



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Cabinet Agenda

5.00 pm

Tuesday, 2 December 2025

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT

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

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting.
2. Declarations of Interest.
3. To hear relevant representation (from Members and the General Public) on items on this Cabinet agenda.
4. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of this Cabinet held on 4 November 2025 (Pages 5 - 10)
5. Matters Referred to Cabinet – There are no matters referred back for reconsideration to this meeting
6. Issues Arising from Scrutiny Committee – There are no issues referred back from the Scrutiny Committees to this Meeting, other than where they have been specifically consulted on an issue and their comments are included in the contents of the relevant report on this agenda.
7. Key Decisions:-
 - (a) Working Age Adults Transformation Project – Report of the Executive Director of People (Pages 11 - 18)
8. Housing Revenue Account - MTFP 2026-27 to 2029-30 – Report of the Executive Director of Resources and Governance (Pages 19 - 36)
9. Housing Services Tenancy Policy 2025-2030 – Report of the Executive Directors of

Resources and Governance (Pages 37 - 60)

10. Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for Consultation – Report of the Strategic Leadership Team (Pages 61 - 130)
11. Mid Year Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Monitoring Report 2025/26 – Report of the Executive Director of Resources and Governance (Pages 131 - 146)
12. Pride in Place – Report of the Executive Director Economy and Public Protection (Pages 147 - 170)
13. Traffic Regulation Order - Lowson Street – Report of the Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Community Services (Pages 171 - 180)
14. Membership Changes - To consider any Membership Changes to Other Bodies to which Cabinet appoints.
15. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting.
16. Questions.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

17. To consider the 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 items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in exclusion paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

PART III NOT FOR PUBLICATION

18. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting.
19. Questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'A. C. Kennington'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Amy Wennington
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Monday, 24 November 2025

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

Councillors Curry, Garner, Harker, McCollom, McEwan, Porter, Roche and Wallis

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact 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).

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**DECISIONS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE
MONDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2025**

CABINET

Tuesday, 4 November 2025

PRESENT – Councillors Harker (Chair), Curry, Garner, McCollom, McEwan, Porter, Roche and Wallis

INVITEES – Councillor Snedker

APOLOGIES – Councillor Dulston

C32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

C33 TO HEAR RELEVANT REPRESENTATION (FROM MEMBERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC) ON ITEMS ON THIS CABINET AGENDA.

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

C34 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS CABINET HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2025

Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Cabinet held on 7 October 2025.

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

REASON – They represent an accurate record of the meeting.

C35 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET

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

C36 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

C37 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2026-2027

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director - Resources and Governance requesting that consideration be given to the draft Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme (also previously circulated) for 2026/27 prior to approval by Council on 27 November 2025.

The submitted report stated that the previous scheme had become operational on 1 April

2024; Councils were required to set a CTS scheme each year and as part of that exercise were required to consider whether any changes should be made to the existing scheme, and where changes were made, consider what transitional protection, if any, should be applied to anyone affected by those changes; and that no significant changes were proposed to the existing scheme.

It was reported that the scheme had been considered by the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 31 October 2025, who agreed its onward submission to Cabinet for consideration.

RESOLVED - It is recommended that Cabinet consider and approve the draft CTS scheme for 2026-27 at Appendix 1 and for it to be submitted to Council for decision.

REASON – The recommendation is supported for the following reasons:

- (a) The Council is required to publish a local CTS scheme for 2026-27 by 11 March 2026.
- (b) The CTS schemes since 2013 have all been implemented successfully without any major challenges.
- (c) The continued application of a reduced entitlement for working aged people is still appropriate, given the current financial position of the Council.

C38 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING - QUARTER 2

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director - Resources and Governance providing a forecast of the 2025/26 revenue budget outturn as part of the Council's continuous financial management process.

The submitted report stated that it was the second revenue budget management report to Cabinet for 2025/26 and that the latest projections showed an overall decline of £1.872m on the 2025/29 Medium Term Financial Plan, which was due to £2.880m of departmental pressures and a decline in corporate reserves of £0.481m, offset by £1.489m of additional balances following the 2024/25 outturn.

RESOLVED – It is recommended that:

- (a) That the forecast revenue outturn for 2054/26, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.
- (b) That further regular reports be made to monitor progress and take prompt action if necessary.

REASONS – The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

- (a) To continue effective management of resources.

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

C39 PROJECT POSITION STATEMENT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - QUARTER 2

The Cabinet Member with the Resources Portfolio introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director – Environment, Highways and Community Services and the Executive Director – Resources and Governance providing the latest Capital resource and commitment position, to inform monitoring of the affordability and funding of the Council's capital programme; an update on the current status of all construction projects currently being undertaken by the Council; and requesting that consideration be given to a number of changes to that programme.

The submitted report stated that the projected outturn of the current capital programme was £339.385m against an approved programme of £339.992m; the investment was delivering a wide range of improvements to the Council's assets and services; the programme, including commitments, remained affordable within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2025/26 to 2028/29; the Council was managing 19 live projects, with an overall projected outturn value of £131.241m, the majority of which were running to time, cost and quality expectations, but were being monitored given the current pressures on resources in the construction sector nationally; and that the projects were managed either by the Council's in-house management team, a Framework Partner or by Consultants sourced via an open/OJEU tender process.

RESOLVED – It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (a) That the status position on construction projects, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.
- (b) That the projected capital expenditure and resources, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.
- (c) That the adjustments to resources, as detailed in paragraph 21 of the submitted report, be approved.

REASONS – The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

- (a) To inform Cabinet of the current status of construction projects.
- (b) To make Cabinet aware of the latest financial position of the Council.
- (c) To maintain effective management of resources

C40 TO CONSIDER THE USE OF LAND AT FAVERDALE INCLUDING FORMER ST MODWEN LAND FOR BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN AND NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY CREDITS

The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director of Economy and Public Protection to seek approval for the use of land at Faverdale East Business Park (partly former known as St Modwen Land) specifically including use of the site to generate Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality credits but also to investigate the possibility of disposal of part of the land for employment purposes.

The submitted report stated that the site is approximately 35 hectares (shown at appendix 1) and that it is wholly owned by Darlington Borough Council (DBC), comprising land previously in DBC ownership and land purchases from St Modwen in 2020. The land was identified as an existing employment site in the Local Plan and it was always intended it would be used for employment purposes.

The report explained that during discussions with a prospective developer it came to light that nearly 25% of the site is listed as Open Mosaic Habitat which is defined by Natural England as priority habitat. This part of the site is expensive to replace if developed but highly valuable in biodiversity terms.

The report clarified that there has been interest in part of the site for employment purposes and this needs to be investigated to ensure the best value for the Council. Consideration needs to be given as to whether part or all of the site could be used for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Nutrient Neutrality (NN) Credits.

RESOLVED - It is recommended that Cabinet agrees:

- (a) To approve the use of part of the land to generate Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality Credits. Primarily for sale on the open market but also for use in Council developments.
- (b) That Officers are authorised to initially register the land labelled Area one (Shown on the plan at APPENDIX 2) with Natural England for the purposes of Biodiversity Net Gain credits and to market the credits.
- (c) That officers investigate the sale of Areas two and three on the plan at Appendix 2 for employment purposes. If the conclusions are that the land will generate a greater income for Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality credits within two years of this decision that officers are authorised to register with Natural England either Area two or three or both sites
- (d) That the necessary funds are approved from existing budgets and the capital Investment Fund to allow fencing off parcels of land and for the registration of the land with Natural England so that the credits can be marketed.
- (e) That the Council enters into a Conservation Covenant with a registered 'Responsible

Body' to ensure that the land is maintained in accordance with the Habitat, Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP).

REASON – The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

- (a) That the statutory requirement for developments to provide at least 10% in biodiversity net gain has put into question the viability of the site for employment purposes, either due to the lack of developable land or the costs associated with developing the whole of the site.
- (b) There is a financial benefit to the Council if the conclusions are that the site would be better used for environmental credits, with the land registered with Natural England for the sale of credits.
- (c) By registering Area one we can seek the financial benefits at an early stage and by further considering Areas two and three we ensure we get the best value for the Council.
- (d) If the land is registered in phases, the land needs to be physically separated to manage the land.
- (e) To register the land with Natural England there needs to be a Habitat Monitoring and Management Plan in place and a legal agreement to ensure the HMMP is delivered.

C41 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - TO CONSIDER ANY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO OTHER BODIES TO WHICH CABINET APPOINTS.

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.

C42 TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS :-

C43 QUESTIONS.

**DECISIONS DATED –
FRIDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2025**

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**CABINET
2 DECEMBER 2025**

Adult Services Report: Working Age Adults Transformation Project

**Responsible Cabinet Member
Councillor Anne Marie Curry, Adults Portfolio**

**Responsible Director -
James Stroyan, Executive Director of People**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval to allocate financial resources for a transformation project for Working Age Adults (WAA) services in Adult Social Care (ASC), in partnership with IMPOWER, aimed at improving outcomes, reducing costs, and embedding sustainable change.

Summary

2. The ASC sector is facing unsustainable financial pressures, particularly within the WAA cohort, which includes individuals with learning disabilities, autism, neurodiversity, mental health conditions, physical disabilities, and other complex needs. This group represents a growing proportion of the care system in Darlington.
3. IMPOWER will work collaboratively alongside the service and partners e.g. Finance, Performance, Transformation, Commissioning and Adult Social Care teams to deliver the project.
4. The proposed transformation project with IMPOWER will be delivered in three phases:
 - a) Phase 1: Diagnostic (6 weeks) – Analysis of demand and cost drivers, benchmarking, and identification of priority groups.
 - b) Phase 2: Test and Learn (6 weeks) – Trial interventions, co-production with stakeholders, and evaluation.
 - c) Phase 3: Scale-Up – Subject to gateway decision, development of a strategic business case and system-wide transformation.
5. The total investment is £247,287 (excl. VAT), with a minimum expected ROI of 3:1. This will provide actionable savings in year one to at least cover the cost of the investment, with estimated savings in subsequent years of £0.750m per annum.

6. Learning from the project and practice model will be shared with all Adult Service Teams to bolster the person centred, strength based practice.

Recommendations

7. It is recommended that:-
 - a) Cabinet agrees the allocation of financial resources to enable the WAA transformation project to proceed.
 - b) Delegated authority is granted to the Executive Director of People to oversee implementation and approve progression to Phase 3, subject to gateway review.

Delegations

8. Delegated To: Executive Director of People.
9. Terms of Delegation: Authority to manage project delivery and approve progression to Phase 3 based on gateway criteria.

Reasons

10. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:-
 - a) Rising demand and costs in WAA services, with ASC spend increasing to gross £48.6m in 2024/25.
 - b) Increasing numbers of high-cost support packages and residential placements.
 - c) Opportunity to invest in preventative and strengths-based best practice approaches to improve outcomes and reduce long-term costs.
 - d) IMPOWER's proven track record of supporting Local Authorities to deliver significant savings and improved outcomes.

**James Stroyan,
Executive Director of People**

Background Papers

No background papers were submitted with this report.

Author: Joss Harbron: 5278

Council Plan	This supports the aims of the council plan in relation to reducing health inequalities, promoting wellbeing and effective use of resources.
Addressing inequalities	This proposal aims to address inequalities within working age adults with care and support needs who are disadvantaged within the Borough.
Tackling Climate Change	These changes have a positive impact and aims to promote independence across the Borough.

Efficient and effective use of resources	This proposal aims to support the development of a strategic business case and system wide transformation resulting in tangible savings.
Health and Wellbeing	Positive impact on residents enabling improved independence and wellbeing.
S17 Crime and Disorder	No impact
Wards Affected	All wards
Groups Affected	Working age adults with care and support needs which includes individuals with learning disabilities, autism, neurodiversity, mental health conditions, physical disabilities, and other complex needs.
Budget and Policy Framework	There is a requirement for an invest to save and therefore an impact initially on the budget, with the purpose of a greater return within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). There is no change to the policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	There is no identified impact however this proposal will apply to young people with care and support needs as they reach 18.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

11. The WAA cohort is experiencing increasing complexity and demand. The transformation project will use IMPOWER's INDEX tool and evidence-based methodology to identify opportunities for increased independence and cost savings. The phased approach ensures robust diagnostics, stakeholder engagement, and scalable interventions.
12. Proposal of the service provided by IMPOWER will include:
13. Phase 1: Diagnostic (6 weeks)
 - a) In-depth analysis of current demand and cost drivers in WAA services.
 - b) Identification of up to three priority groups with the greatest potential for increased independence and cost savings. This will primarily be working age adults with learning disabilities, neuro-diversity and or experiencing enduring mental health illnesses.
 - c) Benchmarking against other councils using IMPOWER's INDEX tool.
 - d) Development of baseline and alternative trajectories for cost, demand, and outcomes.
 - e) Recommendations for short-term and medium-term interventions.
14. Phase 2: Test and Learn (6 weeks)
 - a) Trial of up to three targeted interventions with selected WAA groups.
 - b) Formation of a small internal change team from Darlington ASC staff.
 - c) Delivery of strengths-based practice training and behavioural change support.
 - d) Co-production of interventions with citizens, providers, and VCSE partners.
 - e) Evaluation of outcomes, cost savings, and scalability of interventions.
15. Phase 3: Scale-Up (subject to gateway decision)
 - a) Development of a high-level "invest to save" business case for further investment.
 - b) Strategic recommendations for scaling successful interventions across ASC systems.
 - c) Market analysis and reshaping of provider and accommodation options.
 - d) Support for embedding strengths-based practice and data integration across the system.
 - e) Planning for long-term sustainability and system-wide transformation.
16. Overall Deliverables
 - a) Evidence-based business case with projected savings and outcomes.
 - b) Real-time data dashboards and trajectory models.
 - c) Locally tailored training materials and standard operating procedures.
 - d) Recommendations for strategic commissioning and place-shaping.
 - e) Ensure that strength based working is embedded with WAA, adhere to best practice approaches to improve outcomes while achieving efficiencies

17. Strategic Rationale: Why We Should Do This Project

- a) Rising Demand & Costs: ASC spend increased to gross £48.6m in 2024/25, with gross spend on Learning Disabilities rising yearly:

Year	Gross Spend £m	People with Learning Disabilities Supported	Net Spend £m
2024/25	18.192	292	15.644
2023/24	16.921	293	14.468
2022/23	13.905	258	11.556

- b) High-Cost Support Trends: Increasing numbers of WAA entering residential care and receiving high-cost packages, including individuals previously supported in the community.
- c) Preventative Services Under Pressure: The Council aims to shift towards asset-based community development and strengths-based practice, but implementation is challenging due to market capacity and lack of skilled workers to support people with complex needs.
- d) Demographic Shifts: More individuals with learning disabilities are ageing, and carer breakdown is expected to rise.
- e) Opportunity for Change: Whilst the current ASC budget is unsustainable in the long term, there is a short-term opportunity to invest in transformation.

Financial Implications

18. The Project Costs are:

- a) Phase 1 (Diagnostic): £130,000 (excl. VAT)
- b) Phase 2 (Test & Learn): £117,287 (excl. VAT)
- c) Total Investment: £247,287 (excl. VAT)

19. The above phases will provide savings between £0.700m-£0.750m per annum. These will be savings that will be mutually agreed as actionable within 6 months of the end of Phase 1 and 2 (delivery of the savings will be phased in the first year but would be expected to be delivered in full in 2027/28).

20. A further Phase 3, would further increase the potential savings. Typically, this is the stage at which the project would demonstrate the most significant savings and previously identified savings begin to be delivered at speed.

21. The total cost of £247,287, will be covered by savings in the first year of the programme, additional savings may accrue in the first year dependent on the phasing of the savings.

22. Following full implementation, savings of £0.750m are projected to be achieved and have been built into the MTFP from 2027/28. This equates to approximately 5% saving of net expenditure of Learning Disabilities (WAA) budget.

23. In comparison to scale, currently packages of care and support for some adults with learning disabilities can exceed gross £600,000 per annum and an average of £53,000 per annum.

Benchmark Comparisons

24. IMPOWER's past projects, with other Local Authorities, have delivered:

- a) Manchester City Council: £39m cost avoidance (13:1 ROI).
- b) Wolverhampton Council: £1.4m annual savings (2:1 ROI).
- c) Tameside Council: £2.2m in-year savings and increased independence (3:1 ROI).

Risks

25. While the transformation project introduces change, the associated risks are manageable and typical of any major improvement initiative:

- a) Financial: Initial investment and slower-than-expected realisation of savings may occur, but these are short-term challenges with clear plans for phased implementation.
- b) Operational: Workforce capacity and adapting to new ways of working require careful planning, but the council already has strong engagement structures in place.
- c) Cultural: Change can feel disruptive, yet the council's commitment to co-production and communication reduces this risk significantly.
- d) Strategic: Integration with partners will require continued communication, but existing collaborative frameworks position the council well for success.

26. The council is well-prepared to deliver this transformation through:

- a) Strong Foundations: Previous successful projects with IMPOWER and a clear Adult Services vision provide a solid base.
- b) Engaged Workforce: Staff are already familiar with strength-based approaches and digital tools.
- c) Robust Governance: Established performance frameworks and partnership networks support effective implementation.
- d) Alignment with Priorities: The project directly supports the Council Plan and long-term sustainability goals.

27. While there are short-term risks in implementing the transformation, these are mitigated by the council's readiness and experience.

Legal Implications

28. Procurement will follow Council procedures. Legal advice will be sought to ensure compliance with contractual obligations.

HR Implications

29. A small internal change team will be formed. HR advice will be sought regarding capacity and training implications.

Estates and Property Advice

30. Not applicable at this time.

Procurement Advice

31. Procurement will be managed in line with Council policy. Advice will be sought to ensure value for money and compliance.

Carbon Impact and Climate Change

32. Indirect benefits may arise from reduced reliance on residential care and increased community-based support.

Equalities considerations

33. The project will support individuals with complex needs, promoting independence and inclusion. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed.

Consultation

34. Co-production with citizens, providers, and VCSE partners is embedded in Phase 2.

Outcome of Consultation

35. To be reported following Phase 2.

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**CABINET
2 DECEMBER 2025**

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – MTFP 2026-27 TO 2029-30

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

**Responsible Director – Elizabeth Davison,
Executive Director of Resources and Governance**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider proposals for the revenue budget, capital programme, rent levels and service charges for the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the financial year 2026-27 in the context of the HRA Medium Term Financial Plan to 2029-30 and the 30-year Business Plan.

Summary

2. Darlington Borough Council is the largest provider of social housing in the Borough, providing 5,266 homes to local residents. Our homes offer a high standard of accommodation that meets the Decent Homes Standards, and we provide a range of quality services to tenants, including a responsive repairs and maintenance service, lifeline services and emergency call out provision.
3. We are proud of our housing and want to continually improve, so in addition to the day to day maintenance, significant investment is made in our housing stock each year to maintain and improve those standards, enhance the energy efficiency of our homes (to help our tenants reduce their energy consumption and bills, meet Government targets and tackle climate change), whilst ensuring we have the financial capacity to continue with our ambitious programme of building new Council homes.
4. The high quality of our homes and the services provided mean they are in high demand, which is why we have an ambitious programme to build new Council homes in Darlington. Our new build Council housing programme is funded through capital receipts from right to buy sales, grant funding from Homes England and through estimated borrowing of £8.2m.
5. The HRA also funds a Tenancy Sustainment Service, to provide our tenants with advice and support to help address the current financial challenges they are facing. This includes support to claim welfare benefits, including the transition to Universal Credit, budgeting advice, saving money on gas and electricity, opening bank accounts and applying for the Northumbrian Water tariff, which can reduce water bills by up to 50%. Referrals are also made to Citizens Advice for independent financial advice, as well as to food banks and furniture recycling schemes.

6. This report sets out the key decisions for the HRA for 2026-27, which includes:
 - (a) Proposed revenue expenditure of £32.042m, including:
 - (i) £7.579m to fund our responsive repairs and maintenance service, and
 - (ii) £12.261m contribution to the capital programme.
 - (b) A proposed capital programme of £22.119m, including:
 - (i) £1.352m for heating system replacements,
 - (ii) £1.617m for property adaptations, structural works, external works, and roofing,
 - (iii) £2.025m for windows and door replacements,
 - (iv) £3.672m for kitchen and bathroom replacements,
 - (v) £5.237m to deliver energy efficiency measures to tackle climate change,
 - (vi) £6.821m to complete capital schemes approved in previous years, and to deliver our new build Council housing programme.
7. The key decision regarding the HRA each year is the balance between setting rent and service charge levels that are affordable to our tenants, whilst ensuring we have sufficient resources to invest in our housing stock, tackle climate change, meet the challenges of new Decent Homes Standards and Fire Safety Regulations, and maintain services.
8. Councils have the discretion to increase rents each year by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%. CPI for September 2025 was 3.8%, which means for 2026-27 Members could increase rents by up to 4.8%. A rise of this level would mean that rents for our Council homes are still more affordable than all other social housing providers in Darlington, whilst allowing the Council to continue to provide the best service to tenants and increase the quality of homes.
9. Members will recall that a 2.7% rent increase was agreed in February 2025 for the current financial year. This was the maximum increase allowable and was made in recognition of the need to balance ongoing economic pressures facing our tenants and the need to invest in our Council homes and services. As far as we are aware, most social landlords in England also increased their rents in 2025-26 by the maximum 2.7%.
10. The Council has continued to face substantial financial pressures over the last 12 months. There is a country wide pressure regarding building materials and contractor costs, which has, and continues to, increase prices above inflation, which subsequently impacts on the cost of both repairs and maintenance and new build properties. For example, our Repairs and Maintenance costs have increased from £4.759m in 2021-22 to £7.153m in 2024-25, a 50% increase in 3 years.
11. In addition, the significant unknown pressure is Government energy efficiency targets. An independent report from Savills in 2021 estimated replacing gas boilers with air source heating will cost more than £100m. At this point we don't know the Government's long-

term intentions on funding for these measures, but currently, grants are awarded on a matched funding basis.

12. We have approx. 2,350 properties that don't meet the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C rating which will need to be addressed by 2030. We don't know the full costs yet, but current estimates, based on stock condition data, suggest the amount to be around £32m, which is approx. £12.8k for each property. We have successfully bid for £3.5m of funding from the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (WHSHF) wave 3. Including expenditure from the HRA, around 1,000 Council homes will be upgraded in the next 3 years at a total cost of £13.9m. However, significantly more investment will be required to meet Government targets.
13. The Government has also consulted on new Decent Homes Standards, and the Regulator of Social Housing introduced new Consumer Standards in April 2024 that places greater emphasis on social landlords to provide good quality homes to their tenants. Awaab's Law, introduced in October 2025, also requires social landlords to address damp and mould reports with higher priority and new Fire Safety regulations introduced in 2022 also require us to replace all our doors in blocks of flats and communal housing schemes over the next few years.
14. Considering the current economic pressures facing our tenants and balancing this with the increased costs of maintaining and improving our housing and the need to deliver our ambitious capital and energy efficiency programmes, an increase of 4.8% is recommended, or an average of £4.24 each week. It is also recommended to increase service charges in line with the projected costs of the services provided. We anticipate the vast majority of, if not all, other social housing providers in England will propose to raise rents by 4.8% but will keep a watching brief on this. As far as we know in years following higher inflation (2023 and 2024) Darlington Borough Council increased rents by less than all other social landlords in England. This means that we anticipate council homes continuing to be the best value for money social homes in the Borough.

Recommendations

15. It is proposed that the following recommendations are agreed for wider consultation:
 - (a) An average weekly rent increase of 4.8% for 2026-27 be implemented, giving an average social rent of £89.92 and affordable rent of £101.95.
 - (b) Garage rents and service charges are increased as shown in **Table 3**.
 - (c) The revenue budget at **Appendix 1** is approved.
 - (d) The Housing Business Plan at **Appendix 2** is agreed.
 - (e) The capital programme at **Appendix 3** is approved.

Reason

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

Elizabeth Davison
Executive Director of Resources and Governance

Background Papers

Regulator of Social Housing - Rent Standard

Anthony Sandys: Ext 6926

Council Plan	This report supports the Council Plan's HOMES priority to provide affordable and secure homes that meet the current and future needs of residents
Addressing inequalities	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Tackling Climate Change	There are a range of energy efficiency measures included in the business plan, which will support our Housing Services Climate Change Strategy
Efficient and effective use of resources	As the HRA is a ring-fenced budget, every effort is made to maximise income and identify savings to maintain a high-quality service
Health and Wellbeing	By ensuring our housing stock is in good condition, we are making a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of our tenants
S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	All wards with Council housing
Groups Affected	All Council tenants and leaseholders, and Lifeline service users
Budget and Policy Framework	The issues contained within this report require Council approval and the report will be presented to Council in February 2026
Key Decision	This is not a key decision for Cabinet, as the approval of Council in February 2026 will be required
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision for Cabinet, as the approval of Council in February 2026 will be required
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Background

17. Darlington Borough Council is the largest provider of social housing in the Borough, providing 5,266 homes to local residents. Our homes offer a high standard of accommodation that meet the Decent Homes Standards and provides a range of quality services to tenants including a responsive repairs and maintenance service, lifeline services and emergency call out provision.
18. In addition, significant investment is made in our housing stock each year to maintain and improve those standards. A comprehensive capital programme delivers a range of home improvements to tenants, improves the energy efficiency of our homes to reduce our carbon impact and reduce the bills of our residents, whilst ensuring we have the financial capacity to continue with our ambitious programme of building new Council homes. Over 50% of households in Council housing have one or more person with a disability and we are therefore committed to providing good quality homes to support people to live independently and maintain a good quality of life.

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

Setting the MTFP for the HRA

Projected HRA Expenditure for 2026-27

21. Detailed estimates have been prepared based on current service levels and the following expenditure amounts for the revenue account are proposed for 2026-27:

Area	£m	Description
Operational costs	7.084	This includes all the costs associated with the provision of our housing management, housing income, tenancy sustainment and tenancy enforcement services, central support services and other associated support costs such as ICT, buildings, and insurance.
Service charges	3.767	This covers services charged to tenants such as building cleaning, heating, grounds maintenance and Lifeline charges to a range of clients. All service charges are fully recoverable. It also includes recharges that will be recovered through additional income including court costs and recharges to the General Fund for grounds maintenance.
Responsive repairs and maintenance	7.579	This covers the on-going general repairs to our 5,266 Council properties, which is an average of £1,439 for each property in 2026-27. The continued investment in a good quality repairs and maintenance service is essential to maintaining the high standards of our housing stock, whilst also ensuring we meet all the statutory requirements to provide for the health and safety of our tenants.
Capital financing	4.833	This covers the historic and ongoing cost of paying for borrowing undertaken to fund capital expenditure.
Bad debt provision	0.263	Provision to cover rents that are deemed to be unrecoverable.
Revenue contribution to the capital programme	12.261	This represents the amount by which the HRA can fund major capital works. A breakdown of the proposed Capital Programme for 2026-27 is given below in 'Housing Business Plan'.

Housing Business Plan

22. All Housing Capital schemes are funded fully from the HRA, and this section explains what future capital investment is planned. The priorities are identified through the Housing Business Plan and our Housing Asset Management Strategy, which are regularly reviewed to ensure investment is targeted in the areas of most need. The funding proposals for 2026-27 are:

Area	£m	Description
Adaptations and lifts	0.153	This budget delivers adaptations to Council homes to enable tenants with a disability to remain in their own home and live independently. In addition, the budget also covers any unplanned works to passenger lifts within sheltered and extra care schemes.
Heating replacements	1.352	This budget will fund new condensing boilers, air source heat pumps and central heating upgrades that are due for replacement and in addition, to any unplanned replacements required due to boiler failure before their due replacement date. This work for 2026-27 will predominantly be completed in the Eastbourne, Park East, Bank Top and Lascelles, Red Hall and Lingfield and Cockerton wards.
Structural works	0.250	This budget will be used to address structural issues identified within the year.
Lifeline services	0.379	This budget will continue to fund any upgrades required to Lifeline equipment.
Repairs before painting	0.069	This budget will be invested in joinery repair works in anticipation of the cyclical external painting programme. This work for 2026-27 will be completed in various locations across the Borough.
Roofing and repointing work	1.000	This budget will fund the replacement of flat and pitched roofs and the replacement of fascia's, soffits, and rainwater goods. In addition, it will also fund loft insulation work, where appropriate. The programme of works for 2026-27 will be aligned to the energy efficiency work taking place (see below).
Garages	0.329	This budget will be invested in improvements to the Council's garage blocks, including demolition, where they are beyond economical repair. This work for 2026-27 will predominantly be completed in the Red Hall and Lingfield ward.
External works	0.214	This budget will be used to provide new rear dividing fences and new footpaths to Council properties, based on their condition, in various locations across the Borough.
Pavements	0.028	This budget will be used to fund any identified work to upgrade or adapt any pavements (including requirements for

Area	£m	Description
		dropped kerbs for Council properties) across the Borough.
Window and door replacements	2.025	This budget will fund the window and external door replacement programme, including replacement fire doors in sheltered schemes and blocks of flats. This budget will also fund any window and door replacements required because of a responsive repair. This work for 2026-27 will predominantly be fire doors to be fitted in sheltered schemes and blocks of flats, in various locations across the Borough.
Internal planned maintenance (IPM)	3.672	This budget will fund kitchen and bathroom replacements that are due. This budget will also fund any kitchen and bathroom renewal works for properties as required, including any void properties that require this work before letting. This work for 2026-27 will predominantly be completed in the Bank Top and Lascelles, Eastbourne, Cockerton and Park West wards.
Energy efficiency	5.237	This budget will continue to fund energy efficiency improvements such as improved insulation and new low carbon heating systems. This will also include any match funding required for Government energy efficiency grant bids (see the 'Climate Change' section below).
Communal works	0.204	This budget will fund any work required to communal areas and will also be used to carry out upgrades to card entry systems. This work for 2026-27 will be completed in various locations across the Borough.
Capital Schemes approved in previous year	5.821	This budget will be used to fund ongoing capital schemes, including new build schemes, that were approved in a previous year but are due to be completed in 2026-27.
New build and acquisitions	1.000	This budget will continue to fund the new build Council housing programme (see the 'New Build' section below) and acquisitions in 2026-27.

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

New Build

24. We have an ambitious programme to build new Council homes. Since the programme began, 365 new Council properties have already been delivered at various locations around Darlington, providing exceptionally high-quality homes to local residents, with a further 108 under construction. Demand for our properties continues to be high, with just under 2,000 Darlington residents on the Housing Allocations register. Therefore, along

with a range of other measures, efforts continue to be made to develop more schemes, which will have to be costed on a scheme-by-scheme basis for affordability.

