

**DECISIONS SHOULD NOT BE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE
MONDAY 27 JULY 2026**

CABINET
Monday, 13 July 2026

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

APOLOGIES – Councillors Porter and Dulston

C16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

**C17 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.

C18 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS CABINET HELD ON 9 JUNE 2026

Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Cabinet held on 9 June 2026.

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

REASON – They represent an accurate record of the meeting.

C19 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET

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

C20 ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

C21 CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURE RESTORATION PROGRESS REPORT

The Cabinet Member with the Economy Portfolio introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director of Economy and Public Protection. The report gave an update to Cabinet Members on the progress towards both the Council's net zero target and its nature recovery ambition.

The report explained that as agreed in the Climate and Nature Emergency Declaration, this is an annual report for 2025/26, and that the increase in emissions reported for 2024/25 has levelled off, although they are still awaiting final answers from the electricity supplier for

issues at Allington Way.

The report described how solar generation has increased and is now available to begin measuring generation from the solar panels at the Dolphin Centre, a pie chart of where the emissions are coming from show the gas accounts for almost half of the total reported emissions.

It was explained that the Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer had been working with the Tees Valley Combined Authority to develop a Local Area Energy Plan, it is said that the plan will examine and cost the possible interventions needed to reach net zero. It was also mentioned that the Economy Portfolio Holder had been holding regular update meetings with Assistant Directors to understand the challenges facing delivery of actions in their departments.

RESOLVED - It is recommended that Cabinet acknowledges the report and draft Nature Restoration Action Plan at Appendix A.

REASON - The recommendations support our declaration to act on climate change and nature depletion. We run the risk of significant damage to our reputation if we do not deliver on our stated commitments to dealing with the Council's contribution to climate change and ambition for nature recovery.

C22 COLLECTION OF COUNCIL TAX, BUSINESS RATES AND RENT 2025/26

The Leader of the Council introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director of Resources and Governance providing Members with an update on the collection of Council Tax, Business Rates and Council rents during 2025/26 and requesting that consideration be given to the writing-off of debts over £1,000 that are considered to be irrecoverable.

The submitted report stated that the collection of Council Tax, Business Rates and Council rents during 2025/26 had continued to be a significant challenge due to the current economic climate; despite the challenges, a total of £150.56M had been collected in 2025/26; and that approval was being sought to write-off a total of £1,215,433 of debts in respect of individual cases exceeding £1,000 for the financial year 2025/26, where it had become apparent that no further steps could be taken to recover the sums due.

RESOLVED - It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (a) Consider the contents of the report, and
- (b) Approve the write-off of £1,215,433 for debts over £1,000, subject to further steps for recovery being taken, wherever possible, if and when contact with the debtor is made.

REASON - The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

- (a) The collection of Council Tax, Business Rates and Council rents underpins the Council's MTFP.
- (b) The write-off of irrecoverable debts enables the Council's accounts to be maintained

in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules.

C23 CPC ACTION PLAN

The Leader of the Council introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Chief Executive to inform Cabinet Members of the outcome of the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) and seek their approval for the action plan that had been developed in response to the recommendation within the CPC report.

The report explained that as part of the commitment to continuous improvement, the Council asked the Local Government Association (LGA) to deliver a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) in March 2026. The CPC is an independent, sector-led review that provides a strategic challenge and support to the Councils, resulting in a report and suite of recommendations. The review was delivered by experienced external peers, and they gathered evidence from 132 stakeholders through 35 meetings.

The outcome of the CPC found Darlington Borough Council is well run and high performing, with a strong reputation, positive culture and trusted partnerships, consistently delivering impact beyond its size. The report stated that staff are proud and empowered, leadership is financially disciplined, and there are significant opportunities for growth supported by strong partner confidence. The outcome also recognised that capacity is stretched and delivery often relies on staff goodwill, there are opportunities to improve some systems and processes, and the Council should consider demonstrating how ambitions will be translated into measurable outcomes.

The report clarified that in response to the CPC report and its recommendations, the Council is required to create and publish an action plan, which is included in this report for Cabinet to consider. It was stated that the CPC team will conduct a progress review with the Council within 12 months of the CPC.

RESOLVED - It is recommended that:-

- (a) Cabinet notes the Corporate Peer Challenge Report and recommendations.
- (b) Approves the action plan that has been developed in response to the recommendations.

REASON- The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

- (a) As part of the CPC process, the Council is required to develop and publish an action plan in response to the recommendations made in the CPC report.
- (b) The action plan sets a clear response to the recommendations in the CPC report, including specific actions, target dates, and responsible officers.

C24 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT 2026-27

The Cabinet Member with the Adults Portfolio introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director of People to advise Members of the capital resources available for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) during 2026-27 and to seek members' approval for the release of those resources to be utilised in accordance with Darlington Borough Council

Disabled Facilities Grant and Regulatory Reform Order Policy 2022-2025.

The report explained that the DFGs assist people to live independently by helping to fund suitable adaptations to their properties, they are means tested and are available to owner-occupiers, tenants of private rented properties and Housing Association tenants.

The report clarified that the DFGs are governed by housing legislation and have set conditions for payment, within these regulations. The Council has a shared service agreement in place with Durham County Council to provide a Home Improvement Agency service to provide guidance and practical assistance to people who are older, disabled or on low incomes to claim a DFG to repair, improve or adapt their homes. It was also outlined how they provide support to people until the work is completed and the contractor has been paid.

