

AUDIT COMMITTEE
19 January 2026

MID YEAR RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT 2025/26

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members on the approach to and outcomes from the Council's Risk Management processes.

Summary

2. Progress continues to be made within the Authority regarding the management of both strategic and operational risks.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended this Risk Management Report be noted.

Reasons

4. The recommendation is supported to provide the Audit Committee with evidence to reflect on the Council's approach to Risk Management.

Rose Rouse
Chief Executive

Background Papers

- (i) Council's Risk Management Strategy
- (ii) Corporate and Group Risk Registers
- (iii) Annual Risk Management Report to Audit Committee July 2025

Council Plan	Maintaining an appropriate oversight of risk will help contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan Objectives.
Addressing Inequalities	The management of risk as detailed in this report will contribute to addressing inequalities.
Tackling Climate Change	The management of risk as detailed in this report will contribute to tackling climate change.
Efficient and effective use of resources	The management of risk as detailed in this report will ensure the Council uses its resources efficiently and effectively.
Health and Wellbeing	The management of risk as detailed in this report will contribute to the health and well-being of the population of Darlington.
S17 Crime and Disorder	The management of risk as detailed in this report will contribute to the prevention of crime and disorder.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally.
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally.
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	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The management of risk as detailed in this report will contribute to the delivery of services to Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

Background

5. Risk Management is an essential part of effective and efficient management and planning and it strengthens the ability of the Council to achieve its objectives and enhance the value of services provided. It is also an important element in demonstrating continuous improvement as well as being part of the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance that reflects the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (CIPFA/SOLACE) Framework of Corporate Governance.

Information and Analysis

Strategic Risk Outcomes

6. A key element of the Council's planning process is that the areas of potential risk, which could adversely impact on the ability to meet objectives set out in the Council plan, are identified together with the officer responsible for managing that risk. These risks are plotted on to a standard likelihood and impact matrix. There is also reference to management controls in place and working. The red part of the matrix signifies the area above the 'risk appetite line'. Risks in this region require further specific management, i.e. they are priorities for improvement that have an appropriate improvement action plan. The green part of the matrix signifies the area below the 'risk appetite line'.
7. Following the previous review of the Council's Risk Management Strategy, the risks plotted on the matrices are now categorised as Strategic Risks and linked to the relevant objective in the Council Plan, where appropriate. This is to ensure there is a greater focus on managing the risks to the Council delivering the objectives set out in the Council Plan and to ensure effective management of inter-departmental risks. The risk matrices are attached at **Appendices A and B**.
8. All risks are continually managed during the year by Corporate and Departmental Management Teams including any emerging risks identified. In addition, Assistant Directors/Heads of Service are required to confirm in their Annual Managers Assurance Statements (MAS) that processes are in place to ensure that controls identified to support the positioning of risks on the risk matrices are in place and working.
9. The further information contained in Appendix B, provided by appropriate departmental staff, details progress made on improvement actions for those risks identified as above the risk appetite line.

Operational Risk Outcomes

10. The Insurance Group continues to meet representatives of the Council's insurers to examine insurance claims. The insurers provide the group with an update in relation to trends and operational risks to enable continuous improvement to the risk management and health and safety culture within the organisation.