25. Since the abolition of the HRA borrowing cap, we have been able to prudentially borrow and have included estimated additional borrowing of £8.2m in 2026-27 to build new affordable homes and contribute to energy efficiency. Our new build Council housing programme is funded through capital receipts from right to buy sales, grant funding from Homes England and prudential borrowing.
26. We previously lost around 40 homes each year through the Right to Buy scheme, although following new Government rules, which has reduced the discounts available, there were 36 Council homes sold under Right to Buy in 2024-25, and 54 to date in 2025-26. However, due to further changes by the Government, we are expecting the numbers to reduce in the future years. The Housing Business Plan is funded by the rents and service charges received from Council properties and the loss of income from ongoing Right to Buy sales would put the Business Plan at risk if these properties were not replaced.
27. The following is a summary of our current new build work programme:
 - (a) Work on the Neasham Road site commenced in September 2022 and will deliver 150 new homes by the beginning of 2026-27. So far, 72 new Council homes have been completed to date, and the rest of the site will be completed in phases, including 19 homes being offered as rent to buy. The site has been partly funded through £7.35m of grant from Homes England.
 - (b) Phase 2 of the Sherbourne Close site commenced in July 2024, providing an additional 14 new homes, including 2 homes being offered as rent to buy, and is due to be completed by the end of 2025-26. The site has been partly funded through £0.91m of grant from Homes England.
 - (c) Construction work on the Skinnergate site is due to commence in early 2026, following the completion of the demolition of the existing commercial buildings. The construction phase is then due to be completed by December 2026. Development of the site has been delayed because of ongoing legal issues regarding adjoining commercial and residential properties, nutrient neutrality issues and enquiries raised by Historic England. An application for grant funding from Homes England is currently awaiting decision and we are anticipating an award of approx. £2m.
28. As noted previously, the new build programme for 2026-27 will partly be funded through additional borrowing. In addition, grant funding bids to Homes England's Affordable Housing Programme will also provide around 30% of the overall costs. It is difficult to predict exact grant funding levels, as decisions are made by Homes England on a scheme-by-scheme basis, therefore grant projections are based on previous successful bids. To reduce financing costs, unallocated balances will be used before borrowing, however this is purely for treasury management purposes, as all new build schemes are self-financing.

Housing for People with Vulnerabilities

29. Each year, Housing Services complete a range of minor and major adaptations to individual Council properties where an Occupational Therapist has identified a need. Works range from the provision of lever taps and grab rails to semi-permanent ramps, stair lifts, hoists,

and ground floor extensions.

30. The HRA adaptations budget reflects the fundamental role adaptations play in supporting people with vulnerabilities to continue to live independently, reducing the need for expensive care packages and prevent a premature move into residential or care accommodation. These high levels of need have also been considered in developing our new build housing programme. Occupational Therapists and Housing Officers work closely with our tenants to meet their needs where appropriate, such as bespoke lowered kitchens and specific bathing requirements before they move in, wherever possible.

Existing Stock Investment and Responsive Repairs

31. From our current and previous stock condition surveys, our properties have been assessed as being in good condition, reflecting our significant annual investment, as part of a structured programme for both on-going capital improvements and responsive repairs and maintenance. We now have dedicated Stock Condition Surveyors who will undertake a rolling programme of surveys to inform our provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for our tenants. Our surveys have provided us with a complete picture of our stock condition and analysis of this data will continue in 2026-27 to shape our Business Plan and energy efficiency priorities.
32. All our properties comply with Decent Homes Standards. This can be largely attributed to a central heating programme providing A-rated combi-boilers and a planned maintenance programme which ensures properties benefit from cavity wall insulation and loft insulation. Properties have also been targeted in recent years for a more comprehensive package of energy efficiency measures including double glazed UPVC windows, composite doors, and external wall insulation. In addition, all our properties comply with health and safety legal requirements, and part of the cyclical maintenance programme includes statutory gas and electrical safety checks, fire door surveys and fire risk assessments.
33. The Housing Business Plan identifies a capital works budget of around £63m over the next four years and £461m budget for capital works over the next 30 years, including the New Build Programme (see **Appendix 2**).
34. The Business Plan also anticipates the number of responsive repairs will remain at current levels, with an annual inflationary increase for costs and so allocates a budget of £31.2m for responsive repairs and maintenance over the next four years.

Energy Efficiency and Climate Change

35. We are committed to make our homes more energy efficient, to help tenants with fuel bills and tackle climate change, reflected in our Housing Services Climate Change Strategy, approved by Cabinet in January 2024. Our strategy confirmed that significant investment is required to achieve Government targets to ensure all our homes:
 - (a) Achieve a minimum EPC rating of C by 2030.
 - (b) Achieve a net zero carbon rating by 2050.
36. An independent report from Savills in 2021 estimated replacing gas boilers with air source heating will cost more than £100m. At this point we don't know the Government's long-term intentions on funding for these measures but currently, grants are awarded on a

matched funding basis.

37. The Council has already committed over £4m of capital expenditure to tackle climate change in the current financial year and this has been supplemented with Government funding from successful bids through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) and the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (WHSHF) to deliver improvements to Council homes as follows:
- (a) The SHDF (wave 1) scheme delivered external and cavity wall insulation, Air Source Heat Pumps, loft insulation and solar panels to 23 Council homes using £0.24m of Government funding and £0.28m of capital expenditure.
 - (b) The SHDF (wave 2) scheme delivered external and cavity wall insulation, solar panels, loft insulation, double glazing, and low energy lighting to 130 Council homes using £1.27m of Government funding and £1.27m of capital expenditure.
 - (c) The WHSHF (wave 3) scheme will deliver external and cavity wall insulation, solar panels, loft insulation, double glazing, and low energy lighting to approx. 680 Council homes using £3.55m of Government funding. Matched funding from the HRA, together with non-grant funded works, will deliver a 3-year programme of improvements to around 1,000 Council homes at a total estimated cost of £13.9m.
38. We have approx. 2,350 properties that don't meet the EPC C rating, which will need to be addressed by 2030. We don't know the full costs yet, but current estimates, based on stock condition data, suggest the amount to be around £32m, which is approx. £12.8k for each property. Therefore, significantly more investment will be required to meet Government targets.

Rents

39. All registered providers of social housing (including Councils) must set rents in accordance with the Government's Rent Standard, which allows social housing providers to increase rents, by CPI plus 1%.
40. Members will recall that a 2.7% rent increase was agreed in February 2025 for the current financial year. This was the maximum increase allowable and was made in recognition of the need to balance ongoing economic pressures facing our tenants and the need to invest in our Council homes and services. As far as we are aware, all social landlords in England increased their rents in 2025-26 by the maximum 2.7%.
41. The Council has faced substantial financial pressures over the last 12 months. There is a country wide pressure regarding building materials and contractor costs, which has, and continues to, increase prices above inflation, which subsequently impacts on the cost of both repairs and maintenance and new build properties. For example, our Repairs and Maintenance costs have increased from £4.759m in 2021-22 to £7.153m in 2024-25, a 50% increase in 3 years.
42. The Council recognises that the last few years have been a difficult time for all our tenants and in the current economic climate the pressures on fuel and price inflation in general puts a strain on family finances. Conversely, rising prices also means the cost of repairs, maintenance, contractor, and material costs to maintain and invest in our stock are also increasing. Without any rise there would be an impact on our ability to maintain and

invest in our tenant's homes and the ability to implement the significant energy efficiency measures required to tackle climate change.

43. The Government has also consulted on new Decent Homes Standards, and the Regulator of Social Housing introduced new Consumer Standards in April 2024 that places greater emphasis on social landlords to provide good quality homes to their tenants. Awaab's Law, introduced in October 2025, also requires social landlords to address damp and mould reports with higher priority and new Fire Safety regulations introduced in 2022 also require us to replace all our doors in blocks of flats and communal housing schemes over the next few years.
44. Considering the current economic pressures facing our tenants and balancing this with the increased costs of maintaining and improving our housing and the need to deliver our ambitious capital and energy efficiency programmes, an increase of 4.8% is recommended, or an average of £4.24 each week. It is also recommended to increase service charges in line with the projected costs of the services provided.
45. In addition to the income from rent and service charges, in 2026-27 we plan to borrow an additional £8.2m to help fund our new build programme. This will be supplemented with grants from Homes England, which usually cover around 30% of the new build costs. We also plan to continue to bid for available Government funding to improve the energy efficiency of our homes and reduce our carbon impact.
46. In terms of benchmarking data, the following tables are the Government figures for 2024-25, which show Darlington rents both social and affordable (except for one-bedroom and four-bedroom homes with an affordable rent) as being lower.

Table 1: Average Social Rents 2024-25 (no service charges included)

House size	DBC	Other Social Landlords in Darlington
1 Bedroom	£74.65	£82.51
2 Bedroom	£84.52	£97.52
3 Bedroom	£93.97	£104.55
4 Bedroom	£100.23	£125.60
All properties	£84.36	£97.35

Table 2: Average Affordable Rents 2024-25 (including service charges)

House size	DBC	Other Social Landlords in Darlington
1 Bedroom	£106.78	£104.62
2 Bedroom	£109.29	£119.75
3 Bedroom	£123.88	£133.71
4 Bedroom	£182.68	£144.89
All properties	£112.64	£122.33

Garage Rents and Service Charges

47. The proposed service charges are shown at **Table 3** below and achieves full recovery of costs from those tenants who directly benefit from the services provided. In most cases, this means an inflationary increase is necessary that either matches or is below CPI but in some instances, a higher increase is needed to maintain current levels of service.
48. For 2026-27, the heating costs for sheltered and extra care schemes has been estimated by the North East Procurement Organisation's (NEPO) to decrease, reflecting gas price decreases in 2025-26. Therefore, the proposed service charge for 2026-27 has been decreased accordingly. The proposed meals charge for Extra Care schemes will increase by 20% from £58.43 each week, to £70.14 as the costs have been subsidised by the Council, although the actual cost increase of the service has been staggered over 2 years (20% increase in 2025-26 and 20% increase in 2026-27). Similarly, the building cleaning charge has also been increased above inflation, as this service was also being subsidised by the Council and has been phased over 2 years in a similar way to the meals charge. In addition, there is a plus budget pressure for window cleaning, which is the reason for the 38% increase in the weekly charge to the flats.
49. Any additional costs will be covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit for the approximate 70% of tenants who are eligible. The HRA funds a Tenancy Sustainment Service and Income Management Team to address the financial challenges facing a considerable number of Council tenants. Referrals are also made to Citizens Advice for independent financial advice, as well as to food banks and furniture recycling schemes. Those tenants, particularly first-time tenants who require more sustained intensive support, will be referred to the Housing Plus Team.

Table 3: Garage Rents and Service Charges

Description	Current Weekly Charge (25-26)	Proposed Weekly Charge (26-27)	% increase
	£	£	
Garage Rents	10.07	10.45	4%
Building Cleaning – Flats	2.82	3.89	38%
Building Cleaning – Sheltered Schemes	5.15	6.43	25%
Building Cleaning – Extra Care Schemes	18.87	22.09	17%
Grounds Maintenance – General Housing	2.28	2.47	8%
Grounds Maintenance – Blocks of Flats	2.28	2.47	8%
Heating – Sheltered and Extra Care Schemes	19.89	15.41	-23%
Heating – Blocks of Flats	3.29	3.29	0%
Administration – Leaseholders	2.16	2.24	4%
Furnishings and Fittings – Sheltered and Extra Care Schemes	2.58	2.67	4%
Furnishings and Fittings – Good Neighbour Schemes	1.26	1.31	4%
Lifeline Response	8.57	8.90	4%
Lifeline – Sheltered and Extra Care Schemes	30.48	30.73	1%
Pavement Crossings and Hard Standings	5.20	5.40	4%

Description	Current Weekly Charge (25-26)	Proposed Weekly Charge (26-27)	% increase
Mid-day Meal – Extra Care (Residents Only)	58.43	70.14	20%
Mid-day Meal – Extra Care (Non-Residents)	70.12	84.17	20%
Guest Rooms in Sheltered Schemes	110.75	116.29	5%
Door Entry Systems	0.95	0.96	2%
TV Aerials	0.26	0.27	2%
Furniture Charge	14.32	14.87	4%
Housing Plus Service	22.90	25.90	13%

Consultation

50. The Annual Review of the HRA Business Plan, together with the recommendation to increase rents and service changes is developed in consultation with Council tenants through our Tenants Panel and tenant surveys. The specific proposals included in this report have not yet been considered by the Tenants Panel, but the outcome of consultation will be reported to Cabinet in the February 2026 report.

Financial Implications

51. The estimates included in this report represent a fair view of ongoing plans and commitments although Members will appreciate some budgets are subject to volatility and will continue to be monitored closely.
52. With the proposed increase in rents the expenditure plans presented are affordable and the level of revenue balances projected in this report represent an adequate level of risk.

APPENDIX 1

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - MTFP

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<u>Income</u>				
Rents of Dwellings (Gross)	(25,584)	(26,063)	(26,540)	(27,026)
Sundry Rents (Including Garages and Shops)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)
Charges for Services and Facilities	(3,767)	(3,828)	(3,910)	(3,993)
Contribution Towards Expenditure	(1,662)	(1,681)	(1,708)	(1,736)
Interest Receivable	(531)	(369)	(284)	(201)
Total Income	(32,042)	(32,441)	(32,942)	(33,455)
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Operational Costs	7,084	7,142	7,251	7,387
Service Charges	3,767	3,828	3,910	3,993
Capital Financing Costs	4,833	4,928	4,886	4,844
Increase in Bad Debt Provision	263	271	279	288
HRA Revenue Repairs	7,579	7,723	7,875	8,032
Revenue Contribution to Capital (RCCO)	12,261	12,210	11,903	11,811
Contribution to/(from) Balance	(3,745)	(3,660)	(3,163)	(2,901)
Total Expenditure	32,042	32,441	32,942	33,455
(Surplus) / Deficit	0	0	0	0
Opening Balance	16,227	12,483	8,823	5,660
Contribution to/(from) Balance	(3,745)	(3,660)	(3,163)	(2,901)
Closing Balance	12,483	8,823	5,660	2,759

APPENDIX 2

30 YEAR HOUSING BUSINESS PLAN 2026/27 - 2055/56

	Years 1-10 (£000)	Years 11-20 (£000)	Years 21-30 (£000)	Total Spend (£000)
Adaptations and Lifts	1,675	2,042	2,489	6,207
Communal Works	2,234	2,723	3,534	8,490
Repairs Before Painting	1,373	1,749	2,225	5,347
External Works (footpaths, fencing, etc.)	2,345	2,859	3,625	8,829
Garages	573	327	388	1,288
Heating Replacements	14,799	18,039	21,990	54,828
Internal Planned Maintenance (IPM)	40,207	58,582	60,176	158,965
Roofing and Repointing Work	10,950	13,348	16,271	40,568
Structural Works	2,737	3,337	4,331	10,405
Lifeline Services	1,686	921	1,195	3,802
Energy Efficiency (including Window and Door Replacements)	41,192	39,857	47,973	129,022
Professional Fees	4,234	5,163	7,079	16,477
Smoke / Fire Alarms	0	1	2	3
Pavements	311	379	491	1,181
Capital Schemes Approved in the Previous Year	5,821	0	0	0
New Build and Acquisitions	10,000	0	0	10,000
Total expenditure	140,137	149,327	171,769	461,233

APPENDIX 3

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – CAPITAL PROGRAMME

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
<u>Scheme / Project</u>				
Adaptations and Lifts	153	156	159	162
Heating Replacements	1,352	1,379	1,406	1,434
Structural Works	250	255	260	265
Lifeline Services	379	380	382	73
Repairs Before Painting	69	134	136	139
Roofing and Repointing Work	1,000	1,020	1,040	1,061
Garages	329	25	26	26
External Works (footpaths, fencing, etc.)	214	218	223	227
Pavements	28	29	30	30
Window and Door Replacements	2,025	2,065	1,607	1,639
IPM	3,672	3,745	3,820	3,897
Energy Efficiency	5,237	5,200	1,500	1,530
Communal Works	204	208	212	216
Capital Schemes Approved in the Previous Year	5,821	0	0	0
New Build and Acquisitions	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Fees	386	395	402	410
Total spend	22,119	16,210	12,203	12,111
<u>Resourced by:</u>				
Capital Receipts	300	300	300	301
RCCO	12,261	12,210	11,903	11,811
Capital Grant	1,320	1,283	0	0
Additional Borrowing	8,238	2,417	0	0

Examples of Weekly Rent Changes for 2026/27

Appendix 4

Area		Property Type	Approved Rent 2025/26	Proposed Rent 2026/27	Increase between 25/26 & 26/27	Increase between 25/26 & 26/27
					£	%
<u>Middleton St George</u>						
	Pounteys Close	2 Bedroom House	91.52	95.92	4.39	4.8%
	Thorntree Gardens	3 Bedroom House	104.40	109.41	5.01	4.8%
<u>Cockerton</u>						
	Newton Court	1 Bedroom Flat	75.58	79.21	3.63	4.8%
	Elvet Place	2 Bedroom House	88.51	92.76	4.25	4.8%
	Minors Crescent	3 Bedroom House	95.36	99.94	4.58	4.8%
<u>Haughton</u>						
	Ted Fletcher Court	1 Bedroom Flat	76.22	79.88	3.66	4.8%
	Lyonette Road	2 Bedroom Flat	86.34	90.48	4.14	4.8%
	Nightingale Avenue	2 Bedroom House	89.36	93.65	4.29	4.8%
	Rockwell Avenue	2 Bedroom House	86.34	90.48	4.14	4.8%
	Dunelm Walk	3 Bedroom House	97.71	102.40	4.69	4.8%
<u>Branksome</u>						
	Branksome Hall	1 Bedroom Flat	75.70	79.33	3.63	4.8%
	Whitby Way	1 Bedroom Flat	75.70	79.33	3.63	4.8%
	Malvern Crescent	2 Bedroom House	86.83	91.00	4.17	4.8%
	Rosedale Crescent	3 Bedroom House	98.71	103.45	4.74	4.8%
	Sherborne Close	2 Bedroom Flat	104.81	109.84	5.03	4.8%
<u>Lascelles</u>						
	Coxwold House	1 Bedroom Flat	74.82	78.41	3.59	4.8%
	Gilling Crescent	2 Bedroom Flat	74.82	78.41	3.59	4.8%
	Aldbrough Walk	2 Bedroom House	85.67	89.78	4.11	4.8%
	Caldwell Green	3 Bedroom House	94.80	99.35	4.55	4.8%
	Fenby Avenue	3 Bedroom House	98.11	102.82	4.71	4.8%
<u>Bank Top</u>						
	Graham Court	1 Bedroom Flat	76.18	79.84	3.66	4.8%
	Graham Court	3 Bedroom House	97.61	102.30	4.69	4.8%
<u>Red Hall</u>						
	Bramall House	1 Bedroom Flat	73.09	76.60	3.51	4.8%
	Aviemore Court	2 Bedroom Flat	80.38	84.24	3.86	4.8%
	Murrayfield Way	2 Bedroom House	83.72	87.74	4.02	4.8%
	Aintree Court	2 Bedroom House	82.15	86.10	3.94	4.8%
	Aintree Court	3 Bedroom House	108.14	113.33	5.19	4.8%
<u>Eastbourne</u>						
	West Moor Road	1 Bedroom Flat	71.79	75.24	3.46	4.8%
	Tansley Gardens	2 Bedroom Flat	79.96	83.80	3.84	4.8%
	Firthmoor Crescent	2 Bedroom House	83.27	87.27	4.00	4.8%
	Brignall Moor Crescent	3 Bedroom House	90.12	94.45	4.33	4.8%
<u>Skerne Park</u>						
	Trent Place	2 Bed House	84.20	88.24	4.04	4.8%
	Humber Place	3 Bed House	90.99	95.35	4.37	4.8%

<u>Parkside</u>						
	Wordsworth Road	1 Bedroom Flat	76.28	79.94	3.66	4.8%
	Shakespeare Road	2 Bedroom House	89.19	93.48	4.28	4.8%
	Ruskin Road	3 Bedroom House	96.71	101.35	4.64	4.8%

*

* Affordable rent properties - these rents include applicable service charges.

**CABINET
2 DECEMBER 2025**

HOUSING SERVICES TENANCY POLICY 2025-2030

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

**Responsible Director – Elizabeth Davison,
Executive Director of Resources and Governance**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To approve the Housing Services Tenancy Policy 2025-2030.

Summary

2. The Housing Services Tenancy Policy 2025-2030 at **Appendix 1** sets out the type of tenancies we offer for our Council housing and aims to:
 - (a) Help those in housing need access a home that meets their needs
 - (b) Help to build sustainable and healthy communities
 - (c) Help to make decisions about who lives where, in what type of tenancy and for how long.
3. The Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Consumer Standards state that Registered Providers of social housing must "offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock".
4. The Tenants Panel has been consulted on the draft policy, and they have given their full support, apart from the issue of tenancies for new build properties, which is set out in paragraph 12 of the report.
5. This strategy was considered by Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee on 29 October 2025, who agreed its onward submission for approval by Cabinet.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Cabinet:-
 - (a) Consider the contents of this report, and

- (b) Approve the Housing Services Tenancy Policy 2025-2030 at **Appendix 1**.

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
- (a) The Housing Services Tenancy Policy 2025-2030 ensures that tenants are provided with the right tenancy for their circumstances and that the Council makes the best use of its Council housing stock.
 - (b) The RSH, in its Tenancy Standard, sets out that registered providers of social housing must publish clear and accessible policies, which outline the types of tenancies they will grant, the circumstances in which they will grant tenancies of a particular type and the circumstances in which fixed term tenancies will be granted.

Elizabeth Davison
Executive Director of Resources and Governance

Background Papers

- (i) The RSH Consumer Standards

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

Council Plan	This report supports the Council Plan's HOMES priority to provide affordable and secure homes that meet the current and future needs of residents
Addressing inequalities	An equality impact assessment screening form has been completed on the draft policy, but no adverse impacts have been identified
Tackling Climate Change	The Council is actively improving the energy efficiency of our Council homes, through our Housing Services Climate Change policy, ensuring we offer tenancies for warm and energy efficient properties
Efficient and effective use of resources	This policy will ensure we make the most efficient use of our housing stock
Health and Wellbeing	Providing the right accommodation to meet the needs of individual households will support the health and well-being of our tenants
S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	All wards with Council housing
Groups Affected	All Council tenants
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework
Key Decision	This report does not represent a key decision
Urgent Decision	This report does not represent an urgent decision
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	There are no issues which this report needs to address

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. The Housing Services Tenancy Policy 2025-2030 sets out the type of tenancies we offer for our Council housing and aims to:
 - (a) Help those in housing need access a home that meets their needs
 - (b) Help to build sustainable and healthy communities
 - (c) Help to make decisions about who lives where, in what type of tenancy and for how long.
9. The type of tenancies that we offer for our Council housing are as follows:
 - (a) **Introductory tenancies** for those who are not already a secure tenant for the first 12 months of the tenancy.
 - (b) **Secure tenancies** for most tenants who have completed an introductory tenancy.
 - (c) **Flexible tenancies (or fixed term tenancies)** in some circumstances, such as adapted properties, properties within a regeneration area, rent to buy properties and rural properties, once an introductory tenancy has been completed. Flexible tenancies allow the Council to review a tenancy (usually every 5 years) to ensure the property continues to meet the housing needs of the household.
10. The Tenancy Policy also covers other areas, such as mutual exchanges, succession rights, transfers and tenancy assignments.
11. The Housing Services Tenancy Policy 2025-2030 proposes a number of changes to the existing tenancy policy, as follows:
 - (a) **Adapted Properties.** Under the existing Tenancy Policy, properties with adaptations costing £7,500 or more are allocated as flexible tenancies. These are properties with adaptations that cannot be easily reversed, such as through floor lifts and extensions. Under the Tenancy Policy 2025-2030, this amount has been amended to £6,500.
 - (b) **Rent to Buy Properties.** Rent to Buy properties, which have been built with Homes England grant, will be allocated by offering a flexible tenancy, with an expectation that the tenant will purchase the property at the end of the 5-year period. This requirement to purchase is also a term of the tenancy.
 - (c) **New Build Properties.** Under the existing tenancy policy, new build properties are not separately identified as being allocated a flexible tenancy, and this is the same under the Tenancy Policy 2025-2030 (so no change in policy). However, Local Lettings Policies, introduced for our recent new build schemes have stated that these properties are allocated as a flexible tenancy (unless the new tenant is a pre-2012 tenant with a secure tenancy). Therefore, tenancies for any future new build

properties, will be offered as secure tenancies. Existing tenants of new build properties will be offered a secure tenancy when their flexible tenancy expires.

- (d) **Rightsizing.** A new Rightsizing offer is for tenants living in larger homes to move to smaller homes and free up these larger homes for families. For tenants that are interested, we can offer a wide range of support and a choice of housing that better suits their needs. Rightsizing is an option available and is not mandatory.

Outcome of Consultation

- 12. Our Tenants Panel were consulted about the new policy and the proposed changes in July 2025. Overall, the Panel have given their full support. However, on the question of flexible tenancies for new builds, all barring one Panel member (85%) have stated their support for flexible tenancies for new build properties. Comments included the following:

- (a) "I still believe that flexible tenancies should apply to those in new build homes."
- (b) "I strongly believe that flexible tenancies should be included to new build properties and that this shouldn't be changed."
- (c) "I don't think this should change, I think flexible tenancies work, I moved into a new build 5 years ago, as did my neighbours, and I know that their circumstances have changed. I believe Lancaster (Close) is a good working example of flexible tenancies."
- (d) "I can see the logic but 'flexible' means to me that the Council would not force anyone to move after a fixed term period and should treat each case by looking into the tenant's circumstances."

Equalities considerations

- 13. An equality impact assessment screening form at **Appendix 2** has been completed on the draft policy, but no adverse impacts have been identified.

Housing Services Tenancy Policy 2025-2030

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Introduction

We are committed to building sustainable communities, providing high-quality affordable housing to our tenants and meeting local housing need. Our tenants are at the heart of everything we do and they are involved in decision making, improving and scrutinising our services.

The Localism Act 2011 placed a duty on local authorities to publish a Tenancy Policy and this is supported by the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards.

Aims of Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that we offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community and the efficient use of our housing stock.

This policy sets out:

- The type of tenancies we will grant.
- Where we grant tenancies for a fixed term, the length of those terms.
- The circumstances in which we will grant tenancies of a particular type.
- Any circumstances in which we will grant fixed term tenancies for a term of less than five years in general needs housing, following any probationary period.
- The circumstances in which we may or may not grant another tenancy on the expiry of the fixed term, in the same property or in a different property.
- The way in which a tenant or prospective tenant may appeal against or complain about the length of a fixed term tenancy offered and the type of tenancy offered, and against a decision not to grant another tenancy on the expiry of the fixed term.
- How we take into account the needs of those households who are vulnerable by reason of age, disability or illness, and households with children, including through the provision of tenancies, which provide a reasonable degree of stability.
- The advice and assistance they will give to tenants on finding alternative accommodation, in the event that they decide not to grant another tenancy.
- Our policy on granting discretionary succession rights, taking account of the needs of household members with vulnerabilities.
- Our rightsizing offer to tenants in larger homes who wish to downsize.

Relevant Legislation and Internal Policies

- Localism Act 2011.
- Housing Act 1985.
- Housing Act 1996.
- Housing Act 2004.
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards 2024.
- Housing Services Allocation Policy 2023-2028.

- Housing Services: Housing Management Policy 2022-2026.
- Housing Services Tenancy Agreement.
- Housing Services Vulnerability Policy 2024-2029.
- Housing Services Domestic Abuse Policy 2024-2029.
- Darlington Borough Council Low Cost Home Ownership Policy 2022.
- Housing Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2022-2026.

Tenancy Types

The types of tenancy Housing Services offer are:

Introductory Tenancies

All new tenants of the Council, apart from those who are existing tenants of another council or a registered social housing provider, will be given an introductory tenancy.

An introductory tenancy is a trial period lasting 12 months. Introductory tenancies provide an opportunity for new tenants to ensure they understand their rights and obligations under the terms of the tenancy agreement and are able to maintain their tenancy satisfactorily. If there are no problems during the trial period, then the tenancy automatically becomes either a secure or flexible tenancy.

Introductory tenancies do not have all the rights of a secure tenant. They do not have the right to:

- Mutually exchange with another tenant.
- Carry out improvements to the property.
- Sub-let the property.
- Succeed the tenancy.
- Buy the property (but the introductory tenancy period will count towards the entitlement period if they choose to buy later).

In some circumstances, an introductory tenancy may be extended by a further 6 months, up to 18 months. This will occur if there are concerns about how the tenancy is being conducted and a condition of the tenancy has potentially been breached. The intention for this extension is to allow tenants to resolve any issues, with support if required, and successfully complete their Introductory Tenancy period. Examples would be repaying any arrears and maintaining a payment pattern, or improving the condition of their property and maintaining this. A notice of the intention to increase the introductory period will be given by the 10th month of the tenancy.

Where a tenant has not satisfactorily completed an introductory tenancy, a Notice of Possession Proceedings will be served. The tenant will have a right to review this decision, as set out within the Tenancy Agreement.

Notice of Possession Proceedings Appeal Hearings involve a face-to-face hearing (wherever possible) and are chaired by a member of the senior management team, usually the Head of Housing. The panel is made up of Tenants Panel members and legal representatives from the Council and any other relevant agencies such as Social Services.

An appeal hearing allows Council Officers the opportunity to state the case and evidence against the tenant and for the tenant (and their representative) the opportunity to state the reasons why, in the tenant's opinion, the Council should not take legal action to end their tenancy.

The Council may apply for a Court Order at any time during the tenancy to end the tenancy if any of the grounds for possession can be proved.

Secure Tenancies

The vast majority of our tenancies are let as secure tenancies. A secure tenancy allows tenants to live in their home with no time limit as long the conditions of the tenancy are not broken.

Secure tenants have a range of rights and security of tenure, which can only be challenged for specific reasons set out in law. The Council supplies all new tenants with a new tenancy pack, which includes a written tenancy agreement explaining the rights and responsibilities they have as a tenant.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced changes to the rights of tenants. Those who became tenants after 1st April 2012 have a limited right to succession, and the right to retain their status as a secure tenant no longer applies if they transfer to a property that has been designated for a flexible tenancy.

Flexible Tenancies

The Council has a stock of around 5,300 properties and has an ambitious plan to increase the number of affordable social rented properties throughout the Borough. Demand for our properties has always been high and the development of new properties and acquisition of properties has opened up a new demand.

The scale of the new-build ambitions means that the Council needs to consider how new communities are formed as well as supporting existing communities. Accessibility to Council housing therefore forms an important element of achieving balanced sustainable communities. As a consequence, the Council has used its powers under the Localism Act 2011 to introduce flexible tenancies in certain circumstances.

