Council Tax exemption for Care Leavers with effect from 1 April 2023. Awards will be made automatically for care leavers meeting the following definition and eligibility criteria.

Definition

A care leaver, for the purpose of this Council Tax exemption, is a person aged 18 to 24 who was formerly a child in the care of Darlington Borough Council, or any other local authority, and has then become a “care leaver” as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

Eligibility Criteria

The following eligibility criteria will apply for the Council Tax exemption:

- The care leaver must be liable for Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence.

- The exemption will apply from 1 April 2023, or from their 18th birthday, if this is after that date. Any person aged under 18 who is liable for Council Tax on a dwelling they occupy as their sole or main residence, is subject to a statutory Council Tax exemption.
- The Council Tax exemption will be applied to the Council Tax liability, after taking into account any other available Council Tax discounts to which the care leaver may be entitled (such as the single occupancy discount).
- The Council Tax exemption will apply to the full Council Tax liability where:
 - The care leaver has sole Council Tax liability
 - The care leaver is jointly and severally liable for Council Tax with one or more eligible care leavers who are also under the age of 25
 - The care leaver is jointly and severally liable for Council Tax with one other person who is their partner.
- Otherwise, where the care leaver is jointly and severally liable for Council Tax with one or more other persons, the Council Tax exemption will be divided by the number of people who are jointly and severally liable.

The Council Tax exemption will cease on the care leaver's 25th birthday.

Making an Application

Requests for a reduction can be made by:

- Completing a Care Leaver Discount e-form on the Darlington Borough Council website, and
- Providing evidence from the relevant local authority that the care leaver satisfies the requirements of entitlement, or
- By notification from the Council's Looked After Through Care Team confirming the care leaver satisfies the requirements of entitlement, and
- Confirming the care leaver's name, address and date of birth.

Notification of the Decision

Decisions in respect of care leaver relief will be made by Council and where the relief is awarded the care leaver will receive an amended Council Tax bill, detailing the discount, and confirming a nil balance.

Where care leaver relief is not awarded, the applicant will be notified in writing normally within one month of submitting the request, confirming the reasons for refusal.

Part 2 Discretionary Relief for Council Tax payers other than Care Leavers

Hardship

Criteria

The Council will consider awarding discretionary relief if all of the following circumstances are satisfied:

- The applicant has an outstanding Council Tax balance
- There is evidence of severe financial hardship
- No other occupants of the property could contribute towards the Council Tax payable
- Enforcing the full Council Tax liability would result in severe hardship, for example insufficient money available for basic and essential needs such as food, heating, lighting or essential medical needs
- The liable person or persons do not have access to assets or funds of any kind which could be used to meet their Council Tax liability
- The liable person or persons can demonstrate that they have no available income to pay their Council Tax
- All alternative means of resolving the outstanding liability have been exhausted, this includes but is not limited to:
 - Council Tax discounts
 - Council Tax exemptions
 - Council Tax Support
 - Valuation Office Agency appeal and/or Valuation Tribunal application
- If the liability relates to a retrospective period, the customer can demonstrate and evidence that arrears did not accrue due to their wilful refusal to pay their Council Tax
- The applicant's circumstances are exceptional.

If all of the above circumstances are satisfied, the Council will consider granting relief.

Non-Hardship

Criteria

- In the event the Council Tax payers who, through no fault of their own, have experienced a crisis or event that has made their home uninhabitable, and do not have insurance which covers their Council Tax liability.
- The liable person or persons can demonstrate that they have no available income or capital to pay their Council Tax.
- The applicant's circumstances are exceptional.

If all of the above circumstances are satisfied, the Council will consider granting relief.

In all cases, the Council retains ultimate discretion, and all requests will be considered on their individual merits.

Making an Application

Requests for a reduction can be made by:

- Completing a Council Tax Discretionary Discount e-form on the Darlington Borough Council website
- A third party such as Citizens Advice Bureau can make an application on behalf of a Council Tax payer, if the body has authority to do so; the request must set out:
 - The circumstances on which the application is based

- Details of the applicant's financial circumstances

In both circumstances, any evidence relevant to the application may be requested. The Council may refuse to award relief where the absence of information and evidence prevents it from reaching an informed decision regarding the applicant's circumstances.

Amount and period of award

The Council retains discretion over the amount and the period for which relief may be granted.

Any amount of relief granted will be credited to the Council Tax account and should not result in a credit balance on the account. Relief will only be granted on liability for the financial year in which the request is made or for such prior period as the Council deems appropriate.

When making decisions on applications to discretionary relief, the Council will consider the Council Tax payer's circumstances, including:

- The liable person or persons payment history (if applicable), and what efforts they have made to pay their Council Tax liability.
- Whether or not all other avenues of financial assistance have been pursued.
- Whether or not the liable person or persons have engaged with the application process and provided all the relevant and requested information to support the application.
- Any difficulties experienced by the liable person or persons, which prohibits them from being able to meet their liability and the length of time that this difficulty is expected to exist.
- Any other outstanding debts.
- Any steps taken by the liable person or persons to help themselves, such as seeking financial advice.

The above list is not exhaustive, and any other relevant factors and circumstances will be considered, at the Council's discretion.

An award of discretionary relief does not guarantee that a further award will be made at a later date, even if the Council Tax payer's circumstances do not change.

Applications may be refused, or the level of award may be reduced if:

- The Council does not consider the circumstances to be exceptional
- The liable person or persons have failed to comply with the application process
- The Council considers that the liable person or persons have sufficient income or capital to meet their liability
- The Council considers that the liable person or persons can make financial savings in other areas of expenditure or outgoings
- The liable person or persons expenditure is considered unreasonable or excessive
- The liable person or persons have wilfully refused to pay their Council Tax liability, or has not kept up with agreed payment arrangements, without good cause
- The Council is not in a financial position to make an award.

The above list is not exhaustive, and any other relevant factors and circumstances may be considered and may be used to refuse an application.

Discretionary relief is applied as a reduction in Council Tax liability. The reduction will be applied to the Council Tax account and a revised bill will be issued.

