



Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Date **Monday 24 October 2022**
Time **9.30 am**
Venue **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham**

Business

Part A

Items which are open to the Public and Press

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2022 (Pages 3 - 10)
4. Declarations of Interest
5. County Pound Project Update - Report of Corporate Director of Resources (Pages 11 - 38)
6. Medium Term Financial Plan (13) 2023/24 - 2026/27 - Report of Corporate Director of Resources (Pages 39 - 92)
7. Resources - Quarter 1 June 2022: Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2022/23 (Pages 93 - 104)
8. Quarter 1, 2022/23 Performance Management Report - Report of Corporate Director of Resources (Pages 105 - 152)
9. Customer Feedback Report, Quarter 1, 2022/23 - Report of Corporate Director of Resources (Pages 153 - 176)
10. Adult and Health Services Annual Statutory Representations Report 2020/21 - Report of Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services (Pages 177 - 204)

11. Notice of Key Decisions - Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Pages 205 - 214)
12. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Helen Lynch
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
14 October 2022

To: **The Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

Councillor C Martin (Chair)
Councillor C Lines (Vice-Chair)

Councillors E Adam, A Batey, R Charlton-Lainé, J Charlton, I Cochrane, J Cosslett, B Coult, R Crute, J Elmer, O Gunn, P Heaviside, L Hovvels, J Howey, A Jackson, P Jopling, L Maddison, R Manchester, C Marshall, B Moist, A Reed, K Shaw, M Stead, A Surtees and M Wilson

Contact: Jackie Graham

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 7 September 2022 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor C Martin (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors E Adam, A Batey, J Charlton, I Cochrane, J Cosslett, B Coult, R Crute, P Heaviside, J Howey, C Hunt (Substitute) (substitute for P Jopling), R Manchester, C Marshall, J Miller (Substitute) (substitute for L Hovvels), K Shaw, M Stead and M Wilson

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Charlton-Lainé, J Elmer, O Gunn, L Hovvels, A Jackson, P Jopling, C Lines, L Maddison, B Moist and A Surtees

2 Substitute Members

Councillor C Hunt for P Jopling and Councillor J Miller for L Hovvels.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 June and 7 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Democratic Services Manager (Interim) informed the Board that all issues raised had been covered, and with regards to fuel poverty a letter to the relevant Government minister had been sent and a response received, which had been circulated to members.

Councillor Marshall asked for a copy of the correspondence to the Cabinet members regarding their engagement in the scrutiny budget process. The Chair confirmed that he had e-mailed all Cabinet members but was happy to request a formal response.

Councillor Crute enquired as to the response received so far from the Cabinet members on the process and how each thematic committee was

going to deal with this. The Chair clarified that it had previously been agreed that it would be a matter for each thematic scrutiny committee to determine how they wished to approach the issue. However a summary of this information could be compiled and circulated for information.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Report on the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 - Quarter 1 - 2022/2023

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which informed Members of the Council's use of its powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) during the period 1 April to 30 June 2022 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

- i. That the quarterly report on the Council's use of RIPA for the period covering quarter 1 2022/23, be received.
- ii. That the powers were being used consistently with the Council's policy and that the policy remained fit for purpose.

6 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 - Annual Review of the Council's use of powers

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which informed Members about the Council's use of its powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ('RIPA') during the period of 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, and of any changes to the legislation, policy or other developments in respect of the Council's use of its powers under RIPA (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the report be received.

7 2021/22 Final Outturn for the General Fund and Collection Fund

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director Resources which provided details of the final outturn for the general fund and collection fund (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services informed the members that the impact of COVID had resulted in net additional expenditure

of £14.5 million and with government support funding received of £18.2 million, resulting in an underspend of £3.7 million. He added that there continued to be an ongoing impact upon services due to the pandemic.

In addition, there continued to be inflation pressures and he reported that the total net underspend was £11.425 million which represented 2.48% of the revised net expenditure budget of £461.251 million.

Moving on to reserves the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services advised that the total general, earmarked and cash limit reserves (excluding school reserves) reduced by a net £10.258 million in 2021/22, from £271.685 million at 31 March 2021 to £261.427 million at 31 March 2022. The general reserve at 31 March 2022 was £25.898 million, and during the year, a review of all reserves enabling the realignment of £14.9 million of cash limit and earmarked reserves enabling the investment of earmarked reserves in council priorities. This included a £10 million transfer into the Cabinet Priorities Reserve supporting one off investment priorities.

The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services went on to advise about profiling into future years, the collection fund, business rates and delivered savings totalling £5.312 million.

Councillor Marshall thanked the teams involved in re-aligning staff during the pandemic, providing support to communities. He asked what the £10 million Cabinet Priorities Reserve was, what it was for and how other councillors could access it. In response, the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services explained that the detail around this was detailed in the February 2022 Council's budget report.

Councillor Crute expressed his concerns about the level of reserves and asked if there was a safety net in place. The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services advised that the general reserve was the Council's safety net. He explained that there was no statute to say what should be set aside but that it was important for the Council to set a fair budget and create a reserve. Any underspend was put into the general reserves or would be identified for investment. He was satisfied that it should be sufficient to cover any unexpected spending. He added that the pandemic had caused an enormous strain on the budget and with the pressure of inflation it was essential to keep reserves.

Regarding the Cabinet Priorities Reserve Councillor Batey asked for further detail around this and what the money would be used for. The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services explained that the £10 million investment had already been discussed at this committee and was included within the Council's budget report. He went on to report that £2.8 million had

been allocated for the levelling up bid feasibility study to ensure that if successful work could be delivered.

In response to a question from Councillor Shaw the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services confirmed that the general reserves contained a £14.9 million cash limit of which £10 million had been put into the Cabinet Priorities Reserve.

Councillor Marshall asked why the decision had been taken to take the hit on Council Tax over a three year period rather than put less into reserves and to help with business rate retention. The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services explained that the three year roll over from previous years was following the pandemic and a significant deficit on the collection fund. With the loss of funding from government the Section 31 grant had been netted off and could be applied for the following year.

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

8 Resources - Revenue and Capital Outturn 2021/22

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided details of the final revenue and capital outturn position for the Resources service grouping in 2021/22, highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

9 Medium Term Financial Plan(13), 2023/24 to 2026/27 and Review of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided an update on the proposed approach to scrutiny of the Budget 2023/24 and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) (13) 2023/24 to 2026/27 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services provided a thorough overview of the report highlighting the ongoing level of financial uncertainty brought about by a combination of the ongoing impact of the pandemic, our inherent low tax raising capacity due to our low tax base, and significant budget pressures in social care brought about by National Living Wage increases and enduring demographic pressures in Children's Social Care and in waste services alongside other unfunded pressures arising from the present high levels of inflation impacting on energy and fuel costs in particular plus uncertainties surrounding the pay award that will ultimately be

agreed. The financial outlook for the Council will continue to be extremely challenging for the foreseeable future. He added that the Council were active in lobbying government and had already written to the new Prime Minister regarding the financial pressures faced in County Durham.

He went on to explain that this level of uncertainty made financial planning difficult and required the council to be flexible and adaptable in its financial planning. He highlighted the key adjustments and major areas for consideration including:

- Revenue Support Grant (RSG) / Fair Funding Review
- Business Rates, Section 31 Grant and Top Up Grant inflation uplift
- Pay Inflation
- National Living Wage/CPI Uplift impact upon adult care fees
- Energy Price Increases
- Cost of the Implementation of Adult Social Care Reform
- Children's Social Care Demographic Pressures

The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services said that all of these areas contribute to significant financial pressures on the Council and highlighted the timetable.

Referring to the cost of care and the new Prime Minister's pledge to cancel funding to the NHS and move into social care, Councillor Crute asked if national funding had been factored of social care would be scrapped. He further asked how this would impact the provision in future years. The Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services said that the new Prime Minister had reversed the national insurance increase but that the investment in the NHS would continue to help reduce the backlog of patients waiting for health care with a lot of work being carried out in the private sector. With the uplift in national insurance there was an assumption that next year £12 billion would go to the NHS with £1 billion to adult social care, and for 2024/25 that would increase to £2 billion.

Councillor Crute expressed his concerns about public funding and energy costs and asked how this would impact the local authority. In response the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services said that the extra funding was part of the overall package, part of which would cover the overall uplift.

Councillor Marshall commented that best case scenario would be a £20 million shortfall and next year realistically that could double to £40 million. He pointed out that £250 million of savings had been reached over the last ten years and that services and the community had been affected by that so it was important to set a balanced budget for next year. He commended the officer and his team on doing a fantastic job over the last ten years. He went on to say that the cuts in EU funding needed to be taken into account as

were well in excess of what has been faced over the last ten years. Referring to the buildings and the extra energy costs associated with the Sands building and other financial implications around the HQ he enquired about the VAT exemption threshold. In response the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services advised that plans were underway to identify where we could be more efficient and where we could make savings through strategies that would be flexible and adaptable. He added that any savings would be pulled together in order to ride out the next year whilst awaiting announcements about energy costs for local government and settlements. He clarified that savings would be identified to assist in setting a balanced budget and that reserves may need to be used to balance the budget. Savings for next year would be identified in a report to Cabinet in October. He advised that EU provision was not an issue for the Council. With regards to the HQ he confirmed that figures had been recalculated based on two buildings and that the business rates at the Sands building were higher than at County Hall. He did not expect energy prices to be the same in two or three years' time and with the new build at Aykley Heads being financed from the sale of the Sands building it would be cost neutral. He advised that there were no VAT issues for the Council and explained in detail about the exemption activities and limits, giving an example of the Leisure Transformation Programme receiving dispensation from HMRC to build this. Chelmsford Council had recently challenged VAT exemption around leisure facilities and could have an impact for all Councils.

Councillor Miller said that it was imperative that everyone engages with the process and with each other and would encourage Cabinet members to be part of the scrutiny process around budget discussions. He asked about the council tax reduction scheme grants for town and parish councils and if this would change. In response the Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Service said that the expectation would be that the County Council would pay this grant in 2022/23 although it was noted that most councils had ceased doing this.

Referring to the timetable, Councillor Crute asked that this Board be sighted on the budget report this side of Christmas and was concerned that the scheduled meeting was early December. The Chair said that there could be a need for a special meeting to be arranged in December but wanted this Board to have a say in this process.

Resolved:

- (a) That the content of the report and comments made be noted.
- (b) Note the indicative timetable for scrutiny discussions subject to receiving the funding settlement from government.

10 Update in relation to Petitions

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which provided for information the quarterly update in relation to the current situation regarding various petitions received by the Authority (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Democratic Services Manager (Interim) advised that the schedule provided a list of those petitions that were active, and those that were to be closed and which would be removed from the list prior to the next update.

Since the last update five new e-petitions had been submitted. Three were ongoing and two were not valid petitions.

Four new paper petitions had been submitted, three of those had closed and the other one was awaiting a further response. A list giving details and current status of all active petitions was attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

11 Notice of Key Decisions

The Board considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which listed key decisions which were scheduled to be considered by the Executive.

The Democratic Services Manager (Interim) advised that new to the plan were the following:

- MTFP – Update on the development of MTFP including consideration of options for consultation;
- Council Tax Base 2022/23 and Forecast Surplus / Deficit on Collection Fund;
- MTFP - Update on development of MTFP including analysis of the Autumn Statement;
- Inclusive Economic Strategy; and
- Concessionary Fares Budget.

Resolved:

That the content of the report be noted.

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**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**



24 October 2022

County Durham Pound Project Update

Darren Knowd, Head of Procurement, Sales and Business Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide an update to Corporate Overview Scrutiny Management Board (COSMB) on the progress of the County Durham Pound project which was initiated following CMT approval of the Social Value and Wealth Building Report on 30 September 2020, reported to Cabinet on 13 January 2021 and the launch event taking place 29 September 2022.

Executive Summary

- 1 On 30 September 2020, CMT considered a report on Social Value and Wealth Building. This report set out a proposal to improve the social value and local wealth building outcomes for the community in support of the Council Plan and the response to the COVID-19 outbreak via restoration and recovery objectives. The proposal included 10 initiatives to enable the Council and its local partners to support the reports objectives.
- 2 One of the initiatives was the use of a County Durham Partnership to establish a 'County Durham Family' procurement network to improve place-based procurement and local spending, collaborative sourcing and social value impact.
- 3 To help facilitate this initiative the Head of Procurement, Sales and Business services put forward a bid to obtain funding from the Contain Management Outbreak Fund (COMF) in relation to Social Value and Local Wealth Development in County Durham, designated the 'County Durham Pound' project. The bid was successful and resulted in £260K of funding being awarded.

- 4 The funding was integral in providing the support and infrastructure necessary to initiate the County Durham Pound project in relation to the following critical elements:
 - (a) Professional services in relation to spend analysis across all partners
 - (b) Professional services to enhance knowledge and expertise in relation to social value, training/delivery of social value via procurement exercises and local needs analysis across County Durham.
 - (c) Appointment of collaborative resource to support all aspects of the programme
 - (d) Communications and marketing to promote the County Durham Pound programme
- 5 The funding opportunity and then subsequent funding availability was outlined to partners in a series of overarching County Durham Pound meetings. The first meeting in January 2021, set the scene with the next meeting in May 2021 allowing presentations from professional services partners, Social Value Portal (SVP) and Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), with the programme then gathering pace as we moved from theory to practical implementation of the project. The Council has also held 1-2-1 meetings with partners to facilitate and encourage engagement and address any areas of concern.
- 6 The County Council has also been careful, however, to ensure that this is not seen as a Council led programme but a collective collaboration between willing partners for the benefit of the residents of County Durham. Partners have been increasingly engaged and are now active participants and leaders in the project and meetings as collaboration intensifies.
- 7 The current project partners includes public sector organisations plus Northumbria Water, and has specifically not included private sector companies, particularly those who commercially compete for business with the current partners, but a future consideration could be expanding the project to include County Durham based companies to be “Supporters” of the County Durham Pound, and also Federation of Small Businesses and discussions have already commenced with Amazon in this regard.
- 8 On 29 September 2022 a formal launch event was held at the Radisson, Durham outlining the achievements noted below and engaging the Durham business community through a meet-the-buyer event. The following outcomes have been delivered:
 - (a) Spend analysis training was undertaken with each partner subsequently providing the requisite spend information across their top 300 suppliers for aggregated analysis by CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategy). The analysis of a spend of almost £926 million provides the opportunity to identify local leakage and enhancement of local and regional supplier engagement.

- (b) Statement of Intent drafted and agreed ready for signature by relevant senior management across 12 partners to commit formally to the social value work we are collectively engaged in . Appendix 3 provides an overview of the 12 partners involved.
 - (c) Local Needs analysis to identify the priorities of all the partners coordinated by SVP (Social Value Portal) and Council colleagues.
 - (d) Overarching Social Value Strategy for County Durham Pound has been developed to act as a tool to communicate what we all as partners are seeking to do and we have adopted this as the Council strategy.
 - (e) Appointment of a locally based Social Value Coordinator employed by SVP but based in the Council's procurement team to provide a collaborative resource across the project.
 - (f) Development, and subsequent training on, new County Durham Family 'Themes Outcomes and Measures' toolkit for use in procurement exercises to extract social value from the procurement process
 - (g) Knowledge Hub website to keep the people of County Durham informed of the project's progress and create a space for them to send us their ideas and feedback (www.countydurhampound.co.uk)
 - (h) Production of a series of promotional videos by a locally based provider, 3Point Media, highlighting social value delivery including those via collaborative projects involving collective engagement between partners (3 Point Media).
 - (i) Launch Event attended by 68 Durham based SME's; with 144 appointments across 11 buyers; 4 dedicated free training workshops on Social Value & Successful tendering provided.
- 9 The County Durham Pound Project now moves into phase two with the aims of embedding the social value processes developed including launching the new County Durham TOMs model and developing a longer term programme of activities targeting the business community with Business Durham at the forefront to lead.
- 10 To support our community based activity and ensures linkages to the wider programmes across the Council to the Project, the procurement team is encouraged to join and support a number of working groups to facilitate opportunities for place and community based social value outcomes.

Recommendations

- 11 COSMB is asked to:
- (a) note the success to this point of the County Durham Project culminating in the successful launch event;
 - (b) support the next phase of the Project and procurement activities outlined to enhance the desired project outcomes;

Background

- 12 On 30 September CMT approved the Social Value and Wealth Building Report. The report set out a proposal to improve the social value and local wealth building outcomes for the community in support of the Council Plan and the response to the COVID-19 outbreak via restoration and recovery objectives. The proposal included 10 initiatives to enable the Council and its local partners to support the reports objectives.
- 13 One of the initiatives was the use of the County Durham Partnership to establish a 'County Durham Family' network to improve place-based procurement and local spending, collaborative sourcing and social value impact.
- 14 To help facilitate this initiative the Head of Procurement, Sales and Business services put forward a bid to obtain funding from the Contain Management Outbreak Fund (COMF) in relation to Social Value and Local Wealth Development in County Durham, designated the 'County Durham Pound' project. The bid was successful and resulted in £260K of funding.
- 15 The funding was integral in providing the support and infrastructure necessary to initiate the County Durham Pound project in relation to the following critical elements:
 - (a) Professional services in relation to spend analysis across all partners
 - (b) Professional services to enhance knowledge and expertise in relation to social value, training/delivery of social value via procurement exercises and local needs analysis across County Durham.
 - (c) Appointment of collaborative resource to support all aspects of the programme
 - (d) Communications and marketing to promote the County Durham Pound programme

Partner Engagement

- 16 The funding opportunity and then subsequent funding availability was outlined to partners in a series of overarching County Durham Pound meetings. The first meeting in January 2021 set the scene with the next meeting in May 2021 allowing presentations from professional services partners, Social Value Portal (SVP) and Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), with the programme then gathering pace as we moved from theory to practical implementation of the project. The Council has also held 1-2-1 meetings with partners to facilitate and encourage engagement and address any areas of concern.
- 17 The County Council has also been careful, however, to ensure that this is not seen as a Council led programme but a collective collaboration between willing partners for the benefit of the residents of County Durham.

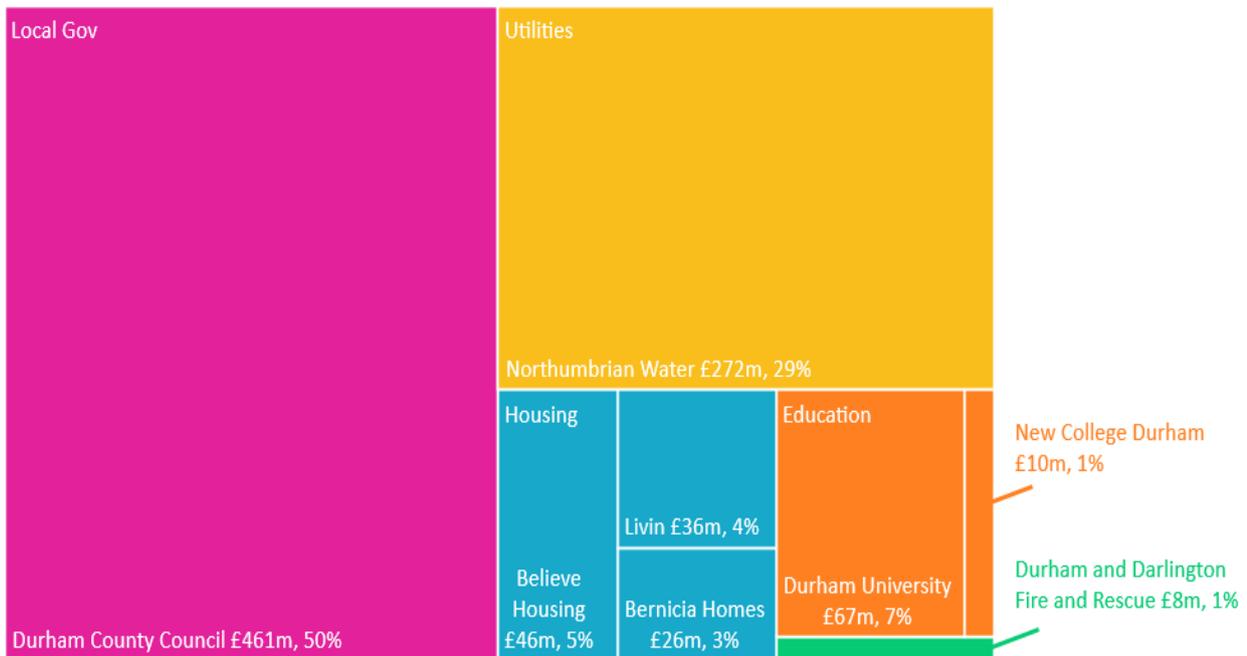
- 18 Partners have been increasingly engaged and are now active participants and leaders in the project and meetings as collaboration intensifies.
- 19 Appendix 2 provides an overview of the County Durham Pound Project Timeframe outlining outcomes and deliverables achieved and ongoing actions.

Outcomes and Deliverables

- 20 The following outcomes have been delivered or are anticipated to be finalised via the County Durham Pound Project.

Spend Analysis

- 21 Spend analysis training was undertaken with each partner subsequently providing the requisite spend information across their top 300 suppliers for aggregated analysis by CLES.
- 22 The analysis of a total spend of £926 million provides the opportunity to Identify local leakage and enhancement of local and regional supplier engagement.
- 23 The table below provides a breakdown of the spend by category and partners involved.



- 24 The project is now undertaking further reviews of the spend data in conjunction with Business Durham with the objective of:
 - (a) **Market Analysis** - to understand the makeup of the County Durham supply base

- (b) **Gap Analysis** - the collective spend analysis will be overlaid with the market analysis to allow us to identify the areas of spend leakage outside of County Durham to target
- (c) **Sectoral Action Plans** – to identify a number of priority areas or subsectors that emerge from the analysis, each of which would then be subject to more detailed discussion with the County Durham Pound group. This would help to develop bespoke action plans to put in place practical ways for localising spend
- (d) **Supply Chain Opportunities** – whilst the County Durham market may not be sufficiently developed to fully deliver major areas of spend there may be opportunities for tier 2 or 3 suppliers to engage with ‘Out of County’ main contractors
- (e) **County Durham ‘Make Strategy’** – identify opportunities for companies to manufacture or supply locally

Statement of Intent

25 A Statement of Intent has been drafted and agreed ready for signature by relevant senior management across the 12 partners to commit formally to the social value work we are collectively engaged in. This is a major step in endorsing the work and approach of the County Durham Pound and is underpinned by the following 6 commitments:



Collaborate proactively

We will share ideas and learn from each other's experience and best practice in social value



Embed relevant processes

We will develop suitable processes to ensure high quality delivery and to meet the project's objectives



Involve and empower stakeholders

We will hear the concerns and ideas of community members and other stakeholders across the public, private and third sectors



Respond to local needs

We will ensure that our social value activities address local needs and priorities wherever possible



Be transparent and accountable

We will share what we intend to do and why, plus how we are progressing, so you can hold us accountable



Track, report, learn and improve

We will track and report what we are all doing using a consistent framework so that we can drive continuous improvement

Local Needs Analysis

- 26 Social value is maximised when activities and initiatives are directed towards addressing local needs and priorities. Therefore, in March 2022, SVP, as part of their brief, conducted a Local Needs Analysis in conjunction with Durham County Council using data from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and other public data sets. This data was mapped to show the areas of severe, high, mild, and low deprivation across County Durham.
- 27 The County Durham Pound project recognises the different business strengths and objectives of each partner and respects their autonomy in choosing geographical areas and themes to focus on for their social value contributions. As outlined later in the report the Local Needs Analysis was fundamental in identifying key areas of social value criteria for inclusion in the procurement process via the County Durham Family 'Themes Outcomes and Measures' (TOMS) toolkit.

