



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Agenda

10.00 am, Thursday, 3 April 2025

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 this Scrutiny Committee:-
 - a) 30 January 2025 Meeting of the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee
 - b) 26 February 2025 Meeting of the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee (Pages 3 - 10)
4. Inclusive Growth Strategy for Darlington – Report of the Business Growth and Investment Manager (Pages 11 - 14)
5. Artificial Intelligence –Report of the Head of Strategy, Performance and Communications (Pages 15 - 18)
6. Agile and Blended Working –Report of the Assistant Director Resources (Pages 19 - 30)
7. Work Programme –Report of Assistant Director Law and Governance (Pages 31 - 46)
8. 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
9. Questions



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Wednesday, 26 March 2025

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

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

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Olivia Hugill, Democratic Officer, Resources and Governance, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays E-mail: olivia.hugill@darlington.gov.uk or telephone 01325 405363.

ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 30 January 2025

PRESENT – Councillors Baker (Chair), Coe, Dillon, Durham, Henderson, Marshall, and McGill

APOLOGIES – Councillors Haszeldine, Mrs Scott and Ray,

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors McEwan (Deputy Leader and Economic Portfolio Holder), Porter (Resources Portfolio Holder)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Mark Ladyman (Assistant Director Economic Growth), Brett Nielsen (Assistant Director Resources), Anthony Hewitt (Assistant Director Highways and Capital Projects), Brian Robson (Head of Capital Projects), Anthony Sandys (Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues), Neil Bowerbank (Head of Strategy, Performance and Communications), Luke Swinhoe (Assistant Director Law and Governance), Alex Nicholson (Town Centre Partnership & Events Manager) and Olivia Hugill (Democratic Officer)

ER132 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

ER133 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THIS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

- a) Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 9 January 2025.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 9 January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

- b) Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the Special Meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 9 January 2025.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 9 January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

ER134 DIGITAL DARLINGTON STRATEGY REPORT

The Head of Strategy, Performance and Communications submitted a report which provided Members with the details of the Draft Digital Darlington Strategy 2025-30 and sought their views before the submission to Cabinet for approval.

The report stated that the Digital Darlington Strategy was also aligned with the Customer Services Strategy. The main focus of the Strategy detailed in the report was to maximise the productivity and efficiency that can be achieved through technology through customer access to services and via back-office systems. The Strategy adopted a 'digital first' approach when it comes to accessing council services for those who can and allowed resources to be allocated to those who require support.

The report explained that the successful delivery of the strategy relied on several factors and to have a clear understanding on digital exclusion. Those affected by digital exclusion enabled officers to explore potential interventions and ensure no one is left unable to access the services.

Members discussed the ICT system supplier markets and how to ensure the value for money, Members also wanted to understand how the Council makes sure we get the best use of the software.

Members asked what the Intervention on Digital Exclusion would look like on the delivery plan. The Committee touched on the customer relationship system and how data is gathered for the Council and Members.

Discussion ensued around the feedback from the Digital Darlington Strategy and how this was completed, how the feedback will be received and how digital exclusion will be monitored.

Members asked if digital exclusion has moved away from an age point of view to a cost-of-living issues viewpoint. Members also wants to understand why the updates of systems take such a vast amount of time to complete.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the report.

ER135 CUSTOMER SERVICES STRATEGY

The Assistant Director of Housing and Revenues submitted a report (previously circulated) for members to consider the draft Customer Services Strategy 2025-2030 before approval from Cabinet.

The report set out the strategy's vision to deliver excellent services to customers and in particular how to support customers to access council services. The Strategy detailed the Customer Standards which set out timescales and standards customers will expect from all customer services when contacted.

It was explained that a public consultation exercise had been undertaken on the Strategy and at the upcoming Cabinet Meeting a verbal report on the outcome of the consultation will be given. The Strategy focused on seven key aims; Providing excellent customer services, making it clear how customers can contact us, Making it clear what we can help customers with and what we can't, Providing support for these customers who are digitally excluded, Delivering value for money, Investing in our people and Listening to our customers and using this to improve our services.

Members asked if anyone would be turned away from Customer Services if it was an issue that Members of the public could resolve online. Member also asked officers if the staff have any levels of training around supporting Members of the public with disabilities.

Members wanted to know if the same focuses were on any customers queries to be resolved

the first time and if Members could receive monthly Customer Services feedback. Members mentioned that the priority of staff safety should be highlighted within the strategy.

RESOLVED - That members noted the report.

ER136 FOOTFALL CAUSES AND IMPACTS STUDY

The Assistant Director Economic Growth and Community Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with the factors that can impact on footfall within the town centre.

The report explained that Darlington had the largest conurbation in County Durham with a retail catchment of 400,300 (Experian) which extended to 586,000 within a 30-minute drive time. Both the level of home and car ownership in Darlington are above the UK average and that the town had excellent road connections, located 3 miles east of the A1M.

It was explained that town centre footfall was influenced by numerous factors which were detailed throughout the report, these included Shopping from home (online), Entertainment at home, Cost of Living, Changes to Bus Network, Etc.

Members were happy to see the level of detail in this report but would like to see how much money people are spending and how working from home can affect footfall numbers.

Members wanted to understand how the events programme can help business in Darlington, officers explained that a number of events such as the in trails happened inside some stores which promoted new customers to enter shops.

Members wanted to understand why the Town footfall numbers were the best in September 2024 compared to the last seven years. Discussion ensued around the reduction in numbers that could be due to the increase in retail sales on the internet.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the report.

ER137 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2025-2027

The Assistant Director Law and Governance submitted a report (previously submitted) for Members to consider the Draft Procurement Strategy 2025-2027.

The Council did not have a formally adopted Procurement Strategy, this report explained that the work on this strategy had been informed by the Councils own priorities and ambitions as well as reviewed comparable approaches. The version set out in this report was a distillation from this exercise and the seven key objectives were Working together, Delivering Quality and value for money, Social Value, Climate Change, Governance and Compliance, Local Economy and SME and Innovation, improvement and forward planning.

The report also explained the need to set develop a subset of specific goals and targets to assist the measurement of deliverance. Some of those were detailed in the strategy under the heading 'Drawing things together'.

Members entered discussion around the social value of the strategy, it was asked if local businesses were used would this come under social value and how to increase local spend.

Discussion ensued further around the how KPI's would be incorporated, and Members were glad to see this Procurement Strategy in place.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the report.

ER138 PROJECT POSITION STATEMENT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING QUARTER 3

The Executive Director Resources and Governance and Executive Director Environment, Highways and Community Services submitted a report (previously circulated) for Members to consider the Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring for Q3.