11. Health and safety continue to be key priorities for the Council, with work continuing to embed the health and safety management system and maintain a positive culture. The total number of reports to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), as required by the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) as at 2025/26 Q3 was 13. The 13 reportable accidents were eight slips, trips or falls, two manual handling, two struck by and one fall from height.
12. RIDDOR requires employers to report certain diagnosed reportable diseases. The Council reported two cases at Q3 2025/26 of hand arm vibration syndrome to employees working with vibratory equipment.
13. One accident to a member of the public was reported under RIDDOR. This was in a maintained primary school, where a child fell from a designated climbing tree, resulting in a fractured leg.
14. All accidents and ill health reports are investigated by management and the Health and Safety Team to establish the causes, to identify issues or trends and make recommendations to prevent reoccurrence.
15. The most common kind of minor accident was once again slips, trips or falls on the same level, followed by manual handling and struck by accidents. Targeted work with services continues with a focus on risk assessment development and reviews, training including refresher and monitoring of the work areas and work practices.
16. Good near miss reporting levels are an indication of a positive health and safety culture. Near miss reporting continues to be encouraged, promoting the benefits for accident and ill health prevention and as at Q3, 75 reports had been submitted.
17. Violence at work remains a risk to Council staff. Services reporting incidents include, social care and housing, and there was also an increase in reports in other areas including school crossing patrol, leisure, and culture.
18. Work has continued to implement measures to reduce the risk of violence including the use of security; maintaining the employee protection register, promoting and monitoring the use of personal safety devices, with corporate wide use of the devices consistently good. A refreshed internal violence at work training course has been launched covering legislation, Council arrangements, why violence happens and how it can be recognised and de-escalated. Work has also continued to raise awareness of the importance of reporting incidents to help reduce the risk and protect staff.
19. A programme of health and safety audits and inspections have continued in 2025. In addition to health and safety management system audits, there has been a focus on legislation compliance audits including construction (design and management) and asbestos management.
20. A new Highway Asset Management system (Aurora) is currently being implemented and is expected to go live in February 2026. The new system will allow improved mobile recording of inspections using ios devices. Aurora will be used across the Highways, Street Lighting, Public Rights of Way, Structures and Gully Cleansing service areas and features a comprehensive asset register and works management system. Aurora has already been in

use for over 2 years for the Street Works service. It replaces Insight which has been in use for over 25 years and is provided by the same supplier.

21. The “Report It” website for highway and street lighting defects has now received over 12,000 reports since it was introduced in June 2021. There were 3,043 reports in 2024/25.
22. We have continued with the micro-asphalt programme this year to help reduce the number of potholes forming. We continue to carry out highway safety inspections at a suitable frequency to ensure that potholes are identified and repaired as soon as possible. In 2024/25 6,341 potholes were repaired.
23. The Automated Vehicles Act 2024 included a requirement for Traffic Authorities to submit details of traffic regulation orders in digital form (D-TRO) to a central hub managed by the Department for Transport. This requirement is expected to come into force in 2026, however, the Council began sending D-TRO’s to the hub in November 2025 using the Aurora system.
24. The 2026/27 structural maintenance program of works consists of 12 carriageway schemes and 1 back lane refurbishment, and the preventative maintenance program comprises of 18,968m² of surface dressing over two sites. In addition to this we will also be completing 2 footway refurbishment schemes. We will continue to utilise lower carbon materials and construction methods to reduce our carbon emissions (where practicable). The annual program and 5 year program will be updated on the Council website in due course.
25. The proactive tree risk management processes continue to provide positive results, enabling the Council to defend the majority of storm and subsidence compensation claims received. A full tree survey of the borough is due to be completed in January 2026. This will make all the trees easier to monitor for any safety issues that may occur in their positions in regard to roads and buildings. This is alongside the ongoing works of pruning and the removal of dead and dangerous trees to keep the public safe. The Council’s website has been updated to make the public more aware of tree law and their rights and easier for them to report any safety issues they may have.
26. In relation to sickness absence, the half year position for days lost was 3.99% or 4.41 days per full time employee (FTE), this represents an improvement of 0.41 days per FTE compared to 2024/25. As can be seen from the table below, from the information we received, although similar, we compare favourably with our neighbours.

Council	Actual Days lost 2024/25	Actual Days lost Half year 2025/26
Darlington	4.82	4.41
Hartlepool	5.16	5.98
Middlesbrough	Not declared	Not declared
Redcar & Cleveland	3.95	4.72
Stockton	4.80	5.10

27. The management of sickness absence is a high priority for managers and Human Resources (HR) with absence being actively monitored and actions taken appropriate to each case and in accordance with the Absence Management Policy. Actions have included

sickness absence review meetings, setting of improvement targets and formal monitoring/reviewing, phased returns, temporarily adjusted duties, dyslexia/ADHD assessments, referrals to Access to Work, extensions of probation period, non-confirmation of employment after probationary period, formal caution, redeployment to alternative roles and ill health capability dismissals.