Notification of the Decision

Decisions in respect of discretionary relief will be made by the Council and where the relief is awarded, the Council Tax payer will be notified in writing normally within one month of submitting the request, or as soon as practicable, and will receive an amended Council Tax bill, detailing the discount, and confirming any balance outstanding.

Where discretionary relief is not awarded, the applicant will be notified in writing confirming the reasons for refusal, normally within one month of submitting the request, or as soon as practicable.

Ending a discretionary relief award

The Council retains the right to withdraw relief at any time, including for retrospective periods. This could be where:

- The Council Tax liability ends.
- The liable person or persons have a change in their circumstances relevant to their discretionary relief award.
- The liable person or persons have misrepresented or failed to disclose a material fact, fraudulently or otherwise.
- Discretionary relief has been awarded in error.
- The liable person or persons wilfully refuse to pay their Council Tax liability, or does not keep up with agreed payment arrangements, without good cause.
- The Council is no longer in a financial position to continue to make an award.

The liable person or persons must notify the Council of any such relevant change in their circumstances with 21 days of the change occurring.

Part 3 Reviewing Decisions relating to Parts 1 and 2

Customers can request a review of a decision in respect of discretionary relief.

Requests for a review or reconsideration should be made in writing by letter or by completing an Enquiry e-form on the Darlington Borough Council website, within one month of notification of the original decision and should detail the reasons for the request.

Upon receipt of a request, a different Officer to that who made the original decision, will review the original decision and consider whether there are grounds to change the decision. If further evidence or information is required, it will be requested from the customer.

The Council will notify the customer of its decision normally within one month of receiving a request for review or reconsideration, or as soon as practicable.

Part 4 Finance

There is no separate budget for these awards, they are financed by other Council Tax payer's within the borough and are paid from the Council's Collection Fund.

**ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
4 JANUARY 2024**

COUNCIL TAX AND BUSINESS RATES RECOVERY STRATEGY 2024-2029

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

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the draft Council Tax and Business Rates Recovery Strategy 2024-2029 before approval by Cabinet on 9 January 2024.

Summary

2. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992 provide the legal framework for the collection of Council Tax. The Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Local Lists) Regulations 1989 provide the legal framework for the collection of Business Rates.
3. Once a Liability Order has been obtained from the Magistrate's Court for unpaid Council Tax and Business Rates, the Council has a number of options to recover and enforce these debts.
4. The Council Tax and Business Rates Recovery Strategy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** sets out how the Council will use its discretionary and statutory powers to facilitate payments, recover debts and maintain a firm but fair approach to collection and recovery.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Members consider the draft Council Tax and Business Rates Recovery Strategy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** and agree its onward submission to Cabinet.

Reasons

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

- (a) The Council has a statutory responsibility for the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates, including the recovery and enforcement of debts.
- (b) The adoption of a formal Council Tax and Business Rates Recovery Strategy will help to demonstrate how we will exercise our discretionary and statutory powers to ensure fairness and consistency of decision making.

Anthony Sandys
Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues

Background Papers

- (i) Local Government Finance Act 1988
- (ii) Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Local Lists) Regulations 1989
- (iii) Local Government Finance Act 1992
- (iv) Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992
- (v) Taking Control of Goods Act 2014
- (vi) Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space Moratorium and Mental Health Crisis Moratorium) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues
Health and Wellbeing	There are no issues
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There is no impact in this report
Diversity	The Council must adhere to the Equality Act 2010, in the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates
Wards Affected	All wards are affected
Groups Affected	People with liability to pay Council Tax and Business Rates
Budget and Policy Framework	The issues contained within this report do not represent a change to Council budget or the Council’s policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This report supports the Council Plan to maximise Council Tax and Business Rates income
Efficiency	The collection of Council Tax and Business Rates underpins the Council’s MTFP
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	Care leavers under the age of 25 are exempt from Council Tax under our Discretionary Relief powers and are therefore unaffected by this strategy

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992 provide the legal framework for the collection of Council Tax. The Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Local Lists) Regulations 1989 provide the legal framework for the collection of Business Rates.
8. The Council Tax and Business Rates Recovery Strategy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** sets out how the Council will use its discretionary and statutory powers to facilitate payments, recover debts and maintain a firm but fair approach to collection and recovery, and covers the following areas:
 - (a) The aims and principles of the strategy, and the legal framework for the collection, recovery and enforcement of debts.
 - (b) The statutory processes for deciding liability, the issuing of demand notices and the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates through the issuing of reminders, up to and including Court action.
 - (c) The process of obtaining Liability Orders from the Magistrate's Court for Council Tax and Business Rates debts.
 - (d) The recovery and enforcement of debts, once a Liability Order has been obtained from the Magistrate's Court, including:
 - (i) Payment arrangements
 - (ii) Attachment of Earnings
 - (iii) Deductions from certain welfare benefits
 - (iv) Enforcement Agents
 - (v) Charging Orders
 - (vi) Bankruptcy/Liquidation proceedings
 - (e) How we deal with vulnerable customers and the Breathing Space scheme.
9. The collection of Council Tax and Business Rates is a high priority for the Council and is the main revenue source for the funding of key Council services. A summary of Council Tax and Business Rates collection from 2012 is given at **Tables 1 and 2** below and shows that collection rates remain high and arrears are well managed.

Table 1: Council Tax collection summary (as at March 2023)

Year	Council Tax (£,000)				Percentage Collected to date
	Due	Collected	Written-off	Outstanding	
2012-13	41,265	40,894	360	11	99.1%
2013-14	44,666	44,175	480	11	98.9%
2014-15	46,295	45,695	580	20	98.7%
2015-16	47,880	47,199	652	29	98.6%
2016-17	50,245	49,520	675	50	98.6%
2017-18	53,296	52,483	702	111	98.5%
2018-19	57,179	56,303	643	233	98.5%
2019-20	60,119	59,208	389	522	98.5%
2020-21	61,624	60,463	251	910	98.1%
2021-22	67,717	65,546	298	1,873	96.8%
2022-23	71,132	68,358	103	2,671	96.1%

Table 2: Business rates collection summary (as at March 2023)

Year	Business Rates (£,000)				Percentage Collected to date
	Due	Collected	Written-off	Outstanding	
2012-13	32,352	31,771	573	8	98.2%
2013-14	33,266	32,673	575	18	98.2%
2014-15	33,556	33,119	436	1	98.7%
2015-16	34,090	33,758	328	4	99.0%
2016-17	35,776	35,340	421	15	98.8%
2017-18	33,758	33,372	370	16	98.9%
2018-19	34,042	33,662	321	59	98.8%
2019-20	33,388	33,223	103	62	99.5%
2020-21	18,480	18,474	54	-48	100.0%
2021-22	26,704	26,662	38	4	99.8%
2022-23	31,885	31,817	2	66	99.8%

Financial Implications

10. The recommendation in paragraph 5 will not have any significant financial implications and therefore it is not intended to amend the budget in the MTFP.