Members considered the report which provided information on the delivery of the Council's capital programme and a summary of current construction projects. The report included the projected outturn of the Capital Programme is £330.800m against an approved programme of £330.901m.

Members if the timescale from network rail had been received yet with regards to Hopetown, officers advised they were still waiting for this information.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the report.

ER139 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 2 2024/25

The Assistant Director Community Services, Assistant Director Economic Growth, Assistant Director Law and Governance, Assistant Director Housing and Revenues, and Assistant Director Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) providing Members with an update on performance against key performance indicators at Quarter 4 2023/24.

It was reported that of the 22 indicators reported to this Scrutiny Committee, 17 had Quarter 2 data.

The submitted report gave the performance position in relation to the 17 indicators, of which 9 had increased when compared to the same period last year or from when last reported, whilst 8 had decreased when compared to the same period last year or from when last reported.

Members wanted further clarification around the Council Tax arrears collected which was detailed in the report. Members of the Committee also discussed how the Performance Indicators could be reviewed and revamped going forward.

RESOLVED - That Members noted the report.

ER140 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2024/25 QUARTER 3

The Assistant Director Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) providing an early forecast of the 2024/25 revenue budget outturn as part of the Council's continuous

financial management process to be presented at 4 February Cabinet.

Members were provided with the third revenue budget management report 2024/25 which included financial records to November and managers projections for the remainder of the year. Assumptions had been made concerning the future demand for services over the final quarter.

The report included the Council's projects revenue reserves position at the end of 31 March 2025 are £11.458m, £0.885m lower than the initial 2024-28 MTFP position. The position related to the £1.982m of departmental pressures and a decline of £0.224m from corporate resources, offset by £1.321m of additional balances following the 2023/24 outturn.

Members entered discussion around the Carry Forward Requests, it was requested if more information could be received regarding this request. Members also wanted to understand if any more carry forward request will be submitted in the future.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the report.

ER141 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.

Members discussed that consideration should start for what the Committee would like to see across next year's Work Programme.

RESOLVED - That Members noted the report.

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ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 26 February 2025

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

ABSENT – Councillors Coe and Haszeldine

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors McEwan

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Ian Williams (Chief Executive), Elizabeth Davison (Executive Director Resources and Governance), Mark Ladyman (Assistant Director Economic Growth) and Olivia Hugill (Democratic Officer)

ER142 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

ER143 DARLINGTON INDOOR MARKET - CALL IN OF CABINET'S DECISION

A report (previously circulated) was submitted following the receipt of a 'call-in' from Cabinet held on 4 February 2024 (Minute C113) in relation to its decision in respect of the Darlington Indoor Markets. The 'call-in' was taken in accordance with the Council's constitution and had been submitted by three Members of this Scrutiny Committee.

In opening the meeting, the chair advised Members as to the background to the call in and how she intended to manage the meeting in terms of time allocation, Members, exclusion of the Public and Press and formulating a view, if needed, to Cabinet.

The Chair opened the meeting up to questions which could be asked and responded to in the non-confidential part of this meeting and Members discussed the first question of Part 1 and how the Darlington Indoor Markets item was not included on the Work Programme for Members to scrutinise.

Discussion ensued onto question 4 of the part 1 report, Members expressed their concerns that the response did not answer their question. Conversation ensued around that the Terms of Reference that was yet to be agreed and the potential for this to attend scrutiny in the future.

Question 8 of part 1 was in relation to whether an audit had been undertaken from the request of Cabinet, Members discussed whether this was usual practice for the Council to request another business to complete an audit. Members scrutinised that if the Council is to loan such a significant amount of money that the business accounts should be looked at closer.

Conversation then ensued to Question 10, Members scrutinised that there was no detail of how the work could be brought back in house, officers explained the implications of bringing the Darlington Indoor Market back in house and what MAM offer to the Indoor Market.

NOTE – Members were satisfied with the responses given by Officers to the questions raised in the non-confidential part of this meeting. As there were a number of other questions within the call in which fell with the definition of confidential information in accordance with Access to Information Procedure Rules, the press and public were excluded from the meeting whilst further questioning took place. Following this discussion a decision on all of the issues raised within the call in was taken

ER144 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED - That, pursuant to Sections 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the ensuing item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in exclusion Paragraph 13 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act.

ER145 DARLINGTON INDOOR MARKET - CALL IN OF CABINET'S DECISION (EXCLUSION NO. 13)

RESOLVED - That, in relation to all the of the areas specified in the Call in, having considered and heard all the information presented to, and at this meeting, this Scrutiny Committee is satisfied with the decision of Cabinet at Minute C113, and that no further action in relation to the call-in is required.

**ECONOMY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY
3 APRIL 2025**

INCLUSIVE GROWTH STRATEGY FOR DARLINGTON

Introduction

1. During the past 12 months, work has been underway to develop a new Inclusive Growth Strategy for Darlington, a document that sets out the Council's ambitions for inclusive, sustainable and good quality economic growth across the whole of the Borough. The Plan will set the framework to ensure that Darlington is a great place to live, work and visit.
2. During the development of the strategy, the UK Government announced its intention to publish a new national Industrial Strategy and develop Local Growth Plans for each Mayoral Authority. It is important that the Darlington Strategy is informed by evolving national and local policies, and is designed so that it complements new strategic ambitions.
3. In light of this new emerging national strategy, development of the Inclusive Growth strategy was delayed to ensure new policy ambitions could be understood and where appropriate, accommodated in the new Darlington plan. This also coincided with the announcement of plans for UK Shared Prosperity Funding and Local Growth Plans.

Invest 2035: the UK's modern industrial strategy

4. In October 2024, the government published Invest 2035, a green paper detailing proposals for a modern industrial strategy. The government set out plans to use the strategic power of the state to "support and shape" the UK economy. In addition to driving growth nationally, the government wants the Industrial Strategy to support regional growth, net zero and the UK's economic security and resilience.
5. The green paper indicates the industrial strategy will have three main strands:
 - (a) Sectors: the strategy will target support to eight "growth-driving" sectors, producing specific plans for these sectors (sectoral policies). These are:
 - i. Advanced manufacturing
 - ii. Clean energy industries
 - iii. Creative industries
 - iv. Defence
 - v. Digital and technologies
 - vi. Financial services
 - vii. Life sciences
 - viii. Professional and business services

6. The government says it has chosen these sectors because they represent either current UK strengths – sectors that are more productive and internationally competitive than others – or emerging strengths, where the UK could develop a comparative advantage.
 - (b) Businesses: the strategy will include policies aimed at creating a pro-business environment; these will be both cross-sector (horizontal policies) and targeted at specific sectors. These policy areas include:
 - i. people and skills
 - ii. innovation
 - iii. energy and infrastructure
 - iv. the regulatory environment
 - v. crowding in investment
 - vi. international partnerships and trade
 - (c) Places: the strategy will target places with high-growth potential across the country including city regions, regional clusters and strategic industrial sites (place-based policies). The government is committed to devolving significant powers to mayoral combined authorities across England, giving them the tools they need to grow their sectoral clusters and improve the local business environment through ambitious local growth plans.
7. The green paper received a high level of engagement and has been broadly welcomed as a “positive first step” by stakeholders and commentators. The final industrial strategy is expected in June 2025 (alongside the Spending Review).