Overarching Social Value Strategy

- 28 An overarching Social Value Strategy for County Durham Pound has been developed to act as a tool to communicate what all the partners are seeking to do via the project and how.
- 29 The strategy introduces the collective partners, maps out the strategy, and provides practical mechanisms to support the delivery of this place-based project. It contains guidance on how partners can maximise social value through various processes, provides examples of good practice and how to measure and report on social value through the County Durham Family Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMS) toolkit. An overview of TOMS is provided later in this report.
- 30 The strategy is an integral constituent of the project as it provides the framework and parameters under which partners will operate and the collective approach which is so important in maintaining our County Durham Family going forward.

Social Value Coordinator

- 31 A locally based Social Value Coordinator has been appointed. The coordinator has been employed by SVP but is based in the Council's procurement team to provide a collaborative resource across the project. It is to be noted this resource is funded until March 2024 only.

County Durham Family 'Themes Outcomes and Measures' toolkit

- 32 In partnership with the National Social Value Taskforce (chaired by Darren Knowd, Head of Procurement, Sales and Business Services), SVP developed the National Social Value Measurement Framework—known as

the 'National TOMs' as it was built around a set of Themes, Outcomes, and Measures.

- 33 The National TOMs Framework provides a common language for measuring social value that enables consistency, comparability, and transparency. Endorsed by the Local Government Association, the Framework has been widely adopted across both public and private sectors including Durham County Council within its procurement processes.
- 34 This project required its own set of TOMs and using the National TOMs framework, the County Durham Family TOMs have been built. County Durham Family TOMs were selected as meaningful to the county by aligning them to the findings of the Local Needs Analysis, CLES analysis and the local knowledge and visions of the partners. They needed to be deliverable within the capacity of the partner organisations and proportionate to their underlying business activity.
- 35 The following activities have taken place or are due to take place in relation to the County Durham Family TOMs:
 - (a) User training on the TOMs for each of the partners
 - (b) Such TOMs training can then be utilised to include TOMs within partners procurement exercises where organisationally agreed
 - (c) Each partner has been provided with access to and training for the use of the actual Social Value Portal electronic system. An individual account has been set up for each partner to record their own organisational progress against the County Durham Family TOMs
 - (d) Following the training, the Social Value Coordinator will be on hand to support partners with their reporting. Each partner will be requested to report monthly, with a minimum requirement of quarterly, to facilitate a progress report being published for the collective project every quarter.

Knowledge Hub

- 36 The project has now developed a Knowledge Hub website to keep the people of County Durham informed of the project's progress and create a space for them to send us their ideas and feedback. Going forward partners are determined the Knowledge Hub remains vibrant and dynamic with case studies outlining the progress of the County Durham Pound and the initiatives that will bring value to our communities.
- 37 Currently the Knowledge Hub contains:
 - (a) An overview of each of the partners involved
 - (b) Our collective commitment and objectives in working together for the benefit of County Durham
 - (c) The Statement of Commitment as outlined earlier in the report, signed by all partners

- (d) Case studies from partner organisations outlining their delivery of social value across the County
 - (e) An outline of the County Durham TOMs and training videos explaining how the TOMs are applied in practice
 - (f) Social Value guidance for those organisations bidding for contracts and tenders that include social value requirements
 - (g) Contact details to allow the sharing of ideas and case studies or to become a supporter of the County Durham Pound project
- 38 A link to the Knowledge Hub is provided to allow an exploration of the current information held [County Durham Pound – Social Value Knowledge Hub](#)

Internal Awareness and Coordination Across Durham County Council

- 39 Given the size and scale of the County Council itself, it is critical that the organisation is aware of the work being carried out via the County Durham Pound Project.
- 40 The Council's procurement team have therefore engaged across the following areas:
- (a) Inclusive Economic Strategy – regular engagement has taken place between officers involved in both projects to ensure synergy across the work being undertaken. Procurement will now be attending future Economic Inclusion meetings. This engagement has led to the potential of the NHS now joining the County Durham Pound project.
 - (b) A meeting has now been held with NHS Training & Development Business Partner at County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust who is now discussing internally with Directors regarding increased participation, and all recent engagement also represents a good opportunity to join up work being carried out on the Inclusive Economic Strategy, Left behind Neighbourhoods as well as wider community wealth building across all partners.
 - (c) The new build of Belmont Primary School has provided the opportunity to outline the Council's social value approach, including the County Durham Pound Project, with the Council's Principle Project Management Office and the Area Action Partnership.
 - (d) Poverty Action Group (Workplaces Project) – the Council's procurement team attended a meeting on 2nd August 2022 to help develop a proposal to support Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) in schools. The project will seek to provide students in Years 10 and 12 with a valuable insight into the world of work through organised visits to employers. This aligns with initiatives being developed via the County Durham Pound Project and activities will be coordinated going forwards.
 - (e) It should be noted that the approach of the County Durham Pound Project is to complement the mitigating actions in the Poverty Action Plan and the Inclusive Economic Strategy.

Promotion and Celebration of the County Durham Pound Project

- 41 A series of promotional videos by 3Point Media, a locally based provider, have or are in the process of being developed which will highlight social value delivery including collaborative projects involving collective engagement between partners. Such videos include:
- (a) An overview of 200 hours of social value delivered by the Council's Digital Service's team following a successful tender exercise by the team at Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust.
 - (b) Construction video has been produced which highlights the delivery of social value by the Council's supply chain, Chapter Homes and the Council itself.
 - (c) Wingate Primary School – a collaborative project, via the County Durham Pound Project, between Believe Housing and Durham County Council to deliver a community garden at the school (being finalised).
- 42 To ensure the continued progression of the County Durham Pound Project quarterly meetings of the County Durham Pound Working Group have been set up with representation by partners to ensure we meet the projects outcomes and deliverables.
- 43 A Communications and Marketing sub-group has been set up reporting into the Working Group to coordinate a communications strategy for the County Durham Pound Project. This will encompass a variety of events and activities to maximise the impact of the collective work under the project such as:
- (a) Collective 'meet the buyer' events with multi partner representation providing opportunities for County Durham suppliers to engage 'once' across major County Durham buyers
 - (b) Supplier training to prepare them for bidding for respective partner opportunities
 - (c) Skills and employment awareness events which will make sure that young people learn more about a variety of career opportunities before making crucial choices about their future options
 - (d) Engagement with Business Durham to maximise their skills and knowledge to support partner engagement with the County Durham supply base
 - (e) Delivery of grant opportunities across County Durham with a bank of multi partner social value opportunities able to fulfil grant submissions which one partner could not individually deliver
 - (f) Coordination of social media communications to ensure awareness of the work, activities and events which will be taking place under the banner of the County Durham Pound
- 44 The first role of the Communications and Marketing subgroup is to promote and celebrate the signing of the Statement of Intent by all 12 partner organisations and ensure awareness of the potential opportunities available

via the project. Press statements and media activity will be coordinated via this group.

Conclusion

- 45 The work to date has culminated in a well attend and received launch event, taking advantage of the appetite from partners and the business community the aim is to continue the positive momentum launching a programme of activities in quarter three of the programme (January 2023).
- 46 Conversations are to be held with County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust to bring this key anchor partner into the project fold (November 2022).
- 47 To support the Council's Inclusive Economic Strategy, Inclusive Economic Group, Poverty Action Group, Climate Emergency Reduction Plan and overarching Council Plan, procurement is now represented at these groups with the aim of linking these activities within the Cuntly Durham Pound and Council Social Value Agenda.

Background papers

- 31 January 2021 Social Value and Wealth Building Cabinet Paper
- 14 September 2022 County Durham Pound Project Update Cabinet Paper

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Current compliance with the Social Value Act 2012 and future compliance with the Procurement Bill 2023 considered in this approach.

Finance

Social Value delivery is additional to the main contract delivery and is of no extra cost to contract budget holders.

Consultation

Consultation has taken place across service areas within the Council most notably Regeneration, Economy and Growth and Adult and Health Services. All partner organisations have been consulted in overarching meetings and 1-2-1 sessions with a working group now formed with representation by all partners.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

Environmental and sustainability considerations are addressed within the TOMs outlined in the report which have been formulated in conjunction with the Low Carbon Team.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

Procurement resource will be utilised to support ongoing and future social value delivery until April 2024 with a Social Value Coordinator appointed to support the County Durham Pound Project as outlined in the report.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

Social Value assessment criteria is managed with the procurement process risk profile.

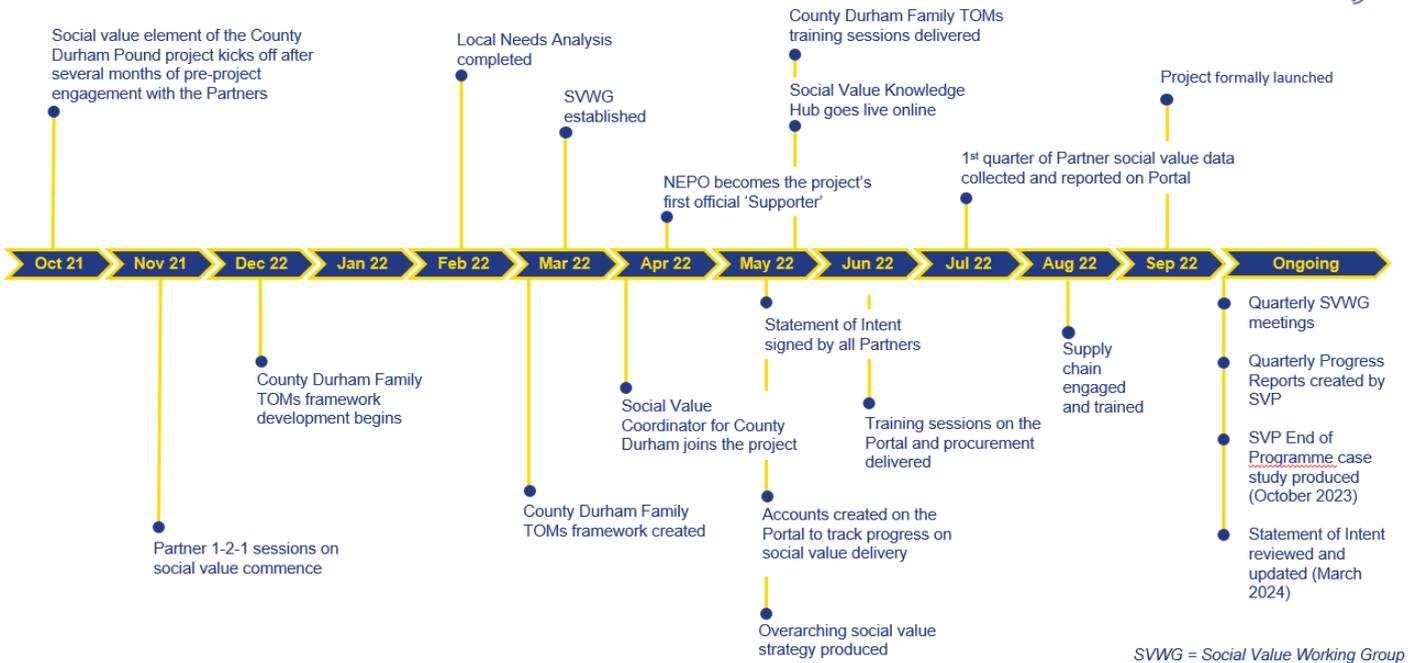
Procurement

Current compliance with the Social Value Act 2012 and future compliance with the Procurement Bill 2023 will be addressed via the County Durham Pound Project and the Council's own ongoing social value activities.

Appendix 2: The County Durham Pound Project Timeframe



The County Durham Pound project timeframe



Appendix 3: The County Durham Family Partners

The County Durham Family partners



One of the largest housing associations in the North East of England, with a primary focus in County Durham, managing 18,000 homes and employing 540 people



Provides property and estate services to over 60,000 customers. There are 4 social housing areas in County Durham



Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust

Established in 2016 there are 23 schools in the Trust with 6 in County Durham



Business Durham is the business support service for Durham County Council



County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service

Responsible for County Durham and the borough of Darlington, serving a population of over 620,000 people



Durham County Council is local authority governed and serves over 508,500 people who live in the county



The Durham Police and Crime Commission was elected by the public to make the communities in the force area safer, stronger, and more resilient to crime and anti-social behaviour



A public research university located in Durham. It is part of the Russell Group and has over 19,500 students enrolled



A housing association with almost 30,000 homes across the North East and Yorkshire



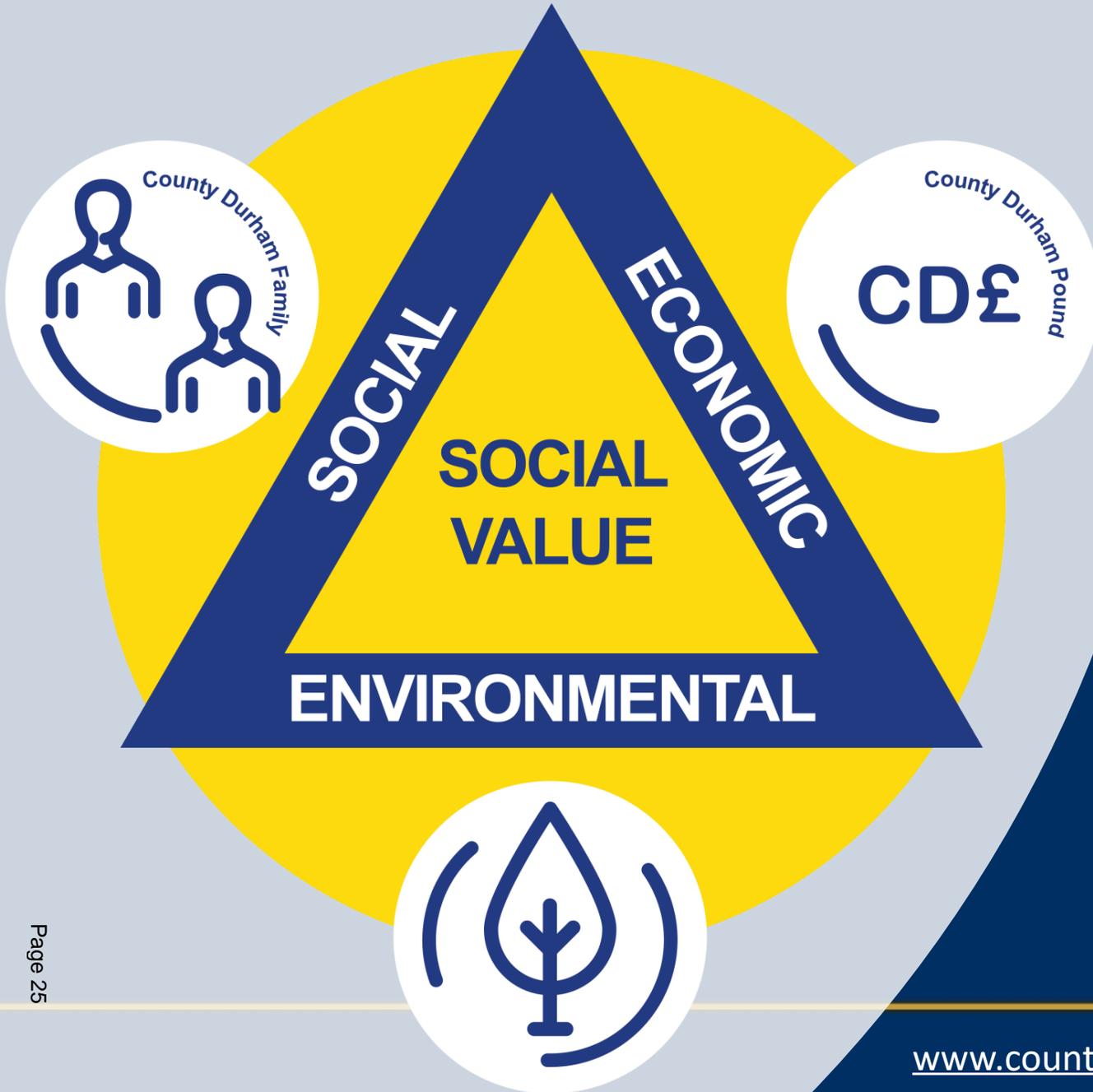
Local housing provider currently managing over 8,400 homes across County Durham



Further and higher education college and a sixth form college based in County Durham



Northumbrian Water provides water and wastewater services to 2.7 million people in the North East of England



County Durham Pound project

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
24th October 2022

Richard Carroll

Chief Procurement Officer



www.countydurhampound.co.uk

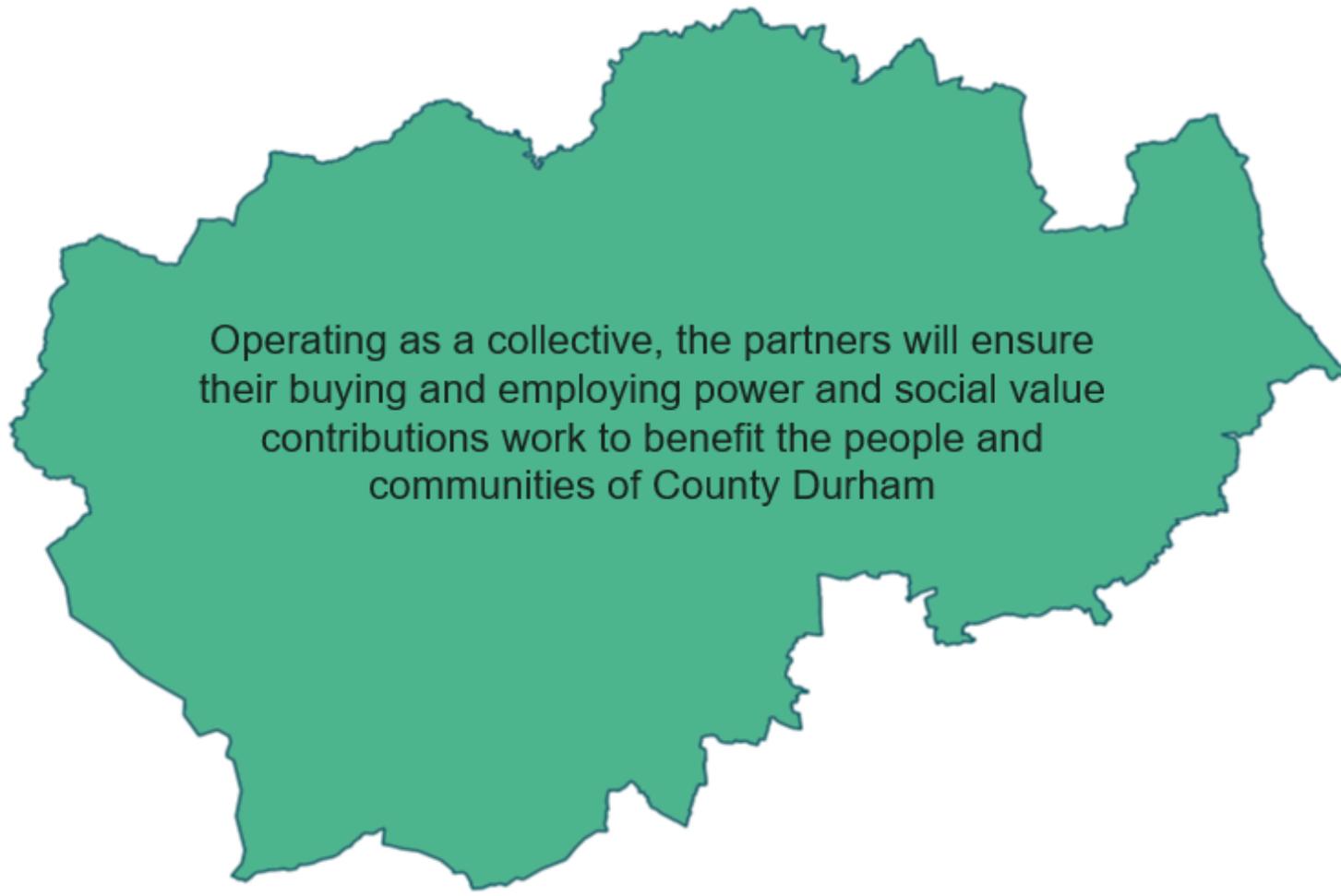
#CountyDurhamPound

The County Durham Pound partners





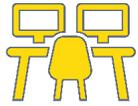
Our Core Objective



Operating as a collective, the partners will ensure their buying and employing power and social value contributions work to benefit the people and communities of County Durham



Aims and Objectives for the County Durham Pound project



Create more jobs for local people



Prioritise better health and wellbeing



Focus on equality, diversity and inclusion



Reduce our impact on the environment



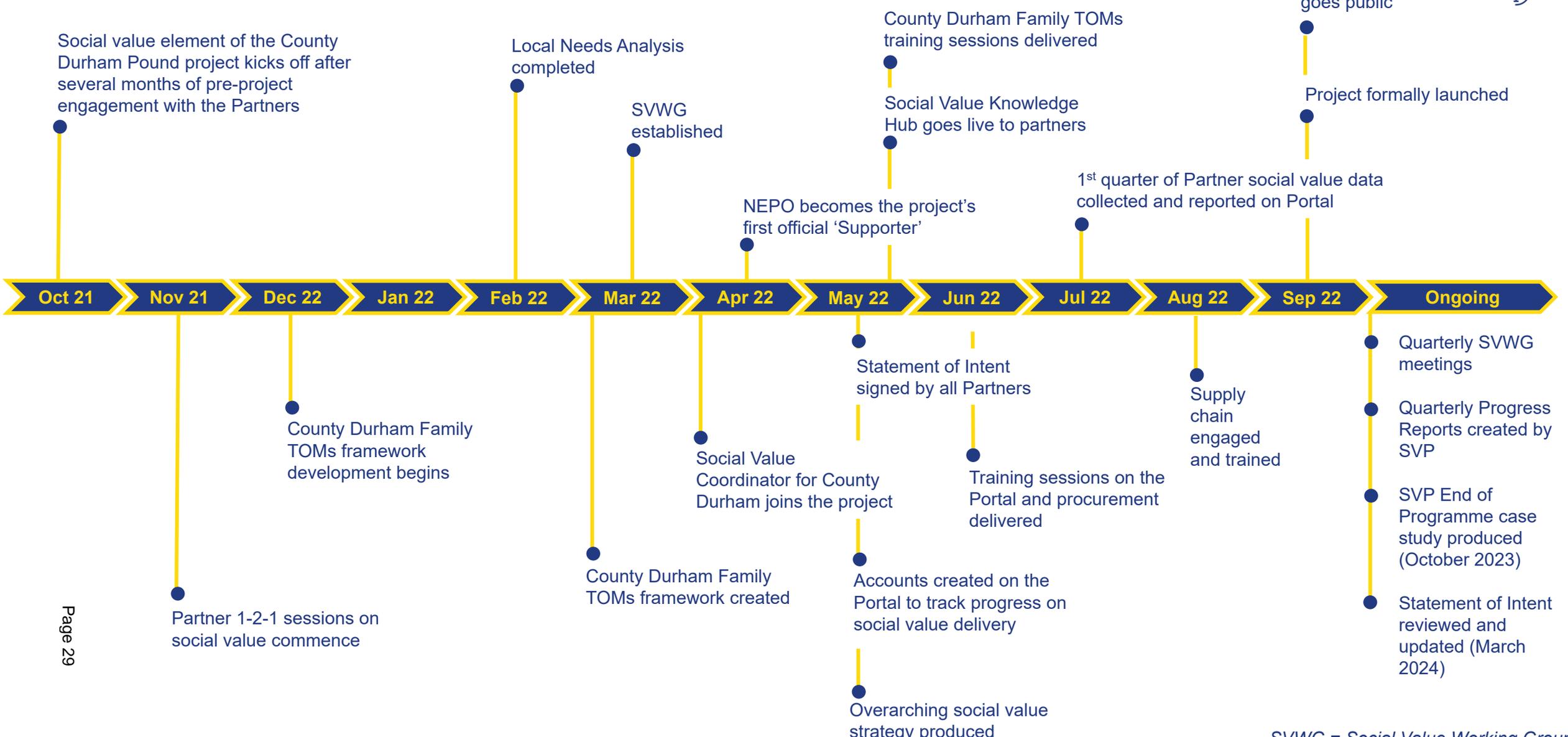
Support with meaningful training and upskilling



Help communities, groups and charities

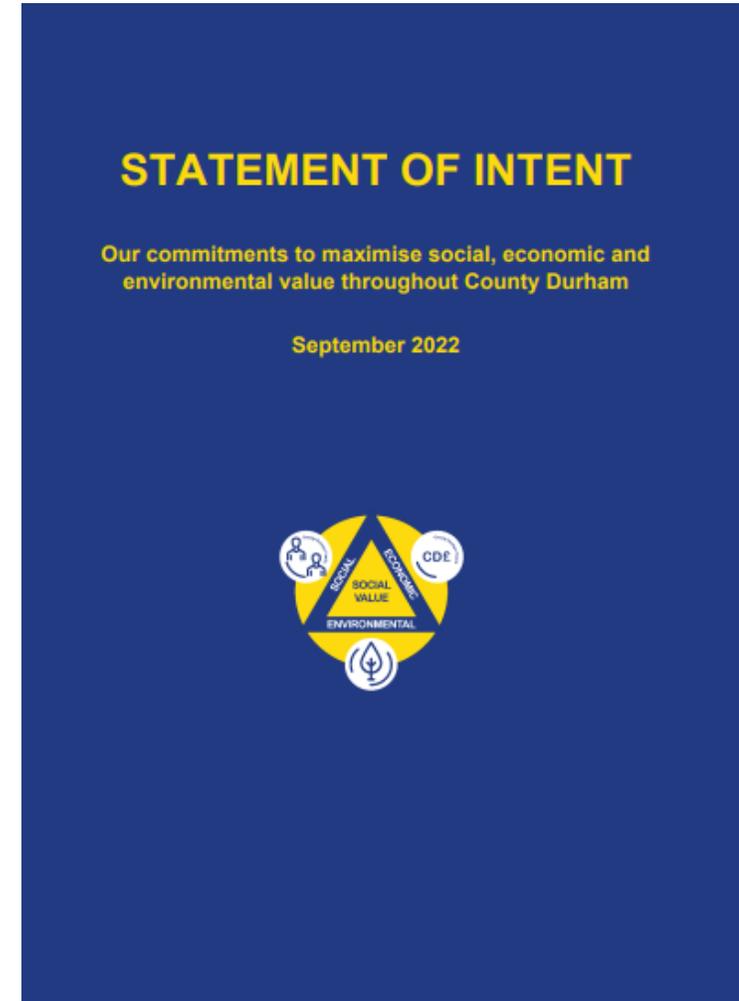


The County Durham Pound project timeframe



Statement of Intent

- The Statement of Intent shows the commitment of the partners to collaboratively to maximise every pound spent in County Durham to improve local social value.
- It presents the six commitments of the project.
- The Statement of Intent was signed by the partners in September 2022 and will be reviewed by them in March 2024.



