

**COUNCIL**  
**29 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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**OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

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

**Council Tax Energy Rebates**

2. The Council Tax Energy Rebate scheme was fully delivered by August 2022. A total of 50,274 payments were made to Darlington residents amounting to £6.98 million, which was a significant undertaking for the Council. The scheme was set up to help households with the rising cost of energy bills and I am pleased to report that Darlington has reacted swiftly to ensure that all eligible households received their payment well within the Government's timescales.

**Property Asset Management**

3. Site investigations at Blackwell have started in connection with the feasibility work relating to the proposed development of site 403 in the Local Plan and the parkland.

**Capital Projects and Design Services Management**

4. The Council's capital programme has a wide range of exciting projects being developed and delivered.
  - (a) Design work is progressing on a number of schemes.
    - (i) The Compulsory Purchase Order proposals for the Darlington Railway Station are progressing with all of the property and landed now vested with the Council. Preparations are now taking place for site clearance ahead of the main project commencing.
    - (ii) The Railway Heritage Quarter scheme commenced on site 3 May 2022 with steelwork on the new engineering shed on Bonomi Way now being erected.
    - (iii) Site works are nearing completion on the Hybrid Innovation Centre on Central Park, and
    - (iv) Works are ongoing at the Central Library, Crematorium and new Chapel development.
    - (v) The Neasham Road affordable housing site has commenced.
    - (vi) The demolition of the ex-Sports Direct and night club building is also almost complete.
  - (b) Business cases continue to be developed to secure additional projects from funding opportunities.
  - (c) There remains a risk of further inflation related effects on construction related costs.

### **Annual Canvass (Electoral Registration) 2022**

5. This year's Annual Canvass commenced on 4 July 2022, the third Annual Canvass under the new reformed process. As reported at the previous meeting, an initial data match with national and local data sets was undertaken prior to the Canvass commencing, and this suggested that a significant number of properties had no changes in terms of the household composition. As such, the residents within these properties were only required to respond to the Annual Canvass Form where there was a change.
6. This allowed Officers to concentrate their approach on those non-responding properties where the data match suggests that there could be a potential change to the composition of the household.
7. Annual Canvass Reminder Forms for those properties from which a response was required, however had yet to be received, were issued on 15 August 2022, and further action, including household visits, will continue until the end of November 2022 to encourage the completion of outstanding forms.

### **Neighbourhood Planning Referendum**

8. Officers from the Elections Team facilitated a Neighbourhood Planning Referendum for Middleton St George on Thursday, 11 August 2022, with residents voting overwhelmingly in favour of accepting the Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan.

**Councillor Scott Durham**  
**Cabinet Member with Resources Portfolio**