Tees Valley Local Growth Plan

8. The Local Growth Plan for the Tees Valley will provide the overarching framework for inclusive growth in the local area. The Tees Valley Local Growth Plan will articulate local growth potential and put in place the programmes and infrastructure needed for the economy to thrive.
9. TVCA has been working collaboratively with the local authorities through a working group, the Business Board and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to co-develop the proposed high-level priorities.
10. The Tees Valley Local Growth Plan will be evidence-based and positively articulate the opportunities for growth, building on delivery to date. The overriding message will be that Tees Valley is opportunity rich, which is supported by the evidence, and therefore the Government will see a strong return on investment.
11. The aim of the Tees Valley Local Growth Plan is:
 - (a) “Securing sustained and inclusive growth to exceed the UK growth rate - building on our success to date, to power a diverse and balanced economy, with job growth and productivity gain that creates opportunities for everyone.”

12. The initial ask of government was for TVCA to identify five high-level priorities to shape the Tees Valley Local Growth Plan.
13. The proposed high-level Tees Valley Local Growth Plan priorities are set out below:
 - (a) Grow our globally competitive modern industrial and technology cluster and enabling advanced manufacturing sector by securing further investment, deepening our innovation expertise and attracting and retaining talent.
 - (b) Accelerate our rapidly growing digital cluster and creative cluster by securing further investment, growing our business base and attracting and retaining talent.
 - (c) Diversify and drive the growth of our everyday economy by increasing business density and developing the skills of our people to get more people into work.
 - (d) Create the environment for growth and accelerate regeneration of our communities making Tees Valley an attractive place to live, work and invest.
 - (e) Accelerate the development of strategic transport, energy, digital and housing infrastructure to maximise the potential of our growth opportunities and create the environment for growth.
14. The proposed priorities have been discussed with government given the ongoing development of the national industrial strategy and there are clear synergies with the eight national growth-driving sectors.
15. In terms of the timeframe, government is currently seeking input from Mayoral Combined Authorities to inform the development of the national industrial strategy. It is understood that the Local Growth Plan itself will need to be submitted to government by Summer 2025.

Next steps

16. Although the final policy documents are to be published, there is a clear steer as to the broad direction of travel in this field. With a defined policy framework in place, work to build the Darlington Inclusive Growth Strategy can re-commence, and work is now underway to develop local aims, ambitions and actions that complement the emerging policy framework at national and local levels, and connect these economic growth ambitions with local Inclusive Growth priorities. When the National Industrial Strategy is published, it will be sense-checked against the work undertaken to ensure strategic fit.
17. Officers are working on a new timetable for the development and production of the Inclusive Growth Strategy and are co-ordinating with the Strategy and Policy Manager to ensure the project plan is deliverable. We will advise Members when the production schedule is available.

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ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 April 2025

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide scrutiny with an overview of the progress being made by the Council for the assessment and adoption of artificial intelligence.

Summary

2. The development of artificial intelligence (AI) started in the 1950's, and it is only during recent years that it has become integrated in society and industry more broadly, initially through technologies such as Alexa and Siri, but more recently through Chat GPT and Microsoft Co-Pilot, which themselves continue to evolve.
3. Adoption of AI by organisations is growing as the technology continues to rapidly develop, but for many including councils the application of it is still in its infancy. It has the potential to offer opportunities for improved productivity and efficiencies but in many cases the benefits are currently unproven. For local authorities there has been much focus on using AI for advanced task automation, content generation, and predictive modelling. The cost of AI technology can be high, and implementation can require significant work to create the required ICT environment. The assessment and application of AI within Darlington Borough Council is a work stream within the Digital Darlington Strategy, with the aim of establishing an Artificial Intelligence Strategy.
4. There is currently no specific UK legislation governing the use of AI, instead there is a reliance on existing laws and regulations relating to things like data protection, intellectual property, and the Equality Act.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) It is recommended the members note the content of the report and offer feedback that could help inform the content of the council's Artificial Intelligence Strategy.

Neil Bowerbank
Head of Strategy, Performance and Communications

Background Papers

1. Digital Darlington Strategy

Neil Bowerbank : Extension 6052

Council Plan	Has the potential to support the principle of effective and efficient use of resources.
Addressing inequalities	Potential use for data analysis and predictive modelling.
Tackling Climate Change	Potential use for data analysis and predictive modelling.
Efficient and effective use of resources	Has the potential to support the principle of effective and efficient use of resources.
Health and Wellbeing	Potential use for data analysis and predictive modelling.
S17 Crime and Disorder	Potential use for data analysis and predictive modelling.
Wards Affected	N/A
Groups Affected	N/A
Budget and Policy Framework	N/A
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

6. Our aim is to establish an Artificial Intelligence Strategy for Darlington Borough Council by Autumn 2025. Work is ongoing and four main themes are starting to emerge.
 - (a) Establishing clear governance
 - (b) Building the infrastructure to enable use of artificial intelligence
 - (c) Identifying opportunities to integrate AI into services
 - (d) Developing staff skills to get the most from AI.

7. To inform the development of the strategy we are gathering information from a broad range of sources. We are members of the LGA Artificial Intelligence Practitioners Group which involves sharing knowledge and learning from work being done by other local authorities. We are working closely with our main ICT system suppliers to understand their development roadmaps and where AI might play a role. Webinars discussing AI and how it can be used are now commonplace and are providing useful insights from across a range of sectors. We are engaged with Microsoft to learn how to make the most of our Co-Pilot licenses. In March 2025 we were selected to be part of a pilot program for an AI tool called MINUTE that has been developed by a government department.

8. In October 2024, three officers embarked on an 18 month Level 4 Business Analyst apprenticeship which focuses on the application of AI within local government. As they develop their skills and knowledge the officers will help with the creation of the Artificial Intelligence Strategy, and will identify opportunities for the application of AI within the council.