Table 1: Where flexible tenancies apply

Property type	Reason
Properties with adaptations over £6,500	There are a small number of properties where very expensive adaptations costing more than £6,500 have been completed that cannot easily be reversed, such as a "through floor" lift or a major extension. A fixed term tenancy allows a review of the tenancy to ensure the property continues to meet the

	housing needs of the household and ensures adapted properties are allocated effectively and to those that need them.
Properties within a regeneration area	When large scale regeneration is planned and properties become void, which are identified for future demolition, a short term flexible tenancy will prevent properties standing empty for longer than necessary.
Rent to Buy Properties	<p>Rent to Buy properties, which have been built with Homes England grant, will be allocated by offering a Flexible Secure Rent to Buy Tenancy*, with an expectation that the tenant will purchase at the end of the 5 year period. This requirement to purchase is also a term of the tenancy.</p> <p>*Please note that applicants that are not transferring from a secure tenancy will initially be offered an Introductory Tenancy prior to a Flexible Secure Rent to Buy Tenancy after 12 months.</p>
Rural Properties	All properties in rural locations (villages) are flexible tenancies, to ensure that properties are allocated effectively and to those with a local village connection.

The regulatory guidance indicates that generally, flexible tenancies should be a minimum of 5 years, although the Localism Act 2011 states that the minimum period that can be offered is 2 years.

Anyone being offered a flexible tenancy will be first offered a one year introductory tenancy, followed by a 5 year flexible tenancy. There are exceptions to this (see below).

The Localism Act states tenants with a “flexible fixed term tenancy” will have the following rights:

- Right to exchange with limited exceptions
- Right to buy after the qualifying period of 3 years.
- Right to take in lodgers and to sub-let part of the property (with our permission).
- Right to have repairs carried out.
- Right to consultation and information.
- Right to one succession to the spouse or partner of the deceased tenant.

The Localism Act 2011 states that the shortest length of time a flexible tenancy can be given is 2 years and then only in exceptional circumstances. The Council will only consider the use of shorter flexible tenancies where:

- There are major changes taking place to the housing stock. It is often difficult to make the best use of the stock that becomes vacant prior to works starting. There may be circumstances where the use of shorter flexible tenancies will help address those particular and exceptional circumstances. The decision will be based on the project delivery plan and will be specific to that particular project.
- If there is a significant change in circumstances, such as the impact of the Welfare Reforms that may increase the risk of certain affected groups not being able to maintain their tenancy.
- For our Rent to Buy properties, we may offer 2 year flexible tenancies to any applicants that requires an Introductory Tenancy period to ensure we meet the 5 year purchase period.

Starting a flexible tenancy

All properties offered as a flexible tenancy will be clearly identified as such when the property is advertised, and it will be explained in the offer letter.

All those being offered a flexible tenancy will be first offered a one year introductory tenancy, followed by a flexible tenancy. The exception to this is those who became a secure tenant after 1st January 2013, as they will not have to enter an introductory tenancy first.

Reviewing a flexible tenancy

It is a legal requirement that we notify the tenant that the flexible tenancy will be coming to an end at least 6 months prior to the termination of tenancy. However, we will write to the tenant between 9 and 12 months before the end of a tenancy to inform them that we are beginning a review of their tenancy. Our aim will be to give the tenant as much notice as possible about our intentions for their tenancy.

In addition to confirming the start of a review in writing, a home visit will also be arranged, to ensure the tenant is aware that their tenancy is due to end and to take the opportunity to discuss their housing needs and future housing options. In the review we will consider:

- Any change in circumstances, such as the size of the family that may be leading to under or over occupation, or changes in health.
- The financial situation of the household (for those on a flexible rent to buy tenancy the expectation is they will purchase the property at the end of the fixed term tenancy).
- Any social issues, including children's education.
- Any tenancy breaches such as rent arrears, anti-social behaviour complaints and any concerns around property conditions.
- Where appropriate, the continuing need for major adaptations.

- Where appropriate, if the family are continuing to foster.
- The number of applicants on the waiting list in need of that type of accommodation.
- The availability of similar properties in that area.
- The tenant's views on continuing the tenancy.

Once the review has been completed, we will again write to the tenant as soon as possible but at least 6 months before the end of the tenancy. The letter will explain our decision and set out what will happen next. This will be followed by either a telephone call or a visit depending on the outcome of the review.

Ending a flexible tenancy

Tenants with a flexible tenancy will have the same protection from eviction as tenants with a secure tenancy. Throughout the term of the tenancy, secure tenancy status is conferred, and so if possession is required during the term of the tenancy, such as due to anti-social behaviour or rent arrears, then possession action has to be taken at court, proving grounds of possession and in most cases the reasonableness of regaining possession in the circumstances. This is the same process as would be taken in respect of a secure tenancy.

The circumstances when a decision is made not to grant another flexible tenancy may include:

- The tenant is not in a position to purchase the property now or is not likely to be in the near future, as originally agreed in the tenancy agreement signed at the beginning of occupancy.
- Affordability.
- We plan to sell the home and having given the tenant the right of first refusal they have been unable to purchase.
- A breach of tenancy occurred.
- Tenancy fraud has been identified.
- The tenant has not engaged in the review process.
- The tenant does not wish to accept the terms of the new tenancy being offered.
- The tenant, or a member of their household, has come into legal ownership of another residential property, or it has been brought to our attention that the tenant owns or rents another property.

If at the end of the tenancy the tenant has not vacated the property and requires a short period of time whilst they wait for alternative accommodation to become available, we may agree not to start court proceedings. Each circumstance will be assessed on their own merits. We will, however, always serve the 6-month notice and 2-month notice period before the end of the tenancy.

Where the Council decides to not offer a further flexible tenancy and terminate the tenancy, we will confirm this with the tenant with at least 6 month's notice in writing, followed by a visit as soon as possible after the decision.

The notice will set out:

- Why we have made this decision.
- What the appeals process is (see below).
- What advice and support we will provide should alternative accommodation be required.

Where a tenancy is being terminated we will provide advice on alternative housing options including:

- Access to the Housing Options Team.
- Support to apply for alternative social housing, if appropriate, including other Council housing.
- Advice on privately rented accommodation.
- Advice on shared ownership and owner occupation.
- Advice on moving house.
- Information on other advice and support agencies.

A formal notice seeking possession will be served two months before the end of the tenancy.

Other circumstances where a flexible tenancy may end

The Council may apply for a Court Order at any time during the tenancy to end the tenancy, if any of the grounds for possession can be proved. The grounds for possession remain the same as for secure tenancies.

If the tenant wishes to bring the tenancy to an end before the end of the flexible tenancy, they may do so by issuing a notice of termination that provides 4 week's notice. For the surrender to take effect, it must be accepted in writing by the Council.

Appeals

The Flexible Tenancies (Review Procedures) Regulations 2012 sets out the procedure for a review of decisions relating to flexible tenancies. There are only two circumstances in which a review can take place:

- A tenant can seek a review of the length of tenancy on offer if it does not comply with the Tenancy Policy.
- They can also apply for a review if, at the end of the flexible tenancy they are refused a further tenancy (which will generally be because the tenant has not exercised the option to purchase or is in breach of tenancy).

Other concerns to do with the tenancy, such as repairs, will be dealt with through the Council's Complaints procedure.

Any written request for a review must be made before the end of:

- The period of 21 days beginning with the day on which the person(s) concerned receive the notice.

On receipt of the written request for review, we will review the decision. The person(s) concerned has the opportunity to request an oral review for the review which will normally be held in person but could be held virtually (such as through Teams or Zoom) and will:

- Be chaired by a senior member of Housing Services, who was not involved in the original decision.
- Will include members of the Tenants Panel in the decision making panel.
- Require officers from Housing Services and any other relevant agency to present details relating to the original decision.
- Require the person(s) concerned to attend, with any such representation they request (such as a support worker or family member).

If the person(s) concerned fail to attend an oral review, the panel will decide whether to hold in their absence.

The decision of the review will be provided both at the oral hearing and in writing, which will be hand-delivered to the property within 5 working days. This will include:

- The reasons for the decision.
- If the original decision is upheld, the help and support available from Housing Services to assist in finding alternative accommodation.
- Details of how, should they wish, to terminate the tenancy prior to the ending of the flexible tenancy period.

The conditions for each type of Council tenancy

Table 2: Types of tenancy

Tenancy Type	Who can be offered	Property Type	Length of Tenancy
Introductory tenancy	Those who are not already a secure tenant with the Council or other registered provider. Will apply to flexible and secure tenancies.	All properties	12 months, with the option to extend to 18 months in certain circumstances.
Secure tenancy started before 1st April 2012	Those who were either Council or Registered Providers' secure tenants before 1 st April 2012	All properties	There is no limit on the length of tenancy.
Secure tenancy started after 1st April 2012	Those who have successfully completed an introductory tenancy.	All properties except where a flexible tenancy applies (see below).	There is no limit on the length of tenancy.

Flexible tenancy	Those who have successfully completed an introductory tenancy	Properties with adaptations over £6,500. Properties within regeneration areas. Rent to Buy properties. Rural properties	5 years for most properties 2 years in exceptional circumstances
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Mutual Exchanges

A mutual exchange is the process whereby Council, or Housing Association tenancy can swap homes, with the permission of their landlords.

The rights of tenants who have flexible tenancies are in most respects the same as those tenants with secure tenancies, including the right to a mutual exchange. However, the process is different. There are also some differences between those who were secure tenants before 1st January 2013 and those who became tenants after that date.

Where a mutual exchange takes place with someone who was:

- **A secure tenant with a tenancy that started before 1st April 2012:** If a mutual exchange is entered into with someone with a flexible tenancy, then both the tenancies have to be terminated and new ones set up. The secure tenant will retain their right to a secure tenancy, regardless of the type of property involved. However, as a new tenancy has been started they will have the rights of a secure tenant with a tenancy started after 1st April 2012.
- **A secure tenant with a tenancy that started after 1st April 2012:** If a mutual exchange is entered into with someone with a flexible tenancy, then both tenants will simply swap places and both parties will take over each other's property and tenancy. The existing secure tenant must bear this in mind as the tenancy terms will be different under a flexible tenancy.
- **A tenant with a flexible tenancy exchanges to a property that falls into the category of a flexible tenancy:** In these cases, the tenant will be offered a new flexible tenancy. However, the tenancy length will be the remaining period of the exchanged flexible tenancy.
- **A tenant with a flexible tenancy exchanges to a property that does not fall into the category of a flexible tenancy:** In these cases, the tenant will be offered a secure tenancy and they will have the rights of a secure tenant with a tenancy started after 1st April 2012.

An exchange may be refused if:

- The tenant has a Court Order.
- The tenant has legal action pending, which may end their tenancy because of rent arrears, breach of tenancy conditions, neighbour nuisance, or damage to the property, or because they have obtained the tenancy by deception or by paying someone to exchange with them.
- The property is unsuitable for the tenant(s) wanting to move to it, or significantly larger than they need.
- The property has been adapted or has conditions attached to the property that the tenant does not meet (such as older persons' housing).

If there are rent arrears which have not yet led to a Court Order or Notice of Seeking Possession, then we will usually give conditional approval for the exchange to take place after the arrears have been cleared. In exceptional circumstances, we will consider allowing someone with rent arrears to exchange, for example, where the arrears are as a direct result of restrictions to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit because of under occupation and the exchange will result in a move to smaller, more affordable accommodation.

If the property conditions are poor, we may give conditional approval for the exchange to take place but only after the property conditions have been brought to an acceptable standard, as agreed by us.

We may also consider allowing a tenant to exchange in other special circumstances, such as domestic abuse and these will be considered on the facts of each individual case.

Transfers

Tenants holding a flexible or secure tenancy can apply for a transfer, this is when a current tenant applies to move or transfer to another Council home. They will have their priority assessed in the same way as other applicants.

Succession Rights

Succession rights are the right to take over the tenancy or inherit it when the main tenant dies. In the case of joint tenancies, the right to succeed applies to the other tenant named on the agreement.

The right to succession is the right to remain in the property as a tenant when the tenant dies. There can legally only be one succession per tenancy.

Types of succession

The Localism Act 2011 introduced changes to the right to succession. The rights of succession for tenants with tenancies that started before 1st January 2013 will not be affected.

Table 3: Right of Succession

Tenancies started before 1 st April 2012	Tenancies started after 1 st April 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married couples and registered civil partners automatically succeed providing they are living in the property at the time of the bereavement and there has not been a previous succession. • If there is no spouse or registered civil partner, another family member who has been living with the tenant continuously as their sole or main residence for at least 12 months prior to the tenant's death may qualify to succeed. However, they may be asked to move if the property is not suitable for their needs. In these circumstances, alternative accommodation will be offered, and they need not move until 6 months after the date of death. • If a couple are not married or civil partners, then legally the surviving partner has to be treated as a family member, not as a spouse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession to a secure or flexible Tenancy entered into after 1st November 2012 only applies to the spouse or civil partner, but also includes a person who was living with the tenant as if they were married or civil partners of the deceased tenant, and there has not been a previous succession. • Another family member who has been living with the tenant cannot succeed to the tenancy on the death of the tenant.

Assignment

Assignment is when a tenant transfers their tenancy to another person. A tenancy is assigned using a deed.

A secure or flexible tenant can only assign their tenancy if either:

- They assign by mutual exchange.
- They assign to a potential successor
- The court orders assignment in family law proceedings

In some circumstances a tenant may assign their tenancy to another person who complies with certain criteria as laid out in their tenancy agreement. Generally, the right to assign is limited to the same people who can succeed a tenancy.

There are also a limited number of other forms of assignment permitted by statute:

- Mutual exchange (except where a Flexible Tenancy is involved).
- Where a Court has made an order to transfer the tenancy under:
 - Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, Section 24.
 - Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984, Section 17(1).
 - Paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 to the Children Act 1989.
 - Part 2 of Schedule 5 or Paragraph 9(2) or (3) of Schedule 7 to the Civil Partnership Act 2004.

Affordable Rents

Affordable rents were introduced as part of the Government's Affordable Rent programme for 2015-2018. Most new build properties developed through the programme were required to be offered on an affordable rent. An affordable rent is calculated on 80% of rents in the private rental market.

Housing providers who had made successful bids for funding through the affordable rents programme also agreed to transfer a proportion of re-lets of existing properties from social rents to higher affordable rents. The intention was to generate extra income that could be used to support new developments.

All Rent to Buy properties are let on an affordable rent to maximise affordability.

Rightsizing

We recognise that some households may be living in a home, which for one reason or another, is too large or does not have the communal facilities that they require or is too expensive for them to run. Larger homes especially 3, 4 and 5-bedroom homes are in high demand in Darlington, with lots of families on the waiting list.

The Rightsizing offer is for tenants living in larger homes to move to smaller homes and free up these larger homes for families. For tenants that are interested, we can offer a wide range of support and a choice of housing that better suits their needs. Rightsizing is an option available and is not mandatory.

Rightsizing can help tenants:

- Have more disposable income because the rent or bills on a smaller property can be less.
- Feel safer in their home because it meets their needs better.
- Have more free time because a smaller home can be easier to manage, clean and maintain.
- Improve their health and wellbeing; their new home could be closer to local community centres, nearer to resident groups and activities.
- Provide them with more support; their new home may benefit from our Lifeline service.
- Feel content knowing their home meets their current and future needs better.

We recognise that some tenants cannot afford to move house and so, for those that are looking to downsize from a 2-bedroom or larger house to a 1-bedroom flat or bungalow, the Rightsizing offer allows us to help financially (up to a reasonable cost) for items for their new home, such as new carpets, removals or to replace built-in furniture, to help make the move easier.

Rightsizing applicants will be given priority banding on Darlington HomeSearch to move to smaller accommodation, which gives them opportunity to move. Automatic bidding can match them to the type of home and area they would like to move to.

The following eligibility criteria applies for Rightsizing:

- You are a current tenant of Darlington Borough Council.
- Your current home has one or more bedrooms spare.
- Ideally, you would not be in current arrears, but where there are arrears, a repayment plan must be in place and being maintained, and a court order must not be in place.
- You are not in breach of any part of your tenancy agreement.

Rightsizing only applies when tenants move to a smaller home; it does not apply if they are moving to a larger property.

Tenant Involvement

Our tenants are at the heart of what we do, and our Tenants Panel help us to improve our services through scrutiny, challenge and reviewing of policies and procedures.

We have ensured that our Tenants Panel have been involved in reviewing this policy review and they will be involved in the review of processes and any complaints relating to this policy.

Implementation & Staff Training

We will ensure effective implementation and advertising of this policy through our website and Housing Connect magazine. We will ensure appropriate training and support is given to colleagues and that all Housing staff regularly complete Corporate mandatory training. We will use both internal and external training resources to ensure staff training is as up to date as possible. We will carry out training, sharing good practice and case reviews with our staff in team meetings and will ensure support is available for staff through 1:1's and an open-door policy to Team Leaders and Managers.

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to ensuring that we do not discriminate against any of our tenants, and we want to provide excellent service to our tenants. This means that for all our policies and strategies, we will consider any specific issues that might be faced by tenants with vulnerabilities or those in protected groups. We ensure we have regard to our Vulnerability Policy throughout our interactions with tenants and through our policies.

We will make reasonable adjustments to our policies to assist our tenants, wherever possible. We will ensure that we support any individual; irrespective of age, gender, sexuality, disability, race or ethnicity, sex, religion, social background, or any other protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010.

Performance Monitoring

To assist in our continuous improvement, we will use tenant feedback, complaints, and compliments to look for improvements and will involve our Tenants Panel and Council Members in monitoring this.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every five years unless business need, regulation or legislation prompts an early review.

Draft

Initial equality impact assessment screening form

This form is an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to an activity, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.

Directorate:	RESOURCES & GOVERNANCE
Service Area:	HOUSING SERVICES
Activity being screened:	HOUSING SERVICES TENANCY POLICY 2025-2030
Officer(s) carrying out the screening:	CLAIRE GARDNER-QUEEN
What are you proposing to do?	A full review of the Tenancy Policy to ensure it assists Housing Services to meet new consumer standards, expectations and legislative requirements, as set out by the Regulator of Social Housing and government.
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	<p>The review is required to ensure that it continues to meet legislative and regulatory standards in relation to the types of tenancy we offer new Council tenants.</p> <p>Regulatory standards state we must publish clear and accessible policies in relation to tenure which set out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The type of tenancies we offer.• Where we grant tenancies for a fixed term, the length of those.• The circumstances in which we grant tenancies of a certain type.• Any exceptional circumstances in which we grant fixed term tenancies for a term of less than 5 years in general needs accommodation following any probationary period.• The circumstances in which we will grant tenancies of a particular type.• The circumstances in which we may or may not grant another tenancy on the expiry of the fixed term, in the same property or in a different property.• The way in which a tenant or prospective tenant may appeal against or complain about the length of fixed term tenancy offered and the type of tenancy offered, and against a decision not to grant another tenancy on the expiry of the fixed term.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our policy on taking into account the needs of those households who are vulnerable by reason of age, disability or illness, and households with children, including through the provision of tenancies which provide a reasonable degree of stability. • The advice and assistance we will give to tenants on finding alternative accommodation in the event that we decide not to grant another tenancy. • Our policy on granting discretionary succession rights, taking account of the needs of vulnerable household members. <p>Further types of properties have been added to the list of those where a flexible tenancy (a tenancy for a fixed term) is offered as standard.</p> <p>This has increased from properties with adaptations over £6,500 and those within a regeneration area to also include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent to Buy Properties (homes which must be bought after a 5-year tenancy period) • Rural properties. <p>This is to ensure that we can make the most efficient and effective use of our accommodation stock and to ensure that reviews are completed every 5 years to ensure they still meet the requirements of the household.</p> <p>We must also develop and deliver services that seek to address under-occupation and overcrowding in our homes and focussed on the needs of our tenants. This review includes the addition of the new “Rightsizing” offer to tenants who live in larger properties and who may wish to downsize, and the support and assistance offered to them.</p>
<p>Does the activity involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details</p>	<p>No, this is a review of the existing policy. Resources are already in place.</p>


Is there likely to be an adverse impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or any other socially excluded groups?

As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:

- To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics?
- Does the activity relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important?
- Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the activity relates to?

If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be a significant adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate.

Protected characteristic	Yes	No	Don't know/ Info not available
Age		x	
Disability		x	
Sex (gender)		x	
Race		x	
Sexual Orientation		x	
Religion or belief		x	
Gender reassignment		x	
Pregnancy or maternity		x	
Marriage or civil partnership		x	
Other			
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		x	
Low Income		x	
Rural Location		x	
Does the activity relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	<p>Yes, this policy review impacts all prospective and current Council tenants, however there is no adverse effects on them, with flexible, secure and introductory tenancies being protected by Housing law.</p> <p>The introduction of the "rightsizing" offer is not a mandatory requirement for tenants in larger homes to downsize but more an incentive to do so. It may also apply more to older tenants; however this is not a mandatory requirement and will assist us to meet the needs of older tenants better and help us to deal with under-occupation, so would have a positive impact across the waiting list and to those under-occupying.</p> <p>Adapted properties will be offered on a flexible tenancy basis, however if the property continues to meet the household needs, we will always renew the tenancy.</p> <p>Rural properties will be offered on a flexible tenancy basis, however if the property continues to meet the household needs, we will always renew the tenancy.</p>		

Will the activity have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.		No		
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	x	Continue to full EIA:	
Reason for Decision		Whilst the policy effects all prospective and current tenants there are no adverse impacts on them.		
Signed (Assistant Director)				
Date		26/08/25		

**CABINET
2 DECEMBER 2025**

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

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

Responsible Director – Strategic Leadership Team

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To propose a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2026/27 to 2029/30 for consultation, including setting a budget and Council Tax increase for 2026/27.

Summary

2. After years of austerity the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan remains in a fragile position. The reduction in public spending between 2010 and 2019 where the Council's budget was reduced by £46m in real terms, the significant increase in demand for services in the aftermath of Covid along with the unstable economic climate where the country saw the cost of living increasing, high inflation and poverty rising, is a challenge for all. The Council is facing a spiralling increase in cost and demand for services in Children's and Adults' Social Care 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.
4. The Government has recognised the inherent unfairness in the current funding model for local government along with the significant pressures faced in public services, and on 20 June 2025 published a comprehensive consultation on the reform of local government funding. The Government have committed to a policy statement at the end of November which will outline final policy positions, however, the draft local government finance settlement will not be published until late December, which is not helpful for planning purposes. Encouragingly, the Government has committed to a three-year finance settlement which will allow for more effective planning in the future.
5. Analysis of the consultation indicates Darlington should benefit from the redistribution of funding given our low Council Tax base and relative needs.

These changes are long overdue, and the Council has been lobbying for these reforms for many years, so the funding reforms are welcome news. Whilst initial assessments are encouraging, the position remains challenging with reserves required over the next two years to meet the sustainability gap and continued demand pressures need to be stemmed.

6. Over two thirds of our expenditure is on Adult and Children's Social Care, looking after our most vulnerable residents and children. Inflation, the national living wage and interest rate levels directly impact on the cost of our adult care contracts; in addition, 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; last year we saw a 50% increase in contacts from partner agencies and people concerned for a child's welfare, a 45% increase in referrals and an 11% increase in children in our care since pre pandemic levels. These are our largest budgets, and we have a statutory requirement to provide these services. This consequently impacts on the funding available for all other Council services, in particular discretionary areas which keep our town clean, vibrant and safe.
7. Darlington is not alone in facing these pressures, councils across the country are struggling with the same issues, which have been widely reported in the media over the last year with a significant percentage indicating the inability to balance their books. The Government acknowledge the pressures councils are facing, and fair funding reforms are a step to improving the position.
8. In addition to the anticipated increase in government funding and to protect services as far as possible, the Council continues to review its cost base and challenge all service areas to ensure Value for Money. The transformation programmes identified in the 2025/26 MTFP are progressing well and the savings anticipated have been realised. In addition, further transformation programmes have been identified and if agreed will progress on a spend to save basis.
9. As part of the funding reform consultation, the Government confirmed the intention and expectation that councils would increase their Council Tax by 5% per annum, including the Adult Social Care precept. This MTFP therefore proposes a Council Tax increase of 2.99% and an Adult Social Care precept of 2% which will generate £2.126m and £1.422m respectively. Adult Social Care is by far our largest overall budget with a spend of £59.7m and the precept is crucial to meet the overall costs and pressure faced in this service area.
10. The Council Plan vision is for Darlington to be one of the best places to live, learn, work and invest in the UK, with a strong and sustainable economy, healthy and thriving communities and opportunities for all. There are three core principles running through everything we do: addressing inequalities, tackling climate change and the efficient and effective use of resources. The Council's priorities are:
 - (a) Economy – a strong and stable economy and highly skilled workforce with opportunities for all.
 - (b) Homes – affordable and secure homes that meet the current and future needs of residents.
 - (c) Living Well – a healthier and better quality of life for longer, supporting those who need it most.

- (d) Children and Young People – the best start in life, realising the potential and raising aspirations.
 - (e) Communities – safer, healthier and more engaged communities.
 - (f) Local Environment – a well-connected, clean and sustainable borough.
11. This MTFP is shaped to help meet these priorities, despite the financial challenges faced, by directing the resources available to the areas where most impact can be made. Darlington has some significant inequalities across the borough from a financial as well as a health perspective. The best thing you can do to improve health is to have 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 to provide a good mix and range of homes for our residents to benefit from.
 12. However, this ambition is not an overnight fix, inclusive economic growth takes time, particularly in this economic climate. Over the last decade, the structural landscape of Darlington has changed, new businesses and government departments have relocated to the town bringing high quality jobs, and 365 new Council houses have been built providing good quality affordable housing. Significant investment has gone into Darlington station paving the way for improved rail services for the town and wider area, as well as a significant development occurring across the borough, all of which boosts regeneration, job opportunities and revenue. But more needs to be done and we will allocate the resources we do have into realising this ambition.
 13. This report has necessarily been prepared before the Chancellor's budget announcement on the 26 November 2025, and the 2026/27 Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS), consequently, several assumptions have been made in this draft. The fair funding consultation offers a direction of travel, however, the proposals are open to interpretation with regards to the scale of the reforms to be implemented. There is a commitment to implement the reforms from 1 April 2026, although they are likely to be phased in across three years given the funding envelope is not increasing and some councils by necessity will see a reduction in funding levels.
 14. The 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 2026/27 and continue to provide our core offer level of services to the residents of Darlington.
 15. 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. Reserves have been maintained for medium term stability, and this is now a crucial component of the budget strategy given the pressures faced in the coming year. It is proposed general fund reserves are utilised to meet the 2026/27 and 2027/28 funding gap whilst the full effect of the reforms come into play.
 16. This is a prudent position to ensure our statutory services are maintained along with a small proportion of discretionary services, which are important to the vitality of the town and residents in the borough and continue some preventative services which stop the need for more costly service provision in the future.

At this juncture it would be unwise to reduce much needed discretionary and preventative services, which are key to enabling our Council Plan priorities, before funding levels are clarified.

17. In summary, if the recommendations are agreed, the Council can deliver a 2026/27 budget which will allow net revenue investment in Darlington and its residents of £149m and new capital investment of £84m to add to the current capital programme of £340m.

Recommendations

18. 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 2026/27.
 - (b) The Schedule of Charges as set out in **Appendix 3**.
 - (c) The efficiency savings and transformation programme proposed.

Reasons

19. 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.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM

Background Papers

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

Elizabeth Davison: Extension 5830

Council Plan	The MTFP proposals direct resources to the priorities of the Council Plan.
Addressing inequalities	The MTFP proposals direct resources to assist in reducing inequalities.
Tackling Climate Change	The MTFP proposals seek to continue to support the Council's responsibilities and ambitions to reduce carbon impact in the Council and the Borough.

Efficient and effective use of resources	The MTFP proposals include savings to ensure the efficiency and effective use of resources.
Health and Wellbeing	The report contains proposals to continue to allocate resources in support of the Council's Health and Well Being responsibilities.
S17 Crime and Disorder	The report contains proposals to continue to allocate resources in support of the Council's Crime and Disorder responsibilities.
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.
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

20. After years of austerity the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan remains in a fragile position. The reduction in public spending between 2010 and 2019 where the Council's budget was reduced by £46m in real terms, the significant increase in demand for services in the aftermath of Covid, along with the unstable economic climate where the country saw the cost of living increasing, high inflation and poverty rising, is a challenge for all. The Council is facing a spiralling increase in cost and demand for services in Children's and Adults' Social Care, which have a direct impact on the Council's contracted expenditure.
21. Over two thirds of our expenditure is on Adult and Children's Social Care, looking after our most vulnerable residents and children. Inflation, the national living wage and interest rate levels directly impact on the costs of our adult care contracts, in addition, 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, last year we saw a 50% increase in contacts from partner agencies and people concerned for a child's welfare, a 45% increase in referrals and an 11% increase in children in our care since pre pandemic levels. These are our largest budgets, and we have a statutory requirement to provide these services, this consequently impacts on the funding available for all other Council services, in particular discretionary areas which keep our town clean, vibrant and safe.
22. 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.
23. Darlington is not alone in facing these pressures, councils across the country are struggling with the same issues, which have been widely reported in the media over the last year, with a significant percentage indicating the inability to balance their books.
24. The Government has recognised the significant pressure in public services and on 20 June 2025 published a comprehensive consultation on the reform of local government funding. The Government have committed to a policy statement at the end of November, which will outline final policy positions, however, the draft local government finance settlement won't be published until late December, which is unhelpful for planning purposes. Encouragingly, the Government has committed to a three-year finance settlement which will allow for more effective planning in the future.
25. Analysis of the consultation indicates Darlington should benefit from the redistribution of funding given Council Tax equalisation and relative needs. These changes are long overdue, and the Council has been lobbying for these reforms for many years. Whilst initial assessments are encouraging, the position remains challenging with reserves required over the next two years to meet the sustainability gap and continued demand pressures to stem.

26. 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, 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 2025/26 going into 2026/27 and the income and resources we will receive in future years.

Financial Analysis

Projected Expenditure

27. 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>	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m
Service Demand	4.989	4.810	2.724	1.979
Price Inflation	0.344	0.499	0.581	2.169
Reduced Income	0.420	0.345	0.345	0.345
Pay Award	0.980	1.002	1.024	1.059
Other	1.044	0.823	0.538	0.883
Total	7.777	7.479	5.212	6.435

Pressures

28. There are some significant pressures emerging which fall into one of five categories, being: increased service demand, price inflations, reduced income, pay award and other.
29. **Service Demand** – the largest pressure area regarding increased demand in 2026/27 is Children’s Social Care, accounting for £3.928m in 2026/27 and £10.618m across the MTFP. This is a continuation of the pressure we are seeing in the 2025/26 budget, in particular the growth in children with complex cases and the significant rise in the cost of residential placements. The children’s sufficiency programme is helping to alleviate these costs, however, there is a fundamental and nationwide issue regarding the availability and cost of children’s residential placements.
30. The second largest pressure is in the Adult Social Care budget where there has been an increase in the number of residential and care packages required at a cost of £0.855m in 2026/27 and £3.329m across the MTFP. A spend to save transformation programme is proposed which will review care for working age adults, with the aim of improving outcomes as well as providing savings to the MTFP.