28. Management and HR continue to be supported by a proactive Occupational Health Team. There were 132 occupational health appointments, for each of these appointments the Occupational Health Nurse writes a report, these are professional insights informing managers of progress, and recommending appropriate reasonable adjustments which could be made, including details of phased returns. Cases are escalated to an Occupational Health Doctor for advice as required.
29. Together with the reactive measures above, we have also continued to promote proactive, preventative initiatives such as Counselling, Physiotherapy, Stress Risk Assessments, Flu jabs and offered various courses and sessions around resilience and mental health. We delivered 351 flu jabs to Council employees this year.
30. We have recently launched our 2025–2030 Workforce Strategy, which includes a dedicated Health and Wellbeing Framework. This framework sets out three key objectives and priorities, outlining how we will achieve them. However, improving sickness absence is not solely dependent on this framework. There is a golden thread running through all five frameworks—focused on enhancing our workforce by being compassionate, inclusive, engaging, and forward-thinking. Each framework has defined measures, enabling us to monitor progress and ensure they deliver the desired impact.
31. Linked to this and following the success of last year's January Wellness Clinic we are planning to launch a refreshed version in January 2026. This will include full range of activities and suggestions to help our employees think about their health, body and mind. They can get involved as much, or as little as they feel comfortable, the activities are just suggestions to inspire them to think about what they could do in January to make health and wellbeing to a priority. The choice is theirs.
32. In September 2025 we initiated a new regional absence group called the North East Health, Attendance and Wellbeing group. This group is chaired by Darlington Council and the focus of the group is on reducing employee sickness absence and creating sustainable and healthy workplaces by sharing best practice. The group is underpinned by 5 sub-groups with specific, time bound goals. The meetings will start early 2026 with findings and initial recommendations expected to be ready in summer 2026.

Conclusion

33. The Council's pro-active approach to risk management continues to produce positive results for the Authority.

Outcome of Consultation

34. There has been no formal consultation in the preparation of this report.

COUNCIL PLAN OBJECTIVES**APPENDIX A**

Council Plan Priorities	Strategic Risk(s) relevant to delivery of Council Plan Priorities
CP1 - A strong sustainable economy and highly skilled workforce with opportunities for all.	Those above the 'risk appetite line' – SR22, SR34, SR35, SR48, SR54, SR55
	Those below the 'risk appetite line' – SR1, SR8, SR10, SR13, SR14, SR23, SR24, SR36, SR39, SR40, SR41, SR47, SR57
CP2 - Affordable and secure homes that meet the current and future needs of residents.	Those above the 'risk appetite line' – SR15, SR48, SR54, SR55
	Those below the 'risk appetite line' – SR39, SR45, SR57
CP3 - A healthier and better quality of life for longer, supporting those who need it most.	Those above the 'risk appetite line' – SR20, SR22, SR48, SR54, SR55
	Those below the 'risk appetite line' – SR18, SR23, SR24, SR26, SR42, SR46
CP4 - Best start in life, realising potential and raising aspirations.	Those above the 'risk appetite line' - SR16, SR21, SR27, SR48, SR54, SR55
	Those below the 'risk appetite line' – SR17, SR19, SR23, SR31, SR47, SR49
CP5 - Healthier, safer and more engaged communities.	Those above the 'risk appetite line' - SR16, SR21, SR27, SR48, SR54, SR55
	Those below the 'risk appetite line' – SR17, SR37, SR47
CP6 - A well-connected, clean and sustainable borough.	Those above the 'risk appetite line' - SR35, SR48, SR54, SR55
	Those below the 'risk appetite line' – SR36, SR40, SR47, SR56