The Commitments of the collective



1

Collaborate proactively

We will share ideas and learn from each other's experience and best practice in social value



2

Embed relevant processes

We will develop suitable processes to ensure high quality delivery and to meet the project's objectives



3

Involve and empower stakeholders

We will hear the concerns and ideas of community members and other stakeholders across the public, private and third sectors



4

Respond to local needs

We will ensure that our social value activities address local needs and priorities wherever possible



5

Be transparent and accountable

We will share what we intend to do and why, plus how we are progressing, so you can hold us accountable

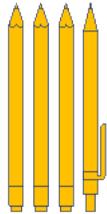


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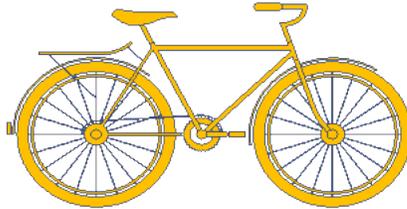
Track, report, learn and improve

We will track and report what we are all doing using a consistent framework so that we can drive continuous improvement

Mechanisms for unlocking social value



Procurement



Organisational activities and programmes



Grant funding



Capital spending



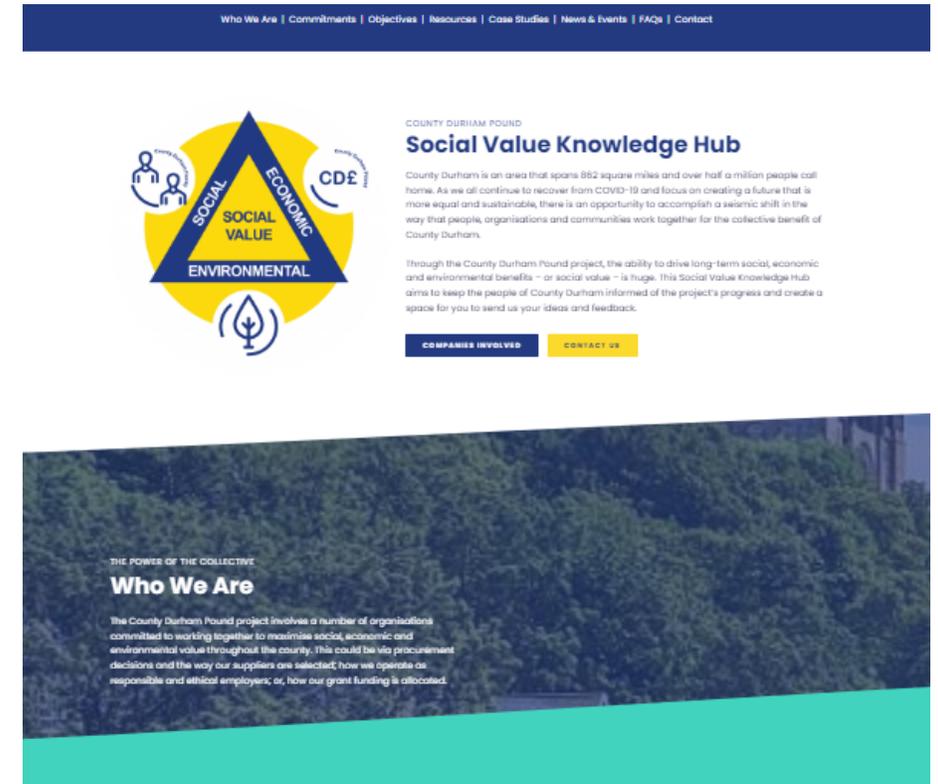
Planning (where applicable)





The Social Value Knowledge Hub

- The Social Value Knowledge Hub is a public website for anyone to use if they wish to read about the project or its progress
- Information and resources available include:
 - Case studies
 - FAQs
 - News and events
 - Key documents
 - ‘Contact us’ Form
- www.countydurhampound.co.uk



Supporters of the County Durham Pound Project



- In April 2022, NEPO signed up as the first official supporter of the project
- We will be looking to welcome more supporters as the project progresses





The Launch Event

- On 29th September 2022 we held our launch event at the Radisson Hotel, Durham
- 11 of the 12 partners were in attendance with the event opened by Cllr Susan McDonnell
- 68 x Supplier Delegates attending from SMEs based in County Durham
- 55 x Buyers and Exhibitor Delegates attending – from all £Durham partners
- 123 total attendance
- 144 x pre-set 121 appointments to open up local supply chain opportunities across Durham – although we are sure we had many more “ad-hoc” meetings which took place on the day
- 4 x Training workshops on Social Value and Successful Contracting/Tendering

The Launch Event





Next Steps

- Quarter 2 meeting data uploaded
- Programme of activities ‘working group’ November to be presented at Q3
- Focus on Business Community engagement and targeted spend
- Review of ‘Supporters’ of the CD£ to be discussed at Q3
- Roll-out of new County Durham Pound TOMs models at DCC (and partners)
- Links with PAG, IEG and IES formed...leading to targeted collaborative projects

Thank you



**Corporate Overview & Scrutiny
Management Board**



24 October 2022

Medium Term Financial Plan(13) 2023/24 – 2026/27

CORP/R/22/01

Report of Corporate Management Team

Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

**Councillor Richard Bell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for
Finance**

Councillor Amanda Hopgood, Leader of the Council

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide an update on the development of the 2023/24 budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP(13)) covering the period 2023/24 to 2026/27.

Executive Summary

- 2 The council is continuing to operate in a period of significant financial uncertainty. When the 2022/23 budget was approved on 23 February 2022, the council was concerned about the ongoing and consequential impact of the pandemic and the uncertainty of future local government finance settlements.
- 3 Whilst these concerns remain, they are now overshadowed by the forecast impact of high inflation, especially in relation to fuel and energy prices. The impact of inflation is being experienced across all council services with no part of the council's budget unaffected. Energy costs are significantly above original budget forecasts, despite a 40% increase being built into the base energy budgets this year, along with the majority of other major spend areas such as waste and transport.
- 4 On 8 September, 2022 the Government announced a package of measures to cap energy costs for households and businesses, with further detail published on 22 September, 2022. At the time of preparing this report more detail on how the support to businesses will work in practice was awaited. The support to business is only for six months and therefore

will only help alleviate some of the pressure being experienced in 2022/23 and therefore is not expected to help offset the £9 million of budget growth that is required in 2023/24. The MTFP forecasts assumes that prices for gas and electricity return to 2022/23 budgeted levels over the following two years.

- 5 Inflation is also impacting upon bank base rates and expected pay settlements for our employees with future National Living Wage increases expected to exceed previous expectations, which will impact upon the cost of adult social care in particular.
- 6 In addition to the increase in costs highlighted above, there is concern that the outcome from the Fair Cost of Care exercise, being carried out in Adult and Health Services, could result in cost pressures that are significantly higher than the funding government has provided to cover the costs of implementation. It is not clear at this time if government will provide the additional funding required to close any shortfall in this regard.
- 7 Once again, the Looked After Children's budget is under pressure due to increased demand and, significantly, increased complexity of need as we emerge from the pandemic driving forecast overspends in the current year that are forecast to continue into next year which must be accommodated.
- 8 All these issues are making financial planning difficult and are resulting in adjustments to the relation to the forecast MTFP(13) financial position as compared to that reported to Cabinet on 13 July 2022, with significant additional pressure falling into 2023/24.
- 9 On 23 September, 2022 it was announced that the 1.25% increase in National Insurance & the Health and Social Care Levy, was being withdrawn from November 2022. This will produce both an in-year saving in 2022/23 (of circa £0.7 million) and a base budget reduction from 2023/24 of circa £1.5 million. It is unclear at this stage what, if any impact, the unwinding of this will have on funding for social care going forwards.
- 10 There still continues to be significant uncertainty in terms of future financial settlements for local government and how available funding will be shared between local authorities. Local authorities continue to be provided with one year financial settlements, which provide little financial certainty and security and given the timing of these announcements in late December, provides little time to react for local authorities.
- 11 Local authorities desperately need early notification of how much, if any, additional government support will be provided in 2023/24 to offset the significant financial pressures faced by the sector due to the present high levels of inflation. It appears at this stage however that there will not be early notification of funding levels for 2023/24, leaving local authorities to continue to plan for the worst i.e., no further funding being made available. Representations have been made to Government in this regard.

- 12 Although it was anticipated that in the 2022/23 local government finance settlement that the Fair Funding Review (FFR) would be implemented, it is now expected that the implementation of the findings from the FFR, may now be delayed until at least 2024/25 but more likely to be 2025/26.
- 13 The lack of clarity in relation to the quantum of future financial settlements and the FFR is exacerbated by uncertainties in relation to future council tax referendum levels, the distribution of the Improved Better Care Fund, the impact of the cost cap and fair cost of care requirements in adult social care, the future of short term funding provided to local authorities for adult and children social care pressures and the ongoing impact of the pandemic upon council services and especially council income.
- 14 This level of uncertainty is making financial planning extremely challenging and requires the council to be flexible and adaptable. In this regard the strong financial position of the council will ensure that the council is well placed to react effectively to any outcome. That said, without significant additional government funding the council will be placed in a challenging situation and will be required to make very difficult decisions to address these pressures in setting balanced budgets in 2023/24 and in future years.
- 15 Previously the council was prudently planning on the basis that the council would only receive additional core funding uplifts of £0.9 million in 2023/24 and that from 2024/25 the council will lose £8.8 million of funding due to the combined impact of the outcome of the FFR but also from the forecast impact of further government funding reductions for local government to contribute to the recovery required to the national finances.
- 16 With the unlikelihood of the FFR not now being implemented until 2025/26 and the expectation that in the current financial climate government will find it very difficult to reduce the funding of local government, it is assumed that there will be small inflation uplifts in the Revenue Support Grant over the next four years but no reduction in funding from government relating to the FFR outcomes. This position will be closely monitored in the coming months especially once the next local government finance settlement is received in the autumn.
- 17 As we continue budget planning for 2023/24, in line with previous practice, the MTFP Model has been reviewed and the financial forecasts for the next four years updated. Financial plans have been updated to consider the impact of inflation upon council costs with the consumer price index forecast to peak at 10% by the end of 2022, the forward forecasts of energy costs and the Low Pay Commission's latest forecast for the 2023/24 increase in the National Living Wage of 8.6%.
- 18 The latest forecasts indicate a funding gap / savings requirement of £52.569 million will be required to balance the budget over the 2023/24 to

- 2026/27 period. This assumes that the Fair Cost of Care outcomes can be accommodated from the grant funding provided.
- 19 Savings are forecast to be required in all years of MTFP(13) as budget pressures and the impact of funding reductions outstrip the council's ability to generate additional income from business rates and council tax. The forecasts assume the council will apply the maximum increases in its Council Tax it is allowed to across each of the next four years, in line with government guidance.
 - 20 The achievement of an additional £52.569 million of savings over the next four years would be extremely challenging and should not be underestimated – more so given the savings that the council has been required to achieve in the last ten years. The emphasis since 2011/12 has been to minimise savings from front line services by protecting them wherever possible whilst maximising savings in management and support functions and by targeting increased income from charging. This is becoming much more difficult however, as the scope for further savings in managerial and back office efficiencies is becoming exhausted following the delivery of £250 million of savings up to 31 March 2023.
 - 21 The total savings required at this stage for 2023/24 to balance the budget amount to £37.389 million, although it must be recognised that this figure could change significantly depending on whether the government provide much needed additional resources to the sector in 2023/24 and whether the council experiences further additional financial pressures due to demand, loss of income or due to the impact of inflation especially in relation to energy.
 - 22 The previous forecasts, presented to Cabinet on 13 July 2022, identified a forecast funding shortfall of £21.9 million for 2023/24 and an overall funding gap of £54.845 million across the period 2023/24 to 2026/27. The updated forecasts show that overall savings requirements across the next four years are not too dissimilar, but the challenge in setting a balanced budget next year is significantly more difficult.
 - 23 Based on the previous forecasts service groupings have been working on saving plans to help close this funding shortfall. This report provides details of savings plans amounting to £17.731 million over the next four years, with £11.853 million of these savings in 2023/24 which, if approved, will assist in reducing the forecast £37.389 million shortfall in that year to £25.536 million. The savings plans have been assured in terms of delivery with every attempt made to seek to protect front line services.
 - 24 Work will continue over the coming months to identify additional savings options to help to balance next years and future years budgets. In this regard however local government requires confirmation of funding settlements for the future to ensure there is a clear understanding of the financial challenges faced.

- 25 To ensure budgets can be balanced whilst clarity is provided and to provide time to work up proposals to reduce expenditure to address the underlying budget position, a thorough review of all earmarked reserves is being undertaken to ensure that corporate reserves are in place to ensure the council can set balanced budgets. This review will result in options to re-prioritise earmarked reserves and transfer funding to the ER/VR reserve and increase the MTFP Support Reserve, which is currently £15.2 million and would be insufficient to balance the budget next year based upon latest forecasts highlighting a £25.536 million funding shortfall. The application of reserves in this way is not a sustainable solution to the financial challenges we face. Until there is greater clarity, the programmes and projects funded from earmarked reserves are being paused at this time.
- 26 The MTFP(13) forecasts continue to assume that there will be a 2.99% council tax increase in 2023/24 and 2024/25, in line with MTFP(12) planning assumptions, and 1.99% increases per annum thereafter. The 2.99% increases for the next two years include an assumed 1.99% council tax referendum limit core increase and 1% for the adult social care precept. It may well be that Government provide additional flexibility in terms of council tax going forward, though there is no indication on whether this will be the case at this stage.
- 27 The MTFP(13) forecasts include provision for £3 million of prudential borrowing in 2025/26 to fund new capital expenditure in MTFP(13). Given the increase in base rates in recent months and forward forecasts for the cost of borrowing, the £3 million budget will only fund circa £60 million of new capital expenditure. This position may need to be reviewed in line with increases in base rates in recent months and potential for further increases, which could reduce the scope of new capital expenditure that could be funded from the prudential borrowing provision factored into the plans at present. In previous MTFP planning, when interest rates were lower and much more stable, £3 million of prudential borrowing provision would have serviced circa £75 million of new capital expenditure.
- 28 Pre-commitments to existing programmes and business as usual requests are expected to well exceed capital resource availability in MTFP(13), which together with the impact of construction price inflation, will lead to some difficult choices to be made around re-prioritising existing commitments and scaling back or increasing the pressure on the MTFP by requiring greater provision for prudential borrowing, which would increase the savings targets in MTFP(13).
- 29 Although the position beyond 2023/24 appears to be not as challenging as in 2023/24, this is mainly due to revised assumptions in terms of the outcome of the Fair Funding Review and an assumption that energy prices fall back to 2022/23 budget assumptions across 2024/25 and 2025/26, plus an assumption that provision for new prudential borrowing remains

unaltered once the capital bids are assessed. This position will need to be closely monitored to ensure plans are in place for any eventuality.

Recommendations

30 COSMB is asked to:

- (a) note the updated MTFP forecasts and the requirement to identify additional savings of £52.569 million for the period 2023/24 to 2026/27, but also note that this forecast could change significantly based upon outcome of future government funding settlements, the ongoing impact of the pandemic, demand for services and inflationary pressures upon the council;
- (b) note that at this stage a forecast £37.389 million of savings are required to balance the 2023/24 budget;
- (c) note the expected challenges in balancing the capital programme in light of increased cost of borrowing and construction price inflation;
- (d) note the savings included at Appendix 3 to support MTFP(13) are consulted on;
- (e) note the planned review of earmarked reserves and the need to replenish corporate reserves should these forecasts prevail; and
- (f) note the MTFP(13) consultation process as outlined in the report.

Background

- 31 To ensure the 2023/24 budget and MTFP(13) can be developed effectively and savings targets delivered in time to produce a balanced budget, it is important that a robust plan and timetable is agreed and followed.
- 32 The council is committed to strong financial governance and getting value for money whilst ensuring that any council tax increases are justified and affordable.
- 33 It is prudent that the council continues to plan across a four year timeframe. During this period the council will continue to face significant and unavoidable budget pressures, especially relating to the inflationary impacts on energy and fuel costs, future pay awards to council employees, the National Living Wage uplifts, Children's Social Care and Waste pressures whilst facing the uncertainty over the impact of the Fair Funding Review (FFR) and implementation of the Fair Cost of Care.
- 34 Planning across the medium term in this way ensures that decisions can be made in the knowledge of the likely financial position of the council and provides a basis for effective decision making taking account of the best estimates of income and expenditure.
- 35 Savings plans have been developed for consideration for 2023/24 and in future years. These plans were developed in the context of the initial MTFP(13) forecasts presented to Cabinet in July. Unless there is a significant uplift in the level of local government financial settlements, additional savings are inevitable.
- 36 The council will be able to utilise the MTFP Reserve to help balance the budgets in the short-term whilst savings proposals are developed and or implemented. The MTFP Reserve balance is currently £15.2 million and will be insufficient to balance the budget next year based on the updated estimates and the savings proposals that have been developed to date.
- 37 A review of all earmarked reserves is necessary, and a strategy may need to be implemented whereby funding set aside for specific projects and programmes is reprioritised and redirected to replenish the MTFP Reserve. While this review is completed and in advance of the financial settlement in December when the position will be clarified, a range of programmes and initiatives that are funded by these reserves have been paused.
- 38 The use of reserves to balance the budget is not a sustainable position and is only recommended where there is a need to smooth in more sustainable budget solutions.
- 39 At this stage of the planning cycle for MTFP(13) the following areas are presented for consideration by Cabinet:

- (a) an update on the development of the 2023/24 budget since the 13 July 2022 MTFP(13) report to Cabinet;
- (b) an update on the MTFP(13) savings forecast for the period 2023/24 to 2026/27;
- (c) detail on a range of savings plans recommended for inclusion in MTFP(13) plans to assist in balancing budgets
- (d) an overview of a review of reserves that has been initiated to replenish corporate reserves should the need arise and the implications arising from this; and
- (e) the proposed approach for consultation on the 2023/24 budget proposals and on MTFP(13);

Review of MTFP Model

- 40 The financial outlook for the council continues to be extremely challenging. Prior to the pandemic the national finances were in a reasonably healthy state for the first time in ten years. The impact of the pandemic upon the national finances however alongside the impact of the Governments response to the cost of living crisis is forecast to have long term impacts on the flexibility for increases in expenditure across the public sector.
- 41 Local authorities continue to lobby strongly for a long term sustainable financial settlement, but it is becoming less likely that this will occur in the short term due to ongoing uncertainty in the national finances linked to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, Brexit, and the inflationary impact of the crisis in Ukraine.
- 42 The council will need to continually review its MTFP(13) projections and savings requirements over the coming months in light of future announcements and as more information becomes available on the longer term impacts of the pandemic and inflation upon the council's budgets going forward.
- 43 The assumptions underpinning the development of MTFP(13) continue to be reviewed. This has resulted in a number of significant changes to the core assumptions for 2023/24 and in future years as well as consideration of increased costs and demand increases specifically linked to the impact of high levels of inflation. The key adjustments and major areas for consideration are detailed below:

(a) Revenue Support Grant (RSG) / Fair Funding Review

The 13 July 2022 MTFP(13) report to Cabinet included the assumption that the council would receive revenue support grant increases over the next four years of between 1.5% and 3%. This

assumption remains unchanged at this time but does represent a risk in terms of this being actioned.

It was also assumed however that the council would lose £8.8 million of funding due to the FFR, which at that time was forecast to be implemented from 2024/25. The planning assumption being that a combination of formula changes and reductions in funding to local government would be implemented as part of a strategy to bring the national finances back into balance which would adversely impact our funding levels.

It now appears more likely that the FFR will not be implemented until at least April 2025 and that local government will not face funding reductions, mainly due to the significant inflationary budget pressures now faced. On that basis it has been assumed that the settlement the council received in 2022/23 will be 'rolled over' into 2023/24 and that no funding reduction will be encountered in 2024/25.

All of these financial planning assumptions could change in the coming months as a result of government announcements.

(b) Business Rates, Section 31 Grant and Top Up Grant inflation uplift

It was previously forecast that these sums would be uplifted by a CPI rate of 3% in 2024/25. In line with current CPI forecasts this assumption has been increased to 9%, which has increased the estimated additional resources by £8.9 million compared to the previous forecast. There is a risk that the government seeks to cap this support and not provide funding at that level, but that would require a change in legislation.

(c) Pay Inflation

The 2022/23 budget includes 3.25% in the base for pay inflation. In July the Local Government Employers made an offer of a £1,925 flat increase pay offer to 'green book' employees, which represents the majority of employees in the council, is presently being considered by trade unions through a consultative ballot .

If this offer is ultimately accepted and a similar pay award is agreed with non 'green book' employees also, it will cost a forecast £7 million more than the 3.25% budget provision in the base.