9. At the time of writing this report, there was no specific UK legislation governing the use of AI. The focus proposed by the previous government was to rely on existing laws and regulations relating to things like data protection, intellectual property, and the Equality Act. This position requires the council to interpret existing legislation and determine how best to apply it. The Government has defined ten common principles to guide the safe, responsible and effective use of generative AI in government organisations and these may form the basis of our approach.
 - (a) You know what generative AI is and what its limitations
 - (b) You use generative AI lawfully, ethically and responsibly
 - (c) You know how to keep generative AI tools secure
 - (d) You have meaningful human control at the right stage
 - (e) You understand how to manage the full generative AI lifecycle
 - (f) You use the right tool for the job
 - (g) You are open and collaborative
 - (h) You work with commercial colleagues from the start
 - (i) You have the skills and expertise needed to build and use generative AI
 - (j) You use these principles alongside your organisation's policies and have the right assurance in place
10. It is very important we get the right governance arrangements in place as we have a legal responsibility for the data we hold and how it is used. We need to know how the AI application is using / processing the data, who has access to it, where it is being stored, and how long for.
11. Co-Pilot is an AI tool provided by Microsoft, and the council has licenses to use it. The capabilities offered by this application are growing particularly in relation to data analysis and document creation. To maximise the benefits it offers, information held by the council needs to be in a structured and clean format, and stored in a location where Co-Pilot can access it. An 18 month project commenced in September 2024 that involves a systematic approach to support services in migrating their documents, and to support staff in understanding the new ways of working.
12. Opportunities to use AI and help the council be more efficient and productive are starting to emerge. Once clear governance arrangements have been established the council is seeking to maximise the benefits AI can offer where there is a clear business case. The Co-Pilot licenses already held by the council offer an increasing suite of opportunities. A working group has been established and is testing Co-Pilot across a range of activities such as minute taking, data analysis and content creation. Over time we anticipate it will be used for many other activities such as translations and predictive modelling. Learning is being shared across the council and is already helping to inform programmes and work streams within several transformation programmes.
13. The council has over 17 corporate ICT systems that offer functionality to support services ranging from waste collection through to children's social care. Many system suppliers are already developing AI modules and as they are released, we will consider if the opportunities they offer are worth the investment. Due to the competitive environment in which the suppliers operate, timeframes for product releases are usually shared at short notice making it difficult for us to plan when new opportunities will emerge. Where AI modules have already been developed, suppliers are pushing hard to sell them. Our

approach for now is not to be an early adopter of the technology unless there is a low risk and low cost opportunity to explore. This is because of the high level of uncertainty around the risks and benefits it will bring, especially within early releases. We are also mindful that AI is continuing to evolve and over time there may be solutions that integrate with multiple systems, reducing the need to buy so many modules and providing opportunities for much richer AI content. Our Artificial Intelligence Strategy will aim to establish a framework to help consider the options when they emerge.

14. It is likely that AI will become a tool commonly used by staff in future years. To maximise the benefits AI offers and to ensure it is used correctly, staff training is likely to be needed. As AI continues to evolve so will its ease of use. It is likely the challenges people currently face with some AI applications, in particular the writing of prompts will become easier to do. The fourth theme emerging within the draft Artificial Intelligence Strategy will focus on helping staff to develop the skills needed to use AI.

Neil Bowerbank
Head of Strategy, Performance and Communications

ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 APRIL 2025

AGILE AND BLENDED WORKING

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to share an update on agile and blended working at Darlington Borough Council.

Summary

2. The Council undertook an agile working pilot between May and December 2022 to explore the potential of formalising the new ways of working, which had commenced during the pandemic.
3. Following the successful pilot the Council adopted an agile working solution and the “Ways we can work” policy was adopted in April 2023.
4. The use of agile/blended working has many benefits to the Council.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that :-
 - (a) Members note the content of the report.

Brett Nielsen
Assistant Director Resources

Background Papers

No background papers

Brett Nielsen 5403

Council Plan	The Council’s workforce contributes to all priorities outlined within the Council Plan.
Addressing inequalities	This report provides an update on Agile and Blended working, therefore there is no impact as a result of this report.
Tackling Climate Change	This report outlines some of the benefits of Agile and Blended working to climate change.
Efficient and effective use of resources	This report outlines efficiencies in working practices.
Health and Wellbeing	The use of Agile & Blended working has wellbeing benefits to employees.
S17 Crime and Disorder	N/A
Wards Affected	N/A
Groups Affected	N/A
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council’s budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

Information and Analysis

6. The Council undertook an agile working pilot between May and December 2022 to explore the potential of formalising the new ways of working, which had commenced during the pandemic.
7. Following the successful pilot the Council adopted an agile working solution and the “Ways we can work” policy was adopted in April 2023.
8. The Council has four role types:
 - a) **Fixed** - A role that requires work to be carried out predominantly at a specific location either due to providing the first point of customer contact, or the daily use of specific equipment which is not mobile (ICT software/hardware or Health and Safety) and/or required to carry out a role e.g., library assistants, post room assistants, leisure assistants or refuse collectors.
 - b) **Agile** – Agile working is where an employee retains their main work location i.e. a Council building, however, the employee has the flexibility to work in other office locations, client premises, external locations and includes occasional work from home. It is acknowledged that within the agile worker category there will be varying degrees of flexibility depending on the nature of the role, office cover and business requirements.

- c) **Blended** – Is different to agile working as there is an expectation to work from home but with the opportunity to work in Council buildings and other locations where appropriate. To work on a blended basis there must be a DSE compliant set up of a home office with a suitable environment to work in a productive and conducive manner. As part of the asset rationalisation and agile working project this form of working is more commonly available and has proven to work well.
- d) **Home** - Homeworking is where an employee works all their contracted hours from home on a permanent basis with a requirement to attend meetings and training at specific locations as required. A homeworking agreement constitutes a permanent change to the employee’s terms and conditions of employment. Permanent home working with no office contact is not considered to be the norm or an expected work type for many employees.

9. In March 2025 the following number of staff are employed in each of the above categories. For the purposes of this paper, due to the synergies, management information for Agile and Blended have been merged.

Worker Type	Number	Full Time Equivalent
Fixed	1,243	780.70
Agile/Blended	900	815.03
Home	1	0.81
TOTAL	2,144	1,596.54

10. As can be seen although the Council operates an agile and blended working policy, there are 1,243 (58%) employees that work in a fixed location across Darlington.

11. As noted above, agile/blended workers have the ability to work from a number of locations, including options in administrative building. In the Town Hall there are specific team rooms which can only be used by members from that team, “hot desks”, meeting rooms and the Space which are open for all staff to use.

12. Agile/blended workers do not have a specific ratio of time they are required to be in council buildings, instead they work around business need and at their managers discretion. However some employees choose to be in the building every day and some on a number of days every week.

13. Agile/blended working has been introduced by many employers across the country in both the private and public sector. A number of neighbouring Council’s had originally specified the number of days in which staff need to be in the building, however they have now moved towards the Darlington model of no longer specifying the days required.