RESOLVED - It is recommended that :-

- (a) It is noted that the sum of £1,319,439 has been allocated to the Council to use for Disabled Facilities Grant adaptations in 2026-2027 (which is the same as 2025 –2026) plus a previous additional in year allocation of £92,788 in 2025 -26.
- (b) The capital funding for 2026-27 and the additional capital funding for 2025-26 is released to enable it to be allocated in accordance with Darlington Borough Council Disabled Facilities Grant and Regulatory Reform Order Policy 2022-2025.

REASON - The recommendations are supported by the following reasons: -

- (a) To enable the adaptations for those individuals who are eligible to receive a DFG for 2026-27 to proceed.

C25 MEETING DATES FOR THE GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2026/27

The Leader of the Council introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director of Resources and Governance for Members to consider the date of the first meeting of the General Licensing Committee for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

The first meeting of the General Licensing Committee in the 2026/27 Municipal Year was cancelled due to lack of business and, as such, the Committee has not had opportunity to agree the remaining dates of meetings of the Committee for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED - It is recommended that the amended date of the first meeting of the General Licensing Committee be agreed, and the proposed dates for the remainder of the 2026/27 Municipal Year, as detailed in the Calendar attached as an Appendix, be considered by the Committee at its first meeting.

REASON- The recommendations are supported by the following reason:

- (a) To enable the General Licensing Committee to consider the dates of its meetings.

C26 QUARTER 4 - COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Leader of the council introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Chief Executive to summarise the progress against the key commitments and deliverables of the Council Plan 2024-27.

The report explained that the Council Plan was approved at the Council Meeting on the 18 July 2024. The plan outlined Darlington Borough Council's long-term ambitions for the town and the priorities for action over the next three years.

The report provided a summary of the key actions taken by the Council to deliver the priorities in the Council Plan. The appendices within the report contained the narrative from lead service areas on the key actions, which demonstrated the delivery of the priorities and core principles.

RESOLVED - It is recommended that Cabinet note the progress made in the delivery of the Council Plan.

REASON - To monitor progress against key actions and priorities in the Council Plan.

C27 PROJECT POSITION STATEMENT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING OUTTURN 2025-26

The Leader of the Council introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director of Environment, Highways and Community Services and the Executive Director of Resources and Governance providing information to Members on the delivery of the Council's Capital Programme; the financial outturn position as at 31st March 2026; proposed financing of the 2025/26 capital expenditure; 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 significant enhancements had been made to the Council's assets in the three major programme areas of schools, housing and transport, mostly using external funding; those investment were delivering a wide range of improvements to the Council's assets and services; capital expenditure in 2025/26 totalled £48.073M; there were 19 live projects currently being managed by the Council with an overall value of £151.564M; the majority of those projects were running to time, cost and quality expectations with no foreseeable issues; 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) Note the delivery and financial outturn of the 2025/26 Capital Programme.
- (b) Note projected capital expenditure and resources.
- (c) Approve the adjustments to resources as detailed in paragraph 25.

REASON – The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

- (a) The recommendations are supported to enable Members to note the progress of the 2025/26 Capital Programme and to allow the capital spend to be fully financed.
- (b) To inform Cabinet of the current status of construction projects.
- (c) To maintain effective management of resources.

C28 REVENUE OUTTURN 2025/26

The Leader of the Council introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director Resources and Governance presenting the 2025/26 revenue outturn, to allow Members to consider the results in the light of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) outturn.

The submitted report stated that this was the final revenue budget management report for 2025/26; the year-end projection showed an overall improvement in the 2025/26 financial position of £1.935M; there was an improvement of £0.537M on the 2026/27 MTFP opening balance; outlined the variances from the original budget along with changes since the quarter three projected position; and stated that there were a number of carry forward requests, which would assist with projected slippage and pressures in the coming year.

RESOLVED - It is recommended that:-

- (a) The revenue outturn for 2025/26 be noted.
- (b) The carry forward of resources referred to in paragraphs 16 - 19 be noted and approved.

REASON - The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

- (a) To continue effective management of resources.
- (b) To continue to deliver services to agreed levels

C29 XENTRALL SHARED SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

The Leader of the Council introduced the report (previously circulated) of the Executive Director of Resources and Governance to update Cabinet Members on the progress and performance of Xentrall Shared Services.

The submitted report outlined the background to the establishment of Xentrall Shared Services, the Stockton and Darlington Partnership, which was established in May 2008 and was now in its seventeenth year; stated the agreement covered ICT, Transactional HR, Transactional Finance and Design and Print; the initial savings that were identified were £7.4M over the original ten year period of the partnership; those savings had been achieved plus additional efficiencies and benefits and significant additional savings; quality and performance of services had improved; and that both Councils had benefited both financially and through a continued programme of service improvements.

RESOLVED - It is recommended that Cabinet note the report and acknowledge the continuing success of Xentrall over the eighteen years since it was formed.

REASON - The recommendation is supported to allow Members to receive information about the progress of the partnership and acknowledge the continuing success of Xentrall and the savings it has achieved over the eighteen years since it was formed.

C30 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - TO CONSIDER ANY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO OTHER BODIES TO WHICH CABINET APPOINTS.

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.

C31 TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS :-

C32 QUESTIONS.

**DECISIONS DATED –
FRIDAY 17 JULY 2026**

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