31. **Price Inflation** – the main driver of inflation in the 2026/27 budget is energy costs, whilst gas prices are holding the electricity charges have increased above the 2% provided for.
32. **Reduced Income** - the main area of reduced income is at Hopetown where the anticipated car parking income is £0.220m lower than the original business case. Now the main celebrations are finished, a full review of the Hopetown business case is being undertaken to see how this pressure can be mitigated.
33. There will also be reduced income at the Dolphin Centre whilst the Phase 3 Mechanical and Electrical works are completed during next year.
34. **Pay Award** – the 2025/26 pay award was settled at 3.2%, 0.2% higher than budgeted for creating an in-year pressure. In addition, given the current inflation rate it is felt prudent to budget for a 3% pay award in 2026/27 as opposed to the 2% currently in the estimates.
35. **Other** – this includes several pressures across all service areas, however, the largest is financing costs with a pressure of £0.801m in 2026/27. This is due to interest rates remaining at higher levels than previously forecast, which impacts on the cost of borrowing for new capital schemes such as the Dolphin Centre refurbishment. In addition, the closure of one of the Council's property funds has reduced dividend income, however, the funds returned have been used to repay maturing loans, therefore saving on interest whilst options are considered for future investment opportunities.

Savings

Summary of Savings	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m
Back-Office Efficiencies	(0.422)	(0.301)	(0.274)	(0.298)
Energy Savings	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.085)
Increased Income	(0.190)	(0.197)	(0.339)	0.328
Other	(2.040)	(2.124)	(2.133)	(2.135)
Pressure Offset	(0.200)	(0.200)	(0.160)	(0.160)
Transformation Review	(0.000)	(0.750)	(0.750)	(0.750)
Total	(2.937)	(3.657)	(3.741)	(3.100)

36. 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 £2.937m has been identified in 2026/27 totalling, £13.435m across the MTFP.
37. **Back Office** - by reducing costs in back office, general housekeeping and process review, £0.422m has been identified in 2026/27, and £1.295m over the life of the MTFP. These savings come from staffing vacancies through redesign of service provision, removal of historic underspends and reduction in general running costs.
38. **Energy** – whilst electricity prices are rising there is a slight reduction in gas through pricing and usage.

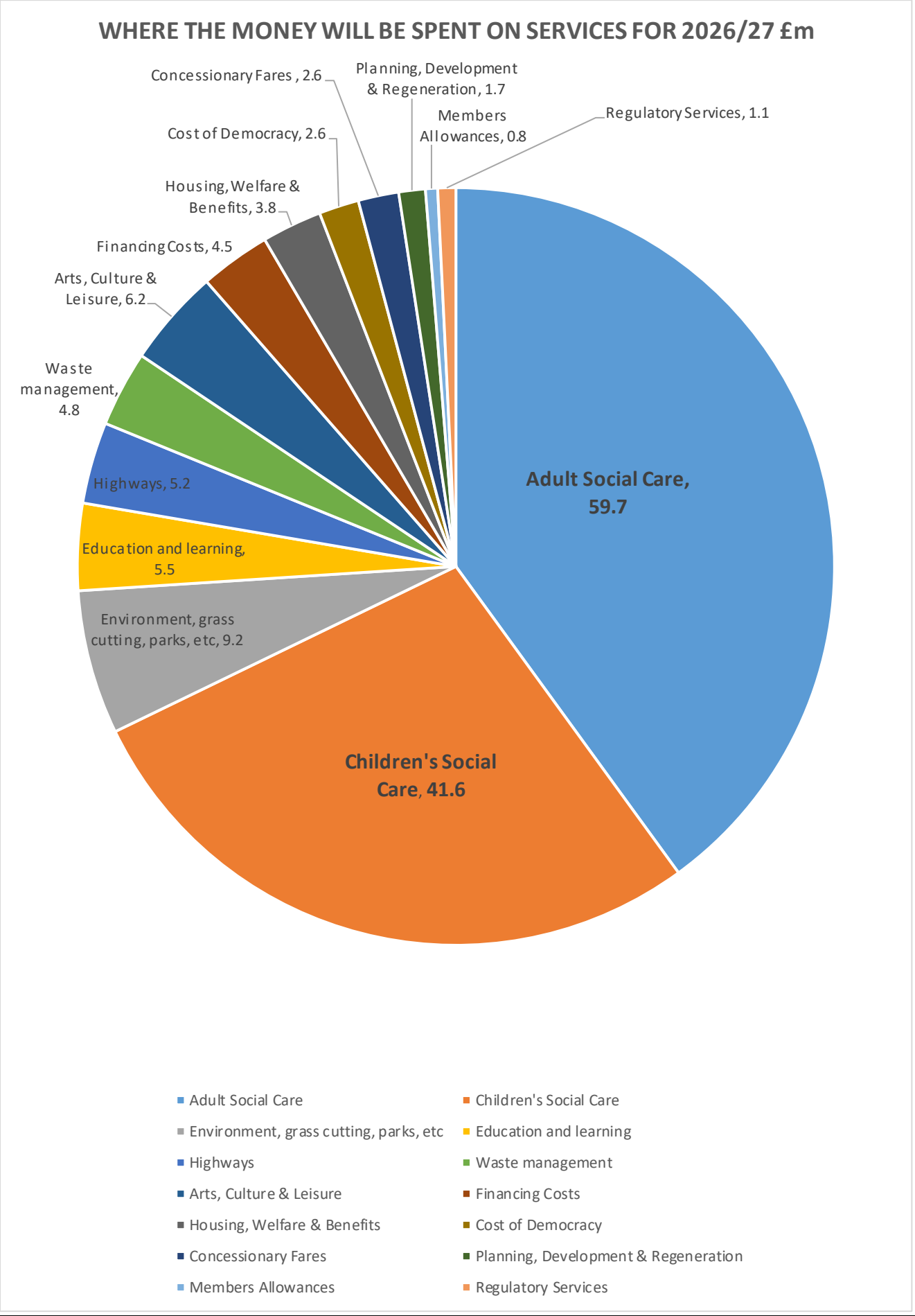
39. **Increased Income** - income returns from our Joint Venture companies have been slightly increased and reprofiled due to the demand for the homes and sales earlier than anticipated.
40. **Other** – following a triannual review of the Durham Pension fund, the actuaries have reduced the contributions the Council needs to make for pension provisions providing a general fund saving of £1.9m per annum. In addition, there has been a reduction in contributions required for concessionary fares of £0.140m per annum.
41. **Transformation** – in addition to the programmes initiated last year, all of which are progressing well, there is a spend to save transformation proposal in Adult Social Care which is discussed in detail earlier on the Cabinet agenda.

Total Expenditure

42. Taking the above savings, pressures and the transformation proposal into account the summarised projected expenditure is shown in the table below:

Service	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m
Chief Executives Office	0.342	0.349	0.356	0.364
People Services	100.743	102.676	104.215	106.665
Economy & Public Protection	2.208	2.145	2.052	2.124
Environment, Highways and Community Services	27.792	28.319	28.888	29.818
Resources & Governance	16.824	17.339	17.823	18.184
Financing costs	4.507	4.057	4.157	4.473
Investment Returns - Joint Venture	(2.188)	(1.942)	(1.855)	(1.188)
Council Wide Savings	(1.169)	(1.153)	(1.137)	(1.120)
Council Wide Contingencies	0.278	0.202	0.202	0.202
Total Expenditure	149.337	151.992	154.701	159.522

43. This proposed net investment in services of £149m in 2026/27 covers a wide range of areas from adult residential care to refuse collection, from children's 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.



Projected Income

Fair Funding Review 2.0 (FFR 2.0) and the Local Government Finance Settlement

44. The Government has recognised the inherent unfairness in the current funding model for local government and on 20 June 2025 published a comprehensive consultation on the reform of local government funding. The consultation was referred to by the Government as Fair Funding Review 2.0 which distinguishes it from the previous Government's review in December 2018 which did not result in any meaningful change to local authority funding allocations. The changes represent the first major overhaul to the funding formula since 2013/2014, and one Darlington has been calling upon for years.
45. The Government have committed to a policy statement at the end of November which will outline final policy positions, however, the draft Local Government Finance Settlement will not be published until late December, which is once again unhelpful for planning purposes. The consultation papers do however confirm that local authorities will receive a 3-year settlement covering the period 2026-27 to 2028-29, which is the first time this will have occurred for ten years and is welcome from a financial planning perspective.
46. The consultation contains a large amount of detail around the new relative needs and weighting of different components of the proposed new formula but does not include the detail that underpins the calculations of relative needs, rather it provides an outline of the datasets and formulae being applied. The consultation is however reasonably transparent on the proposed methodology to be used to distribute funding in 2026-27 and over the next 3 years, with the proposal being under-written by a commitment to try and simplify the formulae through a combination of consolidating a range of specific grants into the general grant formula and by simplifying and reducing the number of Relative Needs Formulae used to distribute funding.
47. Significantly, the proposals include a commitment to 100% Council Tax resource equalisation, the first time this will have been reset since 2013/14.
48. The consultation does not include any provisional allocations at local authority level at this stage. However, officers have worked through the principles and details that have been set out in the FFR 2.0 Consultation documents to estimate the allocation Darlington could receive. This work has been informed by colleagues at Pixel, the Society of Municipal Treasurers and through discussions with colleagues across the region.
49. The funding reforms as set out are likely to have significant implications for local government, with some winners and losers at a regional and national level and in different types of authorities across the sector. There is an emphasis on linking funding to deprivation and to account for Council Tax bases given the huge variation across the country.
50. Analysis of the consultation indicates Darlington should benefit from the redistribution of funding, however, whilst initial assessments are encouraging, the position remains challenging with reserves required over the next two years to meet the sustainability gap and continued demand pressures to stem.

51. The broad principles of the FFR 2.0 proposals are

- (a) **Needs Assessments:** The Government will use Relative Needs Formulae (RNF) to assess differences in demand between councils for different functional service areas. Some of these service areas are existing and there are some new proposed ones. As with previous reviews of funding allocations, an Area Cost Adjustment (ACA) is then be applied to each RNF to account for the different costs of delivering services in different places. The RNFs and ACAs are then combined to give each council an overall “relative needs share”, by weighting each RNF according to the size of (national) expenditure on that functional service area.
- (b) **Resources Adjustment:** In order to account for differing Council Tax raising abilities by councils, the Government is proposing to multiply each council’s tax base (the number and band of properties) by a notional level of Council Tax. The notional Council Tax available to be raised is added to the current quantum of grant funding available to local government and the level of retained business rates available nationally, to give the total notional amount of funding available to local government. This funding resource is then allocated according to each council’s needs share. Each council’s notional tax contribution is deducted from their resources, to give each council a Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA), which indicates how much a council needs relative to one another.

52. A local authority’s Settlement Funding Assessment is driven by a combination of the strength of their taxbase and their measure of relative need.

Transitional Support

53. As there will be winners and losers in the redistribution of funding, the government have proposed that the transition to the new formula will take place over 3 years. The consultation papers refer to this time-period being “*gradually over 3 years*” and in one third increments across that period.
54. The Government is proposing to fund the cost of the transition by top slicing the national funding and through scaling-back gains expected by other authorities. This means it may take up to three years for the Council to see the benefits of this funding transition perpetuating the current inequities for a further two years. The Council has argued in its consultation response that it is unfair to scale back the gains of councils in the first two years (2026/27 and 2027/28) to pay for the phasing for those councils losing out, and these transition costs should be funded separately.
55. Our funding assumptions have assumed the phasing will happen over three years so any changes following consultation would be of benefit.

Core Grant funding to Local Government

56. **Revenue Support Grant (RSG)** - after years of significant reductions, the RSG will become the second largest revenue stream for the Council after Council Tax. This grant has increased to reflect resource adjustments through the fair funding reforms consultation and also will subsume a number of grants currently received, including the Recovery Grant, Social Care Grant and the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund.

57. **Better Care Fund (BCF)** - the fund supports local systems to successfully deliver the integration of health and social care in a way that supports person centred care, sustainability and better outcomes for people and carers. The BCF grant is pooled with the NHS BCF grant and is agreed annually by the Health and Wellbeing Board and signed off by the Department of Health and Social Care.
58. **Extended Producer Responsibility Grant (EPR)** – to try and reduce packaging the Government introduced an EPR levy on organisations responsible for producing packaging in the first place. Fees are paid by those organisations with the revenue being passed to local authorities to help mitigate the cost of waste collection and disposal of household waste from kerbside and communal collections, brought to Household Recycling Centres. Darlington has received a draft allocation of £2.7m for 2026/27 and it has been estimated to reduce by 20% per annum as producers make changes to their packaging.
59. **Children and Families Grant** - this grant was paid outside of the Core Spending Power calculations in 2025/26 and consolidated a number of previous Department for Education grants including the Supporting Families, Virtual Headteacher grants. Within the fair funding reforms consultation this grant is expected to be consolidated with other Children's grants to be paid as one grant for children in addition to the RSG. It has been assumed that this funding will remain at the 2025/26 allocation level.

Council Tax Income

60. Council Tax is the largest single funding stream to provide Council services in Darlington and will increase further as a percentage over the coming years representing 56% of projected resources anticipated by 2029/30. 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 circa. £0.711m.
61. As part of the consultation on the reform of local government funding, the Government confirmed the intention and expectation that councils increase their Council Tax by 5% per annum, including the Adult Social Care precept. This MTFP therefore assumes a Council Tax increase of 2.99% across the life of the MTFP and an Adult Social Care precept of 2%. As can be seen in the chart in paragraph 43, Adult Social Care is by far our largest overall budget with a spend of £59.7m. The precept will raise circa. £1.422m which is crucial to meet the overall costs and pressure faced in this service area.
62. Darlington currently 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.
63. Darlington has a low Council Tax Base with 43% of our properties in Band A and 78% of our homes in Band A – C, which means significantly less Council Tax is generated for each 1% raised than in some other more affluent areas and highlights the disparity in how local government is funded. However, as mentioned previously, the Government is looking to adjust resource levels to take this into account and this adjustment has been included in our RSG assumptions.

64. Despite some turbulent years in house building due to Covid, Nutrient Neutrality and high interest rates, Darlington's house building remains stable. Planning estimates anticipate growth levels to be an average of 461 Band D equivalent properties over the period of this plan, which is a growth on the tax base of 1.25% per annum. This growth is helping to address the national housing shortage and the increasing demand for homes in Darlington. 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 2026/27.

National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

65. 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.
66. Growing the economy is a 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 work has begun on the new Darlington Economic campus at Brunswick Street which will house His Majesty's Treasury Department along with several other government departments including the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. This is providing a boost to the town with other employers looking to relocate to Darlington.
67. 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.
68. As anticipated, along with FFR 2.0 the Government have also announced plans to undertake a full reset of the baselines for the Business Rates Retention Scheme, which will result in a resetting of the target collection baseline for the Council's Business Rates and an associated adjustment of the Council's Top-up Grant. The estimated impact of these changes is reflected in the financial planning assumptions set out in this report, with further clarity required from Government on these impacts over the coming months.
69. The in-year collection rate target for NNDR is 98.0% and as at the end of October 2025 is 66% and on track to achieve the target.

Collection Fund

70. 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

71. 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	2026/27 £m
Housing Benefits	0.410
Public Health Grant	10.343
PFI Grant	3.200
Youth Justice Board	0.292
Local Reform & Community Voices	0.071
Adult & Community Learning	0.992
Garden Village	0.093
Pupil Premium	1.130
Dedicated Schools Grant	37.767
Heritage Lottery Fund	0.127
Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children	1.026
Homeless	0.594
War Pensions	0.060
DFE Phonics	0.004
Children's Prevention Grant	0.617
Bikeability	0.028
	56.754

Fees and charges

72. 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 £0.213m of income to help offset the cost of service provision.

Total Income

73. 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	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m
Council Tax	74.633	79.308	84.334	89.671
Business Rates	25.886	26.202	26.544	26.884
Revenue Support Grant	35.376	36.302	37.431	37.157
Better Care Fund	5.537	5.537	5.537	5.537
Extended Producer Responsibility Grant	2.704	2.163	1.730	1.384
Children and Families Grant	0.922	0.922	0.922	0.922
Total Resources	145.058	150.434	156.498	161.555

Projected MTFP

74. 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 funding gap for the next two years whilst the funding reforms are fully established. We are anticipating having £6.517m reserves which can be utilised to support the plan over that period, however, it is clear the financial position is fragile and reliant on the funding reform predictions along with Council Tax increases to ensure sustainability.

75. It is encouraging that predictions for future years put the finances back on an even keel, however, caution should be taken at this juncture given the continued demand pressures placed on the Council.

	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m
Projected Total Expenditure	149.337	151.992	154.701	159.522
Projected Total Resources	(145.058)	(150.434)	(156.498)	(161.555)
Projected budget deficit	4.279	1.558	(1.797)	(2.033)

Revenue Balances

76. The projected revenue outturn for 2025/26 is detailed at **Appendix 5**, and after taking into account the Risk Reserve of £6.0m, it is anticipated we will have £6.517m of usable reserves which will be required to cover the sustainability gap in 2026/27 and 2027/28. As previously mentioned, this is a fragile position and not a sustainable if funding reform estimates do not come to fruition. Savings and efficiencies have been found for 2026/27 which will continue into future years, through transformation, back office efficiencies, economic and income growth and a review of fees and charges.

Revenue Balances	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m	2029/30 £m
Opening balance	6.517	2.238	0.680	2.477
Contribution to/(from) balances	(4.279)	(1.558)	1.797	2.033
Closing balance	2.238	0.680	2.477	4.510

Capital Expenditure

77. 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.
78. 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.
79. In recent years there has been acceleration of economic investment some of which is funded or has been pump primed by the Council; examples of such schemes include key road infrastructure that facilitated developments at Symmetry Park, and Central Park that now house the College, two University buildings, the National Biologics Centre and two Business Incubator buildings with further developments on the horizon. The Council owned and funded Feethams House in the Town Centre has been the catalyst in attracting the Darlington Economic Campus, and recent Town Centre investment funded from the Towns Fund and Indigenous Growth Fund are both reinvigorating key parts of the Town Centre and, importantly, enabling the Council to be well positioned for the future and to reshape the Town through its next phase of private sector redevelopment.

The Council's Investment Fund is vital in helping to stimulate more private sector economic investment across the town that ultimately increases business rates and contributes to the finances of the Council, thereby helping to fund vital services

80. The current capital programme stands at £340m 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 2025/26 was presented to Cabinet on 4 November 2025 and noted there was a projected £0.607m underspend on the approved capital programme.

Table 1

	Construction				Non construction	Capital investment fund	Housing New Build - not yet allocated	Total
	Live Schemes 75k & Over	Annualised Schemes	Completed Schemes awaiting review	Live Schemes under 75k				
Area	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Housing	43.551	26.945	0.000	0.033	2.097	0.000	15.925	88.551
Economic Growth	33.057	0.099	0.440	0.348	8.284	77.834	3.476	123.538
Highways/Transport	50.023	15.687	2.756	1.304	2.418	17.977	1.512	91.677
Leisure & Culture	22.026	0.125	2.545	0.310	0.000	3.974	0.000	28.980
Education	3.768	0.509	1.061	0.177	0.079	0.000	0.000	5.594
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	1.581	0.000	0.000	1.581
Total	152.425	43.365	6.802	2.172	14.530	99.785	20.913	339.992

81. 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. Most 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.
82. 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.

83. 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.
84. The risk assessed usable capital receipts over the next four years are in the region of £11m although they are not guaranteed so caution needs to be taken when allocating.

85. There are likely to be many competing priorities against the available resources for both regeneration and refurbishment these schemes will emerge over the coming year/s. At this stage, Members are requested to make capital provision for three schemes with a total value of £2.050m, which will be subject to full reports to Cabinet in due course, these are:

- (a) **Capitalised Repairs - £0.250m** – capitalised repairs of £0.250m have been included in the MTFP until for repairs on the Council building stock until 2028/29 to ensure it is fit for purpose, however it is clear with inflation and the age of some of our building that this is not sufficient. An additional £0.250m has been included for the next three years and the full £0.500m continue into 2029/30. This is a rolling programme and details on specific areas of spend will be brought to Cabinet for consideration.
- (b) **Energy Performance Certification compliance - £0.200m** - the Council has an extensive commercial estate which generates income from rents and leasing. Energy performance regulations which are to be introduced in 2028 will mean works are likely to be required in some of our commercial buildings. EPC surveys will need to be undertaken before any work is carried out, so this is a provisional estimate at this stage.
- (c) **Advanced Design Fees - £0.150m** - per annum is requested to ensure that resources are available to work up any new schemes brought forward in relation to Economic Growth including site investigations on development sites, industrial and housing land. This funding has been invaluable in the past in enabling the Council to be site ready and without this it is likely schemes would stall and not progress.

Government Funding

86. Set out below are details of the levels of Government funding available for investment by the Council in 2026/27 and an outline of the proposed use of these funds.

	2026/27 £m
Children's Services	
School Condition Allocation	0.154
Transport	
Local Transport Plan	3.068
Other	
Disabled Facilities Grant	1.319
Total Capital Grant Available	4.541

School Condition Allocations

87. 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 (LAMP) 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

88. A 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.
89. The Tees Valley Local Transport Plan has several accompanying documents that set the strategy and vision for different modes of transport. Each Local Authority is required to produce a Local Implementation Plan, which will effectively replace the Local Authority Local Transport Plan. In Darlington, the Darlington Transport Plan 2022-2030 was approved by Council in November 2022 and covers local priorities and maintenance requirements. Previously 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. In the Budget 2024 a further £500m was pledged nationally for Road Maintenance, of which Darlington were awarded £0.902m. Currently no additional Road Maintenance funding has been confirmed for 2026/27. From 2027/28 highway maintenance funding will form part of the Transport for City Regions (TCR) funding to TVCA. TVCA have been allocated £978m and in January 2024 TVCA Cabinet approved £83m for Local Highway Authority Consolidated Funding, of which Darlington will receive £15.340 over the five year period.

Disabled Facility Grants

90. 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

91. 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 2026/27. Further detail is given in the Housing Revenue Account financial plan but in summary includes:

- (d) Adaptations and lifts - £0.153m
- (e) Heating Replacement - £1.352m
- (f) Structural Works - £0.250m
- (g) Lifeline Services - £0.379m
- (h) Repairs before Painting - £0.069m
- (i) Roofing and Repointing work - £1.000m
- (j) Garages - £0.329m
- (k) External Works - £0.214m
- (l) Pavements - £0.028m
- (m) Window & Door Replacement - £2.025m
- (n) Internal planned maintenance (IPM) - £3.672m
- (o) Communal Works - £0.204m
- (p) Energy Efficiency Improvements - £5.237m
- (q) New Build and acquisitions - £1.000m
- (r) Fees - £0.386m

Consultation

92. This report will be available for public viewing from the 25 November 2025 with official consultation running from 3 December 2025 to 21 January 2026.

Conclusion

93. The Council has faced significant financial challenges over the last decade, with substantial 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. 2025 has presented further challenges with increased demand for services particularly in social care where complexity and costs are rising significantly.
94. Until the outcome of the Fair Funding Reform 2.0 is known, the future of local government financing remains uncertain; there have been several councils issuing a Section 114 notice and even more requesting exceptional financial support with evidence of more to come if funding isn't forthcoming.
95. However, on current assumptions, the Council can deliver a balanced MTFP, by achieving the savings and transformation programmes in train and by utilising reserves in 2026/27 and 2027/28 as per our financial strategy, followed by an in year balanced position in the following years.
96. In summary, the Council continues to face significant budget pressures, however, the savings identified in this MTFP and proposed Council Tax rise have reduced the sustainability gap.

Due to the previous actions to protect reserves where possible, the Council can afford a 2026/27 budget and have reserves available to meet the funding requirement until the Government's FFR 2.0 is initiated. If estimates prove incorrect and no funding is forthcoming, making savings to meet the gap will be extremely challenging. There are no easy options without significantly reducing our discretionary services and preventative services which, as previously highlighted, assist towards making our town, clean, safe, vibrant and a place where people want to live and work, and businesses want to relocate to.

97. As the Council's Statutory Chief Financial Officer, the Executive Director of Resources and Governance must advise the Council on the robustness of the budget and adequacy of reserves. In assessing the robustness of the estimates, the Chief Finance Officer has considered the general financial standing of the Council; the underlying budget assumptions in the financial strategy; the adequacy of budget monitoring and financial reporting in place; the assumptions made on budget pressures and savings proposals; the adequacy of the Council's internal control systems relying on the assurance statements provided in the Annual Governance Statement for the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts; and the level of reserves to cover any potential financial risks faced by the Council.
98. The budget presented to Members in this report has been based on the most accurate information available at the time of writing and the assumptions made based on the interpretation of the Government's Fair Funding Reform 2.0. On that basis, 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.
99. General Fund reserves are adequate for the coming financial year; however, the position is fragile and if funding is not forthcoming changes in service provision and/or increased income will be required. 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.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Detailed Revenue Estimates 2026/27
Appendix 2	Budget Pressures/Savings
Appendix 3	Fees and Charges Proposals 2026/27
Appendix 4	Assumptions used to prepare estimates
Appendix 5	Projected Revenue Outturn 2025/26
Appendix 6	Proposed MTFP 2026/27 to 2029/30
Appendix 7	Capital Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 – 2029/30

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REVENUE ESTIMATES 2026/27 -SUMMARY

Appendix 1

	2025/26 Net Budget	2026/27			
		Gross Budget	Income	Grants	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Chief Executive's Office	349	423	(81)	0	342
People Services	92,248	178,242	(21,997)	(55,502)	100,743
Environment, Highways & Community Services	28,217	66,570	(38,623)	(156)	27,792
Resources & Governance	16,101	48,740	(30,913)	(1,003)	16,824
Economy & Public Protection	2,299	4,936	(2,635)	(93)	2,208
Service Total	139,214	298,911	(94,249)	(56,754)	147,909
Financing Costs	4,028	4,507	0	0	4,507
Investment Returns - Joint Ventures	(1,977)	(2,188)	0	0	(2,188)
Council Wide	(15)	(1,169)	0	0	(1,169)
Contingencies	272	278	0	0	278
Grand Total	141,522	300,339	(94,249)	(56,754)	149,337

PEOPLE SERVICES - Revenue Estimates 2026/27

	2025/26 Net Budget	2026/27			
		Gross Budget	Income	Grants	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Executive Director of People	195	205	0	0	205
<u>People Support Services</u>					
Transformation & Performance	820	910	(68)	0	842
Business Support	1,767	1,744	(14)	0	1,730
<u>Children's Services</u>					
Children's Services Management & Other Services	679	700	0	0	700
Assessment Care Planning & LAC	4,449	4,525	0	0	4,525
First Response & Early Help	4,303	5,071	(30)	(617)	4,424
Adoption & Placements	21,981	26,333	0	(1,026)	25,307
Disabled Children	1,643	1,775	(239)	0	1,536
Youth Offending	312	768	(142)	(292)	334
Quality Assurance & Practice Improvement	101	200	(99)	0	101
<u>Development & Commissioning</u>					
Commissioning	2,373	2,854	(213)	0	2,641
Voluntary Sector	292	355	0	(57)	298
<u>Education</u>					
Education	992	42,911	(2,884)	(39,053)	974
Schools	0	4,040	0	(4,040)	0
Transport Unit	3,416	3,452	(52)	0	3,400
<u>Public Health</u>					
Public Health	0	10,343	0	(10,343)	0
<u>Adult Social Care & Health</u>					
External Purchase of Care	40,860	60,838	(15,280)	(60)	45,498
Intake & Enablement	762	3,101	(2,338)	0	763
Older People Long Term Condition	2,117	2,483	(327)	0	2,156
Physical Disability Long Term Condition	6	30	(24)	0	6
Learning Disability Long Term Condition	2,361	2,449	(24)	0	2,425
Mental Health Long Term Condition	1,252	1,544	(249)	(14)	1,281
Service Development & Integration	966	1,063	0	0	1,063
Workforce Development	601	548	(14)	0	534
Total People Services	92,248	178,242	(21,997)	(55,502)	100,743

ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS & COMMUNITY SERVICES - Revenue Estimates 2026/27

	2025/26	2026/27			
	Net Budget	Gross Budget	Income	Grants	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Executive Director - Environment, Highways & Comm. Services	191	195	0	0	195
<u>Highways & Capital Projects</u>					
AD - Highways & Capital Projects	117	119	0	0	119
Building Design Services	(14)	621	(643)	0	(22)
Capital Projects	468	710	(302)	0	408
Car Parking R&M	613	597	0	0	597
Concessionary Fares	2,767	2,591	(2)	0	2,589
Flood and Water Act	323	91	0	0	91
Highways	4,347	5,476	(1,217)	(28)	4,231
Highways - DLO	(344)	9,131	(9,568)	0	(437)
Investment and Funding	503	177	(70)	0	106
Sustainable Transport	127	161	(62)	0	99
<u>Community Services</u>					
AD - Environmental Services & Community Safety	173	147	0	0	147
Allotments	21	27	(8)	0	19
Building Cleaning - DLO	37	446	(446)	0	(0)
Cemeteries and Crematorium	(711)	1,185	(1,927)	0	(742)
Street Scene	7,361	10,509	(2,197)	0	8,312
Transport Unit - Fleet Management	6	0	0	0	0
Transport Unit - Fleet Management, MOT & Private	(14)	33	(69)	0	(36)
Waste Management	4,492	4,572	0	0	4,572
Winter Maintenance	645	708	(26)	0	682
<u>Community Safety</u>					
CCTV	341	421	(107)	0	314
Community Safety	926	898	(83)	0	815
Parking	(2,424)	357	(2,927)	0	(2,570)
Parking Enforcement	17	318	(294)	0	24
<u>Leisure and Culture</u>					
Dolphin Centre	1,219	4,726	(3,762)	0	964
Eastbourne Complex	75	306	(254)	0	52
Hippodrome	220	5,908	(5,818)	0	90
Hopetown Darlington	498	2,430	(1,635)	0	795
Stockton & Darlington Railway NLHF	2	127	0	(127)	(0)
Indoor Bowling Centre	32	17	0	0	17
Libraries	1,065	1,117	(21)	0	1,096
Move More	0	116	(116)	0	0
Outdoor Events	492	443	(30)	0	413
Community Catering	0	358	(358)	0	0
Culture and Heritage Fund	133	127	0	0	127
<u>Building Services</u>					
Construction - DLO	(346)	4,599	(4,871)	0	(272)
<u>Corporate Landlord</u>					0
Corporate Landlord	4,649	6,593	(1,808)	0	4,785
<u>General Support Services</u>					
Works Property & Other	78	79	0	0	79
<u>Joint Levies & Boards</u>					
Environment Agency Levy	132	135	0	0	135
Total Environment, Highways & Community Services	28,217	66,570	(38,623)	(156)	27,792