14. Following the successful pilot, the working arrangements have been reviewed each year with reports presented to Chief Officers Board (COB) and the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC). Trade Unions and employees are supportive of the arrangements and COB have continued to support agile/blended working as a successful and useful initiative to deliver Council services.
15. The use of agile/blended working has many benefits to the Council which are detailed in the following paragraphs.

Recruitment and Retention

16. More than 9 in 10 Councils across the country are experiencing employee recruitment and retention difficulties as demand for services continues to rise, highlighting the vital need to attract more people into the workforce. In response to this the Government funded the pilot “Make a Difference” recruitment campaign in the Northeast which went live in early 2024. (The campaign won the best innovation in recruitment initiative of the year award at the LGC Workforce Awards in November). After the success of the Northeast pilot, this was rolled out to the rest of England in November.
17. Our workforce delivers a wide range of services to our community, we have nearly 800 different roles. Appendix 1 provides a summary of our workforce. Darlington as an employer cannot always match the salaries of other employers both in the private sector, public sector and within local government, therefore our offer of employment is structured to include other benefits of working for Darlington. Flexible working is very much something that people are looking for in their employment, to assist with their work life balance and the offer of agile/blended working is something that has ensured we both attract and retain employees in our roles.
18. Although there are many reasons why employees choose to work for or stay in employment with Darlington, evidence suggests that we have retained and attracted employees who live outside of Darlington due to our agile/blended arrangement including that they do not need to commute into Darlington every day.
19. 52% of those who work agile/blended live outside of Darlington, this compares to 25% of those working at a DBC location. Overall, 63.9% of employees live in the town, which hasn't changed greatly since 2019 when the figure was 64%, showing we are still attracting local people, even with the introduction of many new employers to the town, such as Amazon and various Government Departments. Agile/blended working has also enabled our recruitment catchment area to grow, appendix 2 shows the locations of our workforce.

20. Based on a sample of discussions with employees who live outside of the Tees Valley area, the ability to work agile and blended was key factor for joining and remaining at Darlington Council. One colleague who started recently said this was a huge factor in attracting them to work with us and stated, “I moved from a role that I really enjoyed however there was a lot of travel and a requirement to be office based (when not travelling). The flexibility around home working, start/ finish times and also the holidays (with the option to purchase additional) where all big pull factors”.
21. The below table shows the voluntary turnover rates between April 2024 and February 2025. The turnover rate for those working agile/blended is lower than those working fixed in terms of both headcount and FTE.

	Turnover % Headcount	Leavers Headcount	Turnover % FTE	Leavers FTE
Agile / Blended / Home	6.10	55	6.06	49.47
Fixed	8.69	108	7.15	55.79
All	7.60	163	6.59	105.26

Absence

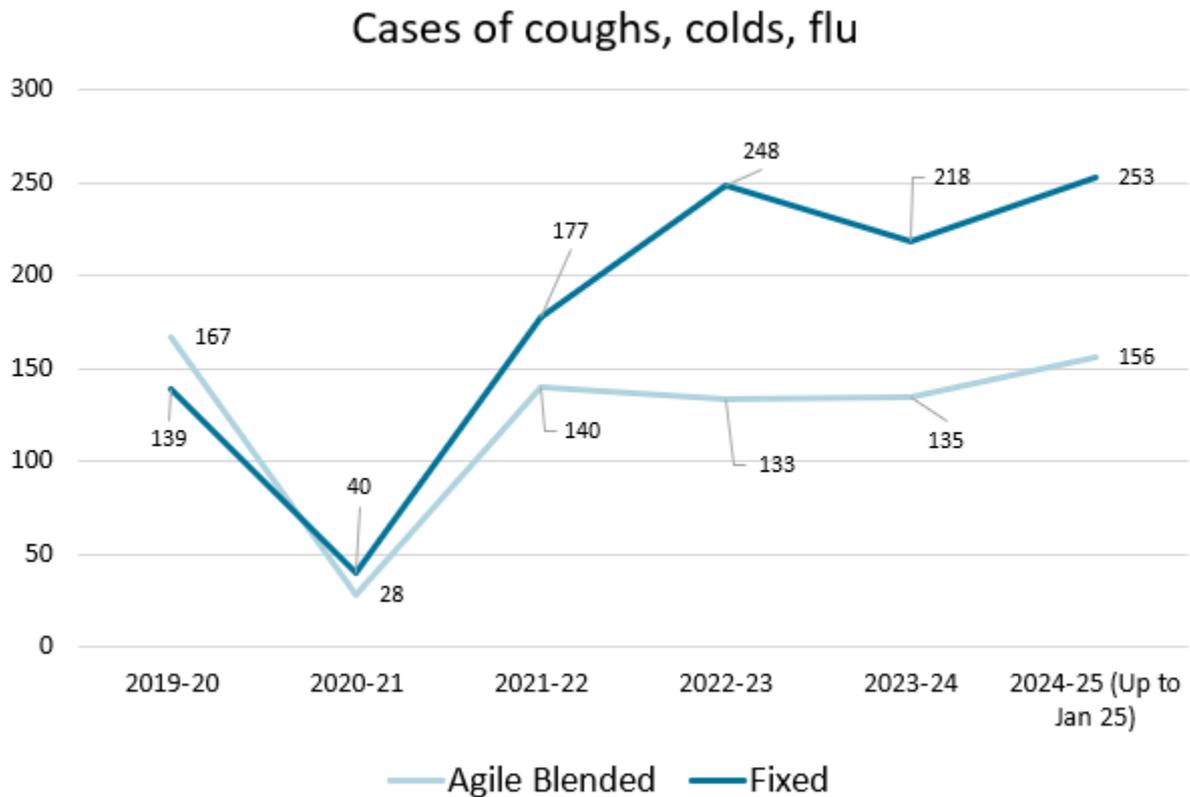
22. Absence levels for those who can work agile/blended continue to be lower than colleagues who are required to report to a fixed DBC location, 8.09 days per FTE (agile/blended) compared to 10.63 days per FTE (fixed) in 2023/24. During the first half of 2024/25, those figures stood at 4.24 and 5.35 respectively. During the same period 65.0% of those working agile/blended had zero absence, this was 58.4% for those at a fixed location.
23. Whilst there are many reasons why an employee may be absent from work due to sickness and roles have differing demands, it is the case that staff who work from home with some illnesses, for example a cold, are sometimes able to work as there is no commute to consider, the ability to do a shorter day and, there is no need to worry about spreading the sickness amongst fellow employees. The following stats provide some evidence to suggest that agile/blended working impacts on sickness levels.