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

Council Tax and Business Rates Recovery Strategy

2024 to 2029

Introduction

Council Tax and Business Rates are an essential source of Local Government Revenue. Councils use the monies collected to deliver key, quality public services including Adult Social Care, Children's Services, refuse collection and leisure facilities. The efficient collection of Council Tax and Business Rates allows the Council to consistently make this broad range of services available, but it is vital that we have sufficient powers to recover any arrears from those who do not pay.

However, Council Tax and Business Rates collection and enforcement should never come at the cost of fair treatment of residents and local businesses. Where residents do not pay on time, the Council faces a range of choices about how and when to use the discretionary and statutory powers to facilitate payments and recover debts. When considering appropriate recovery action, the Council will consider all factors known to us and will maintain a firm but fair approach to collection and recovery, whilst distinguishing between those who are unable to pay and those who deliberately won't pay.

Purpose and Principles of the Strategy

The purpose of this strategy is:

- To use cost effective and fair collection recovery practices regarding all debts, ensuring that those with the means to pay, do so
- To provide a professional, consistent and timely approach to recovery action
- To fully consider our customers' circumstances and their ability to pay
- To improve the levels of income collection and reduce the levels of arrears, bad debt and write-offs
- To ensure that debts are managed in accordance with legislation provisions and best practice.

The principles of this strategy are to ensure:

- We are effective and responsive to our customers to avoid enforcement action being necessary
- We are approachable to customers who are willing to make contact at an early stage when financial difficulties occur
- We promptly identify deliberate non-payers or customers who delay payment
- We only take enforcement action when it is appropriate
- We treat all individuals consistently and fairly regardless of any protected characteristics and to ensure that individual's rights under Data Protection and Human Rights legislation are protected.

Legal Framework

To enable Local Authorities to administer Council Tax and Business Rates, statutory powers exist to ensure a fair and consistent approach is followed.

The legal framework for the enforcement of Council Tax is provided by Schedule 2 and Schedule 4 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992 (SI. 1992/613).

The legal framework for the enforcement of Business Rates is the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Non-Domestic Rating (Collection and Enforcement) (Local Lists) Regulations 1989.

The Council has a statutory duty to:

- Decide liability for Council Tax and Business Rates
- Issue bills and reminder notices
- Collect Council Tax and Business Rates when it is due
- Undertake recovery action for Council Tax and Business Rates arrears
- Enforce Council Tax and Business Rates debts.

Before any Council Tax and Business Rates can be collected, the Council has a statutory duty to decide liability for both. This includes:

- Identifying properties liable for a Council Tax charge and notifying the Valuation Office Agency of any changes
- Identifying properties liable for Business Rates and notifying the Valuation Office Agency of any changes
- Identifying the person(s) liable for Council Tax following the Hierarchy of Liability set in legislation. This is usually the occupier(s) of the property (owners or tenants) or the owners or landlords for empty properties
- Identifying the person(s) or companies liable for Business Rates
- Identifying any exemptions or discounts (including Council Tax Support) that apply
- Identifying any empty property premiums that apply.

Demand Notice

A Council Tax/Business Rates bill is legally defined as a demand notice. No payment can be requested unless a demand notice requiring payment has been served. Annual bills are issued around mid-March for the forthcoming financial year with adjustment notices being issued at any time during the year if there is an amendment to a charge.

Payment of Council Tax/Business Rates is due annually and a taxpayer has a statutory right to pay by ten instalments (April to January) or request that the payments are spread over twelve instalments (April to March). The number of instalments available will decrease as adjustment notices are issued throughout the year. The Council can dictate which date in the month payments should be made – Darlington Borough Council's instalments are due on the 1st of each month for those payers who do not opt to pay by Direct Debit. For those

who opt to pay by Direct Debt, there are currently 5 dates within the month, whereby a Direct Debit can be taken 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd or the 27th.

Non-statutory payment arrangements can be made at the discretion of the Council (such as weekly payments) however these are not subject to the statutory recovery process.

In all cases, the Council Tax/Business Rates must be paid in full by 31st March.

Joint and Several Liability

Joint and several liability means in law that all, or both, the jointly liable parties are each responsible for the whole liability. As a result, the Council can recover the whole amount due from any one of them and they are then left to make arrangements in relation to respective contributions between themselves.

When Council Tax is not being paid, the Council will take action for recovery of the debt against any or all of the liable parties.

Council Tax and Business Rates Recovery

A recovery programme is developed and implemented, which can be amended by adding or removing dates, dependant on local factors.

If a Council Tax or Business Rates payment is missed, we will send out a reminder notice allowing 7 days for the amount to be paid. If the payment is not made within the 7 days, a notice of legal proceedings (or final notice) will be issued asking for the whole year's Council Tax or Business Rates to be paid. If the full year's Council Tax or Business Rates is not paid, then we will ask the Magistrates' Court to issue a summons for Non-Payment of Council Tax or Business Rates (see appendix 1), whereby a Liability Order for the balance including costs will be obtained.

Once a summons has been issued, if full payment of the debt is made including the summons costs, no further action will be taken. If a debtor is unable to do this, we will agree to a suitable repayment plan on the understanding a liability order will be granted and the full costs incurred are payable. If the payment arrangement is maintained and payments are received as agreed, then no further recovery action will be taken. If the payment arrangement is not paid, then we will write to the customer and ask them for their financial situation to assess their ability to pay the debt.