RESOURCES & GOVERNANCE - Revenue Estimates 2026/27

	2025/26 Net Budget £000	2026/27			
		Gross Budget	Income	Grants	Net Budget
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Executive Director Resources & Governance	142	241	(94)	0	147
<u>Resources</u>					
AD Resources	129	135	0	0	135
Financial Services	1,689	2,448	(773)	0	1,675
Financial Assessments & Protection	325	432	(43)	0	389
Xentrall (D&S Partnership)	2,144	2,965	(734)	0	2,231
Human Resources	846	896	(161)	0	735
Health & Safety	213	254	(47)	0	207
<u>Head of Strategy Performance & Communications</u>					
Communications & Engagement	1,125	1,276	(188)	0	1,088
Systems	1,344	1,332	(3)	0	1,329
<u>Law & Governance</u>					
AD Law & Governance	142	128	0	0	128
Complaints & FOI	387	331	0	0	331
Democratic Services	1,593	1,681	(17)	0	1,664
Registrars	(33)	272	(318)	0	(46)
Administration	445	478	(54)	0	424
Legal	1,912	2,122	(153)	0	1,969
Procurement	257	316	(40)	0	276
Coroners	334	394	0	0	394
<u>Xentrall Shared Services</u>					
ICT	768	1,301	(204)	0	1,097
<u>Maintenance</u>					
Maintenance DLO	(718)	8,228	(9,039)	0	(811)
<u>Housing & Revenues</u>					
Local Taxation	517	1,197	(584)	0	613
Rent Rebates / Rent Allowances / Council Tax	1,061	18,033	(16,834)	0	1,199
Housing Benefits Administration	728	1,093	(10)	(410)	673
Customer Services	261	471	(201)	0	270
Homelessness	334	2,404	(1,262)	(593)	549
Service, Strategy & Regulation and General Services	156	312	(154)	0	158
Total Resources & Governance	16,101	48,740	(30,913)	(1,003)	16,824

CHIEF EXECUTIVES OFFICE - Revenue Estimates 2026/27

	2025/26 Net Budget £000	2026/27			
		Gross Budget	Income	Grants	Net Budget
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Chief Executive	225	233	0	0	233
Darlington Partnership	124	190	(81)	0	109
Total Chief Executives Office	349	423	(81)	0	342

ECONOMY & PUBLIC PROTECTION - Revenue Estimates 2026/27

	2025/26	2026/27			
	Net Budget	Gross Budget	Income	Grants	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Executive Director of Economy and Public Protection	196	200	0	0	200
Emergency Planning	97	99	0	0	99
Building Control	174	429	(257)	0	172
Development Management	73	809	(727)	0	82
Economy	389	345	0	0	345
Environmental Health	380	411	(27)	0	384
Place Strategy	697	734	(26)	(93)	615
Property Management and Estates	(225)	934	(1,195)	0	(261)
Head of Public Protection	78	83	0	0	83
Private Sector Housing	128	185	(45)	0	141
General Licensing	32	192	(157)	0	35
Taxi Licensing	2	226	(196)	0	30
Trading Standards	278	290	(6)	0	284
Total Economy & Public Protection	2,299	4,936	(2,635)	(93)	2,208

APPENDIX 2

<u>Analysis of Pressures/Savings</u>				
	Estimate 26/27 £m	Estimate 27/28 £m	Estimate 28/29 £m	Estimate 29/30 £m
<u>SAVINGS</u>				
Savings - Back Office				
People Services - Reduced running costs across services	(0.276)	(0.225)	(0.241)	(0.260)
Resources & Governance - Reduced running costs across services	(0.138)	(0.068)	(0.025)	(0.030)
E,H & CS - Reduced running costs across services	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
	(0.422)	(0.301)	(0.274)	(0.298)
Savings - Energy				
Corporate Landlord - Reduced gas prices	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.085)
	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.085)
Savings - Increased Income				
Investment Returns - Reprofile JV income	(0.182)	(0.189)	(0.331)	0.336
Registrars - Increased fee income from weddings	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
	(0.190)	(0.197)	(0.339)	0.328
Savings - Other				
Concessionary Fares - Reduced contributions to TVCA	(0.140)	(0.140)	(0.140)	(0.140)
Democratic Services - Reduction in Councillors following review	0.000	(0.084)	(0.093)	(0.095)
Council Wide - Reduction in pension fund contributions	(1.900)	(1.900)	(1.900)	(1.900)
	(2.040)	(2.124)	(2.133)	(2.135)
Savings - Offset Pressures				
Waste Management - Reduced Tonnages	(0.200)	(0.200)	(0.160)	(0.160)
	(0.200)	(0.200)	(0.160)	(0.160)
Savings - Transformation Projects				
People Services - Review of working aged adult packages of care	0.000	(0.750)	(0.750)	(0.750)
	0.000	(0.750)	(0.750)	(0.750)
TOTAL SAVINGS				
	(2.937)	(3.657)	(3.741)	(3.100)

	Estimate 26/27 £m	Estimate 27/28 £m	Estimate 28/29 £m	Estimate 29/30 £m
<u>PRESSURES</u>				
Increased Demand				
Adults - Packages of Care - Increased overall packages costs	0.841	0.748	0.842	0.842
Adults - Other service demand pressures	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014
Children's - Packages of Care - Increased overall packages costs	3.590	3.596	1.404	0.630
Children's - Other service demand pressures	0.338	0.347	0.353	0.360
Homeless - Loss of Housing Benefit Subsidy	0.115	0.014	0.019	0.007
Waste Disposal - Increased growth from new builds	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.024
Community Safety - Abandoned cars removal and disposal	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.030
Street Scene - Changes in the law to introduce food waste collection	0.036	0.036	0.037	0.037
Street Scene - Increased service to new build property	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.010
Tree Team - Borough wide tree inspections.	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025
	4.989	4.810	2.724	1.979
Price Inflation				
Adults - Change in budgeted inflation from 25/26 MTFP	(0.236)	(0.140)	(0.112)	1.094
Economic Growth - Contractual inflation & fixed rental income	0.007	0.010	0.010	0.039
Children's - Change in budgeted inflation from 25/26 MTFP	0.025	0.114	0.204	0.233
Corporate Landlord - Water charges	0.018	0.032	0.047	0.063
Coroners - Increase recharges from Durham CC	0.049	0.051	0.052	0.053
Resources & Governance - Revised inflation from 25/26 MTFP & contractual inflation	0.047	0.047	0.050	0.050
E, H & CS - Contractual inflation & fixed rental income	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.120
Waste Disposal - Contractual inflation	0.089	0.085	0.082	0.128
Corporate Landlord - Increased electricity prices	0.290	0.250	0.197	0.336
Estates - Increased electricity prices	0.021	0.015	0.015	0.016
Corporate Management - Impact of NI changes	0.034	0.035	0.036	0.037
	0.344	0.499	0.581	2.169
Reduced Income				
Hopetown - Lower car parking patronage	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.220
Licensing - Lower take up of licenses	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065
Land Charges - Realignment of budget based on previous receipts	0.028	0.027	0.027	0.027
Dolphin Centre - Reduced room hire and income during Phase 3 M&E works	0.107	0.033	0.033	0.033
	0.420	0.345	0.345	0.345
Other				
Adult Services - Staff changes	0.112	0.134	0.137	0.164
Street Scene - Vandalism to play areas	0.020	0.020	0.020	0.020
Estates - Feethams House - Reprofile of income	0.000	0.131	0.034	0.034
Financing Costs - Capital financing and lower property fund returns	0.801	0.425	0.232	0.548
Audit Fees - Increases following PSSA	0.043	0.044	0.045	0.045
Cultural Services - Staff changes	0.068	0.069	0.070	0.072
	1.044	0.823	0.538	0.883
Pay Award				
Pay Award 2025/26 - Additional cost of agreed award	0.199	0.205	0.211	0.229
Pay Award 2026/27 - Additional 1% to cover estimated pay award	0.781	0.797	0.813	0.830
	0.980	1.002	1.024	1.059
TOTAL PRESSURES	7.777	7.479	5.212	6.435
TOTAL NET PRESSURES	4.840	3.822	1.471	3.335

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES 2026/27				
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 2025 to July 2026 (Next Review July 2026)				
Full Fees (including enrolment and tuition fees) per hour	L	3.00	3.00	NIL
Please see APPENDIX 3a for full Fees Policy 2025 - 2026				
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	N			
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 2025/26	These charges set nationally by Statute and will be charged at the advised rate for 2026/27	
Certification for Worship and Registration for Marriages				
Place of Meeting for Religious Worship	N			
Registration of Building for Solemnisation of Marriage	N			
Certificates issued from Local Offices				
Standard Certificate (SR)	N			
Standard Certificate (RBD) (at time of Registration)	N			
Standard Certificate (RBD) (after Registration)	N			
Short Certificate of Birth (SR)	N			
Short Certificate of Birth (RBD)	N			
Certificates of Civil Partnership (at time of Ceremony)	N			
Certificates of Civil Partnership (at later date)	N			
General Search fee	N			
Each Verification	N			
Civil Partnership Ceremony	N			
All Ceremonies – Approved Premises				
Application Fee for licence as an approved venue (valid for 3 years)	N	1,925.00	2,020.00	
Fee for Attendance - All days including Bank Holidays	L	670.00	705.00	
Non-refundable booking fee (inclusive of VAT)	L	55.00	55.00	
All Ceremonies – Town Hall				
The Oak Room (Monday to Saturday)	L	360.00	380.00	
The Council Chamber Foyer (Monday to Saturday)	L	165.00	175.00	

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
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	
Proof Life Certificate - for those who claim pension abroad	L	20.00	20.00	
				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	38.00	38.00	
Counci Chamber per hour	L	48.00	48.00	
				NIL
LAND CHARGES				
The following fees are inclusive of VAT				
Con 29 Required				
Residential Property				
CON29	L	87.60	111.00	
Additional Parcels	L	26.28	30.00	
Commercial Property				
CON29	L	139.20	156.00	
Additional Parcels	L	26.28	30.00	
Con 29 Optional				
Optional Questions	L	8.40	15.00	
Own Questions	L	8.40	30.00	
Personal Search	L	No charge	No charge	
				Minimal

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				
Work up to and including the date upon which the court makes an order appointing a deputy for property and affairs	N	944.00	944.00	
Annual management fee where the court appoints a local authority deputy for property and affairs, payable on the anniversary of the court order:				
a) for the first year	N	982.00	982.00	
b) for the second and subsequent years	N	824.00	824.00	
c) where the net assets are below £20,300, the local authority deputy for property and affairs will take an annual management fee not exceeding 3.5% of the net assets on the anniversary of the court order appointing the local authority as deputy	N	See Description	See Description	
d) 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 £703.	N	See Description	See Description	
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	380.00	380.00	
Preparation and lodgement of an annual report or account to the Public Guardian	N	274.00	274.00	
Conveyancing Costs	N	See Description	See Description	
Travel Rates are allowed at a fixed rate per hour for travel costs	N	51.00	51.00	
Please note that these rates are set by The Office of Public Guardian and are the rates as of 1st April 2025, these may be amended during 2026/27				
Adminstration Fee				
Adminstration 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	133.00	140.00	
				Minimal
DEFERRED PAYMENT FEES				
Administration cost for setting up a Deferred Payment Agreement	L	410.00	425.00	
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	
Reservation Fees for Books Obtained from Outside the Authority				
Single charge for all books obtained from other libraries	L	6.00	7.50	
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	
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	
A3 Colour	L	N/a	1.20	
Printing				
A4 B&W	L	0.20	0.20	
A3 B&W	L	0.40	0.40	
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	
Internet Use				
Library members First 60 minutes FREE, £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	
				Minimal

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	2,500.00	2,500.00	
Small Major Development (10-199) for a written response, including up to 2 meetings	L	800.00	800.00	
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	50.00	50.00	
Advertisements	L	25.00	25.00	
Listed Building consents (to alter/extend/demolish)	L	50.00	50.00	
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	2,000.00	2,000.00	
				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	62.00	65.00	
General Licensing				
Pavement Café Licence, per person				
1-20	L	210.00	210.00	
21-40	L	242.00	242.00	
41-60	L	273.00	273.00	
61-80	L	305.00	305.00	
81-99	L	320.00	320.00	
100 or over	L	350.00	350.00	
Duplicate licence fee	L	53.00	53.00	
Transfer of licence	L	53.00	53.00	
Change of detail	L	32.00	32.00	
Variation of Covers	L	105.00	105.00	
Goods on Highway Licence	L	163.00	163.00	
Sex Shop Grant of application	L	4,080.00	4,080.00	
Sex Shop Renewal	L	1,323.00	1,323.00	
Sex Shop transfer	L	1,323.00	1,323.00	
Cosmetics				
Premise Grant	L	309.00	309.00	
Personal Grant	L	71.00	71.00	
Variation	L	71.00	71.00	
Scrap Metal Dealers				
Collectors Licence (3 years) - grant	L	166.00	166.00	
Collectors Licence (3 years) – renewal	L	166.00	166.00	
Major Variation	L	56.00	56.00	
Minor Variation	L	17.00	17.00	
Site Licence (3 years) Grant	L	386.00	386.00	
Additional Sites (per site per year of licence)	L	215.00	215.00	
Site licence (3 years) – renewal	L	298.00	298.00	
Additional sites (per site per year of licence)	L	215.00	215.00	
Minor Variation Site	L	17.00	17.00	
Major Variation Site	L	56.00 + 72.00 per additional site per year	56.00 + 72.00 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	220.00	220.00	
6-20 pitches	L	248.00	248.00	
21-50 pitches	L	265.00	265.00	
Greater than 50 pitches	L	287.00	287.00	
Annual Fees associated with administration and monitoring of site licences;				
1-5 pitches	L	No charge	No charge	
6-50 pitches	L	243.00	243.00	
Greater than 50 pitches	L	287.00	287.00	
Cost of Laying Site Rules	L	27.00	27.00	
Cost of Variation/Transfer	L	110.00	110.00	
Zoo Licensing Act				
New Application (4 years) or renewal (6 years) for a Zoo Licence (excluding the inspection costs of appointed inspector)	L	497.00	497.00	
Animal Welfare				
Breeding of Dogs - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	271.00	271.00	
2 Year Licence	L	320.00	320.00	
3 Year Licence	L	370.00	370.00	
Breeding of Dogs - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	237.00	237.00	
2 Year Licence	L	287.00	287.00	
3 Year Licence	L	336.00	336.00	
Pet Vending Commercial - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	278.00	278.00	
2 Year Licence	L	328.00	328.00	
3 Year Licence	L	377.00	377.00	
Pet Vending Commercial - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	245.00	245.00	
2 Year Licence	L	294.00	294.00	
3 Year Licence	L	343.00	343.00	
Pet Vending Home - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	271.00	271.00	
2 Year Licence	L	320.00	320.00	
3 Year Licence	L	370.00	370.00	
Pet Vending Home - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	237.00	237.00	
2 Year Licence	L	287.00	287.00	
3 Year Licence	L	336.00	336.00	
Keeping or Training Animals for Exhibition - Grant of Licence				
3 Year Licence	L	259.00	259.00	
Keeping or Training Animals for Exhibition - Renewal of Licence				
3 Year Licence	L	237.00	237.00	
Hiring Out of Horses - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	292.00	292.00	
2 Year Licence	L	341.00	341.00	
3 Year Licence	L	391.00	391.00	
Hiring Out of Horses - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	259.00	259.00	
2 Year Licence	L	309.00	309.00	
3 Year Licence	L	358.00	358.00	
Boarding of Dogs and Cats Commercial - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	337.00	337.00	
2 Year Licence	L	386.00	386.00	
3 Year Licence	L	436.00	436.00	
Boarding of Dogs and Cats Commercial - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	303.00	303.00	
2 Year Licence	L	353.00	353.00	
3 Year Licence	L	402.00	402.00	

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	271.00	271.00	
2 Year Licence	L	320.00	320.00	
3 Year Licence	L	370.00	370.00	
Boarding of Dogs and Cats Home - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	237.00	237.00	
2 Year Licence	L	287.00	287.00	
3 Year Licence	L	336.00	336.00	
Boarding of Dogs Day Care Up to 7 Dogs - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	271.00	271.00	
2 Year Licence	L	320.00	320.00	
3 Year Licence	L	370.00	370.00	
Boarding of Dogs Day Care Up to 7 Dogs - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	237.00	237.00	
2 Year Licence	L	287.00	287.00	
3 Year Licence	L	336.00	336.00	
Boarding of Dogs Day Care 8+ Dogs - Grant of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	336.00	336.00	
2 Year Licence	L	385.00	385.00	
3 Year Licence	L	435.00	435.00	
Boarding of Dogs Day Care 8+ Dogs - Renewal of Licence				
1 Year Licence	L	303.00	303.00	
2 Year Licence	L	353.00	353.00	
3 Year Licence	L	402.00	402.00	
Dog Boarding Franchise in Darlington - Grant of Licence	L	144.00 + 12.00 per host + 71.00 per host inspection fee + 49.00 annual enforcement fee per year	144.00 + 12.00 per host + 71.00 per host inspection fee + 49.00 annual enforcement fee per year	
Dog Boarding Franchise in Darlington - Renewal of Licence	L	105.00 + 11.00 per host + 68.00 per host inspection fee + 47.00 annual enforcement fee per year	105.00 + 11.00 per host + 68.00 per host inspection fee + 47.00 annual enforcement fee per year	
Dog Boarding Franchise out of Darlington - Grant of Licence	L	66.00 + 66.00 per host	66.00 + 66.00 per host	
Dog Boarding Franchise out of Darlington - Renewal of Licence	L	61.00 + 66.00 per host	61.00 + 66.00 per host	
Additional Fees				
Cost per additional licensable activity - Grant and Renewal (each)	L	71.00	71.00	
Mandatory mid licence inspection fee - Grant and Renewal (each)	L	34.00	34.00	
Variation of licence where no inspection is required (each)	L	39.00	39.00	
Variation of licence where inspection is required (each)	L	100.00	100.00	
Application for Re-Rating (each)	L	78.00	78.00	
Copy Licence	L	17.00	17.00	
Administration Fee	L	39.00	39.00	
Dangerous Wild Animals (not including vets fee)	L	132.00	132.00	

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	1,075.00	1,075.00	
- Week	L	424.00	424.00	
- Day (minimum of 4 days)	L	93.00	93.00	
January / October - Full Calendar Month	L	728.00	728.00	
- Week	L	298.00	298.00	
- Day (minimum of 4 days)	L	66.00	66.00	
Note- The above to apply to Itinerant traders. For regular all year round traders - fees as follows				
Annual Consent - Town Centre	L	7,717.00	7,717.00	
If Paying Monthly	L	684.00	684.00	
If Paying Weekly	L	188.00	188.00	
Buskers selling CD's – Half Day	L	26.00	26.00	
Full Day	L	47.00	47.00	
Mobile vehicles (moving or lay-by)	L	287.00	287.00	
New Vendor Permits	L	37.00	37.00	
Skips, Scaffolding and Hoardings				
Place a skip on the highway (less than 3 days notice)	L	42.00	42.00	
Place a skip on the highway (more than 3 days notice)	L	26.00	26.00	
Erection of scaffolding	L	63.00	63.00	
Hoardings	L	63.00	63.00	
Administration Charge (per hour or part thereof)	L	39.00	39.00	
Statutory Fees				
Petroleum Licences				
Less than 2,500 litres	N	48.00	48.00	
2,500 – 50,000 litres	N	65.00	65.00	
More than 50,000 litres	N	137.00	137.00	
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 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	180.00	
Prosecution Costs				
Hourly Rate for preparation of case reports and carrying out works in default of legal notices	L	62.00	65.00	
Environmental Searches				
Environmental search 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	90.00	90.00	
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 set by Defra 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	279.00	

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
Annual Subsistence Charge;				
Standard process Low*	N	772.00	772.00	
Standard process Medium*	N	1,161.00	1,161.00	
Standard process High*	N	1,747.00	1,747.00	
		(+207.00)	(+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	314.00	
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				

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 £103 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	1,476.00	
Annual Subsistence Medium	N	1,611.00	1,610.00	
Annual Subsistence High	N	2,334.00	2,333.00	
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	62.00	65.00	
Measures				
Linear measures not exceeding 3m each scale	L	16.50	16.50	
Not exceeding 15kg	L	44.00	44.00	
Exceeding 15kg but not exceeding 100kg	L	76.50	76.50	
Exceeding 100kg but not exceeding 250kg	L	91.50	91.50	
Exceeding 250kg but not exceeding 1 tonne	L	159.00	159.00	
Exceeding 1 tonne but not exceeding 10 tonnes	L	254.50	254.50	
Exceeding 10 tonnes but not exceeding 30 tonnes	L	533.50	533.50	
Exceeding 30 tonnes but not exceeding 60 tonnes	L	792.00	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	76.00 per hour	76.00 per hour	
Measuring Instruments for Intoxicating Liquor				
Not exceeding 150ml	L	25.50	25.50	
Other	L	29.50	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	110.50	110.50	
Single Outlets	L	151.00	151.00	
Solely Price Adjustment	L	275.50	275.50	
Otherwise				
Other Types – Single Outlets				
Solely Price Adjustment	L	121.00	121.00	
Otherwise	L	164.00	164.00	
Other Types – Multi Outlets:				
1 Meter Tested	L	176.00	176.00	
2 Meters Tested	L	288.50	288.50	
3 Meters Tested	L	394.00	394.00	
4 Meters Tested	L	502.00	502.00	
5 Meters Tested	L	606.50	606.50	
6 Meters Tested	L	712.50	712.50	
7 Meters Tested	L	805.00	805.00	
8 Meters Tested	L	929.50	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	76.00 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	76.00 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, Commercial Street East & West, Feethams MSCP, Winston Street North & South & West				
1hr	L	1.20	1.20	
2hrs	L	2.40	2.40	
3hrs	L	3.60	3.60	
4hrs	L	4.80	4.80	
5hrs	L	5.00	5.00	
6hrs	L	6.00	6.00	
7hrs	L	7.00	7.00	
8hrs	L	8.00	8.00	
9hrs	L	9.00	9.00	
10hrs	L	10.00	10.00	
Car Parks – (Long Stay) (Mon to Sat)				
Archer Street, Garden Street, Kendrew Street East & West, Hird Street, St Hilda's & Park Place East & West				
1hr	L	1.20	1.20	
2hrs	L	2.40	2.40	
3hrs	L	3.60	3.60	
All day	L	5.00	5.00	
2 days	L	10.00	10.00	
3 days	L	15.00	15.00	
7 days	L	20.00	20.00	
Sunday	L	2.00	2.00	
Car Parks – Long Stay (Mon to Sat)				
Park Lane				
All day	L	5.00	5.00	
Sunday	L	2.00	2.00	
East Street MSCP				
Per hour	L	1.20	1.20	
All day	L	3.00	3.00	
Sunday	L	2.00	2.00	
Chestnut Street				
All day	L	2.00	2.00	
7 days	L	8.00	8.00	
Sunday	L	2.00	2.00	
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	0.70	0.70	

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	100.00	100.00	
6 month permit	L	150.00	150.00	
12 month permit	L	250.00	250.00	
				NIL

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	20.00	20.00	
Letter confirming enforcement action will not be taken	L	20.00	20.00	
Copy of historic completion/approval certificates	L	20.00	20.00	
Decision/Approval Notice (Building Control)				
Responding to request for historical information from electronic databases (email response)	L	20.00	20.00	
Responding to request for historical information from electronic databases (letter response)	L	20.00	20.00	
Responding to request for historical information from manually recorded data (email response)	L	20.00	20.00	
Personal searches (email response)	L	20.00	20.00	
The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 plus VAT at the appropriate rate				
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	4.85	5.00	
Non card holder	L	5.40	5.55	
Concession	L	3.70	4.15	
Junior Swim	L	3.10	3.25	
Family swim junior rate discount (up to 4 children accompanying 1 adult)				
Per card holder	L	2.45	2.55	
Per non card holder	L	2.75	2.85	
Under 12 months	L	Free	Free	
Lessons	L	55.00	60.00	
Fitness Areas				
The Gym				
Card holder	L	5.95	6.10	
Non card holder	L	6.55	6.75	
Concession	L	4.60	5.05	
Junior Gym	L	4.60	4.70	
Concession	L	3.50	3.60	
Health & Fitness Classes				
Health & Fitness Classes				
Card holder	L	5.15	5.40	
Non card holder	L	5.70	6.00	
Concession	L	4.30	4.50	
Half Main Hall				
Adult				
Card holder	L	49.50	50.00	
Non card holder	L	55.00	56.00	
Junior (1 hour courts only)	L	33.50	34.50	
Weekday lunchtime				
Card holder	L	40.00	41.00	
Non card holder	L	45.00	46.00	
Badminton				
Adult				
Card holder	L	9.65	9.90	
Non card holder	L	10.70	11.00	
Concession	L	8.05	8.25	
Junior (1 hour courts only)	L	5.65	5.80	
Concession (1 hour courts only)	L	5.00	5.00	
Equipment Hire				
Footballs	L	Free	Free	
Footballs – Deposit (FOC for card holders)	L	5.00	5.00	
Badminton	L	Free	Free	
Badminton – Deposit (FOC for card holders)	L	5.00	5.00	
Table Tennis Bats	L	Free	Free	
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	5.95	6.25	
Parent/toddler (Soft play)	L	5.95	6.25	
Other Activities				
Showers				
Card holders	L	3.00	3.10	
Non card holders	L	3.00	3.10	
Fit 4 Life Packages				
12 month Full Membership	L	299.40	323.40	
12 month Seniors	L	228.00	252.00	
12 month Student	L	180.00	204.00	
6 Month Full	L	195.00	205.00	
12 Month Upfront	L	275.00	296.50	
Swimming Pools				
Main Pool - per hour	L	120.00	130.00	
Diving Pool - per hour	L	70.00	76.00	
Teaching Pool - per hour	L	70.00	76.00	
Gala - per hour				
Swimming Galas - whole complex				
Normal opening hours - per hour	L	370.00	400.00	
Outside normal opening hours - per hour	L	195.00	211.00	
Swimming Galas - Schools, Junior Clubs and Organisations				
Main Pool - Peak	L	257.00	277.00	
Main Pool - Off Peak	L	185.00	200.00	
Main Pool and Teaching Pool - Peak	L	216.00	233.00	
Main Pool and Teaching Pool - Off Peak	L	222.00	240.00	
Electronic Timing	L	110.00	119.00	
Ten Pin Bowling				
Adult Standard - 1 game	L	7.95	8.25	
Juniors (under 16) - 1 game	L	6.30	6.60	
Students & Seniors - Off Peak - 1 game	L	6.30	6.60	
Family Package - Peak - 1 game	L	26.00	28.00	
Family Package - Off Peak -1 game	L	24.00	26.00	
Adult, Students, Seniors - Peak - 2 game	L	15.90	16.50	
Adult, Student, Seniors - Off Peak - 2 game	L	12.30	12.50	
Juniors (under 16) - Peak - 2 game	L	12.60	13.20	
Juniors (under 16) - Off Peak - 2 game	L	12.10	12.50	
Disabled and carer - Off Peak - 1 game (per person)	L	5.50	5.70	
Disabled and carer - Off Peak - 2 game (per person)	L	11.00	11.40	
Dry Sports Hall				
Main Sports Hall - per hour	L	121.00	127.00	
Special Events - per hour Weekends	L	385.00	405.00	
Preparation - per hour Weekends	L	204.00	215.00	
Special Events - Schools - per hour off peak	L	55.00	58.00	
Function Room	L	30.00	31.50	
Seminar Room/Stephenson Suite meeting rooms	L	41.00	43.00	
Pease Suite/Studio	L	51.00	53.55	
Central Hall				
All Events (except commercial, exhibitions and local societies)	L	127.00	135.00	
Exhibitions - commercial - per hour	L	165.00	175.00	
Local Societies event - per hour	L	88.00	95.00	
				88,000

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
EASTBOURNE SPORTS COMPLEX				
3G Pitch				
Non Charter Standard Pay and Play				
1/2 3G Pitch - Adult (1 hour)	L	55.00	60.00	
1/2 3G Pitch - Junior (1 hour)	L	45.00	50.00	
Full 3G Pitch - Adult (1 hour)	L	85.00	90.00	
Full 3G Pitch - Junior (1 hour)	L	60.00	65.00	
Charter Standard and Partner Clubs				
1/2 3G Pitch (1 hour)	L	30.00	30.00	
Full 3G Pitch (1 hour)	L	55.00	60.00	
Grass Pitch Matches - Club				
Adult per match 11 v 11	L	30.00	32.50	
Junior per match 9 v 9	L	20.00	22.50	
Junior per match 7 v 7	L	20.00	22.50	
Junior per match 5 v 5	L	15.00	17.50	
3G Matches - Club				
Junior per match 5 v 5	L	20.00	22.50	
Junior per match 7 v 7	L	25.00	27.50	
Junior per match 9 v 9	L	30.00	32.50	
Junior per match 11 v 11	L	30.00	32.50	
Changing room	L	20.00	25.00	
3G Matches - Adults				
AGP 1 without changing rooms	L	45.00	50.00	
AGP 1 with changing rooms	L	65.00	70.00	
AGP 2 without changing rooms	L	65.00	70.00	
AGP 2 with changing rooms	L	105.00	110.00	
Athletics Track				
Non club rate				
Adult	L	5.20	5.40	
Junior	L	4.20	4.40	
Full track per hour	L	120.00	120.00	
Club rate				
Adult	L	4.20	4.40	
Junior	L	4.20	4.40	
Full track per hour	L	85.00	90.00	
Other				
Shower	L	2.60	2.80	
Function room and pavilion hire per hour (exclusive of VAT)	L	24.00	25.00	
Multi Purpose Studio per hour (exclusive of VAT)	L	18.00	19.00	
				10,000

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
HIPPODROME & HULLABALOO				
Restoration Levy (per ticket excluding children's shows)	L	2.00	2.00	
Booking Fee (per ticket)	L	1.00	1.00	
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	2,310.00	2,425.50	
Hippodrome Theatre Hire - max capacity 1,000 - w/end half day	L	1,155.00	1,212.75	
Hippodrome Theatre Hire - max capacity 1,000 - w/day full day	L	2,126.25	2,232.50	
Hippodrome Theatre Hire - max capacity 1,000 - w/day half day	L	1,065.00	1,118.25	
Hullabaloo Theatre Hire - max capacity 150 - per hour	L	75.00	78.75	
Hullabaloo Theatre Hire - max capacity 150 - day hire**	L	546.25	573.50	
**day hire - 9am to 5pm				
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.				
				5,000