Short term absence (5 days and under):

24. In 2019/20, there were 585 occurrences of absence of 5 days and under for those who would go on to become agile/blended workers, in 2023/24 this figure was 528. For those in a traditional work setting, those figures were 704 in 2019/20 rising to 757 in 2023/24. This should be considered in the context of absence levels rising in the Council and across the country in most sectors.

Coughs, colds, flu, sickness:

25. In 2023/24 there were 135 occasions (0.40 days per FTE) of colds and flu for those working agile/blended, compared to 218 occasions (0.80 per FTE) for those working at a fixed location. Figures up to the end of January 2025 have been added below for reference.



Short term absence (19 days or less):

26. Up to the end of January 2025, those working agile/blended have taken an average of 2.38 days of short-term absence per FTE, this was 3.66 days for those in a fixed location. In the previous year, up to January 2023/24 those figures were 2.17 and 3.18.

Absence reasons

27. The highest cause of absence up to end of January 25 for the Council was Anxiety / stress / depression at 34.8% of absence. Amongst those working agile/blended this is 43% and 28% for those in a fixed location, though overall only 22% of the total sickness due to stress was deemed wholly work related for agile and 16% fixed.

28. Of all stress related absence in those working agile/blended, 41% was taken by employees working in Children’s and Adult Social Care, this is perhaps reflective of the practice and associated pressure rather than working arrangements.

29. It is worth noting the rise in absences nationally, for example, People HR reported that the figure for small and medium sized companies in the UK (who in the main will just pay SSP) has increased by 55% since 2019, if we were to change our approach to agile and blended working this would likely have a negative impact on our absence levels.

Productivity Outcomes

30. We have found that not mandating the ratio when employees are able to work from home and instead giving managers the flex to apply their discretion around our business need has demonstrated many benefits. During the pilot phase of the project, it was found that there was no impact on service delivery and in some cases, there was an increase in productivity.
31. Productivity is managed in the same way as it always has been for agile/blended workers and it is expected that managers are in regular contact with team members. Managers have a responsibility to ensure work is allocated fairly, completed and that standards are maintained. Whilst some areas can be reviewed on transactional outputs this is not possible for many of our services and the real test is the outcomes achieved.
32. The Council Plan 2024/27 Performance (Cabinet - January 2025) and the Council Plan Performance 2020/23 Q4 (Cabinet - July 24) reports demonstrated the significant number and breadth of achievement made despite the challenging economic and financial times the Council is facing. This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the Council's workforce. Whilst it is not possible to link agile/blended working to outputs directly in a number of instances, what can be seen is that the introduction of agile/blended working has not had a negative impact on Council performance. The following list is some of the outcomes demonstrating that our approach is impactful and the right thing to do.
- a) Introduction of new Council Plan for 2024 - 2027.
 - b) The outturn percentage for 2023/24 of Business Rates collected exceeded the target for quarter 4, with 99.97% of Business Rates collected, compared to 99.79% in quarter 4 of 2022/23. (Council Plan Performance 2020/23 Q4 - Cabinet July 24). Business rate collection is on track to achieve the 2024/25 target, with 95.2% collected February 2025.
 - c) The outturn percentage 2023/24 of Council Tax collected exceeded the target for quarter 4, with 96.39% of Council Tax collected in 2023-24, the highest since 2010/11. This is an increase in collection, compared to 2022/23, which was 96.09%. (Council Plan Performance 2020/23 Q4 - Cabinet July 24). Council Tax collection is 92.1% February 25.
 - d) The Council received 746 complaints during 2023/24, an increase of 37 on 2022/23, but significantly lower to pre pandemic level, with the Council receiving 838 in

2019/20 (Complaints, Compliments and Comments Annual report 2023/24 – Cabinet September 2024).

Carbon Neutral Agenda

33. The Council has targets to reduce the emissions it produces directly and can also influence other indirect emissions through its employee practices.
34. The rationalisation of office space will impact on the energy usage of the Council, as less buildings need to be lighted and heated. Whilst it is acknowledged that there will be additional requirements in employee's homes as a result, this can be offset by carbon emissions on employee's commute. Appendix 2 provides a heat map of where our agile/blended employees live. As these employees no longer commute to Darlington every day, those staff who use private vehicles to commute to work will be saving on the emissions from those journeys.
35. As staff are working agile/blended this has meant that the Council is seeing significantly less printing and therefore using less paper. Although this can in part be put down to technology advances, when working in a fixed office space with printing facilities there is often the temptation to print which does not exist in the agile/blended arrangements.
36. The use of technology and in particular Microsoft Teams has reduced the need for staff to travel to meetings outside of office which has saved both time for staff travelling between venues and on rail fares or car mileage. Although the use of Teams is not restricted to employees who work agile/blended basis, where all staff are in the office there is not the ability to talk freely on Teams calls as there are limited private spaces.