Where customers engage, we will endeavour to assist and accommodate their needs by promoting entitlement to the correct discounts/exemptions/discretionary awards at the first point of contact. Guidance and signposting will be provided alongside addressing the need to pay as much as they can whilst assistance is sought.

Liability Order

A Liability Order is granted by the Magistrates' Court in respect of the unpaid Council Tax and Business Rates and gives the Council powers to recover and enforce the debt in the most appropriate manner available.

The Liability Order is not a written notification; it is a verbal instruction made by the Magistrates' Court and there is no legal requirement for the Council to provide a Court signed document.

The Council must satisfy the Court that they have followed the legal process to ask for a Liability Order to be granted. The legal process includes confirmation that the statutory notices have been issued within relevant timescales, confirmation that the debt remains outstanding on that date and confirmation that the summons has been posted to the last known address we believe the debtor to be at.

Once the Magistrates' Court has granted the Liability Order, a notice is issued to the debtor confirming this. Within the notice for Council Tax debtors, there is a request for information, which should be completed and returned informing us of their financial situation.

Request for Information

Where a Liability Order has been granted and the sum remains unpaid, the Council are able to request certain information from the debtor to enable the most efficient and effective recovery of the debt, whilst understanding the debtor's situation. The information which may be the subject of a request is:

- Date of birth
- National Insurance number
- Name and address of employer
- Information as to the earnings of the debtor
- Information of other sources of income if not employed
- If any other individuals reside in the property
- Offer of repayment

The debtor is under a duty to supply the information within 14 days of the request being made. It is a criminal offence not to supply the information without reasonable excuse. Persons guilty of the offence may be liable to conviction of a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale.

The Council will not normally have up to date information of this kind about the debtor, therefore the request for information is usually the first step once the Liability Order has been obtained.

If the offer of repayment is accepted, then a formal payment agreement will be implemented, which is confirmed in writing. If the payment agreement is maintained and the debt repaid, then no other recovery action will be taken.

Payment Arrangements

Where a debtor is unable to repay the debt in full, we may agree to a payment arrangement on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis. Consideration will be made to the debtors' historic payment history along with their current financial situation to make the payments.

In some cases, a payment arrangement will be included within the notice of Liability Order, which will ensure the debt is repaid within the financial year (the Council will not issue these arrangements for any liability orders obtained after 1st January within the financial year, due to the time restrictions for repayment). If the payment arrangement is maintained and payments are received as agreed, then no further recovery action will be taken.

Payment arrangements are monitored on a monthly basis. If a payment arrangement falls into arrears for the first time, a reminder notice is issued. The notice will advise of the amount the arrangement is in arrears and ask that it be paid within 7 days. If it is not brought up to date or any future default occurs, then the arrangement will be cancelled.

Where an arrangement is cancelled, the Council will write to the debtor advising them of the full amount due and advise the further enforcement options which may be taken.

Enforcement of Debts

Where we are unable to agree a payment plan to repay the Council Tax or Business Rates debt, or the customer does not make the payments, legislation allows for us to recover the money through a number of alternative options:

- Attachment of Earnings
- Deductions from certain welfare benefits
- Attachment to Members Allowances
- Enforcement Agents
- Charging Orders
- Bankruptcy/Liquidation proceedings
- Committal to Prison

With regards Business Rate debt, legislation allows for us to recover the money through:

- Enforcement Agents
- Bankruptcy/Liquidation Proceedings

Attachment of Earnings

If the Council know the debtor's employer, an Attachment of Earnings Order can be served on the employer. The employer then has a legal obligation to make deductions from the employee's earnings and forward the amounts deducted to the Council. The amounts to be deducted are prescribed by law and are dependent on the amount earned. A maximum of two Attachment of Earnings can be made at the same time.

Attachment of Earnings amounts to be deducted

Monthly net earnings	Percentage to be deducted
Less than £300	0%
£300 to £550	3%
£550 to £740	5%
£740 to £900	7%
£900 to £1,420	12%
£1,420 to £2,020	17%
Over £2,020	17% of the first £2,020 then 50% of the remainder

Deductions from Welfare Benefits

If it is identified the debtor is in receipt of certain benefits, the Council can apply to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to have amounts deducted from their benefit. These deductions are then sent to the Council, on a monthly basis. The maximum amount that can be deducted from the customer's benefits is set by the DWP.

The benefits from which deductions can be made include Universal Credit and certain legacy benefits. Deductions in respect of only one Liability Order can apply at a time, and we will not usually take any other enforcement action if deductions from benefit are being made. Consideration will be given to the debt amount owed and any ongoing liabilities when determining this route of recovery.

Attachment to Members Allowances

If a Liability Order is obtained in respect of an elected member of the Council, a deduction can be made from the member's allowance. The deduction rate is 40%. Elected members who are in arrears with their Council Tax may also be subject to a restriction in their voting rights at Council meetings.

Enforcement Agents

Enforcement Agents (formerly known as bailiffs) are one of the last resort actions for recovery taken by the Council. Referring a debt to an Enforcement Agent will only take place if:

- The Business Rate payer has not engaged or offered a suitable repayment plan for the debt, or paid the debt as agreed
- The Council Tax debtor has not paid the debt in full or has not kept up with instalment arrangements, and
- An Attachment of Earnings Order is not viable, and
- Deductions from Benefits cannot be made.

The Council will write to the debtor to advise them that if payment of the debt is not made, then it will be passed to the Council’s Enforcement Agent and further fees will be added to the debt. The fees that an Enforcement Agent will charge to the debtor are prescribed in the Taking Control of Goods Act 2014. The Enforcement Agent will collect the Compliance Fee first if payments are made then apportion the subsequent payments between the debt and Enforcement fees incurred.

Stage	Fee
Compliance stage (initial contact by telephone or letter)	£75
Enforcement stage (visit)	£235 (or 7.5% of the sum to be recovered if this is over £1,500)
Sale or disposal stage (taking of goods)	£110 (or 7.5% of the sum to be recovered if this is over £1,500)

The Enforcement Agent will attempt to contact a debtor by telephone or in writing as part of the compliance stage. Where this has been unsuccessful, the Enforcement Agent will visit the debtor’s property. At this stage the Enforcement Agent will use their discretion as to whether a payment arrangement is offered; any arrangement will usually be over a short period. Where a debtor contacts the Council about a debt referred to the Enforcement Agent, they will be referred to the Enforcement Agent to make a payment arrangement. The Council will only usually intervene if an issue of vulnerability arises.