RISK MATRIX


APPENDIX B





STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER



LIKELIHOOD	A Very High		SR50		
	B High			SR21, SR48, SR54, SR55	
	C Significant		SR13, SR41, SR45, SR58	SR15, SR16, SR20, SR34, SR35, SR22	
	D Low		SR11, SR12	SR3, SR6, SR7, SR8, SR10, SR14, SR17, SR18, SR19, SR23, SR24, SR25, SR26, SR31, SR36, SR37, SR39, SR40, SR42, SR46, SR49, SR53, SR56	SR27
	E Very Low		SR1, SR57		SR47
	F Almost Impossible				
		IV Negligible	III Marginal	II Critical	I Catastrophic
IMPACT					


STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**Risks above the appetite Line**


Risk No. & relevant Council Plan objective(s)	Risk / Responsible Person	Likelihood / Impact = Position on Matrix	Movement in Period	Progress on Action Plan for Risks Above the Appetite Line
SR15 (CP2)	Inability to cope with significant increase in homelessness cases / Anthony Sandys	C – Significant / II – Critical = C/II	No movement 	Additional funding has been provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for homeless services. More accommodation and support have been commissioned to cope with increased demand and additional staff have been recruited to the Housing Options Team. However, demand for emergency accommodation has remained high with the shortage of appropriate move on accommodation exacerbating the issue. A new Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025-2030 has been approved and implemented to address these issues and a new National Plan to End Homelessness has recently been published.
SR16 (CP4, CP5)	Inability to contain placement costs for children looked after due to lack of sufficient in house placements / Chris Bell	C – Significant / II – Critical = C/II	No movement 	A new Placement Sufficiency Strategy has been developed with the aim of increasing the number of in house foster care and residential placements. Whilst this strategy is being implemented there remain significant challenges.
SR20 (CP3)	Increased demand for Adult Services impacts negatively on plans	C – Significant / II – Critical = C/II	No movement	There is increasing demand for adult social care and support, specifically domiciliary care, aides, adaptations and support for people with significant learning disabilities. People are living with multiple conditions


	for budget efficiencies / Joss Harbron			<p>and disabilities and require intensive support to remain at home and as independent as possible. Covid has also had a significant impact on people’s wellbeing and support needs with increases in frailty and co-morbidities in both older and working age adults. Adult Social Care will continue with the Transformation Programme and ensure that all assessments are strength based and outcome focussed with the support of the local community. Performance, practice and quality will be continuously monitored and reviewed to ensure we reduce, delay and prevent people from requiring care and support prematurely.</p> <p>The increased demand in adult social care has resulted in waiting lists for reviews and assessments. These are mitigated by a risk management matrix to prioritise people with high needs or significant carer issues. With support from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) social discharge fund we have increased workforce capacity through agency, additional hours and fixed term contracts to manage demand, however this is currently short-term funding. We continue to monitor demand vs capacity. These are raised within the Darlington Local Oversight Group and explore utilisation of current funding arrangements e.g. Better Care Fund (BCF).</p> <p>Due to recent High Court rulings on Ordinary Resident cases there is a risk to the Council for financial liability for people under this new rule. Adult Services have identified the current cases and are working with the relevant local authorities to agree responsibilities. A regional agreement has been reached with 10 of the 13 Local Authorities to have reciprocal arrangements on Ordinary Resident applications.</p> <p>As part of the transition to adulthood we are working with Children’s Services on a number of significant high cost packages of care, with the primary aim of providing appropriate support within the available resources and less restrictive option for the individual.</p>
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				Adult Social Care continue to review the transformation plan to ensure efficiencies and saving are delivered to enable a managed budget. In January 2026 the service will undertake a project to review working age adults – our biggest spend per person to explore ways of meeting need whilst reducing cost. This will further mitigate risks.
SR21 (CP4, CP5)	Increased demand for Children's Services impacts negatively on budget / Chris Bell	B -High / II - Critical = B/II	No movement 	Children's Services has a well established Strengthening Families Plan which is focused on effective management of demand for Children's Services Support. Quarterly Key Performance Indicators linked to the plan are reported to Children's and Young People's Children's Scrutiny Committee.
SR22 (CP1, CP3)	Market (Domiciliary Care Residential Care providers) failure following the Care Act/Living Wage/Employers National Insurance Contribution (ENI) / Christine Shields	C – Significant / II – Critical = C/II	No movement 	The national changes to Employers National Insurance Contributions (ENI) have resulted in additional cost pressures to the care provider market. The Council has provided additional financial support to key care providers of 1.2% on current fee levels and will be carefully monitoring the situation over the coming months to ensure provider stability is protected.
SR27 (CP4, CP5)	Failure to respond appropriately to safeguard vulnerable children, in line with national legislation and safeguarding children, thresholds and procedures / Chris Bell	D – Low / I – Catastrophic = D/I	No movement 	Services are in place to screen contacts and referrals, and to respond should concerns be identified. Pathways for intervention are both internal and multi-agency, and the Council ensures that its own staff understand and apply them robustly.
SR34 (CP1)	Budget and resource implications arising from the ability to progress and	C – Significant / II – Critical = C/II	No movement 	Construction material prices continue to remain high and demand for trades and resource to deliver projects of all sizes remains an issue. These issues are across all sectors, both private and public. Projects developed prior to these issues materialising may not have built in contingencies into





