

**CABINET  
3 DECEMBER 2019**

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**THE NORTHGATE INITIATIVE**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Jonathan Dulston, Stronger  
Communities Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Paul Wildsmith, Managing Director**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The report seeks Cabinet's approval for an initiative in the Northgate ward which aims to work with partner agencies to address a broad range of issues including environment, education, health, employment, safety and social relationships.

**Summary**

2. The initiative will comprise of a multi-agency programme to pilot a range of interventions, from support and advice to enforcement activities where required, in order to improve outcomes for local residents' in all areas of wellbeing including economy, education and childhood, health, environment and social relationships.
3. Work will focus on the area of Northgate ward to the west of North Road.

**Recommendation**

4. It is recommended that Cabinet:-
  - (a) Approve the Northgate Initiative.
  - (b) Note the proposal to earmark £100,000 from the Futures Fund for the project initiation.

**Reasons**

5. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:-
  - (a) Northgate ward has one of the highest concentrations of private rented property in the borough.
  - (b) There is also a relatively high number of younger deprived families living in the area, suffering from a range of interrelated issues of deprivation including child poverty, fuel poverty, high incidences of crime and antisocial behaviour and poor health outcomes.
  - (c) To allocate funding to the initiative.

**Paul Wildsmith  
Managing Director**

Seth Pearson: Extension 6090

S17 Crime and Disorder	These proposals seek to deliver a significant element of the Fairer Richer Darlington programme. The intended long term aim of this programme is to improve Darlington residents' wellbeing, including environmental outcomes such as crime and antisocial behaviour.
Health and Well Being	These proposals seek to deliver a significant element of the Fairer Richer Darlington programme. The intended long term aim of this programme is to improve Darlington residents' wellbeing, including health outcomes.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	Activities to improve the local environment will form part of the programme, including initiatives to improve housing conditions and reduce fuel poverty by improving the energy efficiency of homes in Northgate which will have a beneficial effect in terms of carbon impact and climate change.
Diversity	There are no foreseen negative impacts on diversity. However, the proposals may well create better opportunities for people with protected characteristics.
Wards Affected	Work will focus, at least initially, on a defined area of the Northgate ward. Where interventions are found to be particularly effective, they may be rolled out elsewhere in the borough.
Groups Affected	There are no implications for specific groups of this proposal.
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.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report outlines proposals which seek to make a significant contribution to the Fairer Richer Darlington programme adopted by the Council, which aims to deliver the vision of One Darlington: Perfectly Placed.
Efficiency	This proposal intends to deliver better value for residents of Darlington from Council spend, without increasing its costs.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report does not impact directly on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Background

6. The comprehensive evidence base that was compiled and analysed during the development of Fairer Richer Darlington identified that many of the target group, younger deprived families, were living in private rented accommodation with a high prevalence in Northgate ward (see **Appendix 1**).
7. Separate to this, the private rented sector has been a growing area of focus for local and national government as a result of its rapid growth over recent years, increasing concerns around issues such as rogue landlords and the availability of

effective support for tenants, and as our knowledge about the importance of good quality housing for health and wellbeing has advanced.

8. Council officers were keen to investigate what interventions might be able to be undertaken, given limited resources, to help support private tenants and address issues including environmental crime and antisocial behaviour which are consistently concentrated in areas with higher levels of private rented accommodation.
9. Research was undertaken to identify a focus area for the Private Sector Housing team to target with new pilot approaches to improve housing conditions. This data analysis found that Northgate ward was a key hotspot for many measures related to poor housing conditions, including fuel poverty, homes in poor condition and number of long-term empty properties. It also found, however, that Northgate is a hotspot for many wider measures relating to deprivation generally, including child poverty and households in receipt of welfare benefits, and for the incidence of households which correspond with the target group for Fairer Richer Darlington: deprived younger families.
10. In light of these findings, it was agreed that a broader, more holistic approach should be undertaken in order to maximise the likelihood of delivering meaningful and sustained outcomes working with partner agencies to address all the domains that collectively determine Northgate residents' wellbeing.