The content of the current pay offer and the likelihood of ongoing higher rates of inflation have also resulted in revised assumptions in terms of pay awards in future years. The updated forecasts for the cost of future pay rises in 2023/24 and 2024/25 have been increased

from 2.5% and 2% to 4% and 3% respectively. In total, accommodating the budget shortfall from 2022/23 and the revised assumptions in terms of pay awards over the next two years has added circa £13.2 million of additional budget pressures into the MTFP(13) projections, of which £10.6 million falls into next year.

(d) **National Insurance**

A 1.25% increase in employers national insurance contributions was introduced in April 2022. On 23 September, 2022 it was announced that this was being withdrawn from November 2022. This will produce both an in-year saving in 2022/23 (of circa £0.5 million) and a base budget reduction from 2023/24 of circa £1.5 million. It is unclear at this stage what, if any, impact the unwinding of this will have on funding for social care going forwards.

(e) **Price Inflation**

Forecasts of price inflation in 2023/24 have been increased from 3% to 4% based upon forecast levels of price inflation next year – which has added an additional £1.1 million of budget pressure into the MTFP in 2023/24. At 4%, price inflation below forecast RPI / CPI levels and will require services to absorb an element of the inflation pressures they will face in terms of supplies and services and agency and contracted services.

(f) **CPI Uplift impact upon adult care fees**

The council uplifts care fees each year based upon a combination of increases in the National Living Wage and CPI. National Living Wage increases are in line with the figures factored into the MTFP forecasts in July (an 8.6% increase from April 2023, consistent with the Low Pay Commissions published estimates) but CPI related elements have been updated.

The CPI uplift for non-labour costs in 2023/24 has been uplifted to 9%. The 2023/24 impacts are offset slightly by savings in the commissioning budgets with the net increase required estimated at £13.6 million.

CPI is still forecast to be high when the 2024/25 budgets are set so along with estimates published by the Low Pay Commission, care fee uplifts in 2024/25 have been increased from the previously forecast budget pressure of £10.4 million to £14.9 million.

(g) **Energy Price Increases**

The 2022/23 base budget included a £3.1 million uplift in energy costs based upon forecasted increases in gas and electricity prices.

Over the last six months however, mainly because of the conflict in Ukraine, prices have been extremely volatile and have increased significantly. In July, an additional £4.3 million increase in the 2023/24 budget was estimated to be required.

More recently, energy prices have continued to increase significantly, mainly because of the closure of the Nord Stream gas pipeline between Russia and Europe.

Gas and electricity commodity prices are presently trading at rates ten times higher than they were eighteen months ago.

The council via the North East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO) has forward purchased a large proportion of this years' energy and a smaller proportion of next years' energy, providing some protection against the current volatility.

On 8 September 2022 the Government announced a package of measures to cap energy costs for households and businesses, with further detail published on 22 September, 2022. At the time of preparing this report more detail on how the support to businesses will work in practice was awaited. The support to business is only for an initial six months and therefore will only help alleviate some of the pressure being experienced in 2022/23 and therefore is not expected to help offset the £9 million of budget growth that is required in 2023/24. This position will be kept under review and forecasts amended if necessary as more information emerges.

The MTFP forecasts assumes that prices for gas and electricity return to 2022/23 budgeted levels over the following three years. There are differing views on this within the sector and within the markets and there is a risk that prices rates do not return to 2022/23 budgeted levels in future.

Energy prices continue to be volatile, and this budget will continue to be closely monitored.

(h) **Cost of the Implementation of Adult Social Care Reform**

Local authorities are set to receive £600 million of funding from the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost grant to 'finance' the fair cost of care exercise being carried out in 2022 and £1.4 billion to finance the impact of the introduction of the cost cap and means test changes in relation to charging assessment for adult social care. This includes provision for additional social care and financial assessment staffing to undertake the additional assessments that will be required under the new regime.

The council received the first tranche of funding from the fair cost of care element in 2022/23 (£1.9 million), which the council has utilised to part fund the increase in adult care fees of 7% in 2022/23.

Based upon the proportion of funding received from the national total, it is forecast that the council will receive an additional £5.2 million in 2023/24. This has not been confirmed by government at this stage and it is likely the government may utilise an alternate apportionment methodology.

In relation to the £1.4 billion, a sum of £800 million will be provided in 2023/24 and an additional £600 million in 2024/25. The government have published a consultation on three variant methodologies for apportionment of this element of the funding.

Based upon the three variants the council would receive between £6.7 million and £8.3 million in 2023/24 with between £5 million and £6.2 million in 2024/25. For modelling purposes the council is forecasting the receipt of £11.7 million in total.

The council is assuming therefore that an additional £16.9 million will be received in total and that this sum will be utilised to finance the outcome of the fair cost of care and the changes to the cost cap and the means test. There is a risk that the costs of implementing these changes exceeds the grant funding being provided, though the council will need to argue strongly that if it does it would constitute a new burden that needed to be fully funded by government.

(i) Children's Social Care Demographic Pressures

In recent years the council has had to increase the base budget for children's social care significantly.

The pressure on the budget in children's social care has been evident for a number of years, as the number of children in the care system has increased and their needs have continued to become more complex and more costly to accommodate.

This budget was increased by £5.5 million in 2018/19 and by a further £6.5 million in 2019/20 to cover the escalating care costs, as well as additional costs for staffing in order to meet the expected challenges and pressures identified in 2019/20. The 2020/21 budget included an additional increase for placement costs of £3.417 million

The 2022/23 base budget was increased by £8.9 million through a combination of a 2021/22 in year budget transfer of £4.5 million from

Adult and Health Services and by a £4.4 million base budget uplift approved by Council on 23 February 2022.

Despite this, the Children's Services (Children's Social Care and Early Help & Intervention) 2021/22 outturn showed a net £2.232 million overspend for the year, including an overspend of £4.263 million in relation to looked after children's placements.

The MTFP(12) planning assumption was that there would be a need for a further £2 million uplift in the 2023/24 base budget. However, in light of the 2021/22 outturn, the 2023/24 forecast base budget uplift forecast was increased from £2 million to £3 million in the 13 July 2022 Cabinet report.

This forecast has been reviewed based upon current costs of delivery with the number of children in the care system in the county presently exceeding 1,000 for the first time, which is driving a forecast c£5 million overspend in the current year. On that basis the previous forecasts over the next three years for costs of £3 million, £2 million, and £2 million respectively have been increased to £7.5 million, £4 million, and £3 million in financial years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 – increasing the MTFP growth by £7.5 million across the next four years.

(j) **Forecast increase in major contracts resulting from high levels of inflation**

A number of the councils major contracts have annual inflationary uplift calculations built into them linked to CPI or RPI uplifts and sometimes linked to key materials inflation e.g. diesel prices.

The council faces significant unavoidable contract price uplifts in a number of major contracts in 2022/23 which will produce an overspend in the current year and which, together with higher than previously anticipated increases in 2023/24 contracts, will require base budget increases in 2023/24 to accommodate these pressures and ensure a balanced budget is set next year.

The main contracts affected relate to waste and refuse collection where a £2.6 million unavoidable increase is required, home to school transport and local bus subsidy contracts where a £3.9 million unavoidable increase is required and in some of the ICT contracts where a £0.193 million unavoidable increase is required.

(k) **Prudential Borrowing**

The MTFP(13) forecasts include provision for £3 million of prudential borrowing in 2025/26 to fund new capital expenditure in MTFP(13).

Based on current interest rates and forward forecasts for the cost of borrowing, the £3 million budget will fund circa £60 million of new capital expenditure. In previous MTFP planning rounds, when interest rates were lower and much more stable, £3 million of prudential borrowing provision would have serviced circa £75 million of new capital expenditure.

This position may need to be reviewed in line with increases in base rates in recent months and potential for further increases, which could reduce the scope of new capital expenditure that could be funded from the prudential borrowing provision factored into the plans at present.

Pre-commitments to existing programmes and business as usual requests, together with the impact of construction price inflation are expected to result in requests for new capital expenditure well exceeding capital resource availability.

Capital bids are currently being finalised and careful consideration will be given to these and all other existing capital programme commitments considering the financial position the council is facing.

There will undoubtedly need to be some difficult choices to be made around re-prioritising existing commitments and scaling back or increasing the pressure on the MTFP by increasing the provision for prudential borrowing, which would increase the savings targets in MTFP(13).

2023/24 Savings Forecast

- 44 Based upon the revised assumptions detailed in this report, the savings requirement for 2023/24 is forecast to be £37.389 million, £15.408 million higher than the position previously reported. At this point our forecasts assumes no further government support beyond the inflationary uplifts on RSG and upon business rate retention sums. The forecast also assumes energy prices are contained within the updated forecasts, with no additional government support. The forecasts also assume that the fair cost of care impacts can be contained within the government funding provided.
- 45 Although the budget deficit of £37.389 million in 2023/24 is the latest forecast, it should be recognised that this figure could and will likely change before Council ultimately sets the budget on 22 February 2023.
- 46 The MTFP(13) forecasts continue to be predicated on a 2.99% council tax increase being applied in 2023/24 and again 2024/25, with 1.99% increases per annum across the remainder of the MTFP(13) planning period. The forecast 2.99% increase in 2023/24 and 2024/25 includes the

1% adult social care precept flexibility announced in the 2022/23 local government finance settlement.

- 47 The July 2022 MTFP(13) report identified a forecast funding shortfall of £21.9 million for 2023/24. With this in mind service groupings have been working on saving plans to help close this forecast funding shortfall. This report provides details of savings plans amounting to £17.731 million over the next four year with £11.853 million of these savings in 2023/24, which will assist in closing the forecast £37.389 million shortfall next year. These savings plans have been fully assured in terms of delivery with every attempt made to seek to protect front line services as far as possible. The proposed savings plans for next year, with indicative plans for 2024/25 to 2026/27 are attached at Appendix 2.
- 48 The achievement of £11.853 million of savings in 2023/24 will close the funding shortfall from £37.389 million to £25.536 million. If government provide additional funding to local government in the finance settlement for 2023/24, this gap could be reduced and potentially eradicated depending on the level of investment provided. It is currently unclear whether and the extent to which any additional funding will be provided. However, there is also a risk that the gap widens if cost pressures, particularly in relation to energy and in looked after children's placement budgets, continue to escalate.
- 49 At this point it is likely the council would need to utilise significant levels of reserves to balance the budget in 2023/24.

Equality Impact Assessment of the Medium Term Financial Plan

- 50 Consideration of equality analysis and impacts is an essential element that members must consider in approving the savings plans at Appendix 4. This section updates Members on the outcomes of the equality analysis of the MTFP (13) savings proposals.
- 51 The aim of the equality analysis process is to;
- (a) identify any disproportionate impact on service users or staff based on the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation;
 - (b) identify any mitigating actions which can be taken to reduce negative impact where possible;
 - (c) ensure that we avoid unlawful discrimination as a result of MTFP decisions;
 - (d) ensure the effective discharge of the public sector equality duty

- 52 As in previous years, equality analysis is considered throughout the decision-making process, alongside the development of MTFP(13). This is required to ensure MTFP process decisions are both fair and lawful. The process is in line with the Equality Act 2010 which, amongst other things, makes discrimination unlawful in relation to the protected characteristics listed above and requires us to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people.
- 53 In addition, the public sector equality duty requires us to pay 'due regard' to the need to;
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- 54 A number of successful judicial reviews has reinforced the need for robust consideration of the public sector equality duty and the impact on protected characteristics in the decision making process. Members must take full account of the duty and accompanying evidence when considering the MTFP proposals.
- 55 In terms of the ongoing programme of budget decisions the council has taken steps to ensure that impact assessments:
- (a) are built in at the formative stages so that they form an integral part of developing proposals with sufficient time for completion ahead of decision-making;
 - (b) are based on relevant evidence, including consultation where appropriate, to provide a robust assessment;
 - (c) objectively consider any negative impacts and alternatives or mitigation actions so that they support fair and lawful decision making;
 - (d) are closely linked to the wider MTFP decision-making process;
 - (e) build on previous assessments to provide an ongoing picture of cumulative impact

Impact Assessments for 2023/24 Savings Proposals

- 56 Consideration of equality analysis and impacts is an essential element that members must consider in approving the savings plans, a summary

equality analysis on savings proposals can be found at Appendix 4. This section updates Members on the outcomes of the equality analysis of the MTFP (13) savings proposals as they currently stand. If savings proposals are developed further then analysis of impacts will be updated and included in the final decision making reports.

Adult and Health Services (AHS)

- 57 Savings proposals for AHS include a number of commissioning efficiencies which may impact vulnerable groups with protected characteristics with a disproportionate impact expected in terms of disability, including physical/sensory/learning disability and/or poor mental health. Any reductions in these areas could have a disproportionate impact on men and impacts for ethnic minority groups in relation to services for the Gypsy Roma Traveller GRT community.
- 58 Part of proposals for non-assessed community based services, include a reduction in floating support services which are predominantly accessed by single males between the age of 16-35 years who are experiencing potential homelessness and mental health issues and require housing, benefit/financial advice and support to access services. There will also be an impact to the delivery of Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) floating support services.
- 59 Proposals to reduce the costs of high cost learning disability support packages will impact those with a learning disability and their carers. Any models of care developed for individuals will aim to create services with an improved model of care and support, encourage independence and improve welfare. Depending on re-commissioning outcomes there should be no negative impact on service users.
- 60 A review of commissioned services for people who are deaf, deafened or living with a hearing impairment will impact in terms of disability and older age groups. Impact on service users should be minimised with efficiencies focused primarily on premises and associated utilities and prioritisation of projects within the services. To further mitigate the impact of reduced funding on service users, we have strengthened the need for a community based model of IAG support hubs, whereby people are supported county wide as opposed to a centralised 'building'. The hubs must support accessibility and encourage social inclusion.

Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)

- 61 There are number of savings proposals within CYPS with a disproportionate impact for age (younger and working age in terms of parents and carers) and disability although mitigations are proposed. There are a number of staff reductions and deletion of vacant posts. Fair

treatment of staff will be ensured through agreed corporate HR change management procedures, and progression of ER/VR to minimise impact.

- 62 Reduced expenditure within the One Point activities budget will impact families in terms of age, parents and carers, children and young people 0-19 years and up to 25 years and disability, for those with Special Educational Needs and/or a disability. Negative impact will be minimised due to the greater use of virtual technology and partnership working to enhance levels of non council funded activity. A phased three year approach will help us to monitor impact.
- 63 Through the development and implementation of Family Hubs and Start for Life programme there will be an opportunity to rationalise a number of posts within Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children due to improved integration with partners. A greater focus on development and use of digital platforms will minimise any potential impact in terms of age and disability.

Neighbourhoods and Climate Change (NCC)

- 64 NCC savings proposals generally have no disproportionate equality impact on any particular group apart from some fee increases with potential disproportionate impact in terms of disability and older age. There are a number of staff reductions and deletion of vacant posts with potentially a greater impact on men, disproportionately represented in some posts. Fair treatment of staff will be ensured through agreed corporate HR change management procedures, and progression of ER/VR to minimise impact.
- 65 A number of fee increases are proposed which although impact all may have a disproportionate impact for disabled and older residents who may not be able to use 'free' alternatives such as bulky waste collection and garden waste collection.

Regeneration, Economy and Growth (REG)

- 66 REG savings proposals generally have no disproportionate equality impact on any particular group although there are two proposals with a disproportionate impact on working age and younger age. There are a number of staff reductions and deletion of vacant posts. Fair treatment of staff will be ensured through agreed corporate HR change management procedures, and progression of ER/VR to minimise impact.
- 67 Removal of the discount rate for park and ride users will negatively impact the most regular users who access this discount rate (4.5% of all transactions), most likely to be of working age, although it will create price equity for all users. Proposed improvements in flexibility in payment methods for all customers through reconfiguration of on-bus ticket machines to accept contactless debit/credit card payment will benefit all

customers, in particular some people with disabilities who may find using contactless on-bus payments more accessible.

- 68 Reducing capacity of the International Team will adversely impact opportunities for young people in the county to participate in international and/or intercultural events. The proposal is felt to both reflect the reducing demand for the service, post EU exit and the pandemic which has reduced the level of school travelling, while still retaining sufficient capacity to provide an effective service offer going forward. HR processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment of staff involved.

Resources (RES)

- 69 There are a range of proposals for Resources, two with front line service implications with a disproportionate impact in terms of disability, older age and men. A number of proposals involve staff reductions and deletion of vacant posts. Fair treatment of staff will be ensured through agreed corporate HR change management procedures, and progression of ER/VR to minimise impact. Service continuity will be supported by ongoing business improvement and the data insight and business intelligence programme. However, reduced staff capacity places teams under increasing pressure to meet service demand which can lead to burn out and poor mental and physical health.
- 70 Business Support Services propose a significant number of staff reductions, phased over four years. The initial phase for 2023/24 involves a management restructure with realignment of responsibilities. Further equality analysis will be undertaken to understand the impact of a reduced service provision and any disproportionate staff impact.
- 71 It is proposed to introduce weekly charges of £5 or £7.50 for support provided by the Deputy and Appointee Team (DAT) who act as an appointee to manage the financial affairs of service users who, following a mental capacity assessment, have been found unable to manage their own finances. The introduction of such charges would bring the service in line with other authorities. There are currently 458 clients, all have a disability, disproportionately male (58%) and from a range of age groups from 16+ years. There will be a negative financial impact for groups affected however accessing this service protects clients from financial exploitation and abuse.
- 72 A review of service provision in relation to the face-to-face service in non-strategic sites provided by Customer Services from the Customer Access Points (CAPs) is currently underway and will be subject to public consultation. The largest overall proportion of CAP footfall and appointment traffic relate to Blue Badge and Concessionary Bus Pass application support and queries, both of which can be associated with older age and/or disability. This will potentially mean a disproportionate

impact on disabled people and older age groups although a service offer will remain, it will be restricted in terms of reduced opening hours. The suggested reduction in opening hours releases the capacity of 4FTE staff, with HR processes followed to ensure fair treatment.

Corporate (COR)

73 There is no expected equality impact of COR savings proposals.

Review of Reserves

74 To ensure budgets can be balanced whilst clarity is provided and to provide time to work up further proposals to increase income and reduce expenditure to address the underlying budget position, a thorough review of all earmarked reserves is being undertaken.

75 This is required to ensure that corporate reserves are available to enable the council to set balanced budgets. The review will result in options to re-prioritise earmarked reserves and transfer funding to the ER/VR Reserve, the Commercial Reserve and to increase the MTFP Support Reserve, which is currently £15.2 million and insufficient to balance the budget next year should these latest forecasts come to fruition.

76 The ER/VR reserve at the end of 2022/23 is forecast to be circa £2.5 million. This reserve needs replenishing and it is also forecast that the Commercial Reserve (presently £5 million) will not be sufficient to provide coverage for the Milburngate and NetPark developments as they come on stream.

77 As part of the review of reserves, it is therefore intended to find the capacity to replenish the ER/VR reserve by £7.5 million and the Commercial Reserve by £3.5 million, with options to be developed to bolster the MTFP Support reserve by circa £25 million potentially.

78 The application of reserves to balance the budget is not a sustainable solution to the financial challenges we face. Whilst the review is undertaken and until there is greater clarity, the programmes and projects funded from a range of earmarked reserves will need to be paused at this time.

79 Further details of the review of reserves and the impact of redirecting these resources will be provided in the December MTFP(13) update report.

MTFP(13) – 2023/24 to 2026/27 Summary

80 The adjustments to the MTFP(13) model have resulted in the following revised forecast across the four year period of the current MTFP:

	Savings Requirement	Less Savings Previously Approved	Savings Shortfall
	£m	£m	£m
2023/24	37.389	0	37.389
2024/25	2.609	0	2.609
2025/26	4.213	0	4.213
2026/27	8.633	0.275	8.358
TOTAL	52.844	0.275	52.569

81 As can be seen, the additional savings required to be developed to balance the budgets over the next four years is estimated to be £52.569 million. As previously mentioned, there is significant uncertainty facing local government at this time, especially in relation to future local government finance settlements, the continuing impact of the pandemic, the volatility of energy prices and the other high levels of inflation impacting upon the council.

82 This report provides details of savings plans amounting to £17.731 million over the next four year with £11.853 million of these savings in 2023/24, which will assist in closing the forecast £37.389 million shortfall next year. These savings plans have been assured in terms of delivery with every attempt made to seek to protect front line services as far as possible. The proposed savings plans for next year, with indicative plans for 2024/25 to 2026/27 are attached at Appendix 2.

83 The achievement of £11.853 million of savings in 2023/24 will help reduce the funding shortfall from £37.389 million to £25.536 million. If government provide additional funding to local government in the finance settlement for 2023/24, this gap could be reduced further. However, there is also a risk that the gap widens if cost pressures, particularly in relation to energy and in looked after children's placement budgets, continue to escalate.

84 The realisation of an additional £52.569 million of savings across the MTFP(13) planning period will have resulted in the council being required to save circa £303 million from 2011/12 to 2026/27.

85 The updated MTFP(13) Model, factoring in the savings outlined at Appendix 2, is attached at Appendix 3.

Consultation Programme

- 86 Based on the best practice that has developed over previous consultations, it is once again proposed that we consult using our existing County Durham Partnership networks during October and November.
- 87 This will include the fourteen Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) and the thematic partnerships that support the County Durham Partnership. Additional work will be undertaken with special interest groups and there will be an opportunity for residents to respond electronically via the council's website which will be promoted through the council's presence on various social media platforms.
- 88 The consultation will inform final decisions on the savings proposals set out in Appendix 2 and on the approach to council tax increases in future years.

Conclusion

- 89 The council continues to face significant financial uncertainty for the MTFP(13) planning period, covering the financial years 2023/24 to 2026/27. The uncertainty relating to future government financial settlements is exacerbated by the ongoing impact of the pandemic alongside increases in base budget pressures from inflation, national living wage, social care, and waste disposal, together with enduring pressures in our looked after children's placement budgets.
- 90 The proposed savings attached at Appendix 2 will be subject to consultation via our existing County Durham Partnership networks during October and November. This will include the fourteen Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) and the thematic partnerships that support the County Durham Partnership. The outcome of this consultation, together with greater certainty around the local government finance settlement, will inform final budget decisions in February.
- 91 The MTFP forecasts at this stage would indicate a significant budget gap next year even if all the savings identified for 2023/24 are ultimately taken. The council is therefore in the unenviable position of having to potentially utilise significant reserves to balance its budget next year.
- 92 The application of reserves to balance the budget is not a sustainable solution to the financial challenges we face. Whilst the review is undertaken and until there is greater clarity, the programmes and projects funded from a range of earmarked reserves will need to be paused at this time.
- 93 Planning will continue in relation to the identification of further savings to enable future years budgets to be balanced, which alongside the review of reserves currently underway will ensure the council is well placed to

respond to the financial forecasts as they are firmed up over the coming months.

- 94 The ER/VR Reserve at the end of 2022/23 is forecast to be circa £2.5 million. This reserve needs replenishing and it is also forecast that the Commercial Reserve (presently £5 million) will not be sufficient to provide coverage for the Milburngate and Net Park developments as they come on stream.
- 95 As part of the review of reserves, it is therefore intended to find the capacity to replenish the ER/VR Reserve by £7.5 million and the Commercial Reserve by £3.5 million, with options to be developed to bolster the MTFP Support reserve by circa £25 million potentially.
- 96 Further details of the review of reserves and the impact of redirecting these resources will be provided in the December MTFP(13) update report.

Background papers

- Local Government Finance Act 1992
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations (as amended)
- The Impacts of Localised Council Tax Support Schemes – Institute for Fiscal Studies Report January 2019

Other useful documents

- Medium Term Financial Plan (12), 2022/23 to 2025/26 – Report to Council 23 February 2022
- Medium Term Financial Plan (13), 2023/24 to 2026/27 – Report to Cabinet 13 July 2022

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The council has a statutory responsibility to set a balanced budget for 2023/24. It also has a fiduciary duty not to waste public resources.

Finance

The report highlights that at this stage additional £37.389 million of savings are required to balance the 2023/24 budget, with £52.569 million of additional savings required across the next four years.