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
HOPETOWN DARLINGTON				
General Admission	L	Free	Free	
Donations welcome				
Wagon Woods Adventure Play				
Children over 1 - 1 hour peak (weekends & school holidays)	L	5.00	5.00	
Children over 1 - 1 hour off peak (weekdays term time)	L	3.50	3.50	
Experiment! immersive ride	L	5.00	5.00	
Private Hire				
The Stephenson Room - per hour	L	50.00	50.00	
The Pease Room - per hour	L	38.75	38.75	
The Carriage Works - half day	L	300.00	300.00	
The Carriage Works - full day	L	500.00	500.00	
The Carriage Works - per hour, after hours	L	100.00	100.00	
The Goods Shed/Clocktower Café - 3 hours 6-9pm	L	500.00	500.00	
The Goods Shed/Clocktower Café - per hour after 9pm	L	100.00	100.00	
Charity/Partner rate on all above hires - 30% discount	L			
Study at The Stores				
Historical research by Collections Manager - per hour	L	30.00	30.00	
Family history short research - up to 10 mins (including scans)	L	5.00	5.00	
Photographic reproduction - private use	L	6.50	6.50	
Commercial Photographic Reproduction				
Small local charitable, educational incl. websites	L	6.50	6.50	
Local commercial incl. websites	L	15.00	15.00	
Specialist magazines, journals & newspapers incl. websites	L	30.00	30.00	
Regional TV/Video/Film/DVD	L	50.00	50.00	
National/international TV/Video/Film/DVD	L	100.00	100.00	
School Visits				
Package 1 - Price per pupil	L	4.00	4.00	
Includes led workshop, Wagon Woods play, self guided time in museum and stores plus dedicated lunch area				
Package 2 - Price per pupil	L	7.50	7.50	
Includes led workshop, Wagon Woods play, Experiment! immersive ride, self guided time in museum and stores plus dedicated lunch area				
Both packages reduced by £2 per child for Darlington school children on free school meals				NIL
STRAY DOGS				
Dog held at Allington Way				
Statutory Fee	L	25.00	25.00	
Kennelling Fee	L	20.00	20.00	
Dog held offsite				
Fees incurred at Allington Way (as above) plus				
Kennelling Fee per day	L	30.00	30.00	
Handling Fee	L	50.00	50.00	
				NIL

Description	Type*	Existing Charge £	New Charge £	Financial Effect £
*KEY for basis of fee and charges setting, L - Locally Agreed, N - Nationally Agreed				
REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL				
Refuse sacks (per 25) (Exclusive of VAT)	L	131.50	137.60	
Garden Waste Sacks (Non VATable) (for collection of 10 bags)	L	14.20	14.90	
Bulky Household Collection up to 6 items	L	23.80	24.90	
Garden Waste Service	L	47.00	48.00	
Cost of replacement (inclusive of 20% VAT)				
360L Wheeled Bin	L	67.20	70.30	
240L Wheeled Bin	L	26.60	27.80	
Caddie	L	8.80	9.20	
Glass Box	L	6.50	6.80	
55L Box	L	6.50	6.80	
Lid for recycling box	L	2.60	2.70	
Lid for 240L bin	L	7.80	8.20	
Wheeled bin wheel	L	2.10	2.20	
				13,000

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	1,160.00	1,250.00	
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	1,160.00	1,250.00	
Cremated remains	L	250.00	300.00	
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) - Full Plot	L	1,200.00	1,300.00	
Exclusive burial rights (50 years) - Half Plot	L	600.00	650.00	
Exclusive burial rights (50 years) - Quarter Plot	L	300.00	325.00	
Exclusive burial rights for a bricked grave	L	2,400.00	2,600.00	
Extension to burial rights (20 years)	L	N/a	500.00	
Extension to burial rights (30 years)	L	N/a	700.00	
Extension to burial rights (40 years)	L	N/a	850.00	
Other charges				
Scattering of cremated remains	L	50.00	50.00	
Indemnity form (to produce duplicate grant)	L	50.00	50.00	
Transfer of burial rights	L	N/a	30.00	
Use of Cemetery Chapel	L	150.00	150.00	
Use of Crematorium Chapel for burial/memorial service	L	300.00	300.00	
After post mortem remains	L	250.00	300.00	
Exhumation of a body (excl. re-interment)	L	2,500.00	2,700.00	
Exhumation of cremated remains (excl. re-interment)	L	600.00	600.00	
Grave Maintenance (inclusive of 20% VAT)				
Initial payment	L	60.00	70.00	
Annual Maintenance	L	45.00	50.00	
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	250.00	250.00	
Provision of kerbs – traditional sites only)	L	120.00	120.00	
Vases not exceeding 300mm	L	100.00	100.00	
Additional inscription	L	100.00	100.00	
Total financial effect for Cemeteries				15,000

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	250.00	300.00	
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	1,160.00	1,200.00	
Direct Cremation	L	580.00	600.00	
After post mortem remains	L	250.00	300.00	
Other charges				
Postal Carton	L	25.00	25.00	
Metal Urn	L	60.00	60.00	
Wooden Casket	L	70.00	70.00	
Biodegradable Urn	L	85.00	85.00	
Baby Urn	L	10.00	10.00	
Extended use of Crematorium Chapel	L	300.00	300.00	
Scattering of remains at reserved time	L	50.00	50.00	
Webcasts (inclusive of VAT at the appropriate rate)	L	60.00	65.00	
Tributes (inclusive of 20% VAT)				
Single Photo	L	15.00	15.00	
Basic Slideshow	L	55.00	60.00	
Slideshow set to music	L	85.00	90.00	
Themed Tribute to music	L	100.00	100.00	
Family supplied Tribute	L	30.00	35.00	
For every additional 25 images	L	25.00	25.00	
Tribute Download link	L	20.00	20.00	
Webcast Keepsake (DVD, Blu-ray, USB or audio CD)	L	60.00	70.00	
Extra copies	L	30.00	35.00	
Video Book	L	100.00	120.00	
Extra copies	L	60.00	60.00	
Memory Box	L	130.00	140.00	
Extra copies	L	70.00	70.00	
Book of Remembrance (inclusive of 20% VAT)				
Single Entry (2 lines)	L	80.00	90.00	
Double Entry (3 or 4 lines)	L	120.00	140.00	
Additional lines	L	25.00	25.00	
Low rate emblem	L	N/a	100.00	
High rate emblem	L	120.00	140.00	
Memorial Cards (inclusive of 20% VAT)				
Single entry card (2 lines)	L	35.00	35.00	
Double entry card (3 or 4 lines)	L	45.00	45.00	
Additional lines	L	10.00	10.00	
Low rate emblem	L	N/a	100.00	
High rate emblem	L	100.00	140.00	
Other Memorial Schemes				
Replacement kerb vase plaque	L	300.00	300.00	
Replacement flower holder	L	5.00	5.00	
Wall plaques	L	270.00	270.00	
Planter plaques	L	380.00	380.00	
Lease of space for memorial plaques (per annum)	L	27.00	28.00	
Total financial effect for Crematorium				50,000

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	200.00	200.00	
				NIL
HIGHWAYS				
Private apparatus in the Highway (Section 50 Licence, new installations)	L	550.00	650.00	
Private Road Openings (repair existing)	L	225.00	250.00	
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	
Section 184 Application for private vehicle crossings		150.00	150.00	
- Domestic dwelling	L	150.00	150.00	
- Commercial and industrial	L	150.00	300.00	
Temporary Traffic Regulation Notices (road closures etc)	L	214.00	222.50	
Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (road closures etc) (plus advertising)	L	332.00	345.00	
Urgent Traffic Regulation Notices	L	173.00	180.00	
Application to Secretary of State for TTRO extension (plus advertising)	L	135.00	140.50	
Personal Search - Highways (by email) per question	L	6.00	8.40	
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	186.00	193.50	
- Per road name (council names)	L	226.00	235.00	
- Per plot	L	16.50	17.00	
Street Naming & Numbering of Properties:				
- Per plot or renaming of a property	L	38.00	39.00	
Rechargeable Works	L	Actual cost + 10%	Actual cost + 10%	
Temporary Traffic Light Applications	L	No Charge Individually priced based on requirements	No Charge Individually priced based on requirements	
Section 50 Licence associated bond costs	L			
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	L	8% of works + legal if delivered by developer	8% of works + legal if delivered by developer	
Section 116 Stopping Up of the Highway	N	Actual Costs	Actual Costs	
Section 38 Road Adoption agreement	L	8% of works + legal if delivered by developer	8% of works + legal if delivered by developer	
NRSAWA Defect Charges	N	Nationally set scale of charges	Nationally set scale of charges	
NRSAWA 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	
				2,000
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		3,066.00 (minimum)	3,192.00 (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	256.00	267.00	
Additional parcel	L	51.00	53.00	
Additional notice	L	51.00	53.00	
Authorisation for installing a new gate or stile (HA 80 s147)	L	102.00	106.00	
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	56.00	56.00	
Taxi Vehicle Test and MOT	L	66.00	66.00	
Failure to attend (less than 48 hours' notice)	L	56.00	56.00	
Re-test	L	27.00	27.00	
Re-test including emissions	L	39.00	39.00	
Re-test emissions only	L	12.00	12.00	
Charges for General Public;				
MOT for Standard Car Class IV	L	38.00	40.00	
MOT for Class V Vehicles	L	45.00	47.00	
MOT for Class VII Vehicles	L	45.00	47.00	
				Minimal
PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING				
Works in default & statutory activities per hour	L	62.00	65.00	
Housing inspections & consultancy per hour (inclusive of VAT)	L	62.00	65.00	
Charge for the service relevant Housing Act 2004 legal notice	L	465.00	465.00	
Administration cost for the securing empty homes (addition of VAT if completed by agreement)	L	310.00	310.00	
Houses in Multiple Occupation Activities;				
HMO licence fee per letting/let/tenancy	L	N/a	N/a	
Part A Licence Application	L	217.00	217.00	
Part B 5 year HMO licence per letting	L	155.00	155.00	
Other relevant HMO activities per hour	L	62.00	65.00	
Variation of HMO licence	L	124.00	124.00	
Housing Immigration Inspections;				
Within 10 working days (excluding VAT)	L	155.00	155.00	
Fast Track within 5 working days (excluding VAT)	L	217.00	217.00	
General Enforcement Activities;				
Hourly rate for preparation of case reports/prosecutions	L	62.00	65.00	
Additional copies of legal notices via post	L	10.00	10.00	
Additional copies of legal notices - Scanned copy by Email	L	Free	Free	
Energy Company Regulation				
ECOflex declarations (excluding VAT)	L	93.00	93.00	
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				Minimal
Council Tax – All Charges do not incur VAT				
Issue of Summons for Liability Order	L	41.00	42.00	
Issue of Liability Order	L	51.00	53.00	
Issue of Summons for Committal Hearing	L	264.00	264.00	
Issue of Statutory Demand	L	187.00	194.00	
Schedule 3 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992				
Penalty where				
- A person is requested to supply information and fails to	L	70.00	70.00	
- A person knowingly supplies inaccurate information	L	70.00	70.00	
- A person fails to notify a material change without a reasonable excuse	L	70.00	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	280.00	280.00	
- A person knowingly supplies inaccurate information	L	280.00	280.00	
				21,000
Business Rates (NNDR) – All Charges do not incur VAT				
Issue of Summons for Liability Order	L	41.00	42.00	
Issue of Liability Order	L	51.00	53.00	
Issue of Summons for Committal Hearing	L	264.00	264.00	
Issue of Statutory Demand	L	187.00	194.00	
				1,000

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APPENDIX 4

**KEY ASSUMPTIONS USED IN PROJECTED
RESOURCES, EXPENDITURE AND INCOME 2026/27-2029/30**

Factor	Assumption
Resources	
Council Tax Base	Variable depending on projected additional properties.
Council Tax	2.99% increase in 2026/27 and future years in line with Government Core Spending Power.
Adult Social Care Precept	2% increase in 2026/27 and future years in line with Government Core Spending Power.
Council Tax collection	99% collected
Business Rates	Business Rates as per estimates from the Council's specialist advisors of the Government's Fair Funding review.
Government Grants	Provisional awaiting draft Local Government Finance Settlement.
	Revenue Support Grant increased to include Fair Funding reforms and consolidation of grant streams, as per estimates from the Council's specialist advisors of the Government's Fair Funding review.
	Better Care Grant (previously BCF) consolidated with Delayed Discharge Grant (previously shown in Departmental net expenditure) at 2025/26 financial settlement flatlined to 2029/30.
	Social Care Grant, assumed consolidated into Revenue Support Grant as per Fair Funding consultation.
	Homeless Prevention Grant, Temporary Accommodation element assumed consolidated into Revenue Support Grant as per Fair Funding consultation. Balance of grant in Department net expenditure flatlined at 2025/26 allocation.
	National Insurance Offset Grant, assumed consolidated into Revenue Support Grant as per Fair Funding consultation.
	Children's Social Care Prevention Grant, in Departmental net expenditure flatlined at 2025/26 allocation.
	Recovery Grant, assumed rolled into Revenue Support Grant as per Fair Funding consultation.
	Children & Families Grant as per financial settlement 2025/26, flatlined and assumed to continue to 2029/30.
	New Homes Bonus Grant ended as per 2025/26 final settlement
	Extended Producer Responsibility Grant as per 2026/27 provisional allocation. Assumed to reduce in future years as industry reduces packaging.

Expenditure	
Pay inflation	2026/27 3% and thereafter 2% in line with national scheme.
Price inflation	Only contractual inflation on running costs.
Local Government Pension Scheme	Contribution rate of 14.5% for 2026/27 and all years to 2029/30.
Financing Costs	
Interest rates payable	Average rate on existing debt, 2026/27 of 3.59%, 2027/28 of 3.29%, 2028/29 of 3.15% and 2029/30 of 2.97%
Interest rates payable on new debt – 10 year rate	2026/27 of 4.83%, 2027/28 of 4.70%, 2028/29 of 4.60% and 2029/30 4.60%.
Interest rates receivable	3.50% in 2026/27, 3.50% in 2027/28, 3.50% in 2028/29 and 3.50% in 2029/30
Income	
Inflationary increases	Various based on individual service considerations.

REVENUE BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2025/26**Projected General Fund Reserve at 31st March 2026**

	2025-29 MTFP (Feb 2025)
Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) :-	£000
MTFP Planned Opening Balance 01/04/2025	11,458
Approved net contribution from balances	(3,069)
Planned Closing Balance 31/03/2026	8,389
 Increase in opening balance from 2024-25 results	 1,489
 Projected corporate underspends / (overspends) :-	
Council Wide	(146)
Financing Costs	(192)
Changes in grant income received	(143)
 Projected General Fund Reserve (excluding Departmental)	 at 9,397
31st March 2026	
 Planned Balance at 31st March 2026	 8,389
Improvement	1,008

Departmental projected year-end balances

	Improvement / (decline) compared with 2025-29 MTFP
	£000
People Group	(2,969)
Environment, Highways & Community Services Group	125
Resources and Governance Group	(28)
Chief Executive	(8)
Economy & Public Protection	0
 TOTAL	 (2,880)

Summary Comparison with :-

	2025-29 MTFP
	£000
Corporate Resources - increase in opening balance from 24/25 results	1,489
Corporate Resources - additional in-year Improvement/(Decline)	(481)
 Departmental - Improvement / (Decline)	 (2,880)
 Improvement / (Decline) compared with MTFP	 (1,872)
 Projected General Fund Reserve at 31st March 2026	 6,517

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MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL TERM 2026/27 TO 2029/30

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Chief Executives Office	0.342	0.349	0.356	0.364
People Services	100.743	102.676	104.215	106.665
Economy & Public Protection	2.208	2.145	2.052	2.124
Environment, Highways and Community Services	27.792	28.319	28.888	29.818
Resources & Governance	16.824	17.339	17.823	18.184
Financing Costs	4.507	4.057	4.157	4.473
Investment Returns - Joint Venture	(2.188)	(1.942)	(1.855)	(1.188)
Council Wide	(1.169)	(1.153)	(1.137)	(1.120)
Contingencies	0.278	0.202	0.202	0.202
Contribution to/(from) revenue balances	(4.279)	(1.558)	1.797	2.033
Total Net Expenditure	145.058	150.434	156.498	161.555
<u>Resources - Projected and Assumed</u>				
Council Tax	74.633	79.308	84.334	89.671
Business Rates Retained	25.886	26.202	26.544	26.884
Revenue Support Grant	35.376	36.302	37.431	37.157
Better Care Grant	5.537	5.537	5.537	5.537
Children & Families Grant	0.922	0.922	0.922	0.922
Extended Producer Responsibility Grant	2.704	2.163	1.730	1.384
Total Resources	145.058	150.434	156.498	161.555
<u>Balances</u>				
Opening Balance	6.517	2.238	0.680	2.477
Contribution to/(from) Balances	(4.279)	(1.558)	1.797	2.033
Closing Balance	2.238	0.680	2.477	4.510

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Capital Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 - 2029/30					Appendix 7
	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	Total £'000
Children, Families & Learning					
School Condition Allocations	<i>154</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>154</i>	616
	<i>154</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>154</i>	616
Housing					
Adaptations / Lifts	153	156	159	162	630
Heating replacement programme	1,352	1,379	1,406	1,434	5,571
Structural works	250	255	260	265	1,030
Lifeline Services	379	380	382	73	1,214
Repairs before painting	69	134	136	139	478
Roofing	1,000	1,020	1,040	1,061	4,121
Garages	329	25	26	26	406
External Works (footpaths, fencing, etc.)	214	218	223	227	882
Pavement Crossing	28	29	30	30	117
Window and Door Replacement Programme	2,025	2,065	1,607	1,639	7,336
IPM works	3,672	3,745	3,820	3,897	15,134
Energy Efficiency	5,237	5,200	1,500	1,530	13,467
Communal Works	204	208	212	216	840
Capital Schemes approved in previous years	5,821	0	0	0	5,821
New build (net of HE grant)/regeneration	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	4,000
Fees	386	396	402	412	1,596
	<i>22,119</i>	<i>16,210</i>	<i>12,203</i>	<i>12,111</i>	62,643
Transport					
Highway Maintenance	<i>1,206</i>	<i>1,206</i>	<i>1,206</i>	<i>1,206</i>	4,824
Integrated Transport	<i>893</i>	<i>893</i>	<i>893</i>	<i>893</i>	3,572
Pothole Funding	<i>969</i>	<i>969</i>	<i>969</i>	<i>969</i>	3,876
	<i>3,068</i>	<i>3,068</i>	<i>3,068</i>	<i>3,068</i>	12,272
Other Capital Programmes					
Disabled Facility Grants	<i>1,319</i>	<i>1,319</i>	<i>1,319</i>	<i>1,319</i>	5,276
	<i>1,319</i>	<i>1,319</i>	<i>1,319</i>	<i>1,319</i>	5,276
Council funded Schemes					
Advanced Design Fees	150	150	150	150	600
EPC Surveys in Council Commercial estate	100	100	0	0	200
Capitalised Repairs (Already approved to 2028/29 at £0.250m)	500	500	500	500	2,000
	<i>750</i>	<i>750</i>	<i>650</i>	<i>650</i>	2,800
Total Spending Plans	27,410	21,501	17,394	17,302	83,607
Funded by:					
Capital Grants	5,861	5,824	4,541	4,541	20,767
HRA Revenue Contributions	12,261	12,210	11,903	11,811	48,185
HRA Capital Receipts	300	300	300	300	1,200
Borrowing	8,238	2,417	0	0	10,655
Corporate Resources	750	750	650	650	2,800
Total Resources	27,410	21,501	17,394	17,302	83,607
Commitments - see above	27,410	21,501	17,394	17,302	83,607
Resources Available for Investment	0	0	0	0	0

Figures shown in italics are estimates based on current allocations, awaiting confirmation of future allocations.

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**CABINET
2 DECEMBER 2025**

ITEM NO.

**MID YEAR PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT
2025/26**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

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

Summary

2. The mandatory Prudential Code, which governs Council's borrowing, requires Council approval of controls, called Prudential Indicators, relating to capital spending and borrowing. Prudential Indicators are set in three statutory annual reports, a forward looking annual treasury management strategy, a backward looking annual treasury management report and this mid-year update. The mid-year update follows Council's approval in February 2025 of the 2025/26 Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy.
3. The key objectives of the three annual reports are:
 - (a) to ensure the governance of the large amounts of public money under the Council's Treasury Management activities:
 - (i) Complies with legislation
 - (ii) Meets high standards set out in codes of practice
 - (b) To ensure that borrowing is affordable
 - (c) To report performance of the key activities of borrowing and investments
4. The key proposed revisions to Prudential Indicators relate to:
 - (a) The Operational Boundary will reduce slightly to £182.456m and the Authorised Limit to £276.297m due to lower than originally estimated debt levels.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that:
 - (a) The revised prudential indicators and limits within the report in Tables 1 to 6, 8, 10 and 12 to 17 are examined

- (b) The Treasury Management Budget (Financing Costs) projected outturn shown in Table 11 is noted
- (c) That this report is forwarded to Council with comments from this committee, in order for the updated prudential indicators to be approved

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

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

Elizabeth Davison
Executive Director - Resources and Governance

Background Papers

- (i) Capital Medium Term Financial Plan 2025/26
- (ii) Prudential Indicators & Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26
- (iii) Accounting records
- (iv) The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities

Judith Murray: Extension 5204

Council Plan	The Council's treasury management contributes to all priorities outlined within the Council Plan.
Addressing inequalities	This report is providing an update on prudential indicators and the monitoring of the Council's treasury management. There is therefore no impact as a result of this report.
Tackling Climate Change	This report is providing an update on prudential indicators and the monitoring of the Council's treasury management. There is therefore no impact as a result of this report.
Efficient and effective use of resources	This report contains updated information regarding the Council's treasury management position
Health and Wellbeing	This report is providing an update on prudential indicators and the monitoring of treasury management therefore there is no impact as a result of this report.
S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for crime and disorder
Wards Affected	No specific impact on an individual area as a result of this report
Groups Affected	No specific impact on an individual area as a result of this report
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

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. This mid-year review report meets the regulatory framework requirement of treasury management. It also incorporates the needs of the Prudential Code to ensure monitoring of the capital expenditure plans and the Council's prudential indicators (PIs). The Treasury Strategy and the PIs were previously reported to Council on 20 February 2025.
8. This report concentrates on the revised positions for 2025/26. Future year's indicators will be revised when the impact of the MTFP 2026/27 onwards is known.
9. A summary of the revised headline indicators for 2025/26 is presented in **Table 1** below. More detailed explanations of each indicator and any proposed changes are contained in the report. The revised indicators reflect the movement in the Capital MTFP since its approval in February 2025 and the means by which it is financed.

Table 1 Headline Indicators

	2025/26 Original Estimate	2025/26 Revised Estimate
	£m	£m
Capital Expenditure (Tables 2 and 3)	82.954	65.944
Capital Financing Requirement (Table 4)	266.783	263.140
Operational Boundary for External Debt (Table 4)	215.463	182.456
Authorised Limit for External Debt (Table 6)	280.122	276.297
Ratio of Financing Costs to net revenue stream- General Fund (Table 14)	4.15%	4.15%
Ratio of Financing Costs to net revenue stream- Housing Revenue Account (HRA)(Table 14)	13.34%	13.34%

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

Key Prudential Indicators

13. This part of the report is structured to update:

- (a) The Council's capital expenditure plans
- (b) How these plans are financed
- (c) The impact of the changes in the capital expenditure plans on the PI's and the underlying need to borrow
- (d) Compliance and limits in place for borrowing activity
- (e) Changes to the Annual Investment Strategy
- (f) The revised financing costs budget for 2025/26

Capital Expenditure PI

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

Table 2

Capital Expenditure by Service	2025/26 Original Estimate	2025/26 Revised Estimate
	£m	£m
General Fund	30.216	27.834
HRA	39.878	33.520
Total Estimated Capital Expenditure	70.094	61.354
Loans to Joint Ventures	12.860	4.590
Total	82.954	65.944

15. The changes to the 2025/26 capital expenditure estimates will be notified to Cabinet as part of the Capital Budget monitoring process (Quarterly Project Position Statement Report).
16. The current capital programme that has not already been financed now stands at £131.234m but this includes a number of schemes that will be spent over a number of years not just in 2025/26. A reduction of £65.290m has been allowed for schemes which are known will be finalised in future years, but it is likely that other schemes will also slip into future years.

Impact of Capital Expenditure Plans

Changes to the financing of the Capital Programme

17. **Table 3** draws together the main strategy elements of the capital expenditure plans shown above, highlighting the original elements of the capital programme, and the expected financing arrangements of this capital expenditure. The borrowing element (Borrowing Need) increases the underlying indebtedness of the Council by way of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). Borrowing need is estimated to decrease from the original for 2025/26 mainly due to slippage of schemes. This direct borrowing need may also be supplemented by maturing debt and other treasury requirements.

Table 3

Capital Expenditure	2025/26 Original Estimate	2025/26 Revised Estimate
	£m	£m
General Fund	30.216	27.834
HRA	39.787	33.520
Loans to Joint Ventures	12.860	4.590
Total Capital expenditure	82.954	65.944
Financed By:		
Capital Receipts – Housing	0.000	0.000
Capital Receipts/S106 –General Fund	2.732	4.758
Capital grants	25.118	23.573
JV Repayments	4.120	1.000
HRA Revenue Contributions	26.774	18.760
GF Revenue Contributions	0.171	0.067
Total Financing	58.915	48.158
Borrowing Need	24.039	17.786

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

18. **Table 4** shows the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), which is the underlying external need to borrow for capital purposes. It shows the expected actual debt position over the period. This is called the Operational Boundary. Currently actual borrowing for the Council is £162.668m. It is proposed to set an actual borrowing figure of £173.268m this will accommodate any additional borrowing need and debt requirements for cash flow purposes. Other Long-term liabilities (the PFI scheme & Right of Use Assets) will be added to give the revised operational boundary for 2025/26.

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

	2025/26 Original Estimate	2025/26 Revised Estimate
	£m	£m
Prudential Indicator- Capital Financing Requirement		
Opening CFR	248.267	247.613
CFR General Fund	152.420	153.848
CFR General Fund PFI/Right of Use Assets	6.317	9.188
CFR – Housing	85.778	79.835
CFR – Loans to Joint Ventures	22.268	20.269
Total Closing CFR	266.783	263.140
Net Movement in CFR	18.516	15.527
Borrowing	205.146	173.268
Other long-Term Liabilities	8.317	9.188
Total Debt 31 March- Operational Boundary	213.463	182.456

Limits to Borrowing Activity

19. The first key control over the treasury activity is a PI to ensure that over the medium term gross borrowing should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2025/26 and the next two financial years. As shown in **Table 5** below.

Table 5

	2025/26 Original Estimate £m	2025/26 Revised Estimate £m	2026/27 Revised Estimate £m	2027/28 Revised Estimate £m
Gross borrowing	207.146	173.268	193.268	213.268
Plus Right of Use Assets	3.500	4.371	4.702	5.034
Plus Other Long Term Liabilities	4.817	4.817	3.725	2.633
Total Gross Borrowing	215.463	182.456	201.695	220.935
CFR* (year-end position)	266.783	263.140	274.141	279.273

* includes on balance sheet PFI schemes and Right of Use Assets

20. The Executive Director - Resources and Governance reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current and future years in complying with this PI.
21. A further PI controls the overall level of borrowing, this is the Authorised Limit which represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited and needs to be set and revised by Members. It reflects the level of borrowing which while not desirable, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. The Authorised Limit

is currently set 5% above the Capital Financing Requirement to allow for any additional cashflow needs, the revised figure for 2025/26 has been raised by 5% of the new CFR total. Whilst it is not expected that borrowing would be at these levels this would allow additional borrowing to take place should market conditions change suddenly and swift action was required. This is a Statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

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

Table 6

Authorised Limit for External Debt	2025/26 Original Indicator £m	2025/26 Revised Indicator £m
Capital Financing Requirement	266.783	263.140
Additional headroom to Capital Financing Requirement	13.339	13.157
Total Authorised Limit for External Debt	280.122	276.297

Interest Rate Forecasts Provided by Link Asset Services (as at 31 August 2025)

Table 7

	Bank Rate	PWLB rates for borrowing purposes*			
		5 year	10 year	25 year	50 year
	%	%	%	%	%
2025/26					
Dec 2025	4.00	4.70	5.20	5.90	5.60
March 2026	3.75	4.50	5.00	5.70	5.40
2026/27					
June 2026	3.75	4.40	4.90	5.70	5.40
Sept 2026	3.50	4.30	4.80	5.50	5.30
Dec 2026	3.50	4.30	4.80	5.50	5.30
March 2027	3.50	4.30	4.80	5.50	5.30
2027/28					
June 2027	3.50	4.20	4.70	5.40	5.20
Sept 2027	3.25	4.20	4.70	5.40	5.20
Dec 2027	3.25	4.20	4.70	5.30	5.10
March 2028	3.25	4.20	4.70	5.30	5.10

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

23. The latest Bank Rate was reviewed in September with no change from 4.00% being implemented. The next review will be in November with no cut anticipated. What happens for the remainder of 2025/26 and into 2026/27 will most likely depend on inflation and employment data releases as well as geo-political events.

24. New forecasts suggest that inflation will peak at 4% rather than 3.7% with it not expected to fall to 2% until Quarter 2 in 2027. The Bank of England therefore remain cautious in Bank Rate cuts stating that they must be undertaken gradually.
25. International factors such as US-driven tariff policies and the impact the conflict in the Middle East may have on oil and energy process may also influence how slowly or quickly the Bank Rate is cut.

Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 and Annual Investment Strategy Update

26. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, (TMSS), for 2025/26 was approved by Council on 20 February 2025.
27. There are no policy changes to the TMSS.
28. The details in this report update the position in the light of the updated economic position and budgetary changes already approved.

Debt Activity during 2025/26

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

Table 8

	2025/26 Original Estimate £m	2025/26 Revised Estimate £m
CFR (year-end position) from Table 4	266.783	263.140
<u>Less</u> other long term liabilities PFI and Right of Use Assets	8.317	9.188
Net adjusted CFR (net year end position)	258.466	253.952
Expected Borrowing	205.146	173.268
(Under)/ Over borrowing	(53.320)	(80.684)

30. The Council has taken on £15m of replacement short term debt in the current year to date which will either again be replaced or will be repaid using short term maturing investments and any surplus cash.
31. The amount borrowed by the Council now stands at £162.668m, this excludes any additional cashflow loans which may be required. We are also considering the early repayment of a Barclays loan for £4.4m prior to year end and an additional £15.000m has been included in Table 8 above for estimated cashflow loans which may be required.
32. There will still be under-borrowing by the Council at the end of March 2025.

Property Funds

33. The Treasury Management Annual Report and Outturn Prudential Indicators 2024/25 which was presented to Cabinet on the 9 September 2025 reported that Hermes Federated were looking into a potential merger with another large property fund.
34. Following an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) the merger was agreed and completed on 15 August 2025.
35. Under the terms of the merger only pension funds were eligible to transfer into the fund and therefore the Council could not join the merged fund. Under the terms, those that did not qualify received all their funding in one lump sum and the Council received a cash distribution of £8.896m on 20 August 2025. This funding has been used to repay debt that was maturing in the short term to save on interest costs whilst options for longer term investments are investigated.
36. In terms of the Lothbury fund most assets have now been disposed of with only a few assets now remaining. It is anticipated that these will be disposed of later this year.
37. As per previous reports distributions received from the Lothbury Fund have been used to purchase units in UBS Triton. Decisions regarding future Lothbury distributions will be made on receipts, in consideration of the best investment options and the Council's financial position at that point.