### **Terms of Reference**

11. A multi-agency programme to pilot a range of interventions, from support and advice to enforcement activities where required, in order to improve outcomes for local residents in all areas of wellbeing including economy, education and childhood, health, environment, crime and security, and social relationships.
12. This area-based programme will act as a testbed for Fairer Richer Darlington activities, with ongoing evaluation built in and designed from the outset.
13. Different organisations will be tasked with leading on various domains, in line with their function. The proposed domains (and their underlying sub-domains) are:
  - (a) Economy
    - (i) Unemployment
    - (ii) Job Quality
    - (iii) Material Deprivation
  - (b) Education and Childhood
    - (i) Child Learning
    - (ii) Adult learning
    - (iii) Children's Wellbeing
  - (c) Health
    - (i) Health Behaviour
    - (ii) Overall Health
    - (iii) Mental Health
  - (d) Environment
    - (i) Green Space

- (ii) Housing
  - (iii) Democracy
  - (iv) Local Environment
  - (v) Culture
- (e) Crime and Security
- (i) Crime
  - (iii) Community Safety
- (f) Social Relationships
- (i) Close Support
  - (ii) Community Cohesion
  - (ii) Volunteering

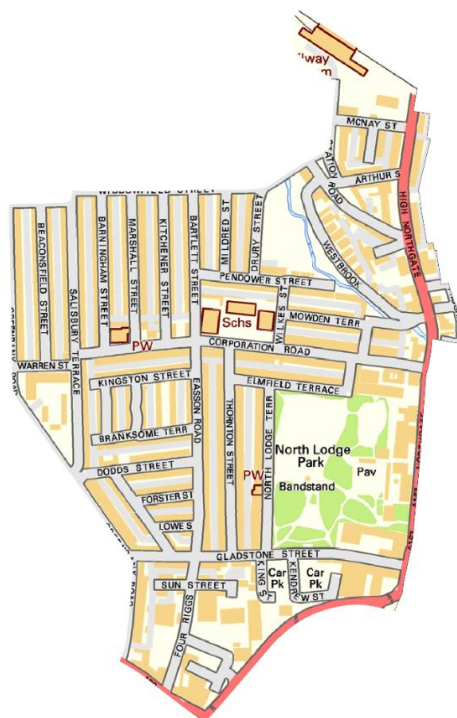
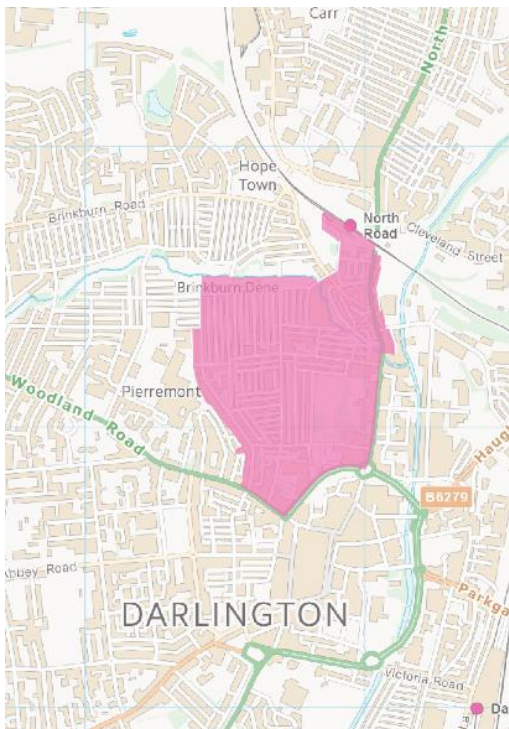
14. These domains align with the Local Framework for Wellbeing indicator set, which was developed by the ONS, Public Health England, that What Works Centre for Wellbeing and Happy City to identify a consistent means of monitoring residents' wellbeing at a local level. The framework is built around domains reflecting the different areas which evidence shows determine residents' overall quality of life.

15. This framework will also allow for progress to be monitored against local and national outcomes.

16. It is expected that there will be some 'quick wins' however it is also recognised that measurable improvement will take years to effect and the initial programme will be planned to 2024.

## Area

17. Work will focus on the area identified in the maps below, specifically the area of Northgate ward to the west of North Road.