The Enforcement Agent has the power to remove goods that belong to the debtor/business, to pay the outstanding debt. To ensure fair practice the Enforcement Agent will:

- Contact the debtor before removing goods and handle all goods with care
- Store the goods securely in accordance with Regulations
- Do not remove any essential items required for day-to day living or for business use
- Do not remove items belonging to a child, elderly or disabled person
- Follow all statutory requirements, such as vehicles clamped for 2 hours before a removal occurs.

Where the Enforcement Agent has been unsuccessful in obtaining payment and there are insufficient goods that can be removed to cover the value of the debt, they will issue a ‘nulla

bona' (no goods) certificate to the Council and return the debt. In these circumstances, the Council will decide if it is economical for the Council to take any further action.

Charging Orders

Where the debtor owns property and there is sufficient equity in the property to cover the outstanding debt, a charging order can be placed against the property as a secured charge (in a similar way to a mortgage). This means that if the property is sold, the Council Tax debt will be paid on completion of the sale.

A Charging Order secures the debt owed and does not enforce the debt as other recovery methods do. We may forego the security if other recovery options become more viable. However, in some cases the Council may force the sale of the property to recover the debt. Each case is looked at individually with the Council normally taking legal advice in such cases. The Council will usually add additional legal fees on to the debt.

Bankruptcy/Liquidation

Where the overall debt exceeds £5,000 the Council may consider bankruptcy/liquidation proceedings. In these circumstances, the Council will serve a 'statutory demand' on the debtor, and if full payment is not received, we can then petition for bankruptcy for Council Tax or commence a Winding Up petition against the company in the High Court for Business Rates. In most cases, the Court will expect the Council to have exhausted all other methods of recovery, including referral to Enforcement Agents.

In deciding if bankruptcy/liquidation proceedings is appropriate, the Council must weigh up the costs of taking such action, together with legal advice as to how likely the Council will be in recovering its debt. The Council will also have to consider the impact on the debtor/company and what action they have taken to improve their financial situation.

Bankruptcy/Liquidation is very often a last resort action where the debtor is wilfully refusing to pay their Council Tax or Business Rates and all other recovery actions have been exhausted. Any fees incurred in taking bankruptcy action will be paid by the debtor, although the likelihood of actually recovering these fees also has to be taken into account.

Committal to Prison

Where Enforcement Agent action to recover a debt has been unsuccessful, the Council can apply to the Magistrates' Court for a committal summons to be issued. This requires attendance at the Magistrates' Court to enable a means enquiry to be conducted to see whether failure to pay is due to 'wilful refusal' or 'culpable neglect'.

If the Magistrates decide that failure to pay was not due to wilful refusal or culpable neglect, they have the power to remit all or part of the debt. However, they are only entitled to remit the debt based on inability to pay.

Legal precedents exist confirming that Magistrates should not commit forthwith without either considering alternatives or having made suspended orders to coerce payment. Once

a suspended order has been made, debtors are obliged to pay as required by the order. If the debtor fails to pay, the Magistrates are entitled to remove the suspension and order that the debtor serves the sentence. In these cases, the Council will give debtors an opportunity to attend hearings to show cause why they have not paid. The term of imprisonment will not exceed three months for each Liability Order.

Committal is very much a 'last resort' action which is available to the Council, it is generally not considered as an effective method of recovery. This is mainly because if a debtor is sent to prison, then the debt is automatically remitted.

Whilst this option is available, it is not currently used by Darlington Borough Council.

See Appendix 2 regarding Debt Recovery following the granting of the Liability Order.

Vulnerability

We recognise that some members of the community may be considered vulnerable and therefore require additional support in dealing with their financial affairs and that these vulnerabilities may not always be obvious. The cause of the vulnerability may be temporary or permanent in nature and the degree of vulnerability will vary widely. We will consider each case on an individual basis and on its own merit as vulnerability does not necessarily mean that a person will not be required to pay amounts they are legally obliged to pay.

There is no legal definition for vulnerability, but this could include:

- A recent bereavement
- Mental health issues
- Long-term or terminal illness
- Dementia or brain injury
- Difficulty in communication

The Council must also adhere to the Equality Act 2010, where we have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments and have regard to protected characteristics. Once a vulnerability issue is identified we will provide the right support that is appropriate.

Breathing Space

The Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space Moratorium and Mental Health Crisis Moratorium) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 is a government scheme, which allows for temporary protection from creditors while professional debt advice is sought. The temporary protection lasts for up to 60 days and ensures enforcement action cannot be taken within this time frame, creditors cannot attempt contact nor add interest or charges.

If the individual is receiving mental health crisis treatment, then the protection lasts for the length of the treatment plus another 30 days.

Once confirmation of Breathing Space is received from the Insolvency Service, recovery of Council Tax debt is suspended, except for debt subject to Attachment of Earnings orders and deductions from benefits.

During Breathing Space, it is essential that any existing payment arrangements, including unsummonsed Council Tax instalments are maintained.