	complete schemes/projects in the event of further construction inflation, material supply and resource demands / Ant Hewitt			the budget or programme to absorb this. Therefore, this will require Programmes & Projects to be reviewed on an individual basis for affordability and deliverability as costs and programmes are finalised and reported to Cabinet through the Project Position Statement. Future project budgets will have inflation allowance built in linked to the proposed start and finish dates. It is anticipated that as inflation reduces so too will the level of risk.
SR35 (CP1, CP6)	Potential impact on public transport networks if commercial services do not recover or continue to receive support from Government and routes are withdrawn / Ant Hewitt	C – Significant / II – Critical = C/II	No movement 	Bus patronage suffered significantly through the pandemic and post covid passenger numbers have not recovered to previous levels, putting the viability of commercial services at risk. In recent years the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) have funded a number of previously commercial services in Darlington which had been withdrawn using Bus Service Improvement Plan funding from Government. Government has recently announced Local Authority Bus Grant funding for a three year period which will allow further support of services subject to the outcome of a network review which is currently underway.
SR48 (CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, CP5 & CP6)	Budget pressures, lack of funding and affordability of services impact on the Council's ability to deliver its Council Plan objectives / Elizabeth Davison/Brett Nielsen	B – High / II – critical = B/II	No movement 	<p>The Council continues to face significant financial challenges stemming from a reduction in public funding in previous years, cost of living increases, high inflation, income deprivation and significant increases in service demand, particularly following Covid where the demand for both adult and children's services increased significantly. The Government have reviewed the way councils are funded and have released a draft settlement for consultation which would see Darlington's funding position improve, however, the continued demand for services continues creating uncertainty.</p> <p>There are a number of existing risks built in the risk matrix concerning demand (e.g. Children's and Adult services), inflationary pressures (capital) and reduced income, however additional demands are putting pressure on all services and with limited discretionary service provision. As part of MTFP planning the Council is facing these challenges, however with each increase in demand this risk remains high.</p>