Budget Savings

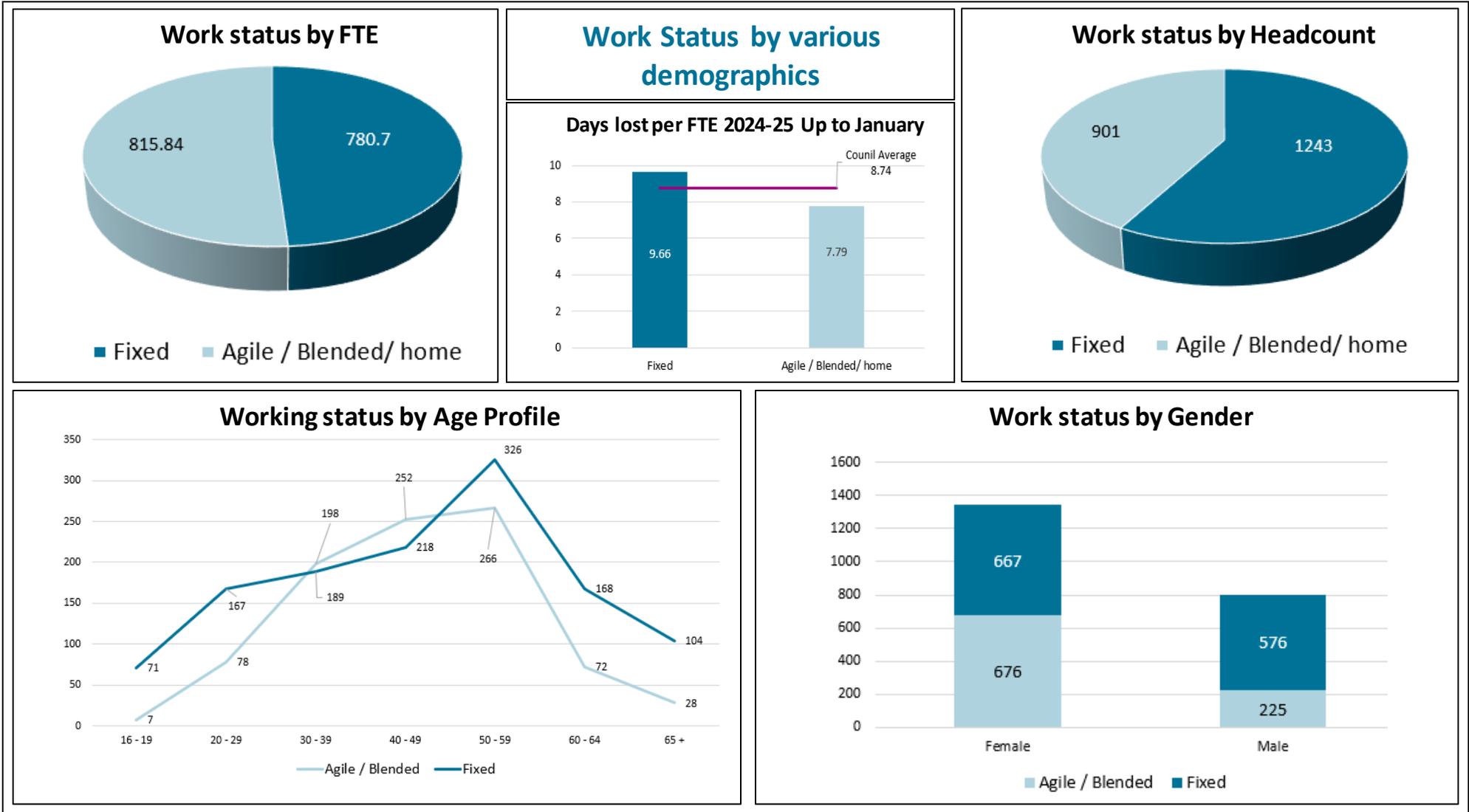
37. The move to agile/blended working has already provided savings to the Council, which are likely to increase in the future. The following are some of the savings that have been quantified and captured to date.
 - a. The transition to agile and blended working has enabled us to reduce car mileage and travel fees. Using 2019/20 as a base and comparing 2023/24, there has been an overall saving of £76k (16%).
 - b. Savings already reflected in the MTFP for 2025/26 at the Town Hall and Central House include £30k per annum from lower cleaning and waste disposal costs from the part closure of buildings.
 - c. Savings in employee travel time, freeing employees to work on other areas. i.e. increasing capacity within teams.

- d. Reduced printing costs (click charges to departments have fallen from £135k in 2019/20 to £68k in 2023/24) and reduced energy consumption.

38. These savings would not be achieved without the flexibility of agile/blended working.

Conclusion

- 39. This report confirms that our flexible practice applying agile/blended working around business needs continues to demonstrate a return.
- 40. There has been savings from reductions in travel costs, printing and the rationalisation of buildings.
- 41. There is evidence that our employee offer has increased recruitment and retention and assisted with staff sickness absence and any change to our offer would likely impact negatively on this.
- 42. There is no evidence to suggest that the implementation of agile/blended working has impacted negatively on service delivery.



Appendix 2

Agile / Blended and home workers home addresses

Chief Executives and Economic Growth



Resources and Governance Group



People Group



Services Group



ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
3rd April 2025

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.

Olivia Hugill, Extension: 5363

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.
Addressing inequalities	There are no issues relating to diversity which this report needs to address.
Tackling Climate Change	There are no issues which this report needs to address.
Efficient and effective use of resources	The Work Programmes are integral to scrutinising and monitoring services efficiently (and effectively), however this report does not identify specific efficiency savings.
Health and Wellbeing	This report has no direct implications to the Health and Well Being of residents of Darlington.
S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
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.
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.

Forward Plan and Additional Items

6. 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.
7. 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 2024/25

	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 9 January 2025	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 31 October 2024 30 January 2025	Brett Nielsen	To contribute and challenge the Medium-Term Financial Plan and assist with the implementation and development of the required savings
	Medium-Term Financial Plan	9 January 2025	Brett Nielsen	To provide a response to Cabinet on the proposals in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Plan

		Special Meeting (response to Cabinet) 20 January 2025		
	Capital Programme and Project Position Statement	Quarterly monitoring reports to be submitted to meetings of this Scrutiny Committee 31 October 2024 30 January 2025	Anthony Hewitt	To look at the position
	Investment Fund	5 September 2024 Last considered: 31 August 2023	Brett Nielsen	To consider progress against the agreed investments being funded through the Investment Fund.
	Complaints, Compliments and Comments - Annual Report	5 September 2024 Last considered: 31 August 2023	Lee Downey	To look at the position
	Complaints Made to Local Government Ombudsman	5 September 2025 Last considered: 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
	Customer Services	30 January 2025 Last considered: 31 August 2023	Anthony Sandys	To review and provide a response to Cabinet.
	Digital Strategy	30 January 2025 Last considered:	Neil Bowerbank	

		31 August 2023		
	Council Tax Support – Scheme Approval 2025/26	31 October 2024	Anthony Sandys	To update Members of Scrutiny
	Procurement Strategy	30 January 2025	Luke Swinhoe	To update Members of Scrutiny
ECONOMY				
	Economic Strategy	3 April 2025	Andrew Perkin	Development of Strategy
	Housing Strategy	TBC	David Hand	Development of the Strategy and Actions
	Climate Change	31 October 2024	Cabinet Member	To update on the work of the Review Group
	Markets Update	9 January 2025 Last considered: 2 November 2023	Mark Ladyman	To update Members of Scrutiny
	Towns Fund	9 January 2025 Last considered: 11 April 2024	Mark Ladyman	To update Members of Scrutiny
	Football Causes and Impacts Study	30 January 2025	Alex Nicholson	To update Members of Scrutiny
	Section 106 Funding	9 January 2025	Michael Chandler	To update Members of Scrutiny

	Office Demand Study (Council Assets)	TBC	Andrew Perkin	To update Members of Scrutiny
	Agile Working	3 April 2025	Brett Nielsen	To update Members of Scrutiny
	Artificial Intelligence Usage	3 April 2025	Neil Bowerbank	To update Members of Scrutiny