Based on previous forecasts, additional savings of £17.456 million across the MTFP(13) period are included for approval in the report to assist in balancing budgets across the MTFP(13) period, taking the overall savings proposals to £17.731 million. These will be subject to consultation across the coming months. Final decisions on savings to be implemented will be taken as part of the budget setting report in February 2023.

These savings plans have been fully assured in terms of delivery with every attempt made to seek to protect front line services as far as possible. The proposed savings plans for next year, with indicative plans for 2024/25 to 2026/27 are attached at Appendix 2.

The achievement of £11.853 million of savings in 2023/24 will help reduce the funding shortfall from £37.389 million to £25.536 million.

If government provide additional funding to local government in the finance settlement for 2023/24, this gap could be reduced further. However, there is also a risk that the gap widens if cost pressures, particularly in relation to energy and in looked after children's placement budgets, continue to escalate

The council is therefore in the unenviable position of having to potentially utilise significant reserves to balance its budget next year and the MTFP Reserve is currently insufficient to balance the budget. This has necessitated a review of all earmarked reserves, to ensure that corporate reserves are in place to ensure the council can set balanced budgets.

The review will result in options to re-prioritise earmarked reserves and transfer funding to the ER/VR Reserve, the Commercial Reserve and to increase the MTFP Support Reserve, which is currently £15.2 million and insufficient to balance the budget next year should these latest forecasts come to fruition

The application of reserves to balance the budget is not a sustainable solution to the financial challenges we face. Whilst the review is undertaken and until there

is greater clarity, the programmes and projects funded from a range of earmarked reserves will need to be paused at this time.

Consultation

Consultation on the 2023/24 budget and MTFP(13) will include engagement via existing County Durham Partnership networks during October and November. This will include the fourteen Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) and the thematic partnerships that support the County Durham Partnership.

Additional work will be undertaken with special interest groups and there will be an opportunity for residents to respond electronically via the council's website which will be promoted through the council's presence on various social media platforms.

The consultation will inform final decisions on the savings proposals set out in Appendix 2 and on the approach to council tax increases in future years.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 all public authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, "have due regard to the need to" eliminate conduct that is prohibited by the Act. Such conduct includes discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to protected characteristics but also requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a "relevant protected characteristic" and persons who do not. This means consideration of equality analysis and impacts is an essential element that Members must take into account when considering these savings proposals.

The report contains summary details of the impact assessment that has been undertaken on the proposed savings, which is set out in more detail at Appendix 4.

Climate Change

The council budget will be developed to provide resource to enable the council to meet the requirements set out in the council's Climate Change Emergency Response Plan.

Human Rights

Any human rights issues will be considered for all proposals agreed as part of MTFP(13).

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

The impact of the MTFP forecasts and the savings proposals that have been developed to contribute to the financial challenges faced is detailed within the report.

Should the MTFP(13) savings proposals set out in Appendix 2 be implemented in full it is estimated that there will a 117 FTE reduction. HR policies will be strictly adhered to in terms of any restructure activity and priority will continue to be placed on seeking voluntary redundancies and early retirements to mitigate against the need for compulsory redundancies.

Accommodation

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings of £275,000 were previously factored into MTFP(12) from the expected move to the new HQ and closure/demolition of the existing County Hall building at Aykley Heads.

Based on the revenue estimates that underpinned the review of the options for disposal of the building on the sands and the implementation of an alternative strategy, net revenue running costs are still forecast to be at least £0.275 million less than the 2022/23 £1.954 million budgeted running cost of County Hall. This saving is factored into the MTFP(13) savings proposals, alongside further building rationalisation and efficiencies to protect front line service delivery.

Risk

The council is continuing to operate in a period of significant financial uncertainty. When the 2022/23 budget was approved on 23 February 2022, the council was concerned about the ongoing and consequential impact of the pandemic and the uncertainty of future local government finance settlements.

Whilst these concerns remain, they are now overshadowed by the forecast impact of high inflation, especially in relation to fuel and energy prices and from increases in bank base rates. The impact of inflation is being experienced across all council services with no part of the council's budget unaffected. Energy costs are significantly above original budget forecasts, despite a 40% increase being built into the base energy budgets this year, along with the majority of other major spend areas such as waste and transport.

Prudent financial planning assumptions have been made in terms of forecasting the base budget pressures the council will face over the coming years. The underpinning rationale is explained in detail in the report.

A robust approach to Risk Assessment across the MTFP process will be followed especially in relation to any individual risk assessments of savings plans. The savings plans attached at Appendix 2 have been assured in terms of delivery with every attempt made to seek to protect front line services as far as possible.

Procurement

None

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MTFP (13) SAVINGS PLANS

APPENDIX 2

Adult and Health Services

Savings Proposal	Description	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL
		£	£	£	£	£
Commissioned Services - Efficiencies	Review of contractual arrangements across Adult and Health Services	1,250,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	1,400,000
Market Shaping - Reablement & Direct Payments	Maximising use of reablement and direct payments to promote independence for service users	0	50,000	250,000	300,000	600,000
High Cost Learning Disability Care Packages	Review of specialist/high cost care provision across learning disability services	210,000	210,000	210,484	0	630,484
Review of Non-Assessed Community Based Services	Review of non-assessed community-based commissioned services	113,000	101,283	93,000	0	307,283
Hearing Impaired Review	Review of county-wide hearing impaired services	50,000	0	0	0	50,000
Extra Care Cleaning	Review of cleaning provision in extra care schemes	52,000	8,000	0	0	60,000
Car Mileage Reduction	Reduction in staff travel costs due to new ways of working	100,000	0	0	0	100,000
Total - Adult and Health Services		1,775,000	419,283	603,484	350,000	3,147,767

Children and Young People

Savings Proposal	Description	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL
		£	£	£	£	£
Review of Support Services	Delivering resource efficiencies in the provision of non frontline services through greater automation of tasks and simplifying systems.	0	0	210,000	0	210,000
Planned reduction in activities budget through rationalisation of One Point Service activities with families and increased use of virtual activity work.	Planned reduction in physical activities held in centres with increased use of technology and virtual services for Families, which support the new work on development of Family Hubs	50,000	50,000	50,000	0	150,000
Early help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children Services review	Achieving efficiencies within Early Help services through turnover of staff, reviewing deployment of staffing resources and use of non council funding to support activity	41,000	41,000	84,000	84,000	250,000
Cross Service Accommodation	Streamlining the use of Council staff accommodation to achieve savings in maintenance and running costs.	0	50,000	71,000	100,000	221,000

Restructure of Education Services	Implementation of the Councils education review programme to align to the future direction of Education Services and national policy	350,000	0	0	0	350,000
Restructure of Adult Learning Service	Changes to the Councils Adult Learning Service to align to the future direction of Education, Employment and Training opportunities for disadvantaged Young People	0	100,000	70,000	0	170,000
Reductions in Mileage	Efficiencies in staff mileage budgets as a result of the greater use of technology and new ways of working	100,000	100,000	0	0	200,000
Reduction in Historic FE Liabilities	Planned reduction in Service Pension liabilities	40,000	10,000	0	0	50,000
Total - Children & Young People Services		581,000	351,000	485,000	184,000	1,601,000

Neighbourhood and Climate Change

Savings Proposal	Saving Description	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL
		£	£	£	£	£
Clean and Green Efficiency Review	Savings opportunities will be identified associated with maintenance, increased income, flower displays and staff restructuring	70,000	0	0	0	70,000
Income and Efficiencies from Destination Parks	Income generation opportunities will be explored at both Wharton Park and Hardwick Park, and the play offer at Wharton Park will be reviewed	66,000	0	0	0	66,000
Income Generation in Refuse & Recycling	The fees and charges relating to Trade Waste, Bulky Waste and replacement bins will be increased	206,000	0	0	0	206,000
Additional Fixed Penalty Notice income	This proposal will see an increase in the number of FPN's issued, and therefore income through stricter enforcement	25,000	0	0	0	25,000
Review of Cemetery fees	Increase in cemetery fees	40,000	0	0	0	40,000
Reduce Allotments investment	This proposal will see a reduction in the planned allotment investment	69,000	0	0	0	69,000
Review of Neighbourhood Protection	This proposal will see a staffing reduction arising from a review of neighbourhood protection, including wardens and civic pride.	70,000	0	0	0	70,000
Power Purchase Agreements	Additional income will be generated by selling renewable energy to commercial energy suppliers	60,000	0	0	0	60,000
Review of Garden Waste income	Garden Waste sign ups continue to exceed the budgeted level so there is scope to increase the income budget	190,000	0	0	0	190,000
Increase in Power Generation income at Joint Stocks	Additional income will be generated by selling gas generated at landfill sites	750,000	0	0	0	750,000

Deletion of vacant post in Highways Estimating Team	Deletion of vacant post in Highways Estimating Team	34,000	0	0	0	34,000
Restructure of Highways Adoption team	Savings will arise from staff restructure and also by funding the team partly from increased development supervision fee income	64,000	0	0	0	64,000
Capitalise the cost of Strategic Highways staff working on LTP	A number of staff directly dealing with the capital programme will in future be funded by the LTP capital grant allocation instead of revenue	299,000	0	0	0	299,000
New charging system for Vehicle Crossing applications	Introduce a new system of vehicle crossing application fees, plus additional license fees for hire of adopted highway space by businesses	20,000	0	0	0	20,000
Supplies & services saving in Strategic Street Lighting	This is associated with an area of the budget that consistently underspends	16,000	0	0	0	16,000
Review of Community Protection Structure & Income Generation	A restructure of the service will deliver savings in employees along with some income generation opportunities	95,000	110,000	145,000	0	350,000
Review of structure in Partnerships team	A restructure of the service will deliver savings in employees	25,000	0	0	0	25,000
Review of AAPs	Savings to be identified following an independent review of the council's community engagement mechanisms including the Area Action Partnerships	183,750	61,250	0	0	245,000
Restructure within Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) and Corporate Policy	A restructure of the service will deliver savings in employees	47,000	0	0	0	47,000
Savings in Car Mileage due to hybrid working	As many staff continue to work from home for a significant portion of the working week, many meetings are now held virtually which will reduce car mileage costs	60,000	0	0	0	60,000
TOTAL - NCC		2,389,750	171,250	145,000	0	2,706,000

Regeneration, Economy and Growth

Savings Proposal	Saving Description	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL
		£	£	£	£	£
Strategic Car Park Review	A review of parking arrangements and tariffs across the county to allow a more equitable charging regime	0	279,000	0	0	279,000

Moving vehicle/Bus Lane enforcement income.	Introduction of camera enforcement intended to address moving traffic offences, and to increase compliance at existing Framwellgate Moor bus lane restrictions	40,000	0	0	30,000	70,000
Park and Ride Discount Rate.	Removal of current POP card option and associated discount & replace with standard on-board payment facilities	20,000	0	0	0	20,000
Reduction in Concessionary Fares	Reduction in concessionary fares budget as a result of behaviour changes & reduced concessionary passenger numbers	50,000	0	0	0	50,000
Increase surplus rental income on commercial properties	Additional rental income generated from commercial properties managed by Business Durham	100,000	0	48,438	0	148,438
Theatre ticketing – introduce dynamic pricing	A revised approach to how and when tickets are sold to increase income and offer customers more choice	0	30,000	0	0	30,000
Theatre Marketing - contract out	Contracting out design, print and brochure production	7,000	7,000	0	0	14,000
Review daytime café offer at Empire theatre	Consideration of aligning daytime café services with theatre and cinema programme	13,000	0	0	0	13,000
Library Transformation including Sevenhills Lease	Review of built service offer with regard to co-location opportunities, delivery models and tech solutions	75,000	105,000	0	0	180,000
Library Transformation - Clayport Library Restructure & Remodel	Remodel and update the library to create a high quality environment to meet modern public requirements	0	200,000	0	0	200,000
Planning Income Volumes	Increase budget for planning fees income to reflect higher levels of planning applications in recent years	350,000	100,000	0	0	450,000
Review of the Housing Solution Team	Reduction of one vacant project manager post	49,672	0	0	0	49,672
International Team Restructure	Review of staffing within the International Team and amalgamate operations	25,000	0	0	0	25,000
Service Review of Catering, Cleaning & Facilities Management	Service efficiencies from catering, cleaning and facilities management through strategic service review including commercial opportunities, opening hours, levels of service etc	0	0	90,000	95,000	185,000
Review of Office Accommodation - New HQ operating costs	Saving in running costs generated from the move from County Hall	0	0	0	275,000	275,000
TOTAL - REG		729,672	721,000	138,438	400,000	1,989,110

Resources

Savings Proposal	Description	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL
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		£	£	£	£	£
Policy and Performance employee review	Restructure of Strategy Service	43,473	75,473	0	0	118,946
HR Employee Review and Training budgets	Review HR Employee and Training budgets	0	0	152,892	86,940	239,832
Procurement income generation and employee reductions	Review of Procurement Services	100,000	0	0	0	100,000
Business Support Employee Review	Review and restructuring of the Business Support service	200,000	150,000	0	517,000	867,000
Internal Audit Income generation and employee review	A restructure of Internal Audit and Risk, including a review of income budgets as the Internal Audit Service is now providing services to additional external clients.	32,200	33,276	0	0	65,476
Corporate Finance employee review	Reduction in management posts	70,000	41,000	0	0	111,000
Corporate Finance non employee budgets	Review / Reduction of Non Staffing Budgets	102,837	0	0	0	102,837
Legal Services staffing	Review of Legal Services	11,360	0	0	127,640	139,000
Legal and Dem Services non employee budgets	Review / Reduction of Non Staffing Budgets	103,000	0	0	12,000	115,000
Digital Services employee review	Restructure of Digital Services Team	0	0	164,011	0	164,011
Digital Services supplies and services	Review of supplies and services budgets across all teams within Digital Services	19,718	65,000	65,000	0	149,718
Finance and Transactional Customer Services	Looking at current charging for services to explore additional areas for income generation	80,275	80,275	0	0	160,550
Finance and Transactional non employee budgets	Reduction in non-staffing budgets following an analytical review of all non-staffing budgets (including income budgets)	0	0	0	102,120	102,120
Finance and Transactional Customer Services	Review of Customer Services	68,500	68,500	0	0	137,000
Finance and Transactional Employee Review	Introduction of new systems, process review and new ways of working	0	28,813	119,558	0	148,371
Digital Services Applications and Hosting	Reductions in supplies and services budgets	36,916	0	0	0	36,916
TOTAL - RESOURCES		868,279	542,337	501,461	845,700	2,757,777

Corporate Savings

Savings Proposal	Description	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	TOTAL
		£	£	£	£	£

Reduction in Subscriptions and Supplies and Services	Review of all non staffing expenditure in the Centrally Administrated costs budget	66,000	0	0	0	66,000
Staff Turnover Rate	Current staff turnover allowance included in budget build is 3.5%. Proposal is to increase this to 3.75%	463,000	0	0	0	463,000
Capital Financing/Investment Income	Recent borrowing costs have been lower than previous forecasts generating a saving whilst current higher interest rate levels are resulting in higher than forecast investment returns	2,500,000	0	0	0	2,500,000
General Contingencies	Reduction in the current level of general contingencies	1,500,000	0	0	0	1,500,000
Buyout of CLUK Contract - Retention of all income	The buyout of this contract from a corporate reserve will result in an increase in leisure income	1,000,000	0	0	0	1,000,000
TOTAL - CORPORATE		5,529,000	0	0	0	5,529,000

TOTAL COUNCIL SAVINGS FOR MTFP (13)	11,872,701	2,204,870	1,873,383	1,779,700	17,730,654
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	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Government Funding				
Revenue Support Grant (3% then 1.5%)	-870	-445	-450	-455
IBCF Uplift (5%)	-1,500	0	0	0
Market Sustainability Grant	-10,300	-5,000	0	0
Social Care Levy Funding - Additional Staffing	-1,600	0	0	0
B Rates/S31 - S31 Adj & CPI increase (9%/9%/1.5%/1.5%)	-6,800	-6,900	-1,100	-1,100
Top Up - CPI increase (9%/9%/1.5%/1.5%)	-6,400	-6,450	-1,050	-1,050
Other Funding Sources				
Council Tax Increase (2.99%/2.99%/1.99%/1.99%)	-7,200	-7,300	-5,000	-5,100
Council Tax Base increase	-3,000	-2,000	-2,000	-2,000
Business Rate Tax Base increase	-500	-500	-500	-250
Estimated Variance in Resource Base	-38,170	-28,595	-10,100	-9,955
Pay Inflation (4%/3%/2%/2%)	9,700	7,700	5,200	5,300
Pay Inflation 22/23 Shortfall (Average of 6.6% plus one day leave)	7,000	0	0	0
Employers National Insurance (Health & Social Care Levy)	-1,500	0	0	0
Price Inflation (4%/1.5%/1.5%/1.5%) - excludes social care fees	4,200	1,500	1,550	1,600
Base Budget Pressures				
Social Care Fee Inflation Uplift - includes NLW and CPI	13,600	14,900	3,300	3,500
Adults - Costs associated with Social Care reform	10,050	1,750	0	1,750
Adults - Social Care Charging Reform - Additional Staffing	1,600	0	0	0
National Living Wage Other Service Areas	350	400	50	50
Pension Fund Revaluation	-2,800	0	0	0
Energy Price Increases	9,000	-3,000	-3,000	-2,250
Social Care System Licenses	100	0	0	0
Adults Demographic Pressures	1,000	1,000	1,500	1,500
Children's Demographic Pressures	7,500	4,000	3,000	2,000
Tees Valley SPV Set Up Costs	0	0	30	0
Low Carbon Team - staffing & partnership development	84	0	0	0
Vehicle Fleet - Transfer to electric vehicles	0	0	1,328	3,238
Community Protection Workforce Development	218	196	-200	0
Woodland Protection / Nature Reserves / Public Rights of Way	0	0	-145	0
Waste Inflation	2,600	0	0	0
Transport Inflation (Local Buses and School Transport)	3,900	0	0	0
Core ICT System Inflation	193	0	0	0
CYPS Social Care Preventative Strategies	808	0	0	0
CYPS Fostering Investment	1,738	0	-1,200	0
CYPS Social Workers	811	0	0	0
NCC Tree Inspections	90	0	0	0
NCC Humanitarian Support	123	0	0	0
NCC Civil Contingencies	30	0	0	0
REG Park and Ride Reprourement	220	0	0	0
REG Durham Bus Station	100	0	0	0
REG Buildings Repair and Maintenance	100	0	0	0
REG History Centre Front of House Team	148	0	0	0
REG North East Screen Industries Partnership	206	0	0	0
RES Barrister Support for CYPS Social Care	513	0	0	0
RES ICT Licencing	85	0	0	0
Aykley Heads Cultural Venue (Former DLI Building)	0	600	0	0
Unfunded Superannuation	0	0	-100	-100
Prudential Borrowing	3,000	3,400	3,000	2,000
Net Collection Fund Position after 75% Grant applied	792	-1,242	0	0
TOTAL PRESSURES	75,559	31,204	14,313	18,588
Use of One Off funds				
Adjustment for use of BSR in previous year	0	0	0	0
Use of Budget Support Reserve in year	0	0	0	0
Savings				
Savings Agreed in MTFP(10)	0	0	0	-275
MTFP(13) Savings	-11,873	-2,205	-1,873	-1,505
SAVINGS SHORTFALL	25,516	404	2,340	6,853
TOTAL SHORTFALL				35,113

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Appendix 4:

MTFP (13) Table of Equality Impacts and Analysis for Savings

Adult and Health Services

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
<p>Efficiencies from Commissioned Services</p>	<p>Budget prioritisation exercise resulting in a range of proposed efficiencies linked to County-wide commissioned services.</p>	<p>Any budget reduction restricts investment in commissioned services and key priority areas.</p> <p>Any pressure on currently commissioned services due to increased costs will not be supported which may adversely impact service delivery and service users, potentially including vulnerable groups with protected characteristics.</p> <p>A key age group accessing the services identified as being in scope are anticipated to be the 18-55 age group. There may be impact on services that provide support to vulnerable groups with protected characteristics.</p> <p>Disproportionate impact is likely for some reductions, for example where more men access these services.</p> <p>Reduction in spend could reduce capacity within services and hinder future</p>	<p>Continual monitoring of impact to ensure fulfilment of service responsibilities.</p> <p>Analysis of service user data to identify impact and any necessary mitigation.</p> <p>Profiling exercise to identify timeline for contracts to apply savings to and when these can take effect in line with contractual terms and conditions.</p>

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
		expansion/development of services that support communities.	
Market Shaping – Reablement and Direct Payments	As the saving proposal develops in subsequent years equality analysis will be added.		
High Cost Learning Disability Care Packages	Reducing costs for high-cost learning disability support packages.	<p>The proposal impacts those with a learning disability accessing support packages and their carers.</p> <p>Potential options include: reducing support hours and developing more efficient models of care that will lower running costs; reducing void costs in supported living schemes; decommissioning and development of some services; moves from high-cost residential care and suboptimal supported living schemes to alternative services that achieve equitable or improved outcomes in a more cost-effective way.</p> <p>Clinical demands and needs change constantly, making this a fluid situation.</p>	<p>Any models of care developed for individuals will create services with an improved model of care/support, encourage independence and improve welfare. This will include reducing less restrictive models of care.</p> <p>Support packages are considered on a case-by-case basis and always tailored to meet individual need.</p>
Review of Non-Assessed Community Based Services	Review and options development for future preventative (non-assessed) services as	At this stage of the review process, it is not known how many of the services will be decommissioned. However, MTFP savings will inevitably mean that some	Careful management, decommissioning and partnership working with providers should enable savings to be taken at the

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
	<p>existing contracts approach their expiry date. Services comprise of preventative accommodation based and floating support services for individuals or families who are not eligible, or not yet eligible, for adult social care.</p>	<p>services are reduced and therefore impacting specific groups who access these services, who are likely to have protected characteristics, potentially disability, including physical/sensory disability and/or poor mental health.</p> <p>The floating support services which will be reduced are predominantly accessed by single males between the age of 16-35 years who are experiencing potential homelessness and mental health issues and require housing, benefit/financial advice and support to access services. There will also be an impact to the delivery of Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) floating support services.</p>	<p>level identified, while mitigating the most challenging risk impacts.</p> <p>Currently a review is underway and any recommendations to service delivery will have to reflect savings and changes to the ways of working.</p> <p>Careful management, decommissioning and partnership working with providers should enable savings to be taken at the level identified, while mitigating the most challenging risk impacts.</p> <p>Evidence base to be used will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim findings from the Non-Assessed Accommodation review • Current provider performance data • DCC service user information
<p>Hearing Impaired Review</p>	<p>Review of commissioned services currently in place for people who are deaf, deafened or living with a hearing impairment. Currently two contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults who are 'pre-lingual deaf' 	<p>There are impacts in terms of disability and age. However, no negative impact is expected as part of re-commissioning of the two contracts. Redistribution of funding will ensure greater equity for people with acquired hearing loss. The number of referrals into this service has increased significantly so this will ensure continuity of service for these service users.</p>	<p>Whilst the amount of funding has been reduced, we expect the impact on service users to be minimal with efficiencies focused primarily on premises and associated utilities and prioritisation of projects within the services. In addition, to further mitigate the impact of reduced funding on service users, we have strengthened the need for a community based model of IAG support hubs, whereby people are supported county wide</p>

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults who have 'acquired hearing loss' 	In relation to 'age' we anticipate that greater accessibility to hubs will result in an increase in older people receiving services. More than 40% of people over 50 years old have hearing loss, rising to more than 70% of people over the age of 70.	as opposed to a centralised 'building'. The hubs must support accessibility and encourage social inclusion. The number of people supported is not expected to decrease, instead how we deliver the services will be more efficient with an emphasis on promoting the independence of service users.
Extra Care Cleaning	None	Reduction in annual budget to reflect spend, with no disruption to current service delivery. No disproportionate equality impact.	
Car Mileage Reduction	None	Changing working practises as we exit the covid pandemic have resulted in a reduction in car mileage claims. No disproportionate equality impact.	