Debts where we are unable to recover

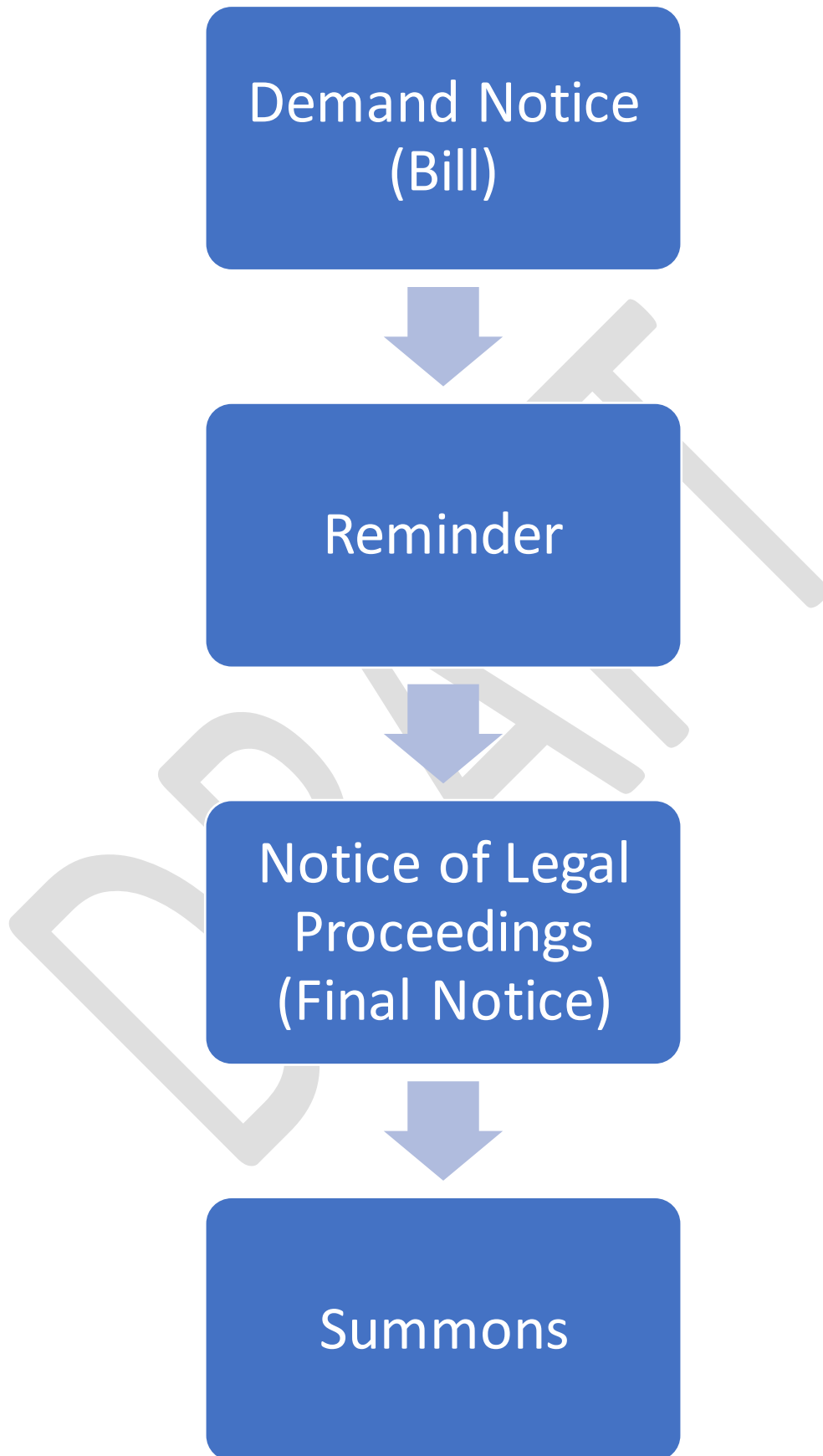
Whilst we will make every effort to pursue outstanding debts, it is recognised that in some circumstances some amounts are not recoverable. Good practice dictates that where debt is irrecoverable, prompt and regular write-off action should be undertaken. The reasoning behind the debt being written off should demonstrate one or more of the following conditions:

- Legal action is unlikely to be successful
- The debt is no longer cost effective to recover
- Recovery of the debt would place the debtor into hardship
- The debt is not recoverable for legal reasons
- No funds are available in a deceased estate
- Legal action would cost more than the actual debt
- Tracing of a debtor has been unsuccessful
- The debt is subject to a form of insolvency
- The debt has been created by an error within the Council
- The debt has been remitted by the Court.

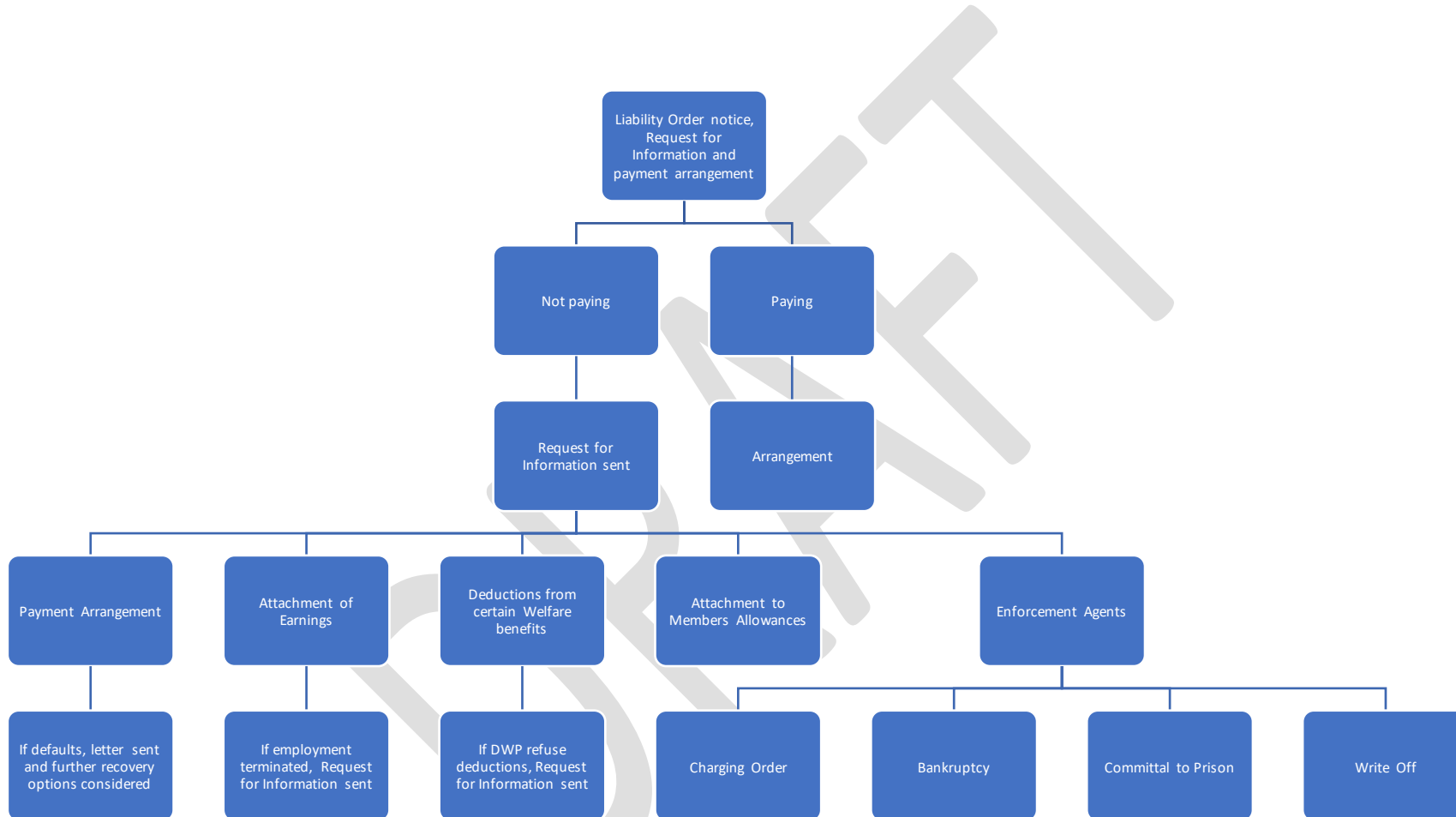
We do have a right to reinstate any debt, subject to statutory deadlines, where it becomes apparent that the write-off reasoning is no longer applicable, for example a debtor has subsequently been traced.