				<p>The 25/26 - 28/29 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) approved by Council in February 2025 including further savings of over £20m across the four years of the plan, which along with increased resources from the 2025/26 Local Government settlement and a Council Tax increase of 4.99% for 2025/26 reduces the annual deficit from the previous MTFP. Economic growth remains a key focus to generate additional income, and work continues to review and challenge all service area expenditure to identify savings, efficiencies and different ways of providing services.</p> <p>The Council has commenced budget preparation for the next MTFP 2026/27 to 2029/30 which will be approved by Full Council in February 2026. As part of that exercise all budgets have been reviewed to ensure resources are allocated to priorities. We are consulting on a Council Tax increase of 4.99% (including the Adult Social Care Levy) in line with the maximum allowable by Government to increase income to reduce the annual deficit. Work has been approved to transform support for working aged adults which will provide savings in the future.</p> <p>The Government continues to invest in prevention within children's social care which will reduce the number of children coming into care which is one of Darlington's largest budget pressures currently. This will provide savings down stream to allow resources to be reallocated to other priorities.</p>
SR50	Disclaimed opinion in relation to 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 accounts /Brett Nielsen	A – Very High /III - Marginal = A/III	Increased 	Due to national delays in the completion of the audit of accounts, following a consultation the new Government published proposals to address the significant backlog on 31 July. These measures included both legislative changes and the introduction of several statutory deadlines (backstop dates) to clear the backlog. For all outstanding accounts up to 2022/23 the deadline was set 13 December 2024, for 2023/24 the 28 February 2025 and 2024/25 27 February 2026. Further dates are provided for the 2025/26 to 2027/28 accounts.




				<p>As our auditors were unable to complete a full audit of the 2022/23 and 2023/24 accounts, Darlington were issued with a Disclaimer of opinion to complete the accounts within the deadlines.</p> <p>For 2024/25 our auditors have notified that there are issues within the sector concerning gaining consistency for the “proof in total” concept for International Standards of Auditing requirements therefore requiring auditors to undertake full audits of disclaimed years. Due to time constraints this is not possible before the backstop date, therefore Darlington will be issued with a disclaimed opinion for 2024/25. Our auditors are undertaking a fuller audit of the 2024/25 accounts which will lay the foundations for potential normal reporting in 2025/26 should a solution be found for the disclaimed years. The Council continues to work closely with our auditors to ensure we can meet all reporting required and avoid further disclaimed opinions.</p> <p>As part of the backstop arrangements auditors are required to undertake value for money work for 2024/25 our auditors have completed this work and not reported any actual significant weaknesses in arrangements to secure value for money in our use of resources. This work backs up the Council’s drive to ensure we have strong robust financial controls ensuring governance through procurement and accounting processes. Auditors are also required to review the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) which has been undertaken for 2023/24 and they have confirmed that the AGS is not misleading or inconsistent.</p>
SR54 (CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, CP5 & CP6)	Potential increased ICT costs as a result of the limited number of corporate system suppliers in the market place moving to Software as a	B – High / II – Critical = B/II	No movement 	<p>We are actively monitoring supplier roadmaps where available and liaising with other local authorities to understand the financial implications that are emerging. Negotiations with system suppliers are common practice whenever contracts are renewed, but more time, planning, legal and procurement support for this may be required in the future. Alternative multi-council approaches to the purchase of corporate systems may need to be explored. The financial pressures the corporate software market is placing on local authorities and the limited competitive nature within the</p>




	Service (SaaS) model / Neil Bowerbank			market will continue to be raised with Government through formal and informal channels.
SR55 (CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, CP5 & CP6)	Likelihood of a Cyber Incident impacting on the Councils ability to deliver services to residents and fulfil its statutory obligations e.g. social care services, electoral services, benefit payments and council tax collection. Potentially leading to a risk to life, significant financial loss, reputational damage, or catastrophic operational disruption / Ian Coxon	B – High / II – Critical = B/II	No movement 	Xentrall ICT continues to invest significant time and resource to ensure the Council's cyber security posture is reviewed and where possible strengthened. These activities are based on the analysis and learning from recent cyber incidents affecting other local authorities as well as the latest threat intelligence from various national sources. Xentrall ICT have recently implemented a SOC (Security Operations Centre) which provides additional monitoring of suspicious activity as well as specialist support should the Cyber Incident Response Plan be activated. Resources within the service have been increased with new dedicated cyber roles now in place. In conjunction with Information Governance, Xentrall ICT run regular phishing exercises which help to raise awareness on the dangers of malicious emails and how to ask for help. It should be noted that the impact of a cyber incident upon council services will be dictated by the quality/preparedness of individual Business Continuity Plans that services should maintain.