Children and Young People

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
Review of Support Services	As the saving proposal develops in subsequent years equality analysis will be added.		

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
Reduced activity costs for One Point hubs	Reduction of expenditure from the DCC One Point activities budget through rationalisation of activities with families.	There will be an impact in terms of age, parents and carers, children and young people 0-19 years and up to 25 years for those with Special Educational Needs and/or a disability. Negative impact is expected to be minimal due to greater use of virtual technology and phased reductions over three years helping us to monitor impact.	Greater use of virtual technology to minimise impact and partnership working activity to enhance levels of non DCC funded activity.
Early help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children review	Staffing reduction by 1FTE	Phased reduction in posts over 4 years, 1FTE vacant post reduction for 2023/4 as per business case recommendation.	Through the development and implementation of Family Hubs and Start for life programme there will be an opportunity to rationalisation of a number of posts within the service due to improved integration with partners. A greater focus on development and use of digital platforms to minimise impact.
Cross Service Accommodation	As the saving proposal develops in subsequent years equality analysis will be added.		
Restructure of Education Services	Restructure of Education Service, including deletion of vacant posts	The restructure was completed in July 2022 with full staff and union consultation resulting in the progression of ER/VR requests. All those leaving the service were over 55 years of age. Changing service delivery and reducing staff capacity was necessary to reflect the increasing academisation of schools and an anticipated reduction in SLA income.	Restructure complete with HR processes followed to ensure fair and transparent treatment.

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
		There is no equality impact to remaining service functioning.	
Restructure of Adult Learning Service	As the saving proposal develops in subsequent years equality analysis will be added.		
Car Mileage Reduction	None	Changing working practises as we exit the covid pandemic have resulted in a reduction in car mileage claims. No disproportionate equality impact.	
Reduction in Historic FE Liabilities	None	No equality impact.	

Neighbourhood and Climate Change

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
Clean and Green Efficiency Review	Review of grounds maintenance staff	There will be an environmental impact in reduction of grounds maintenance and planting although there is no direct equality impact as a result of this. Staff impact is likely to disproportionately impact men.	ER/VR will be sought where possible. HR processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment.
Income and Efficiencies from Destination Parks	Cease operation of miniature cars at Wharton Park and replace with free activity. Review of parking and café	The miniature cars (chargeable) at Wharton Park are commercially unviable and will be replaced with more free children's play equipment and outdoor classes which is positive.	Any increase in charges from the review will be offset by the withdrawl of charges for the provision childrens play equipment at Wharton Park.

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
	charges to be considered alongside Countywide Parking Strategy Review.	The review of café and parking charging may disproportionately impact working age families and carers with young children. There are no staff reductions.	
Income Generation in Refuse and Recycling	Increase bulky waste collection charging from £16 to £18.	Potential impact on disabled and older residents due to the fact that they may not be able to use alternative means of disposing of bulky waste, such as using household waste recycling centres (tips), and may therefore have no option but to pay the cost of receiving this service.	Bulky waste collection charges remain the lowest within the region. The service will ensure the increase in charging is comprehensively communicated.
Additional Fixed Penalty Notice Income	None	No disproportionate equality impact.	
Review of Cemetery Fees	Review of burial fees	Deaths are generally within older age groups with interment or cremation arrangements falling to their partner or wider family, impacting the general public as a whole, affecting all groups. Proposed increased cemetery fees would take the charges to around mid-point of the regional average.	Durham operates two crematoria with prices amongst the lowest in the region and options to reduce costs through direct cremation or early slots being available to customers.
Revision to Allotments	Removal of two vacant posts from the six	Additional investment built into 2022/23 budget resulted in a growth in the team	

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
Investments built into 2022/23 Budget	Additional posts built into 2022/23 Budget	from 2 to 8 posts. Two posts remain vacant and will be deleted in 2023/24. These vacant posts have never been recruited to therefore no disproportionate equality impact.	
Review of Neighbourhood Protection	Removal of management within the Neighbourhood Protection Team	Review of staffing will reduce the numbers in the neighbourhood protection team by 2 posts, this is out of 60 staff overall and will impact on management and vacant posts only. Minimal impact on the general public is expected.	HR processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment of any temporary staff involved.
Power Purchase Agreements	None	Income stream with no disproportionate equality impact.	
Review of Garden Waste Income	Review of volumes and prices	Potential impact on disabled and older residents due to the fact that they may not be able to use alternative means of disposing of garden waste, such as using household waste recycling centres (tips), and may therefore have no option but to pay the cost of receiving this service.	<p>Garden waste can be placed in the general domestic waste bin. Assisted bin collections, bin pull outs, are in place for disabled residents (with no other household assistance).</p> <p>The council encourages the use of composters to dispose of garden waste which can be purchased through the council at heavily subsidised rates.</p> <p>The service will ensure the increase in charging is comprehensively communicated.</p>

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
Increase in Power Generation Income at Joint Stocks	None	Income stream with no disproportionate equality impact.	
Deletion of vacant post in Highways Estimating Team	None	Deletion of a vacant post with no disproportionate equality impact.	Functions absorbed within existing team
Restructure of Highways Adoption Team	None	Changes to funding stream for posts with no disproportionate equality impact.	The restructuring will be funded from the supervision fees levied against developers for the monitoring of works.
Capitalise the cost of Strategic Highways staff working on LTP	None	Changes to funding stream for posts with no disproportionate equality impact.	Capital investment will still be targeted at those assets warranting repair/maintenance.
New charging system for vehicle crossing applications	None	Charging for services with no disproportionate equality impact.	The initial application charge will be taken from the overall licence fee meaning no impact on residents who apply and have a crossing installed.
Supplies and services saving in Strategic street lighting	None	Supplies and services underspend with no disproportionate equality impact.	Services maintained effectively and efficiently within existing budgets.
Review of Community Protection & Income Generation	Reduction in community protection staff.	Saving will involve a phased reduction of staff over 4 years to ease impact, with a reduction of 2FTE for 2023/24. There will be a Countywide impact on service delivery affecting the general public, visitors and businesses which may indirectly impact protected groups.	ER/VR will be sought where possible. HR processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment.
Review of structure in Partnerships Team	Restructure exercise with a reduction of	Reduction in capacity to support partnerships including the voluntary and	HR processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment.

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
	1 FTE staff member.	<p>community sector with potential impacts for protected groups supported by this sector.</p> <p>The roles of the remaining team members will be reviewed to ensure the impact on partnerships including the voluntary and community sector are minimised.</p>	
Review of AAPs	Independent review of AAPs including potential grant funding and staff reductions	<p>The review of AAPs is expected to conclude in December 2022.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the savings will mainly be made up of reductions in AAP grant funds (which benefit initiatives across protected groups), and any potential staffing reductions would be managed through vacancies/ERVR. Based on recent practice with AAPs, it is envisaged that any reduction in their core grant funds would be supplemented by their securing alternative, often externally funded, programmes to manage that would minimise the impact of the reduction on the VCS.</p>	HR processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment.
Restructure within Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) and Corporate Policy	Review of management arrangements	Management responsibilities will be reviewed with no disproportionate equality impact as a result of this saving.	HR processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment.

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
Car mileage reduction	None	Changing working practises as we exit the covid pandemic have resulted in a reduction in car mileage claims. No disproportionate equality impact.	

Regeneration Economy and Growth

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
Strategic Car Park Review	As the saving proposal develops in subsequent years equality analysis will be added.		
Moving vehicle/Bus Lane enforcement income	None	No disproportionate equality impact.	
Park and Ride Discount Rate	Removal of discount rate of £1.70 per day for regular users who pay on the bus using a POP (Pay as you Go) Card and reconfiguration of the on-bus ticket machines to accept contactless debit/credit card payment.	Removal of the discount POP card user rate will negatively impact the most regular users who access this discount rate (4.5% of all transactions), and will most likely be of working age, although it will create price equity for all users. Proposed improvements in flexibility in payment methods for all customers through reconfiguration of on-bus ticket machines to accept contactless debit/credit card payment will benefit all	Communication strategies will be key in the promotion of more flexible payment methods for majority of users.

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
		customers, in particular some people with disabilities who may find using contactless on-bus payments more accessible.	
Reduction in Concessionary Fares	None	One off saving due to reduced ridership of concessionary passengers. No equality impact.	
Increased surplus rental income on commercial properties	None	No equality impact.	
Theatre ticketing – introduce dynamic pricing	As the saving proposal develops in subsequent years equality analysis will be added.		
Theatre Marketing – contract out	None	No equality impact.	
End daytime café offer at Empire Theatre	None	Underuse of daytime café at the Empire Theatre. There are a number of more established independent cafes nearby for use. The café offer will however remain available when the theatre/cinema is open. There is no impact on staff and no further equality impact.	
Library Transformation – Sevenhills lease	None	No equality impact as saving refers to lease agreements only.	

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
Library Transformation – Clayport Library remodel	As the saving proposal develops in subsequent years equality analysis will be added.		
Planning Income volumes	None	Planning and building control fees with no equality impact.	
Review Housing Team Solutions	None	Deletion of vacant post with no equality impact.	
International Team Restructure	Reduced staffing by one post within the International Team and amalgamate operations within the existing Employability team.	Reduced capacity of the international team from will adversely impact opportunities for young people to participate in international / intercultural events. Although reduced in team capacity, an international service offer will remain available after a merger of remaining staff with the employability team.	The proposal is felt to both reflect the reducing demand for the service, post Brexit and pandemic which has reduced the level of school travelling, while still retaining sufficient capacity to provide an effective service offer going forward. HR processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment of staff involved.
Service review Catering, Cleaning and facilities management	As the saving proposal develops in subsequent years equality analysis will be added.		

Resources

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
<p>Policy and Performance employee review</p>	<p>Staff Reduction within the strategy team.</p>	<p>Removal of posts in the Strategy Team, facilitated through the Data Insight & Business Intelligence Programme.</p> <p>The saving is expected to be made through progression of ER/VR and there is no disproportionate equality impact.</p>	<p>HR processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment of staff involved.</p> <p>Data Insight & Business Intelligence improvements will ensure service continuity and minimize impact on wider team.</p>
<p>HR Employee review and training budgets</p>	<p>As the saving proposal develops in subsequent years equality analysis will be added.</p>		
<p>Procurement income generation and employee reductions</p>	<p>Reduction of 1FTE procurement manager.</p>	<p>Reduction of one procurement manager with realignment of responsibilities. Projected further income generation to contribute to saving.</p> <p>The saving is expected to be made through progression of ER/VR and there is no disproportionate equality impact.</p>	<p>HR processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment of staff involved.</p> <p>Realignment of responsibilities with remaining managers/staff will ensure service continuity.</p>
<p>Business support employee review</p>	<p>Service review and restructure of business services.</p>	<p>Proposed staffing reductions over a 4-year period. Initial phase 2023/24 will involve a review of the management positions across the service with any impact to be managed by progressing ER/VR and deletion of vacant posts, where possible, but some compulsory redundancies may be required</p>	<p>HR processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment of staff involved.</p> <p>A full equality impact assessment will be undertaken.</p> <p>Ongoing business improvement and digitisation to mitigate impact.</p>

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
		The level of staff reductions will result in reduced/removed service in some areas which requires further study to understand impact on equality.	
Internal Audit Income generation and employee review	Deletion of two audit manager posts with realignment of responsibilities and creation of deputy chief auditor post.	Proposed staffing reductions/realignment within Internal Audit are in response to service change and the increasing need for a strategic approach. Negative equality impact is not expected as this can be managed with ER/VR requests.	HR processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment of staff involved. The proposal will ensure that the level of service is maintained with greater support to the Chief Internal Auditor and Corporate Fraud Manager.
Corporate Finance employee review	Deletion of senior manager vacant post with expected retirement of another post.	This proposal involves deletion of a senior management vacancy and although this will impact staff workload in picking up additional responsibilities, no disproportionate impact in terms of equality is expected.	HR processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment of staff involved.
Corporate Finance non employee budgets	None	Reduction in non-employee expenditure budgets with no equality impact.	
Legal Services staffing	Staff reductions	For 2023/24 saving involves a voluntary reduction in staff hours with no equality impact. As the saving proposal develops in subsequent years equality analysis will be added to.	

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
Legal and Dem Services non employee budgets	None	Reduction in non-employee expenditure budgets with no equality impact.	
Digital Services employee review	As the saving proposal develops in subsequent years equality analysis will be added.		
Digital Services supplies and services	None	Reduction in supplies with no equality impact.	
Finance and Transactional Charging	As the saving proposal develops and appropriate consultations are undertaken, the equality analysis will be added.	The service will be looking at current charging for services provided where the Council provides additional support within the Deputy and Appointee Team	The proposal will be subject to consultation and this will lead to Analysis of service user data to identify impact and any necessary mitigation.
Finance and Transactional Charging non employee budgets	None	Reduction in non-employee expenditure budgets with no equality impact.	
Review of Customer Services	Demand led review of the service offer within Customer Services As the saving proposal develops in subsequent years equality analysis will be added.	A consultation will be carried out with users of the service to understand preferences and demand in terms of contact, so that resources can be directed where they are needed the most. The outcomes from the consultation will	The review aims to better understand customer need and will ensure the customer service offer meets demand. The proposal is still under development and will be subject to consultation. HR processes will be followed to ensure fair treatment of staff.

Saving Description	Element of saving with equality impact	Equality impact and analysis	Mitigation
		inform proposals for making changes to the service offer to make savings.	
Review of the structure within Finance and Transactional Services	As the saving proposal develops in subsequent years equality analysis will be added.		
Digital Services Application and hosting	None	Reduction in goods and services with no equality impact.	

Corporate – No equality impact for any corporate savings

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**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

24 October 2022



**Resources – Quarter 1 June 2022:
Forecast of Revenue and Capital
Outturn 2022/23**

Ordinary Decision

Report of Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide details of the updated forecast revenue and capital outturn budget position for the Resources service grouping, highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget based on the position to the end of June 2022.

Executive summary

- 2 The initial quarter 1 forecast position shows that the service is forecasting a cash limit overspend of £0.139 million against a revised budget of £25.072 million.
- 3 The Resources Cash Limit balance carried forward at 31 March 2023 is forecast to be £0.428 million. Other earmarked reserves under the direct control of Resources Management Team (RMT) are forecast to total £15.834 million at 31 March 2023.
- 4 The revised Resources capital budget is £10.546 million for 2022/23, with a total expenditure to 30 June 2022 of £0.631 million (5.98%).

Recommendation(s)

- 5 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is recommended to note the forecast of outturn position.

Background

6 County Council approved the Revenue and Capital budgets for 2022/23 at its meeting on 23 February 2022. These budgets have subsequently been revised to account for grant additions/reductions, corporate savings/adjustments, budget transfers between service groupings and budget profiling between years. This report covers the financial position for the following major budget areas maintained by the Resources service grouping:

- Revenue Budget - £25.072 million (original £25.249 million)
- Capital Programme - £10.546 million (original £11.977 million)

7 The original Resources General Fund budget has been revised in year to incorporate a number of budget adjustments as follows:

	<u>£,000s</u>
Quarter 1:	
Transfer to NCC – Business Support	(22)
Transfer to REG – Business Support	(176)
Transfer to REG – Health & Safety	(795)
Transfer to REG – County Records	(258)
Transfer from CYPS to HR	71
Transfer to Contingencies	26
2021/22 Pay award	977
TOTAL	<u>(177)</u>

The revised General Fund Budget for Resources is £25.072 million

8 The summary financial statements contained in the report cover the financial year 2022/23 and show:

- The approved annual budget;
- The actual income and expenditure as recorded in the Council's financial management system;
- The variance between the annual budget and the forecast outturn;
- For the Resources revenue budget, adjustments for items outside of the cash limit to take into account such items as redundancies met from the strategic reserve, capital charges not controlled by services and use of / or contributions to earmarked reserves.

- 9 The service is forecasting a cash limit overspend of £0.139 million (0.55%) against a revised budget of £25.072 million.
- 10 The tables below compare the actual expenditure with the budget. The first table is analysed by Subjective Analysis (i.e. type of expense), and the second by Head of Service.

Type of Expenditure (Subjective Analysis) (£000's)

	2022/23 Budget £000	YTD Actual £000	QTR1 Forecast of outturn £000	Variance (under) / over spend £000	Items Outside Cash Limit £000	Hyper Inflation Adjustments £000	Cash Limit Variance £000
Employees	67,374	16,084	67,819	445	(678)	-	(233)
Premises	2,049	170	2,029	(20)	-	-	(20)
Transport	729	233	590	(139)	-	-	(139)
Supplies and Services	16,679	7,311	16,336	(343)	(92)	-	(435)
Third Party Payments	52	3,884	44	(8)	-	-	(8)
Transfer Payments	-	11	-	-	-	-	-
Central Support and Capital	27,035	-	27,115	80	-	-	80
Gross Expenditure	113,918	27,693	113,933	15	(770)	-	(755)
Income	(89,448)	(8,755)	(88,564)	884	10	-	894
Net Expenditure	24,470	18,938	25,369	899	(760)	-	139
HB Transfer payments	104,245	29,405	104,245	-	-	-	-
HB Central Support and Capital	300	-	300	-	-	-	-
HB Income	(103,943)	(671)	(103,943)	-	-	-	-
HB Net Expenditure	602	28,734	602	-	-	-	-
Total Net Exp	25,072	47,672	25,971	899	(760)	-	139

By Head of Service (£000's)

	2022/23 Budget £000	YTD Actual £000	QTR1 Forecast of outturn £000	Variance (under) / over spend £000	Items Outside Cash Limit £000	Hyper Inflation Adjustments £000	Cash Limit Variance £000
Central Establishment Recharges	(24,181)	-	(24,181)	-	-	-	-
Corporate Finance & Commercial Services	4,079	874	3,993	(86)	-	-	(86)
Internal Audit and Insurance	1,105	252	1,130	25	(67)	-	(42)
Legal & Democratic Services	8,496	1,844	8,458	(38)	(98)	-	(136)
Service Management / Central Charges	(10,497)	58	(10,497)	-	-	-	-
HR & Employee Services	4,730	600	5,113	383	(242)	-	141
Transactional & Customer Services	8,480	4,565	8,380	(100)	(75)	-	(175)
Digital Services	13,873	4,139	14,426	553	(65)	-	488
Corporate Policy Planning & Performance	2,319	617	2,172	(147)	99	-	(48)
Procurement Sales & Business Services	15,969	5,770	16,278	309	(312)	-	(3)
Pension	97	218	97	-	-	-	-
Net Expenditure Excluding HB	24,470	18,938	25,369	899	(760)	-	139
Housing Benefit	602	28,734	602	-	-	-	-
Net Expenditure	25,072	47,672	25,971	899	(760)	-	139

- 11 The table below provides a brief commentary on the variances against the revised budget analysed by Head of Service. The table identifies variances in the core budget only and excludes items outside of the cash limit (e.g. redundancy costs) and technical accounting adjustments (e.g. capital charges):

Head of Service	Service Area	Description	Year End (under) / overbudget £000	Year End (under) / overbudget £000
Central Establishment Recharges	Central Establishment Recharges	No material variances.	0	0
Corporate Finance & Commercial Services	Corporate Management	£9,000 over budget on employees.	9	(86)
	Management Priority	£26,000 underbudget on employees.	(26)	
	Financial Systems	£5,000 over budget on employees.	5	
	Financial Management	£7,000 under budget on employees. £6,000 under budget on supplies & services. £56,000 over achieved income.	(69)	
	Strategic Finance	£5,000 under budget on employees.	(5)	
Procurement Sales & Business Services	Procurement	£3,000 over achieved income.	(3)	(3)
Pensions	Pension	No material variance.	0	0
HR & Employee Services	Advice & Guidance	£20,000 overbudget on employees. £18,000 overbudget on supplies & services.	38	141
	Head of People & Talent Management	£3,000 overbudget on employees.	3	
	Payroll & Employee Services	£15,000 overbudget on employees. £4,000 underbudget on Transport £76,000 under achieved income.	87	
	Occupational Health	£19,000 overbudget on employees. £6,000 underbudget on supplies & services.	13	

Head of Service	Service Area	Description	Year End (under) / overbudget £000	Year End (under) / overbudget £000
Transactional & Customer Services	Customer Relations	£49,000 underbudget on employees.	(49)	(175)
	Service Management	£21,000 underbudget on employees.	(21)	
	Revenue & Benefits	£86,000 underbudget on employees. £19,000 underbudget on supplies & services.	(105)	
Digital Services	Digital and Customer Services	£45,000 overbudget on employees. £34,000 underbudget on premises. £58,000 underbudget on transport. £568,000 underbudget on supplies & services £10,000 overbudget on direct revenue funding for capital scheme. £1,093,000 under achieved income.	488	488
Internal Audit and Risk	Insurance and Risk	£2,000 overbudget on employees.	2	(42)
	Internal Audit	£8,000 underbudget on employees. £18,000 over achieved income.	(26)	
	Corporate Fraud	£18,000 underbudget on employees.	(18)	
Legal and Democratic Services	Corporate and Democratic Core	£26,000 overbudget on employees. £10,000 over achieved income.	16	(136)
	Legal and Other Services	£293,000 underbudget on employees. £16,000 underbudget on premises. £182,000 overbudget on supplies & services. £25,000 over achieved income.	(152)	
Corporate Policy Planning & Performance	Head of Transformation	No material variance	0	(48)
	Equality & Strategy	£32,000 overbudget on employees.	32	
	Research & Intelligence	£30,000 overbudget on employees.	30	
	Transformation	£110,000 underbudget on employees.	(110)	
TOTAL				139

- 13 In summary, the service grouping is not on track to maintain spending within its cash limit.

Capital Programme

- 14 The original Resources capital programme was £11.977 million, and this has been revised for additions/reductions, budget transfers and budget profiling. The revised budget now stands at £10.546 million.
- 15 Summary financial performance to the end of June 2022 is shown below:

	Original Annual Budget 2022/23	Revised Annual Budget 2022/23	Actual Spend 30/06/2022	Remaining Budget 2022/23
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Digital & Customer Services	10,561	9,130	594	8,536
Corporate Finance & Commercial Services and Finance & Transactional Services	16	16	6	10
Policy, Planning & Performance	1,400	1,400	31	1,369
Total	11,977	10,546	631	9,915

- 16 The revised Resources capital budget is £10.546 million with a total expenditure to 30 June 2022 of £0.631 million (5.98%). A full breakdown of schemes and actual expenditure to 30 June 2022 is given in Appendix 2.
- 17 At year end the actual outturn performance will be compared against the revised budgets and at that time service and project managers will need to account for any budget variance.

Background papers

- County Council Report (23 February 2022) – Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2022/23.
- Cabinet Report (14 September 2022) – Forecast of Revenue and capital Outturn – Period to 30 June 2022.

Other useful documents

- Previous Cabinet reports / None

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The consideration of regular budgetary control reports is a key component of the Council's Corporate and Financial Governance arrangements. This report shows the forecast spend against budgets agreed by the Council in February 2022 in relation to the 2022/23 financial year.

Finance

Financial implications are detailed throughout the report which provides an analysis of the revenue and capital outturn position.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable.

Climate Change

Not applicable.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable.

Staffing

Not applicable.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

The consideration of regular budgetary control reports is a key component of the Councils Corporate and Financial Governance arrangements.

Procurement

The outcome of procurement activity is factored into the financial projections included in the report.