**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
FORWARD PLAN**

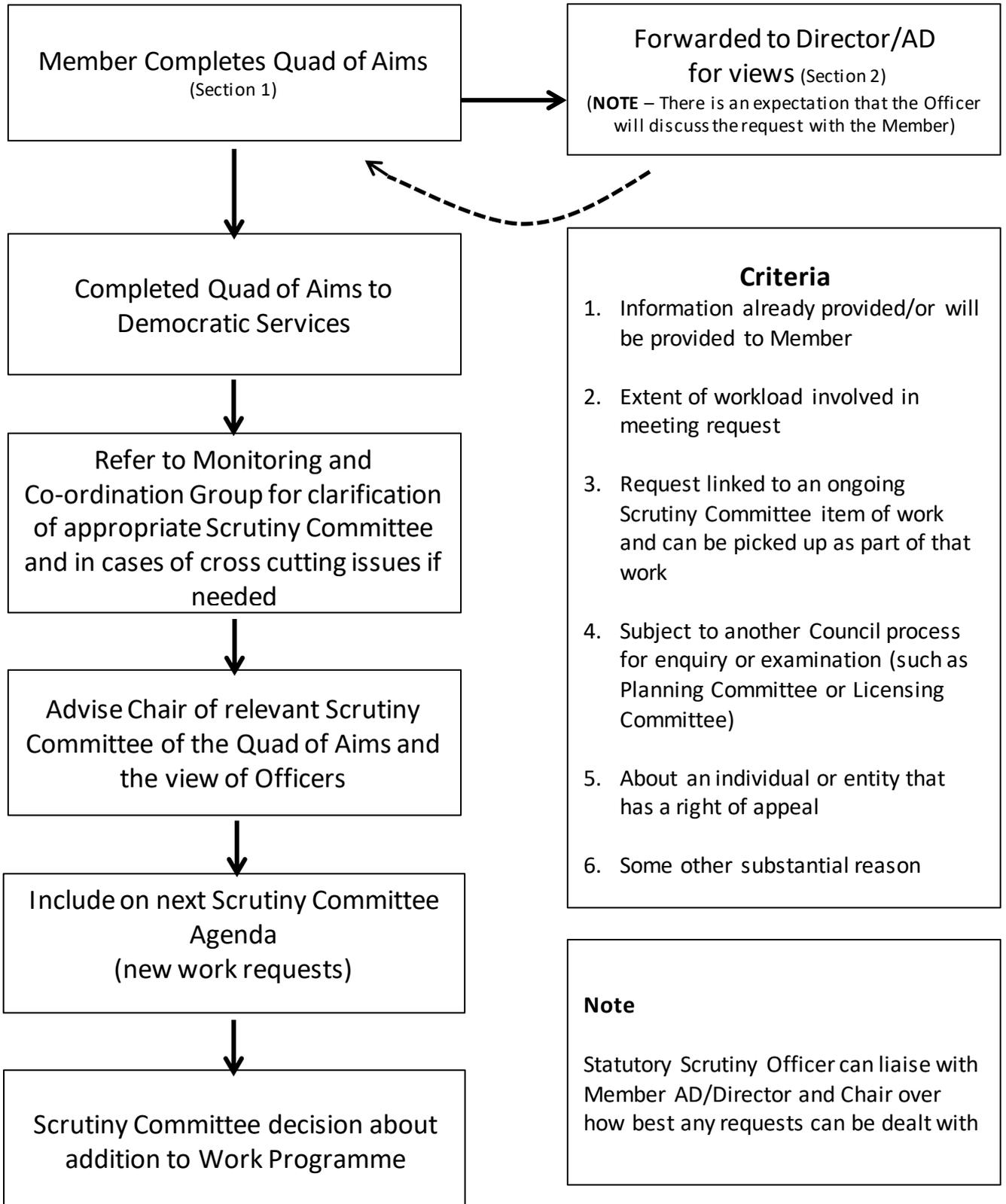


**FORWARD PLAN
FOR THE PERIOD: 5 MARCH 2025 - 31 JULY 2025**

Title	Decision Maker and Date
Annual Procurement Plan Update	Cabinet 8 Apr 2025
Annual Statement of Accounts 2023/24	Cabinet 8 Apr 2025
Consultation on a Homes Strategy for the Borough	Cabinet 8 Apr 2025
Household Support Fund	Cabinet 8 Apr 2025
Long Term Plan for Towns	Cabinet 8 Apr 2025
North East Smokefree Declaration	Cabinet 8 Apr 2025
Physical Activity Strategy	Cabinet 8 Apr 2025
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy	Cabinet 8 Apr 2025
Update to Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Part 1 – The Local Plan	Cabinet 8 Apr 2025
Adult Social Care Transport Policy 2024	Cabinet 6 May 2025
Dolphin Centre – Invest to Save Projects	Cabinet 6 May 2025
High Street Rental Auctions	Cabinet 6 May 2025
Schedule of Transactions	Cabinet 6 May 2025
Strategic Asset Plan	Cabinet 6 May 2025
To recommend to Council that they agree the Middleton St George Conservation Area Appraisal including the designation of a new Conservation Area	Cabinet 6 May 2025
Town Centre Regeneration	Cabinet 6 May 2025
Woodland Road Waiting Restrictions	Cabinet 6 May 2025
Consultation on the Renewal of the Town Centre Public Space Protection Order and Introduction of a Borough Wide Public Space Protection Order	Cabinet 10 Jun 2025
Representation on Other Bodies 2025/26	Cabinet 10 Jun 2025
Collection of Council Tax, Business Rates and Rent 2024/25	Cabinet 8 Jul 2025
Council Plan Performance Reporting Update - Quarter 4	Cabinet 8 Jul 2025
Disabled Facilities Grant 2025/26	Cabinet 8 Jul 2025
Housing Services Fire Safety Policy 2025-2030	Cabinet 8 Jul 2025
Housing Services Tenancy Policy 2025-2030	Cabinet 8 Jul 2025
Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring Outturn 2024/25	Cabinet 8 Jul 2025
Revenue Budget Outturn 2024/25	Cabinet 8 Jul 2025
Xentrall Shared Services Annual Report	Cabinet 8 Jul 2025
Adoption of Finalised Appraisal for the Stockton and Darlington Railway: Northgate Conservation Area Including Changes to its Boundary and Name	Cabinet 6 Jan 2026
To consider the Use of Land at Faverdale including the Former St Modwen Land for Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality Credits	Cabinet

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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 3. Request linked to an ongoing Scrutiny Committee item of work and can be picked up as part of that work
2. If the request is included in the Scrutiny Committee work programme what are the likely workload implications for you/your staff?	4. Subject to another Council process for enquiry or examination (such as Planning Committee or Licensing Committee)
3. Can the request be included in an ongoing Scrutiny Committee item of work and picked up as part of that?	5. About an individual or entity that has a right of appeal
4. Is there another Council process for enquiry or examination about the matter currently underway?	6. Some other substantial reason
5. Has the individual or entity some other right of appeal?	
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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