Where a debt for Council Tax or Business Rates is subject to voluntary insolvency, we must cease all recovery action and submit the appropriate paperwork to the relevant Insolvency Practitioner for their consideration. This debt is initially written-off but may be subject to dividend payments.

Appendix 1 – Pre-summons collection process



Appendix 2 – Recovery and Enforcement Process



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**ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
4 JANUARY 2024**

**ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
WORK PROGRAMME**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during the next Municipal Year and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest should be included.

Summary

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

Recommendation

4. Members are requested to consider and approve the attached draft work programme as the agreed work programme and consider any additional items which they might wish to include.

**Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance**

Background Papers

There were no background papers used in the preparation of this report.

Mike Conway: Extension 6309

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Health and Well Being	This report has no direct implications to the Health and Well Being of residents of Darlington.
Carbon Impact	There are no issues which this report needs to address.
Diversity	There are no issues relating to diversity which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Ward is considered to be minimal.
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Group is considered to be minimal.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Council Plan	The report contributes to the Council Plan in a number of ways through the involvement of Members in contributing to the delivery of the Plan.
Efficiency	The Work Programmes are integral to scrutinising and monitoring services efficiently (and effectively), however this report does not identify specific efficiency savings.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

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

'a borough where economic growth is high and the benefits are enjoyed by all residents'

by delivering

- More sustainable and well paid jobs
- More businesses
- More homes

9. The vision for the Resources Portfolio is :-

'a Council that is financially stable and delivering much needed services and support for the Borough'

Forward Plan and Additional Items

10. Once the Work Programme has been agreed by this Scrutiny Committee, any Member seeking to add a new item to the work programme will need to complete a quad of aims. A revised process for adding an item to a previously approved work programme, has been agreed by the Monitoring and Co-ordination Group.
11. Details of the items included on the Forward Plan has been attached at **Appendix 2** for information.

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ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

	Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer	Scrutiny's Role
RESOURCES				
	Performance Management Framework	Work to be undertaken to look at relevant PI's. Informal meeting to be arranged	Relevant Assistant Directors	To understand/monitor and challenge the indicators
	Sickness Absence Year-end turn out	To be circulated to Members of the Scrutiny Committee as a briefing note	Brett Nielsen	N/A
	Health and Safety Year-end turn out	To be circulated to Members of the Scrutiny Committee as a briefing note	Brett Nielsen	N/A
	Medium-Term Financial Plan - Monitoring	Quarterly monitoring reports to be submitted to meetings of this Scrutiny Committee	Brett Nielsen	To contribute and challenge the Medium-Term Financial Plan and assist with the implementation and development of the required savings
	Capital Programme and project Position Statement	Quarterly monitoring reports to be submitted to meetings of this Scrutiny Committee Most recent – 2 November 2023	Anthony Hewitt	To look at the position

	Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer	Scrutiny's Role
	Medium-Term Financial Plan	4 January 2024 Special - 18 January 2024	Brett Nielsen	To provide a response to Cabinet on the proposals in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Plan
	Discretionary Housing Payment Policy	4 January 2024	Anthony Sandys	To review and provide a response to Cabinet
	Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy	4 January 2024	Anthony Sandys	To review and provide a response to Cabinet
	Council Tax and Business Rates Debt Recovery Strategy	4 January 2024	Anthony Sandys	To review and provide a response to Cabinet
ECONOMY				
106	Economic Strategy	2 February 2023	Mark Ladyman	Development of Strategy
114	Housing Strategy	TBC	David Hand	Development of the Strategy and Actions
209	Climate Change	On-going	Cabinet Member	To update on the work of the Review Group
	Office Demand Study	TBC	Mark Ladyman	Update
	Housing Services Climate Change Strategy	4 January 2023	Anthony Sandys	To update Scrutiny on current strategy

Past Items				
	Topic	Date	Lead Officer	Scrutiny's Role
	Investment Fund	31 August 2023	Brett Nielsen	To consider progress against the agreed investments being funded through the Investment Fund.
	Customer Services and Digital Strategy	31 August 2023	Anthony Sandys	To brief Members on the work being undertaken
	Complaints, Compliments and Comments - Annual Report 2019/20	31 August 2023	Lee Downey	To look at the position
	Complaints Made to Local Government Ombudsman	31 August 2023	Lee Downey	To consider the outcome of cases which have been determined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman (HO) and forward any view to Cabinet
	Council Tax Support Scheme	2 November 2023	Anthony Sandys	To provide comment to Cabinet on the proposed scheme