Appendix 2 Resources Capital Programme 2022/23 – Detailed Monitoring Statement to 30 June 2022

Resources	Revised Annual Budget	Actual Spend	Remaining Budget
	2022/23	30-Jun-22	2022/23
	£000	£000	£000
Applications and Development	549	-	549
Design and Print	2	-	2
Head of Service	2	-	2
Technical Services	5,007	528	4,479
Customer Relations	137	-	137
Digital Durham	1,673	66	1,607
Digital Engagement	1,760	-	1,760
ICT Services Include Design and Print Total	9,130	594	8,536
Migration of HR/Payroll Functionality	16	6	10
Policy Planning & Performance	1,400	31	1,369
Financing Resources Total	1,416	37	1,379
RES Total	10,546	631	9,915

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**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

24 October 2022

**Quarter One, 2022/23
Performance Management Report**

Ordinary Decision



Report of Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present an overview of progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework and highlight key messages to inform strategic priorities and work programmes.
- 2 The report covers performance in and to the end of quarter one 2022/23, April to June 2022.

Executive Summary

- 3 A new [Council Plan](#) for 2022-2026 was approved by Council on 22 June. This sets out a new performance framework for the Council. Corporate Management Team has agreed to the development of a new quarterly performance report format which provides greater focus on these issues. This is the first report for the new reporting period to follow this format.
- 4 The performance report is structured around the two main components.
 - (a) State of the County indicators to highlight areas of strategic importance and reflected in both the [County Durham Vision 2035](#) and the [Council Plan](#).
 - (b) Performance of council services and progress against major initiatives as set out in the [Council Plan](#).
- 5 Performance is reported against the five thematic areas within the Council Plan 2022-2026: our economy, our environment, our people, our communities, and our council.
- 6 Performance is reported on an exception basis with key messages under each thematic Council Plan areas being broken down into national, regional

and local picture, things that are going well, areas which require attention and other areas to note.

- 7 We are now transitioning into a post-pandemic world, but the impacts of COVID-19 can still be seen in our performance reporting. The last two financial years are not representative for many areas of performance and will be an unfair comparison due to pandemic impacts.
- 8 We have therefore, wherever possible, tried to make the comparison of current performance against pre-pandemic data. Whilst COVID-19 continues to impact on certain performance metrics, for instance staff sickness absence, waste tonnages collected and leisure centre usage, there is evidence of some areas returning to pre-pandemic levels, e.g., fly-tipping incidents.
- 9 The report highlights that performance is positive in several areas for the county including higher employment levels and high demand for business space and a recovering tourism sector. Air Quality is improving in Durham City and the second phase of our Climate Emergency Response Plan has been adopted.
- 10 Some health indicators are showing a more positive trend with smoking during pregnancy reducing and the figure for people discharged from hospital into reablement or rehabilitation services who remained at home 91 days later is the highest figure for four years.
- 11 The council is responding to the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis through a multi-agency group to ensure a holistic package of support and latest data shows 384 refugees had been accommodated in the county.
- 12 However, the largest challenge for our residents, local businesses and the council is the current cost of living crisis. Inflation is currently running at 10.1%¹ with the Bank of England forecasting it to peak at 13.3% at the end of March 2023. Ofgem are expected to increase the energy cap again in October and further again in January 2023. The inflationary increase is largely driven by the rise in the cost of fuel and energy bills, which is being impacted significantly by the war in Ukraine.
- 13 The cost of living crisis has a triple impact on the council.
 - (a) It impacts on our residents. High inflation is outstripping wage and benefit increases resulting in a fall in income in real terms. This has been further exacerbated by the tax increases implemented in April. This will result in increased demand for services to help support people facing financial hardship or who are in crisis.
 - (b) Increased costs for the council. Our premises and transport costs have increased because of the rise in energy costs and fuel prices,

¹ UK Consumer Price Index for 12 months to July 2022

and, also the cost of other supplies and services where prices have increased as suppliers face similar issues themselves. It is also anticipated that employee costs will increase by more than in previous years when the settlement is negotiated to accommodate inflation.

- (c) Reduced income for the council. Users of council services may seek to save money resulting in a fall in income from discretionary services such as leisure centres and theatres.
- 14 Other areas which require attention relate to the amount of waste going to landfill and the evidence of worsening mental health in the county. Social work caseloads remain higher than optimum and the extreme pressure on child placements in the looked after service remains. Staff turnover in the Council is higher than in recent years and sickness has broadly returned to pre-pandemic levels now.

Recommendation

- 15 That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board notes the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter one performance, the continuing impact of COVID-19 and the increased cost of living on the council's performance, and the actions being taken to address areas of underperformance including the significant economic and well-being challenges because of the pandemic.

Analysis of the Performance Report

Going well

Our economy

- 16 The number of people claiming unemployment benefits have been reducing since May 2021 and is currently 3.4% of the working age population (June 2022), which is lower than the pre-pandemic position (4%). 30 to 34 years is the most frequent age group for claimants. The official (labour force survey) unemployment rate at 4.4% is statistically similar to the rate for previous quarter and the regional and national rates. The county has been experiencing falling unemployment since December 2020.
- 17 Gross Value Added (GVA) per filled job was £46,245 in 2020 (latest data), up 0.5% from 2019. GVA is 78% of the national value and the gap is widening.
- 18 Business Durham's property rental portfolio has an occupancy rate of 97%.
- 19 Inward investment, businesses intensively assisted, and businesses engaged with Business Durham all exceeded target. The County Durham Growth Fund awarded £660,000 to five SMEs and Finance Durham awarded almost £1.3 million to a further five companies.

- 20 A healthy labour market has resulted in fewer people registering on employability programmes but more participants progressing into employment.
- 21 There are signs our tourism and cultural sector is recovering from the pandemic. In 2022, visitors increased by 38% and money generated by the visitor economy increased by 61%.
- 22 94% of three and four year olds in the county are receiving their free education entitlement.

Our environment

- 23 96% of sites within the Durham City Air Quality Management Area are better than the government threshold for nitrogen dioxide, an improvement from 54% in 2019. COVID restrictions had an impact by reducing traffic within the city centre.
- 24 Cleanliness surveys show improvements across all areas for litter, detritus and dog fouling, and are meeting targets.
- 25 The second phase of the Climate Emergency Response Plan has been adopted and we are working with partners and communities to make the county net zero by 2045.

Our people

- 26 Just over 30% of women are breastfeeding 6-8 weeks after birth, an increase compared to just under 28% for the same period last year.
- 27 89% of people discharged from hospital into reablement or rehabilitation services remained at home 91 days later, the highest figure for four years.
- 28 The average age of people entering permanent care has shown little change over the last ten years (varying between 83 and 85 years). Over the same period, the number of people entering permanent care has also remained stable, except for the last two years.
- 29 Gym and swim memberships are 16% higher than last year and above budgeted income profiles. However, cancellations remain a concern. We have reinstated exit surveys to enhance our understanding and the impact of the cost of living pressures.
- 30 581 families have been turned around via the Stronger Families programme, 545 by attaining significant and sustained outcomes and 36 by maintaining continuous employment.

Our communities

- 31 536 affordable housing units were completed in 2021/22, compared to 478 the previous year. In addition, during quarter one, 433 net new homes were

delivered, and 55 empty properties were brought back into use following local authority intervention, more than the target of 50.

- 32 The latest data shows that 384 of the 560 people who had established contact with residents through the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme had arrived in the county.
- 33 All councils are now expected to take asylum seekers under a new system of 'full dispersal'. A multi-agency group is ensuring we have the infrastructure for community cohesion and integration.
- 34 Fly-tipping incidents responded to by the council continues to reduce and is significantly below both the previous 12 months and pre-pandemic. Our enforcement rate for fly-tipping is 49%.

Our council

- 35 The council has started a major project to implement an enterprise analytics platform which will enable us to provide new insights and citizen indexed data such as a single view of the child, single view of the adult and single view of the family. It will also lay the foundations for a more diagnostic and predictive approach to data analytics in future making us more data driven as an organisation and help deliver better outcomes for our residents.
- 36 Our Performance Development Review (PDR) cycle is continuing, and the latest performance data shows that the process was complete for 117 leaders (100%), 882 managers (88%) and 3,601 core employees (60%).
- 37 459 employees are currently enrolled on our apprenticeship programme, which equates to around 2.8% of our workforce. During quarter one, 61 new apprentices were recruited and given start dates throughout August and September 2022.

Areas which require attention

Our economy

- 38 We remain concerned about the impact of the cost of living crisis on our residents, especially those in low income households and/or in rural areas. The council is still consulting on its revised [Poverty Action Strategy and Plan](#), which sets out a comprehensive response to the impacts of the wide-ranging poverty issues within the county.
- 39 More households are requesting assistance with fuel debt issues. During quarter one, we helped 189 households achieve an average saving of £177 (via the Managing Money Better initiative).

Our environment

- 40 The quantity of waste collected and disposed of remains 8% higher than pre-pandemic. Both the landfill diversion rate (89.4%) and the kerbside recycling rate (38.1%) have reduced. This is due to a combination of fluctuations in the recycling markets, changes to recycling legislation, issues within the waste disposal system and behavioural change stemming from the pandemic.
- 41 Contamination of household kerbside recycling has reduced over the last 12 months. However, it remains an issue with around one third of waste in blue bins being either recyclables such as WEEE² that should be taken to the HWRC for processing or is residual waste. In the north of the county, we have placed stickers on bins to highlight what can and cannot be recycled at the kerbside.

Our people

- 42 Admissions under the Mental Health Act are 19% higher (+37 admissions) than at the start of the pandemic, and 3% higher than last year (+6 admissions).
- 43 Just under 41% of carers (adult social care) are satisfied with the support and services they receive. Whilst this is the lowest result since the survey started 9 years ago (there have been four previous biennial surveys), it is still in line with national trends.
- 44 Despite encouraging performance in terms of the impacts of reablement, the percentage of people receiving reablement following discharge from hospital has decreased from 3.8% to 2.7% and is below both the regional (2.9%) and national (3.1%) rates.
- 45 Caseloads remain high across our social workers. Newly qualified social workers recruited will take up their posts over the summer. We remain focused on retention as well as recruitment.
- 46 More children in care have resulted in significant placement pressures, which are reflected both regionally and nationally, and are focusing on increasing capacity within our in-house children's homes, recruiting more foster carers, and working with children and their families to prevent them entering the care system. The CLA placement budgets are forecast to overspend by £5.39 million this year.
- 47 High demand for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) continues. More than 500 requests were received in the year ending June 2022 - higher than in the same period in any of the last three years.

² Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

Our communities

- 48 Reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) have decreased by 16% compared to the same period last year. This reduction was mainly due to a significant fall in environmental ASB, which is masking increases across the nuisance (29% higher than pre-pandemic) and personal categories (68% higher than pre-pandemic). Reports from the frontline staff suggest this reflects less tolerance across our communities and a deterioration in mental health from the pandemic which is driving behaviour. Deliberate fires have also increased, predominantly in the east of the county.

Our council

- 49 Councils are warning the triple impact of spiralling inflation, high energy costs and wage increases will increase budget pressures. We also expect increased demand for support services due to the cost of living crisis, and a reduction in our income generating services, such as gym memberships, and theatre and cinema attendance.
- 50 Across our workforce, almost one third of staff are aged over 50 years, and staff retirements are partly driving the increase in staff turnover which currently stands at 9.1%, higher than the pre-pandemic figure of 7.2% but lower than the national average of around 10%. We are modernising our approach to recruitment to make us a more appealing in a hugely competitive market, where attracting skilled workers remains a challenge, and local and national skills shortages are driving competition in the jobs market.
- 51 Although COVID-19 caused additional sickness absence throughout the pandemic, measures to limit its spread helped reduce other causes of absence, and our sickness rate steadily reduced to its lowest level for ten years at year-end 2020/21. However, our rate has since increased.
- 52 If we adjust our sickness rate to remove sickness due to COVID-19, then our rate reduces from 12.2 days per full time equivalent (FTE) to 10.7 days which essentially returns us to our rate pre-pandemic.
- 53 Sick days have increased across all sickness types except for neurological reasons. Days lost to 'mental health and fatigue' is 10% higher than pre-pandemic, driven by increases in stress (both work and non-work related), anxiety disorders, fatigue and exhaustion. On 10 March 2022, long-COVID was added as a reason for employee absence and during the 81 days between 10 March and 30 June 2022, 532 working days were lost to this absence type.
- 54 During the last 12 months, 74% of employees recorded less than five days sickness and 57% recorded no sickness at all.
- 55 During quarter one, significantly higher numbers of new council tax claims (up 33%), housing benefit claims (up 28%) and change of circumstances

for council tax reduction (up 5%) resulted in longer processing times. As staff have now returned from working on test and trace support payments, we expect to be back on track by the end of quarter two.

Other areas of note

Our economy

- 56 As runner-up to the UK City of Culture 2025 title, the county was awarded £125,000. In October, we will provide details of how elements of our bid will be progressed.
- 57 To help fund the engineering works at The Story at Mount Oswald project, we have received £70,000 of additional European Regional Development Fund funding and have submitted a bid for a further £200,000.
- 58 Following the Big Econ-versation events, survey responses and workshops held earlier this year, a draft Inclusive Economic Strategy has been prepared and will be shared with partners, stakeholders and community representatives in September. Once consultation is complete, the strategy will go to Cabinet in November 2022.

Our environment

- 59 Our Scaling on Street Charging Infrastructure project won the award for Best Electric Vehicle Charging Project at the 2022 Municipal Journal Awards. Our e-learning course to tackle littering was also highly commended in the Digital Transformation category.

Our people

- 60 The National Child Measurement Programme 2020/21 shows a reduction in the percentage of children, across all age ranges, who are of a healthy weight in the national and regional data. This survey used a sampling methodology, and local authority level data is not available, however, this suggests that County Durham will likely see a reduction in children who are of a healthy weight.
- 61 Tobacco treatment is now a routine part of maternity care, and whilst a greater percentage of women are smoking at time of delivery, there is a narrowing gap with the North East and a longer-term trend of fewer pregnant women smoking.

Our communities

- 62 The council's selective licensing scheme, which aims to improve management standards of privately rented properties and reduce anti-social behaviour, is now live. During the first operational quarter, 2,208 properties were fully licenced, approximately 8% of properties covered by the scheme.

Our council

- 63 Significant financial uncertainty requires the council to be flexible and adaptable in its financial planning. Required savings could change significantly depending on whether the government provides much needed additional resource in 2023/24 and whether the council experiences further additional financial pressures due to demand, loss of income or due to the impact of inflation.
- 64 Achieving the required £55 million of savings over the next four years will be extremely challenging and it is becoming more difficult to protect our frontline services as savings in managerial and back-office efficiencies are becoming exhausted due to delivering £250 million of savings up to 31 March 2023.
- 65 Contacts through our reported channels continue to increase. This is due to transferring lines to the automatic call distribution telephony system, reinstating lines closed due to the pandemic, such as the coroner and leisure centres, and more recently, queries relating to the £150 energy rebate.
- 66 Digital contact is increasing. More residents are requesting services through our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system using online accounts and accessing council tax and housing benefit information through accounts in the Revenues and Benefits Portal.
- 67 Service requests received through our CRM system are 25% higher than the pre-pandemic level (an additional 87,000). Almost 60% of these service requests have a performance standard (which was met in 61% of cases) and of the 22,000 respondents to our satisfaction survey 82% stated they were satisfied with service delivery.

Performance Indicators – Summary

- 68 We are now transitioning into a post-pandemic world, but the impacts of COVID-19 can still be seen in our performance reporting. The last two financial years are not representative for many areas of performance and will be an unfair comparison due to pandemic impacts.
- 69 We have therefore, wherever possible, tried to make the comparison of current performance against pre-pandemic data.

Risk Management

- 70 Effective risk management is a vital component of the council's agenda. The council's risk management process sits alongside our change programme and is incorporated into all significant change and improvement projects. The latest report can be found [here](#).

Background papers

- County Durham Vision (County Council, 23 October 2019)
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s115064/Draft%20Durham%20Vision%20v10.0.pdf>

Other useful documents

- Council Plan 2022 to 2026 (current plan)
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=56529>
- Quarter Four, 2021/22 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s157533/Year%20End%20performance%20report%202021-22.pdf>
- Quarter Three, 2021/22 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s152742/Performance%20Report%202021-22%20003.pdf>
- Quarter Two, 2021/22 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s149087/Q2%20Performance%20Report%202021-22%20-%20Cabinet.pdf>
- Quarter One, 2021/22 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s144872/Q1%20Performance%20Report%202021-22.pdf>

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable.

Finance

Latest performance information is being used to inform corporate, service and financial planning.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality measures are monitored as part of the performance monitoring process.

Climate Change

We have declared a climate change emergency and consider the implications of climate change in our reports and decision-making.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

A number of performance indicators and key actions relating to crime and disorder are continually monitored in partnership with Durham Constabulary.

Staffing

Performance against a number of relevant corporate health indicators has been included to monitor staffing issues.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

Reporting of significant risks and their interaction with performance is integrated into the quarterly performance management report.

Procurement

Not applicable.



Durham County Council Performance Management Report Quarter One, 2022/23



1.0 Our Economy: National, Regional & Local Picture

Employment levels

- 1 Latest data (March 2022) shows no significant change to the employment rate at 70.1%. This is comparable with the rate for the North East region but statistically well below the national rate of 75.4%.
- 2 The employment rate in County Durham for those with a disability is 46.7%, much lower than the rate for those without a disability (78.9%). For those with no disability the employment rate in County Durham is lower than the national average of 81.3%, however, the employment rate for disabled residents in the county is 10.2 percentage points lower than in England (56.9).
- 3 The unemployment rate at 4.4% is statistically similar to the rate for previous quarter and the regional and national rates. The county has been experiencing falling unemployment since December 2020.
- 4 More people have become 'economically inactive' – mainly becoming students or looking after family / home. This suggests people are moving out of the labour market rather than into employment.
- 5 Significantly more people claimed employment benefits between March and May 2020. The number remained relatively static throughout 2020 and 2021 before dropping notably in May 2021. The number has continued to fall and is now 3.4% (June 2022), lower than the 4% recorded pre-pandemic.
- 6 The highest proportion of claimants are aged 30-34 years, and the 40-44 years cohort shows the biggest change since March 2020 (by 0.2pp).

Labour productivity

- 7 In 2020, our GVA per filled job was £46,245. This is 95.4% of the North East value and 78.4% of the national value. Longer-term growth has been slower than both regionally and nationally, so the GVA gap has widened.

Employment land

- 8 Since 2015/16, 79 hectares of employment land have been delivered. The latest year is less than the previous year but 2020/21 included significant developments at Integra 61 and Jade Business Park. 2021/22 reflects several smaller proposals, mainly general industry or storage and distribution floorspace, at various locations across the county.

Tourism Economy

- 9 16 million people visited the county in 2021. Around 8 million people to the Vale of Durham, 3 million to Durham City, 2 million to the Durham Coast and 2.5 million to the Durham Dales.
- 10 £827 million was added to the local economy with a day visitor contributing on average £31 and each staying visitor £276.
- 11 More than 70% of visitors were satisfied with the quality of attractions, eating establishments, variety of things to do and cleanliness of the area. However, the availability of public toilets, visitor information points and public transport were flagged as areas for improvement.

Education

- 12 Our exclusion rate has reduced by around 0.05% since the 18/19 academic year. Although 50 pupils were permanently excluded in 2020/21, the pandemic and sustained period of school closures will have played some part. Suspensions remain around 5%, higher than nationally but lower than the North East (7%).

1.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Occupancy

- 13 97% of Business Durham floor space is occupied. Remedial works are required at Sacriston but there is a waiting list of 16 companies. The Dales Centre achieved 100% occupancy and is seeing increased visitor numbers. £1.2 million of income was generated, £200,000 higher than the same quarter last year.

Investments

- 14 During quarter one, there were two inward investments, five SMEs were awarded a combined grant of £660,000 through the County Durham Growth Fund, and a further five companies received a combined investment of almost £1.3 million through the Finance Durham Fund.
- 15 In addition, more than £1.6 million was secured for companies.

Businesses Assisted

- 16 During quarter one, Business Durham engaged with 263 and intensively assisted 107. This is lower than the same period last year when businesses were taking up pandemic support through Business Durham's various programmes.

Jobs Created/Safeguarded

17 During quarter one, 603 jobs were created and 309 safeguarded. This is significantly lower than the same quarter last year when 2,576 jobs were safeguarded through the Durham Business Recovery Grant (in addition to 73 jobs created and 119 safeguarded through Business Durham's other activities).

Better Health At Work Award

18 The council continues to encourage organisations to work towards the [Better Health at Work Award](#) to improve the health and wellbeing of employees. At the end of 2021/22, 87 organisations were involved in the BHAWA, the highest number to date, 41 of which had attained the higher levels of the Award.

Employability programmes

- 19 891 people registered onto our programmes and 537 progressed into employment (60%). This was more than both the previous year (321 of 712, 45%) and pre-pandemic.
- 20 Although registrations onto the LINKCD programme increased, the healthy labour market means people are gaining employment before being registered onto our programmes. Some people are also unwilling to engage with other services and many clients have been mandated to restart the programme which has led to a reduction in referrals.
- 21 43 participants moved into education or training during 2021/22. Although higher than last year (34) and pre-pandemic levels, it is below the target of 132 because many clients have limited digital skills which prevents them from completing online courses. We expect figures will increase as more training is delivered face-to-face.

Theatres (Gala / Empire)

22 Ticket sales remain lower than normal due to working slightly reduced programmes during the COVID recovery period. However, both venues have sold out shows and we expect sales to reach pre-pandemic levels by the end of the financial year.

Visitors to our libraries and museums

- 23 There were 50,182 visitors to council owned museums (Killhope and Town Halls) during quarter one, including:
- 1,270 to Durham Town Hall despite the offer being reduced from six days to one (excludes private functions and special events).
 - 4,843 to Killhope Lead Mining Museum. The café and gift shop remains popular, and a busy summer programme expected to bring increased footfall.

- 34,023 to Bishop Auckland Town Hall, including 18,800 to the new exhibition space. The café remains popular, and weddings and funerals have returned.

24 Visits to libraries to attend events such as toddler time, reading groups, get creative and discover digital, continues to increase. During quarter one, visits were up 300% compared to last year and 2,622 tickets to 106 events sold.

1.2 Council Activity: Areas which require attention

Energy efficiency advice and support

- 25 During quarter one, we helped 189 households to save an average of £177 (via Managing Money Better). The ability to make savings is being affected by the reduced range of competitive tariffs due to companies going into liquidation.
- 26 514 properties benefitted from an energy efficiency measure. This is lower than previous quarters due to fewer households being assisted through the Warm Homes Scheme as changes in the Energy Company Obligation slowed down applications.
- 27 313 energy efficiency measures were installed through the Local Authority Delivery Scheme.

Library members

- 28 Memberships further reduced during quarter one and are 6% lower than the same period last year. However, library opening hours returned to normal in June and we are working with our communications and marketing team to remind customers of our library offer.

1.3 Council Activity: Other Areas to Note

UK City of Culture 2025

- 29 As a runner up, the county was awarded £125,000 which will contribute to a revised programme based on the 15 original ideas and include Place Labs in our 12 main settlements, and a creative education and skills programme led by Durham University. We will provide further details in October.
- 30 Capital projects in the original bid are being progressed. These include re-opening the former Durham Light Infantry Museum and Art Gallery and improvements to the riverbank in Durham City (Levelling Up Fund bid).

History Centre

31 £70,000 of funding for mechanical and electrical works has been received, and we have submitted a bid for a further £200,000.

Inclusive Economic Strategy

32 More than 86 Big Econ-versation events (31 January to 22 April 2022) were held and attended by over 1,500 people. Almost 1,500 surveys were completed by residents, business and young people. Feedback was tested through a series of workshops held in July.

33 Bringing together everything we have learnt from the comprehensive engagement, the evidence base, best practice both in Durham and elsewhere, a draft Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) has been prepared and during September will be shared with partners and stakeholders, including community representatives. Once complete, the strategy will go to Cabinet for sign-off in November.