## **Vision (illustrative)**

18. A final vision will be agreed by the Project Board and Political lead, following Cabinet's approval of the Northgate Initiative. However, it could include the following:

'Northgate is a place where residents are empowered to take control of and improve their wellbeing and life outcomes, by helping deliver the following conditions:

- (a) Fairly paid, quality employment opportunities.
- (b) Access to continuous learning.
- (c) Enough information and support to get and stay healthy.
- (d) A clean and green local environment that people can take pride in.
- (e) A safe place to live.
- (f) A community that cares for each other.'

## **Next Steps**

19. The following actions will underpin the development of a Northgate Initiative action plan by helping to identify priority issues and actions for each domain:

- (a) Gather, analyse and present baseline data.
- (b) Undertake a gap analysis of current services / provision in Northgate.
- (c) Undertake research to learn from best practice in other areas.
- (d) Develop an effective community engagement plan, including a comprehensive baseline survey for residents.

20. A lead for each domain will be agreed from agencies in line with their function and a programme of action will be developed under each domain.

21. Learning from previous regeneration programmes, for the initiative to generate lasting benefit it will include elements of physical regeneration focused on the housing stock, support for improving the wellbeing of residents and, importantly, meaningful community engagement.

## **Targets (Draft)**

22. It will be important to establish a series of headline targets for the initiative which could include, for example:

### **By 2024:**

- (a) X% of the homes identified as empty in 2019 have been brought back into use.
- (b) X residents and landlords have been made aware of what constitutes a decent and safe home and are aware of the what remedies are available to them should their home not meet these standards.
- (c) No child in Northgate is living in a home that is not decent and safe.

- (d) X people in poor quality employment have been helped into quality jobs.
- (e) The gap between reported crime in Northgate and the average for Darlington has reduced.
- (f) All children leaving Corporation Road Primary School have been engaged in at least one enrichment activity over and above their expected education.
- (g) X people in Northgate have been made better aware of healthy lifestyles.

## **Governance**

- 23. Work will be overseen by a Project Board chaired by the Director of Darlington Partnership (Seth Pearson) who will act as Programme Manager. The Council will be represented on the Project Board by The Assistant Director for Community Services (Ian Thompson) and Assistant Director for Housing and Building Services (Pauline Mitchell). Other members of the Board will include the leads from other key partners.
- 24. The Council will be the principal sponsor and the Project Board will be accountable to Darlington Borough Council's Chief Officer Executive which will receive regular updates from the Project Board.
- 25. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety (Councillor Dulston) will act as the political lead for the programme.
- 26. A Darlington Partnership Programme Development Officer will be tasked with overall coordination of work.

## **Financial Implications**

- 27. It is expected that the majority of actions undertaken will be delivered through the Council and other agencies' programmed spend. However, where a particular intervention requires additional resource, £100,000 of the Council's Neighbourhood Renewal futures fund has been allocated to support the programme.
- 28. As per the current process for neighbourhood renewal funding, any proposals will be required to demonstrate they meet the following criteria:
  - (a) Evidence-led: both in terms of a robust needs analysis and theory.
  - (b) Match-funded: proposals that seek to exploit opportunities to lever in external funding into the borough will be prioritised.
  - (c) Cost-effective: a clear business case outlining how initiatives will seek to avoid significant downstream costs or deliver significant benefit to residents should be provided.
  - (d) Added value: proposals that seek to engage local partners and or involve volunteers will be prioritised.
  - (e) Sustainable: proposals that require a one-time injection of seed corn funding will also be prioritised.

29. Identifying additional external funding opportunities will be a standing action for the Project Board.

### **Legal Implications**

30. There are no legal implications.

### **HR Implications**

31. There are no direct HR implications though officer time will be devoted to developing and overseeing the initiative as outlined in paragraphs 10 to 13.

### **Equalities considerations**

32. There are no direct equalities considerations, however this project is intended to support some of the most vulnerable communities in Darlington which tend to include higher proportions of people with protected characteristics. In addition, the Northgate ward has the highest concentration of ethnic minorities in Darlington.