Debt Rescheduling

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

Annual Investment Strategy 2025/26

Investment Portfolio

39. In accordance with the Code, it is the Council's priority to ensure security of Capital and liquidity, and to obtain an appropriate level of return which is consistent with the Council's risk appetite. Interest rates have fallen over the past year and are in line with the current bank rate of 4%. The Council are actively investing where possible.

Treasury Management Activity from 1 April 2024 to 31 August 2025

40. Current investment position – The Council held £38.699m of investments at 31/08/2025 and this is made up of the following types of investment.

Table 9

Sector	Country	Amount
		£m
AAA Money Market Funds	Sterling Funds	22.305
Property Funds - CCLA	UK	8.958
Hermes	UK	0.000
Lothbury	UK	0.556
UBS Triton		6.880
Total		38.699

Short Term Cashflow Investments

41. Cash balances are invested on a daily basis to maximise the benefit of temporary surplus funds. These include investments in Money Market Funds, the Government's Debt Management Office and bank short term notice accounts. A total of 70 investments were made in the period 1 April 2025 to 31 August 2025 totalling c£90m these were for short periods of up to 153 days and earned interest of £0.448m on an average balance of £25.181m which equated to an annual average interest rate of 4.25%

Investment returns measured against the Service Performance Indicators

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

Table 10

	Cashflow Investments %
Darlington Borough Council - Actual	4.25%
External Comparators	
Sterling Overnight Index Average (SONIA) – 6 months	4.21%

Treasury Management Budget

43. There are three main elements within the Treasury Management Budget:
- (a) Longer term capital investments interest earned – a cash amount of which earns interest and represents the Councils revenue balances, unused capital receipts, reserves and provisions, this includes Property Funds
 - (b) Cash flow interest earned – the authority has consistently had a positive cash flow. Unlike long term capital investments it does not represent any particular sum but it is the consequence of many different influences such as receipt of grants, the relationship between debtors and creditors, cashing of cheques and payments to suppliers

- (c) Debt serving costs – this is the principal and interest costs on the Council’s long term debt to finance the capital programme.

Table 11 - Changes to the Financing Costs Budget 2025/26

	£m	£m
Original Financing Costs Budget 2025/26		4.028
Less Decreased debt costs	(0.086)	
Less decreased returns on Property Funds	0.278	
Total adjustments		0.192
Estimated Treasury Management Outturn 2025/26		4.220

44. This statement concludes that the Treasury Management budget is forecast to overspend in 2025/26, this will be reflected in the current MTFP projections.
45. The loss of Hermes dividends has led to a decrease in expected returns on property fund income, however, by decreasing our debt using the Hermes distribution there has been a forecast decrease in debt costs. It should be noted that interest rates have not fallen as expected when the original budget was set and remain higher than originally anticipated so whilst we have decreased some of our debt it does not offset the loss of property fund income.
46. The Council continue to consider and monitor future investment possibilities that will increase our investment income and help support the MTFP.

Risk Benchmarking

47. A regulatory development is the consideration and approval of security and liquidity benchmarks. Yield benchmarks are currently widely used to assess investment performance and these are shown in **Table 12**. Discrete security and liquidity benchmarks are also requirements of member reporting.
48. The following reports the current position against the benchmarks originally approved.
49. Security – The Council’s maximum security risk benchmarks for the current portfolio of investments, when compared to historic default tables were set as follows;

- (a) **0.077% historic risk of default when compared to the whole portfolio**

Table 12

Maximum	Benchmark 2025/26	Actual May	Actual July
Year 1	0.077%	0.000%	0.000%

N.B. this excludes Property Funds

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

51. The reason that there is no risk of default in May is due to the fact that all investments were in Money Market Funds which could be recalled at any time and carry no risk of default.
52. Liquidity – In respect of this area the Council set liquidity facilities/ benchmark to maintain
- (a) Bank overdraft - £0.100M
 - (b) Liquid short term deposits of a least £3.000M available within a weeks' notice
 - (c) Weighted Average Life benchmark is expected to be 0.0 years with a maximum of 1 year
53. The Executive Director of Resources and Governance can report that liquidity arrangements have been adequate for the year to date as shown in **Table 13**

Table 13

	Benchmark 2025/26	Actual May	Actual July
Weighted Average Life	0.0 – 1 year	0.00 years	0.00 years

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

Treasury Management Indicators

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

Table 14

	2025/26 Original Indicator	2025/26 Revised Indicator
General Fund	4.15%	4.15%
HRA	13.34%	13.34%

Treasury Management Prudential indicators

56. **Upper Limits on Variable Rate Exposure** – This indicator identifies a maximum limit for variable interest rates based upon the debt position net of investments.
57. **Upper Limits on Fixed Rate Exposure** – Similar to the previous indicator this cover a maximum limit on fixed interest rates.

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

Table 15

	2025/26 Original Indicator	2025/26 Revised Indicator
Limits on fixed interest rates	100%	100%
Limits on variable interest rates	40%	40%

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

Table 16 - Maturity Structures of Borrowing

	2025/26 Original indicator	2025/26 Actual to Date	2025/26 Revised Indicator
Under 12 months	50%	28%	50%
12 months to 2 years	60%	0%	60%
2 years to 5 years	70%	37%	70%
5 years to 10 years	80%	38%	80%
10 years and above	100%	100%	100%

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

Table 17 - Principal Funds Invested

	2025/26 Original Indicator	2025/26 Revised Indicator
Maximum principal sums invested greater than 1 year	£50m	£50m

Conclusion

61. The prudential indicators have been produced to take account of the Council's borrowing position. The key borrowing indicator (the Operational Boundary) is £182.456m. The Council continues to be proactive in its treasury management functions.

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

Outcome of Consultation

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

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Appendix 1**Darlington's Pride in Place
Regeneration Plan****Section 1: Local context**

Darlington came to prominence during the industrial revolution. It is world famous for its role in the birth of the modern railway. In 1825, the Stockton and Darlington Railway, the world's first public railway to use steam locomotives, was opened by George Stephenson. This event marked a turning point in transportation history, an event that was celebrated across the town this year, the 200th centenary. The town became a hub for engineering, particularly locomotive and bridge building. This led to rapid population growth and the development of working class neighbourhoods around mills and railway works. The Pease family, prominent Quakers, played a major role in shaping the town's social and industrial landscape. To this day the statue of Joseph Pease overlooks the town centre commemorating his family's contribution to the railway industry that brought prosperity to Darlington and their values that influenced housing, education, and welfare.

Darlington continued to grow through the 20th century, with expansions in housing, education, and infrastructure. In recent decades, the town has diversified its economy, with developments in finance, services, and digital and science-based industries. Most recently it has welcomed the relocation of Government Departments at the Darlington Economic Campus.

Whilst Darlington has thrived as a place, some of its neighbourhoods have fallen behind. It's residents haven't prospered as in other areas and consequently the fabric of the areas has grown increasingly run down.

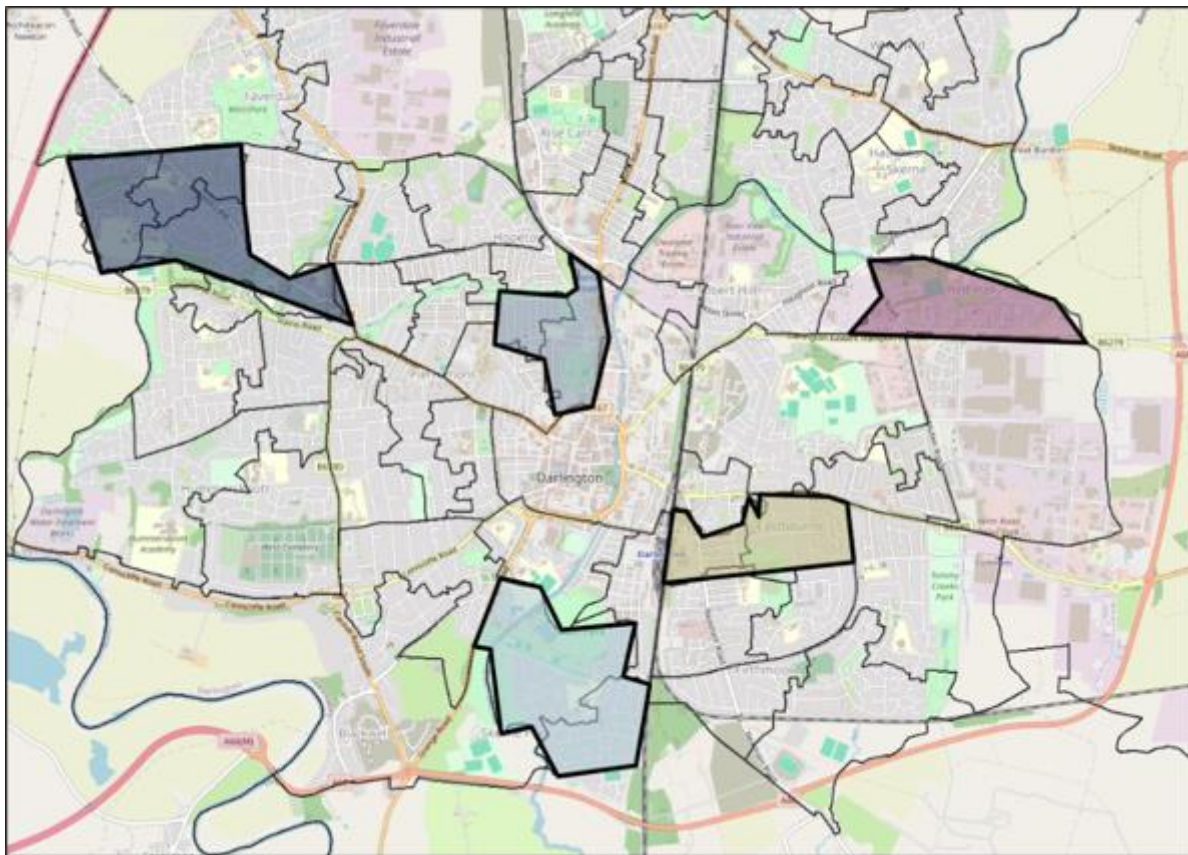
Section 2: Spatial targeting –

The board intends to focus its funding and interventions in the following areas:

- **Skerne Park** - located in south Darlington, is a mid-20th-century housing estate with a mix of council and private homes.
- **Red Hall** - a residential estate in Darlington, developed in the late 1960s.
- **Bank Top** - is a central neighbourhood in Darlington, split by Yarm Road and located near the historic Bank Top railway station, which dates back to 1887.
- **Northgate** - is a historically significant area in central Darlington, closely tied to the town's Quaker heritage and railway legacy.
- **Branksome** - is a residential suburb in north-west Darlington, developed primarily between the late 1940s and 1970s as council housing.

Each of the areas lies within the boundary agreed with MHCLG in April 2025 and indicated on the map below:

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Section 3: Vision for the future

The Neighbourhood Board's vision is:

"To foster connected, inclusive, safe and sustainable neighbourhoods across Darlington that celebrate local identity, support community wellbeing, and can adapt to the evolving needs of residents, ensuring every neighbourhood is a great place to live, work, and thrive."

It will be delivered via two objectives:

- Driving Growth
- Thriving Neighbourhoods

'Driving Growth' speaks to the core issue of access to opportunities, particularly employment. The Board is exploring the feasibility of providing a centre that delivers the skills needed for the growing number of science and technology-based jobs that are being created in Darlington and the wider North East. The key will be to engage people, particularly young people from the targeted neighbourhoods and enthuse and inspire them, then provide routes into learning and introduce them to employers. Experience of previous programmes is that, from small numbers, participation increases exponentially. Aspiration grows like a virus.

The vision for this objective is:

'That a greater proportion of people in the targeted neighbourhoods are in good quality, well paid employment.'

'Thriving Neighbourhoods' is about rebuilding community assets which foster social connectedness and access to resources. In some neighbourhoods, the sense of community has eroded so the Neighbourhood Board is working with agencies expert in community

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engagement. Supporting individuals to come together and grow a sense of agency is recognised as the cornerstone of supporting neighbourhoods to thrive.

Each neighbourhood has a different demography and different challenges and opportunities. Therefore, the process of engaging with communities varies from place to place. In some areas there are community groups to start a dialogue with, in others there are community assets that could be developed and in some, neither.

The Board is committed to deploying an equitable share of time and resources to the targeted neighbourhoods whilst being aware each will progress at a different speed.

The vision for this objective is:

‘Residents feel in control of their lives, have access to opportunities and are proud of the neighbourhood they live in.’

Whilst it was recognised that the issues of concern were concentrated in the following neighbourhoods, they could not be bounded by a firm line.

Skerne Park - While the area has benefited from regeneration efforts, such as the refurbishment of Skerne Park Primary School and the development of the Coleridge Centre, it continues to face social challenges. These include lower rates of home ownership, economic deprivation, and below-average health outcomes. Community initiatives aim to improve engagement and wellbeing, but targeted support remains essential. A thriving and well-functioning community hub that is well used by a cross section of the community, providing a range of social and health related activities for the community and a point for access to health and wellbeing services. A vibrant community that has pride in where they live with a greater sense of connectedness.

Red Hall – The area faces notable social challenges. Red Hall ranks low in income, employment, education, and health, with crime, particularly violent and anti-social behaviour, being a persistent issue. Despite this, regeneration efforts and community support initiatives continue to play a role in improving local conditions. The existing community centre is refurbished to provide a wide range of activities for the community where local people feel a sense of ownership and are well engaged with the centre. It will provide opportunities for provision in leisure, health and wellbeing. It will provide a youth centre where young people are engaged with activities helping them choose positive life paths. The ambition is that crime and antisocial behaviour will have reduced, young people will have been encouraged into quality employment and overall prosperity in the area will have increased.

Bank Top – The area includes a mix of housing, including schemes focused on community living and wellbeing. Bank Top faces social challenges such as economic deprivation and housing-related support needs. Local initiatives aim to foster independence and engagement among residents. Ultimately we will want a sense of community in the area where people feel more connected and there are a range of community based activities. We will have brought people together in a community network around a viable community centre providing a range of leisure activities and access to services.

Northgate – Despite its rich cultural background, Northgate has experienced economic decline, physical dilapidation, and social deprivation in recent years. Key landmarks like Northgate House and Edward Pease House are in poor condition, and the area has become a hotspot for anti-social behaviour. The communities of Northgate should feel less isolated and there should be a greater sense of cohesion in the area. People particularly youths will

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have the confidence to access opportunities particularly quality employment bringing greater wealth to the area. There will be a greater awareness and access to health and wellbeing services. We will have engaged and brought together people from all communities of Northgate to create a community centre which provides access to facilities and services.

Branksome – While many homes have been sold under the Right to Buy scheme, a significant number remain under the management of Darlington Borough Council. Today, Branksome faces social challenges including anti-social behaviour and economic deprivation. However, it also benefits from community-focused housing schemes like Branksome Hall Drive and Windsor Court, which offer supported living for older residents. The area is well-connected to local amenities and green spaces, contributing to ongoing efforts to improve quality of life. A particular focus in this area will be provision of youth services, which will be youth led and empower young people to develop their confidence and skills enabling them to take advantage of learning and employment opportunities.

By focusing on these neighbourhoods, the Board considered that this would provide the best opportunity to concentrate energy on the greatest need and to leave a tangible legacy.

Section 4: Strategic case for change

The Neighbourhood Board has taken the evidence compiled in the data pack provided by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG) as a starting point and carried out analyses within the Borough. Evidence compiled for previous strategies in Darlington have revealed that there was a wide disparity between the more affluent and poorer areas of Darlington and the sense was that this had grown rather than narrowed. Now, 13 Lower Super Output Areas are in the 10% most deprived in the country. Also, whilst the town centre has received a variety of targeted public sector investment, left behind neighbourhoods have received much less. The analyses carried out confirmed that this was indeed the case with five neighbourhoods in particular (detailed above) experiencing poorer outcomes across a range of wellbeing indicators. Perversely, these communities are failing to thrive against a backdrop of a town with a vibrant economy.

Darlington's Economic Growth: A Decade of Transformation

Over the past ten years, Darlington has emerged as one of the UK's most dynamic and resilient local economies, driven by strategic public and private sector investment, infrastructure development, and a commitment to inclusive growth.

a. Private Sector Investment and Economic Expansion

- Darlington's economy has grown steadily, contributing **£2.8 billion in GDP by 2021**, with a **6.1% annual growth rate**.
- Over **£500 million in public and private sector investment** has been attracted since 2012, supporting transport, infrastructure, and regeneration projects.
- The town has seen the creation of **over 4,000 new jobs**, with employment rates consistently outperforming regional averages.
- Strategic sectors such as **advanced manufacturing, logistics, digital, construction, and professional services** have flourished, supported by a skilled workforce and strong connectivity.

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b. Darlington Economic Campus (DEC)

- Established in **2021**, the Darlington Economic Campus has become a flagship for civil service relocation, hosting departments like HM Treasury, Department of Business and Trade, the Office of National Statistics, and others.
- The campus has created **nearly 1,000 jobs**, with **over 800 recruited locally**, and is set to expand to **1,400 jobs** by 2027 with the new Brunswick Street development.
- Independent evaluations highlight DEC's "**massive impact**" on local employment, business interest, and regional pride, positioning Darlington as a **Northern economic hub**.

c. Town Centre Vibrancy and Regeneration

- Darlington Borough Council secured funding for **nine regeneration projects** focused on North Road, the Town Centre, and Victoria Road.
- Long-term redevelopment of key sites including East Street, Commercial Street, and Kendrew Street, adjacent to the Economic Campus is underway.
- Recent completions include the **Hopetown visitor attraction**, **Innovation Central business hub**, and **refurbishment of the Hippodrome Theatre**, enhancing cultural and commercial vibrancy.

d. Housing Development and Community Growth

- Darlington Borough Council has launched an ambitious **10-year plan to build 1,000 new council homes**, with over 400 already completed.
- Joint ventures with developers like **Homes by Esh** have delivered mixed-tenure housing, supporting both affordable and private ownership.

Darlington's decade of growth reflects a successful blend of strategic planning, investment attraction, and community-focused development. With continued expansion of the Economic Campus, vibrant regeneration projects, and ambitious housing plans, the town is well-positioned to sustain its upward trajectory.

Neighbourhoods left behind

However, not all communities have managed to access the opportunities presented by this growth. Be it due to lacking the skills needed for these new jobs, confidence or barriers associated with lack of resources (e.g. transport, childcare), many people from particular neighbourhoods haven't benefited and consequently the wealth generated through better paid jobs hasn't flowed into these areas.

As every other town, Darlington has always had less wealthy neighbourhoods. But as other areas of town have prospered the gap between these and the left behind neighbourhoods has widened. Consequently, the fabric of these areas has deteriorated compounding the disillusionment felt by their residents.

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This relative decline coincided with a period of austerity resulting in a reduction in public sector funding. For Darlington Borough Council this necessitated disinvestment in community development which had been a means of engaging and empowering communities. So, its withdrawal compounded the sense of being left behind.

Community Engagement

The Board recognised the importance of Community Engagement and requested the voluntary and community sector collectively through the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy Group to conduct engagement. Importantly, whilst there would be a focus on left behind neighbourhoods it was felt important to hear the views all residents in Darlington.

The community engagement exercise generated 2,398 responses, vastly more than any similar exercise in Darlington providing a sound evidence base for the programme.

Community Engagement Strategy

A comprehensive community engagement strategy was developed to ensure meaningful participation, with local communities remaining central to the Pride in Place programme throughout its duration. The strategy recognises the importance of building trust and empowering residents. An approach that requires consistency, dedication, and time, alongside clear evidence that community priorities are being acknowledged and acted upon.

Engagement Programme

To support this strategy, a structured programme of engagement was implemented. This began with the launch of a Community Survey, designed to capture residents' views and perceptions of their communities. The survey included a combination of multiple-choice questions and open-ended responses to allow for both quantitative and qualitative insights. Engagement activities were delivered through 18 events held in Darlington Market Square, attracting a broad and diverse audience. In addition, five face-to-face events were held within the five targeted communities to ensure localised engagement.

A range of bespoke outreach activities were also undertaken, including visits to care homes and clubs for the deaf and blind. These sessions provided tailored support to help residents complete the survey. Promotion of the survey was extended through various channels, including the Talking Newspaper, Independent Living Forums, and social work teams supporting individuals with sensory impairments.

To ensure accessibility and inclusivity, the survey was made available in an easy-read format, translated into seven languages, and distributed via a QR code to facilitate digital access.

In the process, the names of people who are interested in being involved going forward were gathered which can be used to launch the all-important community development work.

Initial findings from the community engagement programme reveal that 56% of residents are satisfied with their neighbourhood, while 31% feel neutral, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. A strong sense of safety was reported, with 1,690 out of 1,860 respondents stating they feel safe in their local area.

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Key insights include:

- 1,019 residents expressed a desire for increased youth services across neighbourhoods.
- 1,172 respondents called for a stronger presence of police and community wardens.
- There was a clear emphasis on improving community spaces to foster social connections and cohesion.
- Residents also highlighted the need for more locally accessible services, including health, employment, and general welfare support.
- Additional support for disabled residents within their own communities was also a recurring theme.

The Neighbourhood Board has partnered with Teesside University who are carrying out a detailed analysis of the finding

Darlington's Neighbourhood Board - Priorities

The Board reviewed the findings of the Community Engagement alongside an analysis of data. Looking at heat maps of the town it became readily apparent that there were areas where there were concentrations of the issues raised and concluded that these should be where resources should be focused. Whilst it was recognised that the issues of concern were concentrated in the following neighbourhoods, they could not be bounded by a firm line:

- Skerne Park,
- Red Hall,
- Bank Top,
- Northgate
- Branksome

By focusing on these neighbourhoods, the Board concluded that this would provide the best opportunity to concentrate energy on the greatest need and to leave a tangible legacy.

The Board also considered the preliminary findings of the community engagement exercise and recognised some clear messages which inform the focus of its work. There is a clear message that residents would like to have better community spaces. Not only should these spaces provide venues for social and leisure activities but also enable access to services including health, employment, and general welfare support.

Residents recognise that there is little to do for young people. In conversation with respondents, there was a commonly held view that there was an obvious link between this and antisocial behaviour and crime. It was felt that, whilst more visible policing was seen as important, the root solution revolves around engaging the young people.

The Board has also listened carefully to the call for more support for people with disabilities in their communities. Darlington Association on Disability is part of the consortium of voluntary and community sector organisations that carried out the engagement and confirmed the need for a joined up network of step free routes for people to access services and the town centre.

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The engagement activity is seen as the first step in working alongside communities. Not only has it given a valuable insight it has identified people who are keen to be involved in improving their neighbourhood. From here, there will be two strands of activity running concurrently: 1. Direct engagement with residents on the targeted neighbourhoods and 2. A deeper analysis of the data and intelligence in each neighbourhood. The first of these analyses is focused on Red Hall and is included in the attached data pack. What is emerging from the analysis is a picture of an isolated community with poor outcomes across a whole range of indicators.

Programme Development

A programme of initiatives is being developed in line with the community engagement. There are two clear routes for projects: one via the targeted neighbourhoods and the other driving growth.

As described above, building social capital is critical to supporting local communities to taking ownership of their local resources.

The Board is working with a local charity, the Tees Valley Community Assets Preservation Trust, to engage with the community in Skerne Park and help them determine what they want in their neighbourhoods and develop plans with them for a community resource.

Project Evaluation

The Board has designed an evaluation process to support them in assessing project proposals as they emerge.

A subgroup of Board members supported by relevant Council officers has been established to appraise projects as they are submitted. This allows projects to be considered in depth to ensure they have sound probity, address the objectives and have a credible plan to deliver.

Current Programme Development

Driving Growth

The Neighbourhood Board has commissioned a feasibility study into a STEM Centre, the flag ship initiative of this objective. This is a significant piece of work which opens an opportunity for a facility which, not only will provide opportunities for people, particularly youth from the targeted neighbourhoods access quality employment but play a significant role in growing Darlington's economy.

Thriving Neighbourhoods

The Community engagement exercise delivered by the voluntary and community sector is the most successful in generating responses of any similar carried out in Darlington.

Work is currently underway with residents of Skerne Park to reimaging the Community Centre. A feasibility study is currently at appraisal stage which will allow the community to work with professional architects to design a facility that meets their needs and that can be run sustainably.

On behalf of the Board, Darlington Association on Disability are working with Darlington Borough Council's Highways department to plan work to realise a network of step free access around Darlington.

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Neighbourhood Board Priorities and Strategic Alignment

Following analysis of the engagement findings and supporting data, the Board identified areas with concentrated issues. These areas will be the focus of targeted resources.

The identified priorities align with the three core objectives of Darlington's Pride in Place programme:

Thriving Places

The objective of Thriving Places is reflected in the community's call for investment in local infrastructure and public spaces. Residents highlighted the need for improved access to essential services such as health, employment, and welfare support, which are critical to enhancing overall quality of life. Additionally, concerns around safety and environmental conditions point to the importance of creating clean, secure, and well-maintained neighbourhoods. Together, these priorities aim to foster vibrant, resilient communities where people can live, work, and connect in a supportive environment.

Stronger Communities

The objective of Stronger Communities is reflected in residents' calls for expanded youth services and more inclusive support across neighbourhoods. There is a clear desire for increased visibility of community policing, which contributes to a greater sense of safety and trust. Additionally, the emphasis on promoting social cohesion and intergenerational engagement highlights the importance of building relationships and shared responsibility within communities. These priorities aim to strengthen the social fabric of Darlington's neighbourhoods, fostering resilience, inclusion, and a sense of belonging.

Taking Back Control

Through inclusive engagement and the collection of names for future involvement, the programme has laid the groundwork for sustained participation. Transparent decision-making and responsiveness to community needs are key to building trust and ensuring that residents feel heard and valued. Additionally, the strategy supports the development of local leadership and capacity, enabling communities to take ownership of initiatives and influence the direction of neighbourhood improvements over time.

Pre approved interventions and use of powers

The focus of the Board to date has been on interventions that are included in those listed as pre-approved.

Under the objective of 'Driving Growth', the STEM Centre will create skills provision tailored to local opportunities and skills gaps. It will specifically support young people into learning that will help them avoid becoming NEET or economically inactive.

Under the objective of Thriving Communities, the central plank is to renovate and develop existing or new community spaces. By promoting community led management and broad engagement with communities the aim will be for greater cohesion.

Interventions currently planned would not involve the use of any of the listed powers though this may change as the programme evolves.

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Expected Long-Term Outcomes

The interventions being developed under the two objectives of Darlington's Regeneration Plan: Driving Growth and Thriving Neighbourhoods are designed to deliver sustainable, long-term improvements across Darlington's neighbourhoods. By investing in infrastructure and improving access to essential services, communities are expected to experience enhanced wellbeing, increased economic participation, and greater pride in their local environment. Strengthening social cohesion through expanded youth services and inclusive support will help build resilient, connected communities where individuals feel safe, supported, and valued. Empowering residents through active participation and transparent decision-making will foster a culture of local ownership, enabling communities to influence change and maintain momentum beyond the life of the programme. Collectively, these outcomes aim to reduce inequality, improve quality of life, and ensure that all neighbourhoods in Darlington have the opportunity to thrive.

Section 5: Alignment with other programmes and investments

As outlined in the attached business case, the STEM Centre initiative aligns with:

- the Government's Growth Strategy
- Tees Valley Combined Authority's growth plan priorities

Discussions are currently underway to determine how this alignment will translate into investment.

Darlington has been chosen as a Place Partner to work alongside Sport England in exploring ways to boost local physical activity levels. This initiative focuses on whole-system change, bringing together a wide range of partners to embed physical activity into everyday life. It goes beyond traditional sport and sports facilities, addressing broader themes such as inactivity, accessibility, health, and lifestyle.

Three of the Pride in Place communities Northgate, Red Hall, and Skerne Park are closely aligned with this programme. Involvement with the Sports England programme will offer valuable insights, foster community engagement, and support long-term, sustainable improvements for residents in these areas.

Though Darlington isn't in the first wave of Neighbourhood Health pilots the intention remains that this will be the direction of travel. Discussions have been progressed through the Integrated Care Board about how the Pride In Place programme would align with this, particularly in the realisation of access to health services in 'micro neighbourhoods' which would tally with the left behind neighbourhoods in focus.

Darlington's Pride in Place programme will directly support the Council Plan in addressing inequality. By focusing on 'Driving Growth' it supports the priority of an inclusive and sustainable economy, specifically by the ambition of enabling people from left behind neighbourhoods to access quality employment in STEM related employment. It's focus on Thriving neighbourhoods aligns directly with the Council Plan.

Section 6: Match funding and leveraged investment

The Tees Valley Combined Authority invests heavily in the local workforce and is committed to delivering a world-class education and skills system that provides a base for the economic

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growth for the future of the area. It recognises that Science Technology Engineering and Maths is critical to meeting the needs of the local economy. Discussions are underway between the Neighbourhood Board, TVCA and Darlington Borough Council about joint funding for the STEM centre.

Darlington benefits from strong anchor institutions, including the NHS, Teesside University, and Darlington Borough Council. The Board will work closely with these partners to co-design projects that attract joint investment and unlock additional funding streams. Existing infrastructure, such as Central Park and the National Horizons Centre, will be positioned as catalysts for innovation and growth.

Section 7: Community and stakeholder engagement

The Neighbourhood Board membership evolved from the Towns Fund Board. In recognition of the revised focus of Pride in Place, membership was expanded to include broader representation of civic life. The Voluntary and Community Strategy Group held a fair and inclusive selection process to appoint additional members which has resulted in a Board with a diverse representation of different communities of interest.

The Neighbourhood Board operates as a strategic, community-led partnership distinct from the formal structures of the local authority. While it works closely with Darlington Borough Council, the Board maintains a level of autonomy, enabling it to respond flexibly to local needs and priorities. Its strength lies in its partnership arrangements, bringing together representatives from the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, public services, and residents to co-design and co-deliver neighbourhood interventions. The Board also collaborates with the Public Sector Engagement Group (PSEG) to ensure alignment with statutory services while retaining its grassroots focus. This model allows the Board to act as a bridge between communities and institutions, ensuring that decision-making is inclusive, locally informed, and responsive to the lived experiences of Darlington's residents.

To secure broad-based support for the Plan for Neighbourhoods, the Neighbourhood Board will implement a proactive engagement strategy targeting local businesses, voluntary sector organisations, and community groups. This includes working closely with the Science Park Strategy Group to align neighbourhood priorities with innovation and enterprise agendas, leveraging the presence of anchor institutions such as Teesside University and the Centre for Process Innovation. Local businesses will be invited to contribute through sponsorship, skills-sharing, and place-based investment, while civil society organisations, particularly those within the VCSE sector, will be engaged as delivery partners and advocates for inclusive development. The Board will also collaborate with the PSEG to ensure alignment with statutory services and to unlock joint funding opportunities. Through transparent communication, co-design processes, and shared governance, the Board aims to foster a sense of ownership and collective responsibility, ensuring that neighbourhood transformation is driven by cross-sector collaboration and long-term commitment.