Remainder of Strategic Risks



Risk No. & relevant Council Plan objective(s)	Risk / Responsible Person	Likelihood / Impact = Position on Matrix	Movement in Period	Reason for Movement on Matrix
SR1 (CP1)	Implementation of recommendations from the Capital Process Review is needed to improve effective capital project management / Ant Hewitt	E - Very Low / III – Marginal = E/III	No movement 	
SR3	Business Continuity Plans not in place or tested for key critical services / Trevor Watson	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR7	Financial implications of maintaining and conserving key corporate assets within the borough / Dave Winstanley	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR8 (CP1)	Investment in regeneration projects is not delivered / Trevor Watson	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	





SR10 (CP1)	Planning Performance at risk of Standards Authority intervention / Lisa Hutchinson	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR11	VAT partial exemption breach due to exempt VAT being close to the 5% limit / Brett Nielsen	D – Low / III – Marginal = D/III	No movement 	
SR12	Fraud in General / Andrew Barber	D - Low / III – Marginal = D/III	No movement 	
SR13 (CP1)	Instability within financial markets adversely impacts on finance costs and investments / Brett Nielsen	C – Signifiant / III – Marginal = C/III	No movement 	
SR14 (CP1)	Financial pressures to the General Fund as a result of increased levels of unemployment and increased Council Tax Support claims / Anthony Sandys	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	




SR17 (CP4, CP5)	Inability to recruit and retain sufficient qualified suitably experienced social workers in Children's Services impacts on cost and quality of service / Chris Bell	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR18 (CP3)	Inability to recruit and retain sufficient qualified suitably experienced social workers and reablement staff in Adult Services impacts on cost and quality of service / Joss Harbron	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR19 (CP4)	Risk Re-worded Inability to provide sufficient resource to meet statutory duties regarding elective home education due to significant rise in numbers / Tony Murphy	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	


SR23 (CP1, CP3, CP4)	Market (Domiciliary Care Residential Care providers) for Vulnerable Families with Children (including SEND) experiences provider failure / Christine Shields	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR24 (CP1, CP3)	Market (Domiciliary Care Residential Care providers) failure as a result of increased transmissibility of new Covid variants and other viruses / Christine Shields	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR25	The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Threshold changes significantly increases the amount of people deprived of their liberty resulting in potential for increased legal challenge / Joss Harbron	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	

SR26 (CP3)	Failure to respond appropriately to safeguard vulnerable adults, in line with national legislation and safeguarding adults procedures / Joss Harbron	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR31 (CP4)	Failure to maintain dedicated home to school transport services / Tony Murphy	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR36 (CP1, CP6)	Failure to meet the Council's commitment to becoming Carbon neutral by 2040 / Trevor Watson	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR37 (CP5)	Failure to deliver the Prevent duty including operating an effective Channel Panel / Ben Grabham & Chris Bell	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR39 (CP1, CP2)	The Council is unable to deliver housing targets detailed in the Local Plan as a result of the designation of nutrient neutrality catchment area / Trevor Watson	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	

SR40 (CP1, CP6)	Failure to adequately plan for 2°C global temperature rise / Trevor Watson	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR41 (CP1)	Staffing risk – failure to recruit to vacant posts / Brett Nielsen	C – Significant / III – Marginal = C/III	No movement 	
SR42 (CP3)	Risk of enforcement action from the ICO in relation to subject access requests (SARs) / Amy Wennington	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR45 (CP2)	Increase in Asylum Seeker numbers in Darlington as a result of the Government's full dispersal plan that have seen numbers double from previous years and the impact on services / Anthony Sandys	C – Significant / III – Marginal = C/III	No movement 	
SR46 (CP3)	Risk Re-worded Adult social care awaiting allocation / Joss Harbron	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR47 (CP1, CP4, CP5, CP6)	Failure to prepare for a significant event within the borough,	E – Very Low / I – Catastrophic = E/I	No movement	