	E&R Performance Indicators 2022 – 2023 Q4	2 November 2023	Brett Nielsen	
	Council Tax Changes to Empty Property Premiums 2024	2 November 2023	Anthony Sandys	To review and provide a response to Cabinet
	Economic Impact Study	2 November 2023	Mark Ladyman	Update
	Markets Update	2 November 2023	Mark Ladyman	To update Scrutiny
	Towns Fund	2 November 2023	Mark Ladyman	To update Scrutiny

**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
FORWARD PLAN**

APPENDIX 2



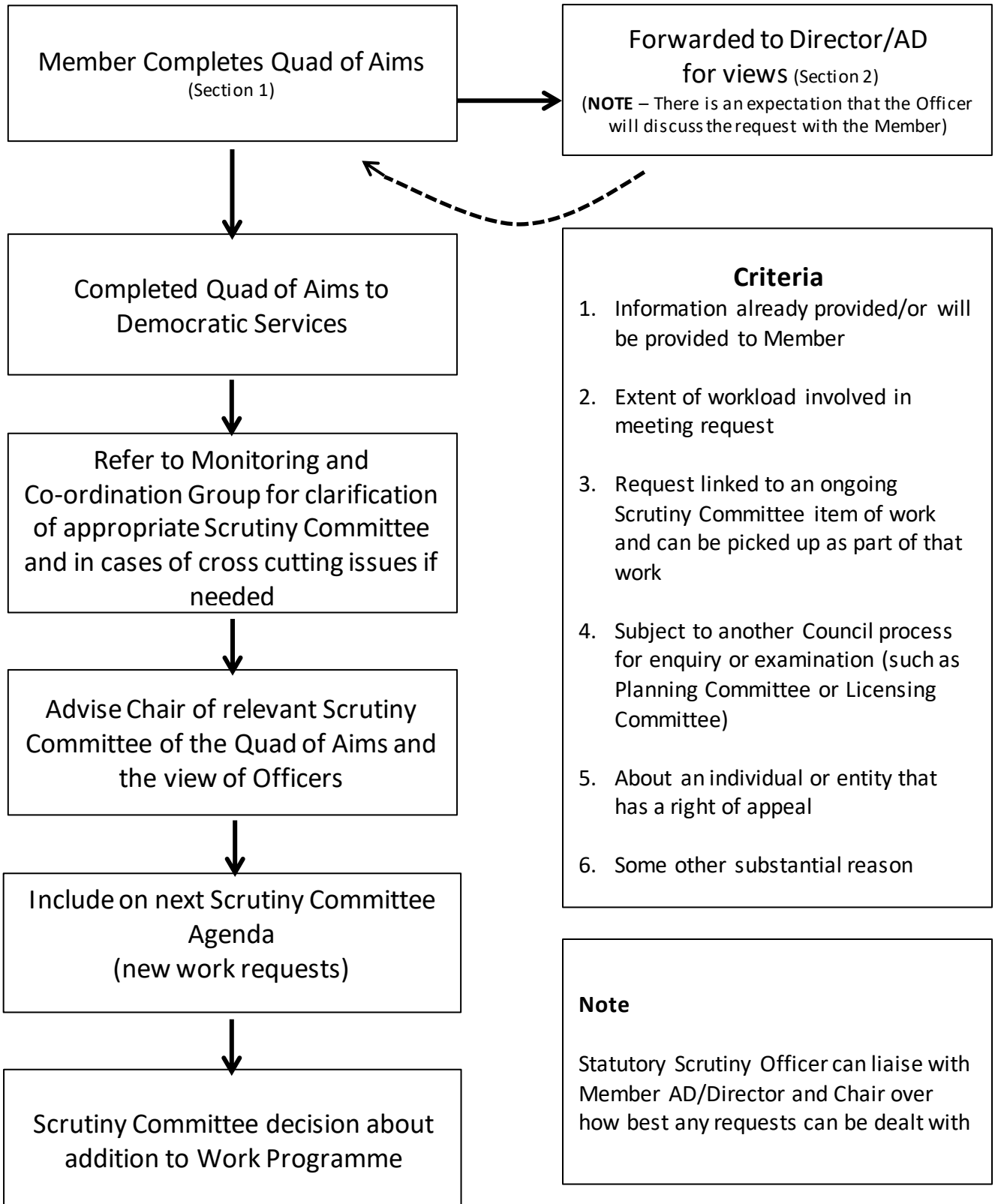
**FORWARD PLAN
FOR THE PERIOD: 6 DECEMBER 2023 - 30 APRIL 2024**

Title	Decision Maker and Date
Council Tax and Business Rates Debt Recovery Strategy 2024/29	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy 2024/29	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Delivery of New Homes at Blackwell - Joint Venture Proposal	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Discretionary Housing Payment Policy 2024/29	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Housing Services Climate Change Strategy	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Land at Central Park – Sale to Network Rail	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Maintained Schools Capital Programme - Summer 2024 and High Needs Capital	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Northern Echo Redevelopment	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Proposed Acquisition of former Wilkos, East Street, Darlington	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Revised Climate Change Action Plan	Council 25 Jan 2024 Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Revised Climate Change Strategy	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Schedule of Transactions - January 2024	Cabinet 9 Jan 2024
Calendar of Council and Committee Meetings 2024/25	Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Housing Revenue Account - Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2026/28	Council 15 Feb 2024 Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Land at Faverdale - Burtree Garden Village - Proposed Infrastructure Development Agreement (IDA)	Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Local Development Scheme (LDS)	Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2024/25 to 2027/28	Council 15 Feb 2024 Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring - Quarter 3	Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy	Council 15 Feb 2024 Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3	Cabinet 6 Feb 2024
Schools Admissions 2025/26	Cabinet 6 Feb 2024

**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
FORWARD PLAN**

Council Plan	Council 21 Mar 2024 Cabinet 5 Mar 2024
Local Transport Plan	Cabinet 5 Mar 2024
Offset Strategy	Cabinet 5 Mar 2024
Regulatory Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)	Cabinet 5 Mar 2024
Annual Procurement Plan	Cabinet 9 Apr 2024

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



PLEASE RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

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

SECTION 1 TO BE COMPLETED BY MEMBERS

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

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

Signed Councillor

Date

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

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

Signed **Position** **Date**

PLEASE RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

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