To ensure effective delivery of the Plan for Neighbourhoods, the Neighbourhood Board will adopt a collaborative, place-based approach that embeds community voice and leadership at every stage. Central to this will be the development and support of local community structures, such as resident-led groups, neighbourhood forums, and grassroots partnerships, which will be empowered to co-design and co-deliver interventions. The Board will maintain ongoing engagement with residents and key stakeholders, including the VCSE sector, PSEG, and the Science Park Strategy Group, through regular consultation events, feedback mechanisms, and transparent communication channels. This continuous dialogue will ensure that the plan remains responsive to evolving community needs and priorities. Capacity-building activities,

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including training and mentoring, will be provided to strengthen local leadership and ensure long-term sustainability. By embedding participation into the delivery process, the Board will foster shared ownership, accountability, and resilience across Darlington's neighbourhoods.

Section 8: Governance

The governance of the Plan for Neighbourhoods investment programme is led by the Neighbourhood Board, which operates as a strategic, cross-sector partnership with a clear distinction from the formal structures of the local authority. Darlington Borough Council serves as the accountable body, responsible for financial oversight and compliance, and also acts as the secretariat for the Neighbourhood Board, providing administrative and coordination support. The Board has established strong links with key existing partnerships to ensure that interventions are informed by local intelligence and aligned with broader strategic priorities. These include the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy Group, which brings insight from grassroots organisations; the Youth Partnership, which ensures young people's voices are represented; the Science Park Strategy Group, which connects neighbourhood planning with innovation and enterprise agendas; and the PSEG, which facilitates alignment with statutory services. Together, these groups contribute to a robust governance framework that supports collaborative decision-making, transparency, and accountability throughout the delivery of the programme.

The Neighbourhood Board will operate under a robust governance framework designed to ensure transparency, accountability, and integrity throughout the delivery of the Plan for Neighbourhoods. The programme will be managed in full accordance with the Nolan Principles of Public Life, upholding standards of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. In addition, all financial and operational decisions will adhere to the principles outlined in Managing Public Money, ensuring regularity, propriety, value for money, and feasibility. Darlington Borough Council, acting as the accountable body, will oversee financial compliance and provide secretariat support to the Board. To ensure informed decision-making, the Board has established a clear vision and strategic objectives, shaped by extensive community engagement. Investment proposals will be appraised through a dedicated Appraisal Subgroup, which will assess alignment with strategic priorities, community need, and deliverability. The Board has also forged strong links with key partnerships, including the Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy Group, the Youth Partnership, the Science Park Strategy Group, and the PSEG, to ensure that governance is informed by local intelligence and cross-sector collaboration. This structure ensures that the programme is delivered with integrity, transparency, and a strong focus on community impact.

The Council supports the Neighbourhood Board in realising its proposals using its existing procurement and project management systems. This will ensure there is adherence to public procurement legislation and that projects are delivered in a structured way that ensures value for money.

The Council makes available officers from across its provision to give advice to the Board to enable it to make informed decisions.

Section 9: Assurance

Darlington Borough Council, as the accountable body for the Plan for Neighbourhoods programme, will ensure that all aspects of delivery meet the standards set out in Managing Public Money, including regularity, propriety, value for money, and feasibility. The Council will apply its established financial controls, procurement procedures, and performance monitoring

Appendix 1

frameworks to oversee the programme's implementation. All investment decisions will be subject to rigorous appraisal through the Neighbourhood Board's Appraisal Subgroup, which will assess proposals against strategic objectives, community need, and deliverability. The programme will also be delivered in line with Best Value principles, ensuring that resources are used efficiently and effectively to achieve maximum impact. Governance will be underpinned by the Nolan Principles of Public Life, with transparent decision-making, ethical conduct, and accountability embedded throughout. Regular reporting, stakeholder engagement, and independent scrutiny will further support assurance and continuous improvement across the programme lifecycle.

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**CABINET
2 DECEMBER 2025**

PRIDE IN PLACE

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Jim Garner, Stronger Communities Portfolio**

**Trevor Watson
Executive Director Economy and Public Protection**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - (a) Provide the background to the Pride in Place programme
 - (b) Outline the current position of the fund in Darlington
 - (c) Outline the Council's governance arrangements
 - (d) Present the Regeneration Plan submitted to MHCLG for approval

Summary

2. Darlington is part of the Government's Pride in Place programme which will invest £19,539,000 in Darlington over the next ten years.
3. To manage the fund an independent Neighbourhood Board has been established to which the Council acts as secretariat and accountable body. Council officers attend meetings and advise the Board. Staffing arrangements have been revised to support the delivery of the fund objectives.
4. Project management capability is being provided by the Council. The Council's procurement team ensures the procurement route is correct. Appropriate Governance arrangements are in place detailed below.
5. A Regeneration Plan (attached) has been submitted the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Recommendations

6. It is recommended that: -
- (a) The Regeneration Plan is endorsed
 - (b) The governance and programme delivery arrangements are agreed

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons: -
- (a) The Pride in Place programme represents an investment of £19,539,000 in Darlington over the next ten years.
 - (b) The programme in development directly supports the ambitions of the Council Plan

Trevor Watson
Executive Director Economy and Public Protection

Background Papers

In preparation of this report the following papers were used:

- (a) Darlington Neighbourhoods Board minutes
- (b) Plan for Neighbourhoods Prospectus and Guidance

Seth Pearson: Extension 07825083796

Council Plan	The programme directly supports the delivery of the Council Plan.
Addressing inequalities	It directly aims to address inequality, particularly in the most deprived wards of Darlington.
Tackling Climate Change	N/A
Efficient and effective use of resources	The Pride in Place is a government grant which complements Council resources.
Health and Wellbeing	The programme in development aims to improve health and wellbeing.
S17 Crime and Disorder	The programme in development addresses crime and anti-social behaviour.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All (particularly those in the more deprived wards)
Budget and Policy Framework	The Pride in Place is a government grant which complements Council resources.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No

Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	N/A
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MAIN REPORT

Background

Plan for Neighbourhoods

8. The Plan for Neighbourhoods is an initiative launched by the UK Government in March 2025, aimed at revitalising communities that have faced long-term challenges. Darlington was selected as one of 75 areas across the UK to benefit from this programme, securing up to £20 million in funding over the next ten years.
9. The programme is designed to:
 - (a) **Build Thriving Places** – investing in infrastructure, public spaces, and local services to improve quality of life.
 - (b) **Strengthen Communities** – fostering social cohesion and resilience through inclusive engagement.
 - (c) **Empower People** – enabling residents to shape the future of their neighbourhoods through active participation.
10. The initiative is based on three overriding principles:
 - (a) Development of projects will be devolved to grassroots
 - (b) It is a long-term plan (ten years) therefore can adjust to meet changes in demand
 - (c) The access to funding is flexible and light touch
11. The intention is that interventions are ‘community developed’. Voluntary and Community sector partners could/should play a significant role in delivering the programme.
12. The Government launched its Pride in Place Programme in September 2025 which is a £5 billion, ten-year investment targeting up to 250 of the UK’s most deprived and socially disconnected neighbourhoods. Each area receives up to £20 million, with decisions made by Neighbourhood Boards composed of residents, local businesses, and community organisations.
13. The Strategic Goals are to:
 - (a) Restore Civic Pride: Rebuild trust in public institutions and foster a sense of belonging.
 - (b) Strengthen Social Capital: Improve wellbeing, reduce crime, and boost economic productivity through stronger community ties.

(c) Tackle Inequality: Address disparities in health, income, and access to services

14. As the other initiatives around the country, Darlington's Plan for Neighbourhoods now becomes part of the Pride in Place programme. However, other than a name change (which is optional) there is no change to the prospectus or guidance.

Plan for Neighbourhoods (Pride in Place) – Darlington

15. A Neighbourhood Board has been established to lead the initiative locally. This board includes residents, businesses, strategic partners, and stakeholders, and is chaired independently to ensure transparency and community representation. The Board is responsible for developing a ten-year regeneration plan (**Appendix 1**), supported by a detailed four-year investment plan (currently in development), which will guide the allocation of resources and delivery of projects.
16. The initiative aligns with Darlington's Council Plan goals of addressing inequality, improving health and wellbeing, and enhancing public safety. It also complements the aims to make efficient use of resources while having engaged the Voluntary and Community Sector to ensure robust community involvement.

Current Position

17. The Neighbourhood Board has agreed a vision as follows:

"To foster connected, inclusive, safe and sustainable neighbourhoods across Darlington that celebrate local identity, support community wellbeing, and can adapt to the evolving needs of residents, ensuring every neighbourhood is a great place to live, work, and thrive."

18. Which will be delivered via two objectives:

(a) Driving Growth

(b) Thriving Neighbourhoods

19. The Board commissioned the voluntary and community sector to carry out a community engagement exercise which generated 2,398 responses, significantly more than any similar exercise in Darlington, providing a sound evidence base for the programme.

20. An in-depth analysis of data related to the following has been undertaken:

(a) Population

(b) Economy

(c) Homes

(d) Living Well

(e) Children and Young People

(f) Place and infrastructure

21. This has led to a recognition that the communities most left behind are around:

(a) Branksome

(b) Northgate

(c) Red Hall

(d) Skerne Park

(e) Bank Top

22. However, whilst it was recognised that the issues of concern were concentrated in the following neighbourhoods, they could not be bounded by a firm line.

23. The intention is that there will be an equitable distribution of resources across these areas.

Project Development

24. A feasibility study for a STEM centre has been commissioned which would be a central element of the Driving Growth objective. The intention is to establish routes into quality jobs for people, particularly youths from 'left behind' neighbourhoods

25. A feasibility study is at the assessment stage for engaging residents in planning the redesign of the Skerne Park Community Centre.

26. A programme addressing the needs of disabled people by creating a network of step free routes across the town is in development.

27. The newly formed Youth Partnership is developing a 'capacity building' proposal which would revolve around outreach youth work in the target neighbourhoods that would help inform future provision.

Financial Implications

28. The fund will be managed in line with the Council's existing financial management controls.

29. The direct costs of management and delivery are recovered from the fund to minimise the cost to the Council.

30. As capital projects are developed consideration is given to all future revenue costs associated with the proposals to limit any financial liability to the Council.

31. The grant is provided as follows:

Funding	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	35/36	Total
CapacityBuilding	450	150										600
Revenue		232	256	432	432	432	432	437	450	450	450	4,003
Capital		360	1,736	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	1,605	14,936
Total	0	592	1,992	2,037	2,037	2,037	2,037	2,042	2,055	2,055	2,055	19,539

32. This year, 2025/26, is described as 'Year Zero'. Capacity building funds of £450,000 have been provided to enable Neighbourhood Boards to embed the necessary governance structures, build local capacity and capability and to ensuring capital and infrastructure interventions can hit the ground running. Capacity building funds can be carried forward into future years and a further £150,000 of capacity building funds will be provided next year.

33. To date £122,267 of capacity building funds have been spent on a feasibility study into a Science Technology Engineering and Maths learning facility and on a community engagement exercise.

Governance

34. It is incumbent on the Neighbourhood Board and local authority to ensure that the appropriate capacity and capability is in place throughout the programme period to ensure that funds are distributed effectively in the local area.

35. In line with the guidance Darlington Neighbourhood Board acts as the main decision-making body.

36. Darlington Borough Council, as the accountable body for the programme, is required to ensure that all aspects of delivery meet the standards set out in Managing Public Money, including regularity, propriety, value for money, and feasibility.

37. The Council applies its established financial controls, procurement procedures, and performance monitoring frameworks to oversee the programme's implementation.

38. The Council will remain the contracting authority therefore must comply with procurement legislation and its own Contract Procedure Rules in relation to spend approved by the Board. It is essential that the procurement team is provided with sufficient notice of spend to enable a compliant procurement procedure is followed.

39. All investment decisions are subject to rigorous appraisal through the Neighbourhood Board's Appraisal Subgroup, which assesses proposals against strategic objectives, community need, and deliverability. This subgroup is supported by a 'Project Board' consisting of Council officers.

40. The programme is delivered in line with Best Value principles, ensuring that resources are used efficiently and effectively to achieve maximum impact. Governance is underpinned by the Nolan Principles of Public Life, with transparent decision-making, ethical conduct, and accountability embedded throughout.

41. Regular reporting, stakeholder engagement, and independent scrutiny further supports assurance and continuous improvement across the programme lifecycle.

Legal Implications

42. The relevant local authority in each place is required to act as the accountable body for the funds with responsibility for ensuring that public funds are distributed fairly and effectively, and that funds have been managed in line with the Nolan Principles and Managing Public Money principles. The local authority is also acting as secretariat to the Board. Local Authorities are required to embed appropriate processes and controls for oversight of the fund.

HR Implications

43. Provisions within the fund allow additional capacity to manage the programme. Revisions are being made the Partnerships Team to accommodate the additional work required.

Estates and Property Advice

44. Advice is sought on projects that involve, or are connected to, Council property from Council's Estates and Property Manager. Currently this is the case for the STEM Centre project.

Procurement Advice

45. All procurement activity will be carried out in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and current procurement legislation.
46. The Council's Procurement Manager is involved at the project development phase so can provide appropriate advice. A Plan for Neighbourhoods Project Board has been established so that all relevant Council officers are involved from the outset.
47. There will be a firm grip of capital spend from the outset with a Capital Programmes Manager providing oversight. All major capital spend will be managed by the Council's Capital Projects team.

Carbon Impact and Climate Change

48. All building works will comply with the current energy efficiency regulations.

Equalities considerations

49. The Council's Inclusion, Engagement & Performance Manager has helped design the community engagement exercise and continues to provide advice to the Board.

Consultation

50. The Board recognised the importance of Community Engagement and requested the voluntary and community sector collectively through the Voluntary and Community Sector

Strategy Group to conduct engagement. Importantly, whilst there would be a focus on left behind neighbourhoods, it was felt important to hear the views all residents in Darlington.

51. The community engagement exercise generated 2,398 responses, vastly more than any similar exercise in Darlington providing a sound evidence base for the programme.
52. A comprehensive community engagement strategy was developed to ensure meaningful participation, with local communities remaining central to the Pride in Place programme throughout its duration. The strategy recognises the importance of building trust and empowering residents. An approach that requires consistency, dedication, and time, alongside clear evidence that community priorities are being acknowledged and acted upon.
53. To support this strategy, a structured programme of engagement was implemented. This began with the launch of a Community Survey, designed to capture residents' views and perceptions of their communities. The survey included a combination of multiple-choice questions and open-ended responses to allow for both quantitative and qualitative insights. Engagement activities were delivered through 18 events held in Darlington Market Square, attracting a broad and diverse audience. In addition, five face-to-face events were held within the five targeted communities to ensure localised engagement.
54. A range of bespoke outreach activities were also undertaken, including visits to care homes and clubs for the deaf and blind. These sessions provided tailored support to help residents complete the survey. Promotion of the survey was extended through various channels, including the Talking Newspaper, Independent Living Forums, and social work teams supporting individuals with sensory impairments.
55. To ensure accessibility and inclusivity, the survey was made available in an easy-read format, translated into seven languages, and distributed via a QR code to facilitate digital access.
56. In the process, the names of people who are interested in being involved going forward were gathered which can be used to launch the all-important community development work.

Outcome of Consultation

57. Initial findings from the community engagement programme reveal that 56% of residents are satisfied with their neighbourhood, while 31% feel neutral, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. A strong sense of safety was reported, with 1,690 out of 1,860 respondents stating they feel safe in their local area.

58. Key insights include:

- (a) 1,019 residents expressed a desire for increased youth services across neighbourhoods.
- (b) 1,172 respondents called for a stronger presence of police and community wardens.
- (c) There was a clear emphasis on improving community spaces to foster social connections and cohesion.
- (d) Residents also highlighted the need for more locally accessible services, including health, employment, and general welfare support.
- (e) Additional support for disabled residents within their own communities was also a recurring theme.

59. The Neighbourhood Board has partnered with Teesside University who are carrying out a detailed analysis of the finding

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**CABINET
2 DECEMBER 2025**

TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER – LOWSON STREET

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Libby McCollom, Local Services Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Dave Winstanley, Executive Director Environment, Highways &
Community Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise Members of an objection received to a proposed traffic regulation order and seek a decision on whether to proceed with the proposal.

Summary

2. Concerns were received from a resident, a business and a Councillor regarding parking and loading at the junction of North Road and Lowson Street.
3. Officers investigated the concerns and proposed changes to the existing loading bay and to introduce some waiting restrictions to deter vehicles from parking too close to the junction causing visibility issues.
4. As part of the statutory consultation, an objection was received from one of the businesses. The objector does not consider the proposals have been adequately investigated. The details of the objection along with the officer's response and assessment are considered in the main report and **Appendix B**.
5. Officers recommend setting the objection aside and proceed to introduce the No Waiting at any time and a change to the loading bay operation times.

Recommendations

6. It is recommended that Members:
 - (a) consider the points raised in the objection and the officer response.

- (b) set the objection aside and authorise officers to proceed with the introduction of the No Waiting at any time restrictions as advertised; and change the operation times of the current loading bay to 7.00am – 4.00pm all days as shown in **Appendix C**.

Reasons

7. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

- (a) Vehicles are parking on the junction causing sightline problems for vehicles exiting these roads. This inconsiderate parking has raised road safety concerns that have been reported by a resident and to the local councillor.
- (b) The Highway Code states “DO NOT stop or park opposite or within ten metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space”. This is to allow sightlines to be kept clear.
- (c) The extended Loading Bay operation times will allow large vehicles an area to load/unload safely.

Dave Winstanley
Executive Director Environment, Highways & Community Services

Background Papers

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

Chris Easby : Extension 6707

Council Plan	The implementation of waiting restrictions will support the local environment via maintaining traffic flow and facilitating servicing for local businesses.
Addressing inequalities	The overall policy framework for Transport is set out in the Darlington Transport Plan which has been developed with the aid of an Equality Impact Assessment.
Tackling Climate Change	The proposed loading bay and associated waiting restrictions will maintain traffic flow and avoid congestion caused by vehicles parked or loading within the carriageway.
Efficient and effective use of resources	The Council has a statutory duty as part of the Traffic Management Act 2004.
Health and Wellbeing	There are no direct implications
S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Wards Affected	Harrowgate Hill
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision 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	There are no direct implications
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MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

8. Concerns were received from a resident, a business and a Councillor regarding parking and loading throughout the day at the junction of North Road and Lawson Street. The parking and loading is associated with a number of businesses at the location.
9. At present there is a loading bay that operates between Monday to Saturday between the hours 8.00am to 12.00pm on Lawson Street adjacent to the businesses. This no longer coincides with one of the businesses needs and a proposal was progressed to change this to operate everyday between the hours of 7.00am and 10.00pm.
10. There are currently no waiting restrictions at the junction, and road safety concerns have been raised regarding vehicles parking too close to the junction causing visibility issues. According to the Highway Code, you must not park within ten meters of a junction to ensure safety and visibility for all road users. Where concerns are raised, officers will investigate and determine what restrictions should be considered to try and alleviate the road safety issue.
11. Observations and investigations concluded that vehicles are parking too close to the junction causing visibility issues. To resolve the issue, the introduction of some double yellow lines at the junction were proposed.
12. The proposed waiting restrictions and changes to the loading bay operation times as outlined above were advertised as part of the statutory process. See **Appendix A**
13. An objection to the proposal was received from a business owner who does not consider the proposals have been adequately investigated. The objector accepts that there are certain times of the week when the junction is extremely busy, but this is suggested to be minimal. The objector's comments, with responses, have been tabulated at **Appendix B**.
14. As part of reviewing the comments from the objector further discussions were undertaken with a business and the proposed operation times of the loading bay are proposed to be reduced to 7.00am – 4.00pm, all days.
15. The proposed waiting restrictions are considered necessary to improve road safety and visibility exiting the junction. Officers recommend setting the objection aside and to proceed to introduce the No Waiting at any time and the change to the loading bay operation times as shown at **Appendix C**.
16. Subject to Cabinet approval, the restrictions will be introduced in accordance with the Council's powers as set out in Part 1 of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984.

Financial Implications

17. The proposal will be funded from the traffic management budget.

Legal Implications

18. The Traffic Orders have been statutorily advertised for the required period.

Consultation

19. Officers have consulted with businesses on the proposals, and it has also been statutorily advertised in the press and council website, following delegated authority to progress a traffic order.

Outcome of Consultation

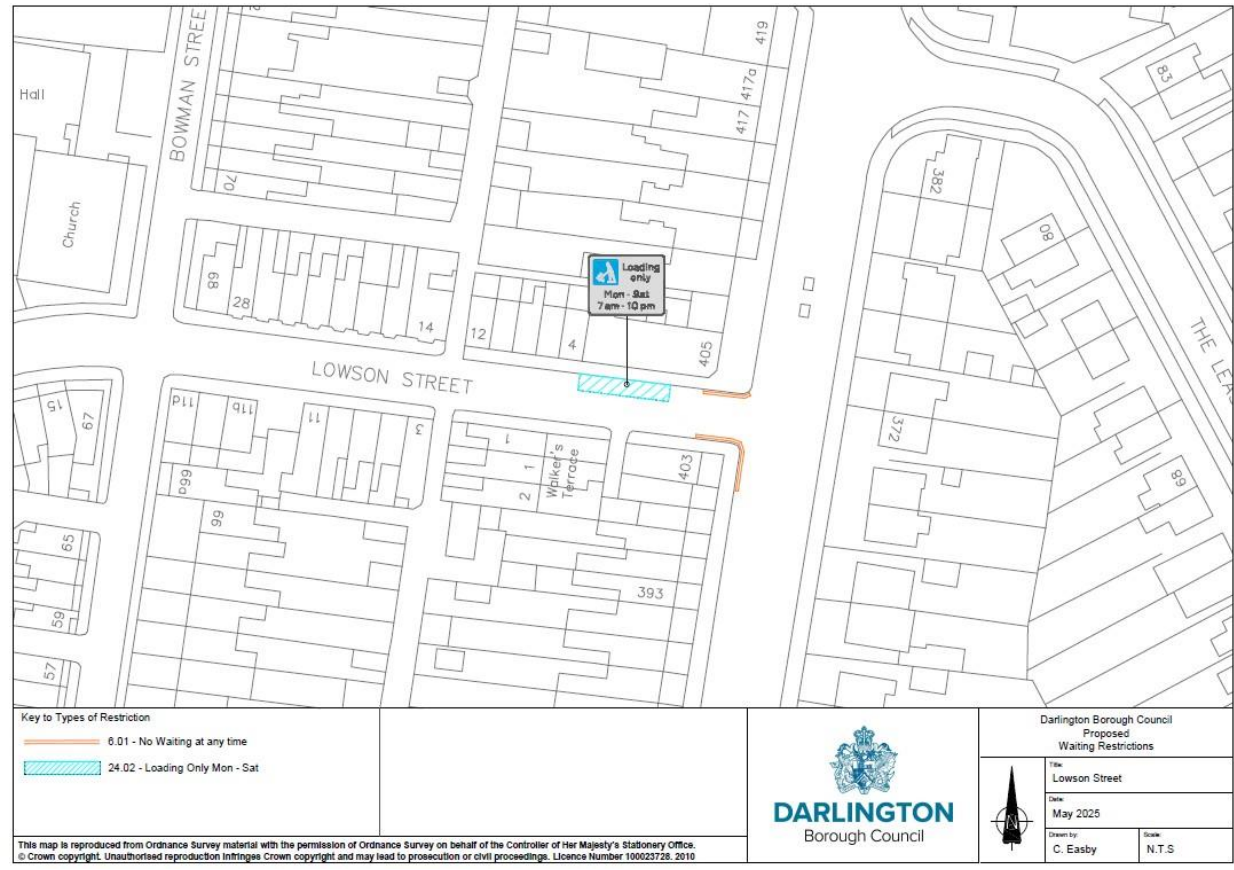
20. One objection was received, and the views are below:
21. *Whilst there are occasional issues with parking on this junction, it is rather limited and there is no evidence that the introduction of yellow line is necessary or indeed will prevent this parking, as it is already illegal so those choosing to park that illegally will continue to do so. This is mainly customers to the Morrisons Daily store and unlikely to be resolved by this poor scheme.*
22. *The times this junction is busy coincides with rush hour and the traffic movement on North Road is slow or stationary. The locally traffic approach this junction with caution. Lowson Street is often used as a short cut to avoid North Road and also by parents using the local school. Changes to is corner could potentially lead to the increasing of abuse and at a faster speed.*
23. *[the Officer and Councillor] suggest this junction is a major issue but yet it is not important enough for them to call Enforcement. This is an enforcement issue and yet none of the involved officials have seen reason to even consult or involve them.*
24. *The issues on this junction are no different to the ones that have existed for decades, they are minor and ad hoc, and 24/7 blanket restriction are not the solution for local business and residents.*
25. *It is suggested there are many complains, which is a lie. It is also claimed it is an unsafe corner, again with zero evidence.*
26. *The discussion held with Morrison and the confirmation to them that this scheme will go ahead is extremely concerning.*

Original Proposal to address Concerns

Appendix A

Double yellow lines proposed to be introduced at the junction to improve road safety and visibility.

Change the operating hours of the loading bay from Monday to Saturday between the hours 8.00am to 12.00pm to operate everyday between the hours of 7.00am and 10.00pm.



The Objection and Officer's assessment and response**Appendix B**

Objection	Officer comments
<i>I do not consider these proposals have been adequately investigated. I have had email correspondence with both [the Officer and Councillor]</i>	Officers have visited the junction and witnessed vehicles parking on the junction. Morrisons Daily requested the extended operation times of the current loading bay on Lowson Street.
<i>Whilst I accept that there are certain times of the week when this junction is extremely busy, this is minimal. I have evidenced this to [the Officer] to be told that he has seen the junction at a busy time and has extrapolated this to be all the time and disagree with my view. I have [the Officer] to provide more information on his visit but he refused to do so stating he was unable to so because he did not record anything.</i>	Officer witnessed vehicles parking on the junction and across the tactile crossing. This was not recorded by the officer.
<i>[the Officer] stated that this will improve road safety but was unable to substantiate this. This was made as a statement of fact when it clearly is not. It is clear his opinion only and no supported in any way.</i>	The Officer has over 20 years' experience in Traffic and Road Safety. This case has also been discussed with the Traffic Manager who is in total agreement with the proposal its effect on road safety/visibility.
<i>I asked [the Officer] what other options had been considered and he informed me that he has no considered any other options, I don't understand why not.</i>	A 'Do Nothing' approach was considered but not recommended due to the Council's obligations under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to manage the safety and access across the network.
<i>I also asked [the Officer] if the double yellow line had been requested by Morrisons and he told me they had not. This is clearly untrue</i>	Morrisons Daily had not requested double yellow lines. Their request for the extension of the loading bay operation times was made through the Ward Councillor.
<i>[the Officer] also informed me that he had received only one resident's complain and this was over a year ago. So hardly an issue.</i>	One complaint was received that highlighted the issues of the junction. The Highway Authority have a statutory duty to maintain highways to ensure they are safe, and have a duty under the Road Traffic Act to introduce appropriate measures to prevent accidents.
<i>[the Officer] told me that he observed cars parked over the dropped curb and these</i>	Vehicles parking over tactile crossings can only be issued a PCN by the police and Civic

<i>were inconsiderately parked so he needed to introduce double yellow lines. He later confirmed that these cars were actually illegal parked, hence the introduction of yellow lines would make no difference and was actually nothing to do with his department, but he has put forward a plan anyway.</i>	Enforcement. The proposed double yellow lines protect and highlight the tactile crossing and also extend beyond this to aid visibility for pedestrians crossing.
<i>[the Councillor] advised that the requests for double yellow lines had come from residents, but on 18 June I spoke to a Morrisons employee who stated they had been told by management that they were getting double yellow lines and they were waiting on the date. I advised the employee that it was only a proposal and not definite. They stated they has been told it was definite. [the Officer] had stated there was no request from Morrisons and [the Councillor] had not mention this until my email asking her directly. At which point she advised Morrisons had made a request. I am sure there is a good explanation of why this was lied about and kept quiet and also how Morrisons have been led to be of the opinion this scheme had approval. Maybe this could be clarified.</i>	Morrisons Daily were consulted at the same time as the objector. At no point had [the officer] advised Morrisons this was a definite and at that point only a proposal, same as the proposed extension of the loading bay operation times.
<i>These restrictions are going to make it virtually totally impossible for the elderly and disabled to access the businesses in this area by vehicle.</i>	The proposal will reduce the parking by one vehicle outside 403 North Road and by 4 metres either side on Lowson Street. Blue Badge Holders may park on double yellow lines
<i>I am unsure why this is required. [the Officer] advised a request from Morrisons has been received, there was no evaluation as this was not required, they just accept what Morrisons requested and are implementing it.</i>	[The Councillor] had spoken with the manager of Morrisons Daily, who requested the extension of the Loading bay operation times.
<i>I do not think this is required, other business in the area have not been approached, I have put forward my concerns just to be told no numerous occasions that this will benefit my business. I am applaud that a large multinational company has the power to enforce a change on a locally area</i>	Other businesses were informed of the proposal by an informal consultation letter and plan.

<p><i>without any need to approach and take no board the requirement of locally business. There is no evidence this is required but it is going to be implemented anyway.</i></p>	
<p><i>Morrison, who require the change to the loading bay, I believe are based in New York and not Darlington, make 3 deliveries to the store per week. Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. So why do they need a loading bay for 90 hours per week (in essence 24/7/365) and 1/3 their deliveries are outside the time any.</i></p>	<p>An Officer has been to discuss the operation times of the loading bay with Morrisons Daily who informed them that they receive deliveries Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday, 7.00am – 4.00pm. As deliveries can change it was decided to make the loading bay operational for 7 days.</p>
<p><i>It has been insisted upon, numerous times, by [the Officer and Councillor] that this is good for me. As they are aware, Morrison deliver using a large refrigerated truck that is parked 1 or 2 hours on the occasions it delivers. Due to the refrigeration its diesel engine is left running the whole duration. This is quite noisy. I certainly cannot have the windows open in the summer and now they suggest that been woken at 7am by this or trying to relax on an evening with this noise constantly going on is something that is beneficial. The thought process here is quite uncomprehensible from competent officials.</i></p>	<p>Any business in the area can use the loading bay for their operational needs.</p>

Proposals recommended to be progressed

Appendix C

Double yellow lines proposed to be introduced at the junction to improve road safety and visibility.

Change the operating hours of the loading bay from Monday to Saturday between the hours 8.00am to 12.00pm to operate everyday between the hours of 7.00am and 4.00pm.