	for example, a terrorist attack, power outage or issue affecting fresh water / Trevor Watson			
SR49 (CP4)	Failure to keep to the terms of the Safety Valve Agreement to manage deficit in High Needs Budget / Tony Murphy	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR51 (CP3, CP5)	Risk removed Additional funding for preventing harm from substance misuse may not continue beyond March 2026 / Lorraine Hughes	D – Low / II – Critical = D/II	Removed from D/II 	Funding for substance misuse has been consolidated into the public health grant over the 3 years of the multi-year settlement. The grant will continue to be ringfenced.
SR52 (CP3)	Risk removed Additional funding for stop smoking services and support available for the financial year 2025/26, with ambitious targets for smoking quits. Funding is only confirmed until end of March 2026 / Lorraine Hughes	D - Low / III - Marginal = D/III	Removed from D/II 	The local stop smoking services and support grant has been consolidated into the public health grant over the 3 years of the multi-year settlement. The grant will continue to be ringfenced.

SR53	Additional challenges introduced by the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023 / Amy Wennington	D - Low / II - Critical = D/II	No movement 	
SR56 (CP6)	Management of significant change in the management of waste across the Borough / Ben Grabham	D - Low / II – Critical – D/II	No movement 	Plans are in place to deliver weekly food waste collections from 31 March 2026. New vehicles have been ordered and are due to be delivered in February/March. Containers will be distributed to all households across a 10-week delivery window from late January onwards. Additional drivers have been recruited with waste operative positions to be interviewed for in January. Contractual arrangements agreed with a local food waste treatment facility. The recycling service will also move to a weekly service from 31 March 2026 increasing opportunities for residents to maximise the amount of waste they recycle.
SR57 (CP1, CP2)	Building Safety Regulator audits – Guy Metcalfe / Trevor Watson	E – Very Low / III – Marginal– E/III	Risk Reduced 	BSR audit now received with no serious risks identified. A number of the recommendations have already been addressed and an action plan will be produced to mitigate the other low risks identified.

<p>SR58 (CP3, CP5)</p>	<p>New Risk Additional conditions have been applied to the consolidated public health grant, which will necessitate more detailed reporting arrangements, external peer review and grant assurance deep dives / Lorraine Hughes</p>	<p>C – Significant / III – Marginal = C/III</p>	<p>New Risk</p> 	<p>The additional requirements as set out in the public health grant conditions and communicated by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) will place additional demand on staff capacity within the public health team and require more detailed financial reporting.</p> <p>All local authorities are expected to participate in and support public health peer reviews as part of the Best Value Duty to secure continuous improvement in how they carry out their work. This will require the Director of Public Health to participate in a peer review for another local authority. The Darlington public health peer review will consider how the Local Authority is meeting its duty to take appropriate steps to improve the health of residents, as set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012.</p> <p>From 2026 it is now a requirement to submit for approval to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) an annual prevention, treatment and recovery plan for the use of drug and alcohol funding.</p> <p>From April 2026 it is now a requirement for Directors of Public Health to complete a bi-annual report for ringfenced smoking cessation and drug and alcohol funding totals.</p> <p>From April 2026 any local authority achieving less than 5% of their smoking population setting quit dates must submit a self-assessment audit within the financial year to DHSC. If 5% or more is achieved the audit is recommended but not mandated.</p> <p>In 2025/26 financial year the Local Authority was required to undertake additional assurance work on the use of the ringfenced public health grant, via a deep dive on miscellaneous spend from the grant. The return was submitted to OHID for review, the outcome is not yet known.</p> <p>Additional assurance reviews will be required on an annual basis, the areas of focus are not yet known but it has been indicated this could include a review of all spend from the public health grant across wider</p>
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				<p>Council services, to determine if the spend meets the conditions of the grant. This could present a future financial risk if some areas of spend from the public health grant across the wider Council are deemed to not comply with the conditions of the public health grant.</p> <p>As further detail emerges the Director of Public Health will work with the Public Health Team and other Council officers to ensure the additional requirements can be met.</p>
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