Wave 9 How's Business Survey (9-16 May, based on 58 responses)

34 Although 9% of respondents said their income had increased, more than a third reported a drop of more than 50%.

35 The average response to the short-term impact of the pandemic was 5 out of 10 (with 10 being severe) and this dropped to 4.1 out of 10 for the long-term impact.

36 Bookings between May and July were below average as are forward bookings for September. The most popular booking period is within two months.

37 The main challenges reported were cost of living increases (72%), fuel prices (66%) and lack of demand (40%). Recruitment and the supply chain continued to be a concern to respondents, as well as COVID variants.

2.0 Our Environment: National, Regional & Local Picture

Air Quality

38 In 2020, 96% of sites within the Durham City Air Quality Management Area were within the government's threshold for nitrogen dioxide, compared to 54% in 2019. COVID restrictions had an impact by reducing traffic within the city centre.

2.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Carbon reduction

- 39 The second phase of the Climate Emergency Response Plan has been adopted and we are working with partners and communities to make the county net zero by 2045. Projects underway include installation of public electric vehicle charging points and through the Business Energy Efficiency Programme 2 helping businesses reduce their carbon emissions.

Environmental Cleanliness

- 40 The latest cleanliness surveys covering litter, detritus and dog fouling show improvements in all areas and are meeting targets.

2.2 Council Activity: Areas which require attention

Waste

- 41 8% more waste tonnage was collected and disposed of during the latest 12 months compared to pre-pandemic.
- 42 There was also a reduction in the kerbside recycling rate. This is due to fluctuation in the recycling markets as the cost of raw materials increase, legislative changes relating to the recycling of carpets, and changes in behaviours since the beginning of the pandemic.
- 43 Contamination of household kerbside recycling has reduced over the last 12 months. However, it remains an issue with around one third of waste in blue bins being either recyclables such as WEEE³ that should be taken to the HWRC for processing or is residual waste. In the north of the county, stickers have been placed on rubbish and recycling bins with information on which materials can and cannot be accepted on the kerbside recycling scheme.
- 44 In addition, waste which cannot be recycled is mostly sent to the energy from waste plant, which is experiencing capacity issues. We anticipated these pressures will ease as behaviours begin to normalise and waste tonnages reduce.

2.3 Council Activity: Other Areas to Note

Award recognition for carbon reduction and environmental initiatives

- 45 At the Municipal Journal Awards, Scaling on Street Charging Infrastructure won the award for Best Electric Vehicle Charging Project. Through the scheme, 150 more charging points have been installed, many in rural areas. Our e-learning course to tackle littering was also highly commended in the Digital Transformation category.

Restoring Railways

- 46 Ferryhill is one of nine projects progressing to the next stage of the government's Restoring Your Railway programme. Development and a further detailed analysis will be carried out by Network Rail to assess the reopening of the station.

3.0 Our People: National, Regional & Local Picture

Improving Healthy Life Expectancy

- 47 Healthy life expectancy at birth has shown no significant change and remains statistically significantly lower than England.
- 48 Female healthy life expectancy at 65 shows significant improvement and has halved the long-term gap with England. However, the figures relate to 2018-20 so do not include excess deaths due to COVID-19.

Breastfeeding

- 49 Historically, the UK has one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the world with County Durham being in the worst quartile of performance compared to UK rates.

Homes for older people

- 50 245 units, mainly bungalows plus some low-level access flats, were delivered in 2021/22 by a range of private developers and registered providers.

Children in Care

- 51 Although more children are in care, the rate per 10,000 children aged 0-17 remains the third lowest in the North East.

Pupils attending good or outstanding schools

- 52 A lower proportion of pupils in County Durham attend good or better schools in comparison to national and regional averages.

Special Educational Needs and Disability

- 53 An additional 200 children and young people were given an Educational Health Care Plan during the last 12 months. This figure continues to rise year on year.

3.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Smoking

- 54 Tobacco treatment is now part of routine maternity care. This gives at least 12 weeks' support and includes the provision of nicotine replacement therapy. New ways of supporting women who have no desire to quit smoking are being developed. More focused support in the postnatal period will be available from October 2022.

Breastfeeding

- 55 A greater proportion of mothers are continuing to breastfeed at 6-8 weeks after birth and the gap with the national average is reducing.
- 56 We are revising the multi-agency communication and engagement plan with partners to share key messages, targeting services such as dentists, businesses, event organisers, mental health service providers, culture, leisure and education.

Suicide Prevention

- 57 The number of suicides has remained relatively consistent over the last five years. Each year, between January and June, there was an average of 32 deaths.
- 58 CCTV and handrail lights will be installed at Newton Cap viaduct in Bishop Auckland.

Stronger Families Programme

- 59 The programme has turned around 581 families. 545 attained significant and sustained outcomes and 36 families achieved continuous employment.

Hospital Discharges

- 60 The proportion of older people who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement or rehabilitation services continues to increase and is currently the highest four years.

Housing Solutions

- 61 1,092 households were helped to stay in their home during quarter one. Of these, 889 involved early advice / intervention work to remove the threat of homelessness.
- 62 Seven households were prevented from homelessness during quarter one, compared to 86 in the same period last year. The reduction is due to the reasons for

presentations which was domestic abuse, loss of assured shorthold tenancies (landlord selling the property) and family/friends no longer able to accommodate. Cases allocated for prevention work have also reduced due to resource issues.

- 63 190 households were helped to stay in their home through adaptations via a Disabled Facilities Grant and a further six via the Financial Assistance Policy (owner occupiers and loans).

Gym and Swim Memberships

- 64 Although gym and swim memberships continue to increase, cancellations are high. We are reinstating exit surveys, stopped during the pandemic, to help understand the reasons why.

3.2 Council Activity: Areas which require attention

Mental Health and Wellbeing

- 65 There has been an increasing trend in admissions under the Mental Health Act (under Sections 2 and 3) since the start of the pandemic.
- 66 During quarter one, funding was provided for 40 communal spaces which support older people experiencing poor mental health, or who are at risk of social isolation or suicide.

Service user satisfaction

- 67 Just under 41% of carers (adult social care) are satisfied with the support and services they receive. Whilst this is the lowest result since the survey started (four previous biennial surveys), it is statistically comparable to the last two surveys and the latest national result.

Children's Social Care

- 68 Both children looked after and children in need⁴ continue to show an increasing trend, and this, combined with more complex cases, has led to caseload pressures for our social workers. Whilst we have recruited newly qualified social workers, who will take up their posts over the summer, we are also focusing on staff retention.
- 69 More children in care have led to increased placement pressures, which are reflected both regionally and nationally. We are focusing on increasing the capacity in our own in-house children's homes, recruiting more foster carers, and working with children and their families to prevent them entering care.

⁴ includes our children in care as well as children in need, children on a child protection plan and care leavers

Housing Solutions Contact

- 70 Although many teams are experiencing a fall in presentations, most notably homeless presentations and the Welfare Reform Team, others such as the Rough Sleeper Team and Ukrainian Support Team have seen an increase in demand.

Households helped to move to alternative accommodation

- 71 Fewer households moving into alternative accommodation corresponds to a reduction in homelessness preventions. Most cases now move straight into relief upon assessment. Of the 149 households helped during quarter one, 41% moved to supported housing, 31% secured tenancies with a registered provider and 25% moved to a private sector property. Of the 50 households where there was an acceptance of the main homeless duty, there were two main reasons for presenting - domestic abuse and the loss of assured shorthold tenancies, e.g., landlord selling the property.
- 72 Resource issues meant that relief cases were prioritised over those threatened with homelessness.

Leisure Centres

- 73 As our leisure centres continue to navigate through the COVID recovery phase, visitor numbers remain 7% lower than expected and we believe the increased cost of living is contributing to the overall decrease.
- 74 The swimming pool at Consett leisure centre has reopened following a lengthy closure to rectify major defects.

Education, Health and Care (EHCP) Plans

- 75 High demand for EHCP plans continues. More than 500 requests were received over the latest 12 months, higher than the same period over the last three years.
- 76 We are struggling to recruit education psychologists as there is a national shortage, and this is impacting our ability to complete assessments within statutory timescales.

3.3 Council Activity: Other Areas to Note

Permanent Admission to Care

- 77 The average age of people entering permanent care has shown little change over the last ten years (varying between 83 and 85 years). Over the same period, the number of people entering permanent care has also remained stable, except for the last two years.

Healthy weight in children

- 78 Regional and National data from the National Child Measurement Programme suggest that we are likely to see a reduction in the percentage of children, across all age ranges, who are of a healthy weight.

Support to the economy

- 79 Our Public Health Team has developed a partnership approach for anchor organisations to act as large local procurers, commissioners, and direct employers. A working group is looking to increase employment opportunities within three of the county's most deprived areas.

Heatwave Plan

- 80 The County Durham Heatwave Plan is now aligned to the up-to-date heatwave plan for England.

Rough Sleepers

- 81 Funding obtained through a regional initiative will provide two outreach workers, 'Somewhere Safe To Stay' provision, Jigsaw Complex Needs Project and an adult social worker.
- 82 However, budgets for the rough sleeper accommodation programme have been halved by the government so the council only received £150,000. Therefore, we only received five properties via North Star in the south of the county.

4.0 Our Communities: National, Regional & Local Picture

Housing Delivery

- 83 Of the 536 affordable housing units completed in 2021/22, 505 were through Homes England grants and 31 units through Section 106 agreements.

4.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Housing of Ukrainian Refugees

- 84 As at 2 August, 384 of the 560 people who had established contact with our residents through the national 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme had arrived in the county.
- 85 157 of the 236 sponsors have had guests arrive. Although, we have received a further 1,950 expressions of interest in housing Ukrainian families, no links have yet been made.

Empty Properties

- 86 During quarter one, 1,076 properties were improved, adapted or brought back into use. This is lower than previous quarters due to fewer properties benefitting from an energy efficiency measure or improved due to a regeneration measure.
- 87 Of the 55 empty properties brought back into use due to local authority intervention, six involved County Durham Lettings Agency interventions and 49 other means, including advice and assistance and financial support via empty homes loans.

Businesses supported and jobs created through town and village regeneration schemes

- 88 During quarter one, nine businesses were supported, and 12 FTEs created. Four businesses were supported by Targeted Business Improvement funding, three by Towns & Villages Programme and two by the Property Refuse Scheme.
- 89 Over the same period, we also engaged with 61 new retail businesses.

Fly-tipping

- 90 There has been an improving trend in fly-tipping incidents responded to by the council, and the number is now below that pre-pandemic. Enforcement action such as further investigation, stop and search operations, fixed penalty notices and CCTV, have increased, resulting in an enforcement rate of 49% over the last 12 months.

Public confidence that the Police and Local Authorities are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter to them¹

- 91 A greater proportion of respondents have agreed that the police and local authority are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter to them. However, the rate is an estimate from a sample survey, so it is possible that the increase is due to random sample variation, as it is within the estimated confidence intervals (+/-4%).
- 92 The survey also asked residents, 'What do you feel is the single, biggest issue, negatively impacting on your local community at this time?'. The main themes within our communities were anti-social behaviour, police visibility, noise from students, off-road motorcycles being driven dangerously or in inappropriate public spaces, vehicle and parking issues, environmental cleanliness, burglary and theft, criminal damage, rural crime, criminal justice issues.

4.2 Council Activity: Areas which require attention

Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Newton Aycliffe Housing Growth programme

- 93 Financial completion of the programme has been delayed by four months to September 2024 to consider the nutrient neutrality⁵ legislation and determine if onsite mitigation measures are required.
- 94 Work on the Masterplan and planning application for Low Copelaw Infrastructure project has also been delayed, to consider and determine possible onsite mitigation measures of nutrient neutrality issues.
- 95 The Masterplan for the junction at Rushyford, Central Avenue and Ricknall Lane has been delayed until October 2022 as delivery requires planning permission and discussions with Homes England.
- 96 Congreve Terrace development and the disposal of Cobblers Hall and Woodham sites are on hold due to the nutrient neutrality legislation.

County Durham Rental Standard

- 97 The Rental Standard, a free hybrid accreditation scheme for landlords, has been delayed to August 2022 to obtain further clarification around communications, legal and data sharing.

Durham City Heritage Infrastructure

- 98 The defect repairs to the Market Place, Silver Street and Saddler Street have been delayed until the submission of the in-year Levelling Up Fund. The earliest start will be quarter four 2022/23 and into financial year 2023/24.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- 99 During quarter one, we changed how we define and measure anti-social behaviour (ASB)⁶ to provide a more detailed picture of ASB and enhance our understanding of its extent across the county.
- 100 ASB continues to be defined through three strands: environmental⁷ ASB which makes up 57% of the total, nuisance⁸ which makes up 37% and personal⁹ which

⁵ Developments achieve nutrient neutrality when the nutrient load created through additional wastewater (including surface water) from the development is mitigated.

⁶ Additional incident types are included within the definition and data has been included from other partner organisations (police, fire, council and Believe Housing. Durham City Parish Council and University data is included in the police data set. We are expanding the data set to include other registered social landlords.

⁷ Criminal damage/vandalism/graffiti, environmental cleanliness (e.g., litter, dog-fouling, fly-tipping (both public and private land), abandoned shopping trolleys, discarded drug paraphernalia), abandoned cars, pollution (smoke, light, smells)

⁸ Noise, rowdy behaviour, nuisance behaviour, drug/substance misuse/dealing, stray animals, deliberate fires, vehicle nuisance

⁹ Intimidation, harassment, abuse

makes up 7%. Although reports of ASB reduced by 16% during the 12 months ending 30 June 2022, compared to the same period last year, this was mainly due to a significant fall in environmental ASB, a fall which masked increases across the strands of nuisance and personal.

- 101 The initial rise in environmental ASB during the pandemic was mainly due to residents spending more time at home and/or in their local community, noticing more, and having more time to report issues. As we exit the pandemic, levels are returning, but remain 30% higher than pre-pandemic.
- 102 The increase in nuisance ASB during the pandemic was mainly due to a spike in noise reports. The more recent increase reflects the end of COVID restrictions and an increasing trend in deliberate fires, predominantly in the east of the county. Nuisance ASB is 29% higher than the pre-pandemic level.
- 103 Reports of personal ASB is 68% higher than the pre-pandemic level. Frontline staff have identified that these increases reflect less tolerance across our communities and deterioration in mental health from the pandemic which is driving behaviour.

4.3 Council Activity: Other Areas to Note

Selective Licensing

- 104 2,208 private sector properties are now fully licenced, equating to an estimated 8% of all properties covered by the scheme. A further 2,545 applications are in the system, which equates to a further 9% of properties.

5.0 Our Council: National, Regional and Local Picture

Budget pressures relating to the cost of living crisis

- 105 Councils are warning the triple impact of spiralling inflation, high energy costs and wage increases will add massive budget pressures. Record energy prices, rising fuel costs, and increased demand for support services due to the cost of living crisis are all driving up the costs of service provision. As the crisis deepens and residents cut-back on their spending, we expect demand for non-essential services, such as gyms and theatres, to fall impacting on our income.

Recruitment

- 106 Attracting employees remains an ongoing and increasing challenge for the council; local and national skills shortages are impacting heavily and driving competition for skilled workers amongst all neighbouring local authorities and other employers including the private sector.

5.1 Council Activity: Going Well

Data and Insight / Business Intelligence Project

- 107 The council has started on a major project to implement an enterprise analytics platform to sit above all our line of business IT systems and replace current management information, dashboards and data warehousing arrangements for reporting operational, strategic, performance management and customer intelligence.
- 108 This will enable us to join currently disparate datasets together to provide new insights and citizen indexed data such as a single view of the child, single view of the adult and single view of the family. It will also lay the foundation for a more diagnostic and predictive approach to data analytics in future making us more data driven as an organisation and help deliver better outcomes for our residents.
- 109 A number of metrics have been identified in terms of expected benefits from the project around things like timeliness, data quality and manual effort freed up.

Audit Score (statement of accounts)

- 110 The council's unaudited statement of accounts for 2021/22, authorised in accordance with statutory deadlines and published on the council's website, are currently being reviewed by the external auditor. The accounts are scheduled to be approved at September's Audit Committee.

Apprenticeships (programme / levy started May 2017).

- 111 Over the last five years, we have invested £9.5 million into our apprenticeship programme, which to date has supported almost 1,300 employees. Half the participating employees were new to the council and half were existing staff upskilling. Currently, 459 employees are enrolled on our programme, (2.8% of our workforce.)
- 112 During quarter one, we interviewed for 97 apprenticeship opportunities across the council. 61 people were appointed and given planned start dates in August and September. Unfilled posts were readvertised with eight new posts that have been identified. The retention rate for apprentices is 72%.
- 113 The council is developing a policy to support skills development across local businesses through a levy transfer. It is expected to be approved in October 2022.

Collection Rates

- 114 Collection rates for both council tax and business rates improved following the reinstatement of recovery action. We have also improved the collection processes,

so each stage is completed more quickly. For those struggling to pay, we are offering a range of special arrangement payment plans which include the option to spread payments.

- 115 The £150 energy rebate was administrated through our Council Tax module during quarter one. 82% of payments have been made. The remaining payments were not made as we were unable to verify bank details (we are contacting those people for more evidence) or had not received an application (reminder letters were issued week commencing 25 July).
- 116 During quarter one, compared to the same period last year, we processed more claims and changes in circumstances, and this increased the processing times. Staff have returned from working on coronavirus test and trace support payments, and a recovery plan is in place to be back on track on performance by the end of the next quarter.

Staff Development

- 117 All staff are required to have completed a Performance Development Review (PDR). As at 1 September, 117 leaders (100%), 882 managers (88%) and 3,601 core employees (60%) had completed the process. The deadline for core employees has been extended to 30 September 2022. An update on the number of completions for core employees will be reported in the quarter two performance report.
- 118 staff should have completed a Performance Development Review (PDR) by 31 July 2022. As at 1 September, 117 leaders (100%), 882 managers (88%) and 3,601 core employees (71%) had completed the process.
- 119 2,130 employees (22% of staff) responded to our recent survey to assess current digital skills and confidence levels. Key points include:
- There is a high level of digital engagement in the non-working lives of our employees. 85% of respondents stated they browse, shop, bank or use social media online daily falling to 65% for employees that do not use technology in their role.
 - more than half of employees reported that their use of digital technology changed during the pandemic falling to 24% amongst employees who do not use technology in their role. Staff in most roles reported increased confidence using digital technology during this time. 51% stated their general confidence improved, 40% stated they were already confident, with only 8% who remain not confident.
 - appetite to access council information and systems from personal devices varied across roles. 50% of core front line employees who don't use technology expressed an interest, falling to 24% for permanent homeworkers.
 - data show that digital skills have been developed through less formal methods (self-taught and demonstration by colleagues), as opposed to training courses.

Managers preferred online learning through Teams, core front line workers who use technology preferred classroom learning with an instructor, and homeworkers preferred watching instructional or on demand videos.

5.2 Council Activity: Areas which require attention

Organisational Structure

120 43% of the council's workforce are aged over 50 (4,137 employees). Extrapolating this data assuming no changes will mean that for the first time, the majority (52%) of the workforce will be aged over 50 by 2027.

Recruitment and Retention

121 During quarter one, 36 employees completed an exit interview. Excluding those leaving due to retirement (11 people), because they were leaving the area (two people) or because their fixed term contract had ended (two people), the most frequently cited reasons¹⁰ for leaving were better job prospects or promotion (18 people) and/or the opportunity to work closer to home or from home (eight people). In addition, 11 people cited personal reasons including ill-health or caring responsibilities, and five due to a change in duties or responsibilities.

Attendance Management

122 Although COVID-19 caused additional sickness absence during the pandemic, the measures implemented to slow its spread helped reduce other causes of absence resulting in sickness rate steadily improving and reached its lowest level for ten years in 2020/21. However, as COVID-19 restrictions were removed and employees returned to the workplace, both health and safety incidents and days lost to sickness increased. 95% of all reported workplace accidents are either no injury or near miss.

123 In line with previous reports, the most frequently reported sickness reasons were mental health and fatigue (33%), musculo-skeletal injury (20%) and infections (17%.) Almost three quarters of infections were COVID-19.

124 Sickness has increased across all types except neurological. Days lost to 'mental health and fatigue' was 10% higher than pre-pandemic, driven by increases in stress (both work and non-work related), anxiety disorders, fatigue and exhaustion, and musculo-skeletal issues particularly related to hips and shoulders.

125 On 10 March 2022, long-COVID was added as a reason for absence. Between 10 March and 30 June 2022, 532 working days were lost to this absence category.

¹⁰ Employees can cite more than one reason. Therefore, the number of reasons is higher than the number of interviewPage 133

126 12% of reported sickness was COVID-related. If we extract sickness due to COVID-19 from our data set, then our sickness rate has returned to its pre-COVID position.

Customer contact

127 The sharp increase in contact was mainly due to transferring lines to the automated call distribution system, reopening our Customer Access Points (CAPs) and reinstating lines closed due to the pandemic. More recently, more than 26,000 contacts were received in relation to the new £150 energy rebate.

128 Contacts are almost 300,000 higher than pre-pandemic and the channels used have changed (partly due to the closure of our CAPs). Digital channels have increased by 8% since the start of the pandemic, although the telephone still remains the most frequently used method.

Service demand

129 Service requests received through the CRM have increased by 25% since pre-pandemic.

130 Most waste-related service requests increased during the pandemic but have since decreased and are now on par with pre-pandemic levels. However, across some areas demand remains higher than pre-pandemic.

- Missed bins: just under 25,000 reports - 49% higher (+8,200).
- Missed bulky waste collections: just over 520 requests - 96% higher (+256)
- Bulky waste collections: just over 30,100 - 18% higher (+4,500)
- Waste permit requests: almost 39,000- 12% higher (+4,250)

131 Changes in non-waste related service requests compared to pre-pandemic include:

- Account updates (change of personal details): 21,100 - 81% higher (+9,500)
- Birth, death and marriage certificates: just over 4,700 - 40% higher (+1,360).

132 The increase in service requests has had a knock-on effect to our customer satisfaction survey, with more surveys e-mailed to and returned from our customers.

Performance Standards

133 At the end of quarter one, a reportable and accurate performance standard had been applied to 76 service requests with improvement work continuing during 2022/23. 43% of service requests processed during the quarter, were assessed against a performance standard with the standard met in 61% of cases.

5.3 Council Activity: Other Areas to Note

Medium Term Financial Plan / Budget Pressures

- 134 Significant financial uncertainty requires the council to be flexible and adaptable in its financial planning ([further detail](#)). Required savings could change significantly depending on whether the government provides much needed additional resource in 2023/24 and whether the council experiences further additional financial pressures due to demand, loss of income or due to the impact of inflation.
- 135 Achieving the required £55 million of savings over the next four years will be extremely challenging and it is becoming more difficult to protect frontline services as savings in management and back-office costs are becoming exhausted with £250 million of savings being delivered up to 31 March 2023.

Carbon Emissions

- 136 Current projects underway to meet the council net zero commitment by 2030 include a solar farm with battery storage at Morrison Busty Depot, which is due for completion in autumn 2022, and further works including heating, lighting and solar PV installations which are underway at Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee, Wolsingham and Abbey Leisure Centres, Comeleon House and Meadowfield Depot.

Customer Satisfaction¹¹

- 137 Overall, 82% of respondents were satisfied with overall service delivery. In addition:
- 97% felt their request was handled knowledgeably and effectively handled
 - 93% found it easy to contact the right service
 - 91% were kept informed of progress
 - 87% were satisfied with our handling of the initial contact
 - 87% felt they were treated with dignity and respect
 - 87% were provided with clear information
 - 83% were satisfied with the time to complete the task.
 - 79% were informed of how long it would take to complete the task.
- 138 Seven service request types attained an overall satisfaction rating of at least 90%. These were requests relating to: birth, death and marriage certificates (98%); bulky waste collections (97%); waste permits (97%); joining the garden waste scheme (95%); applying for free school travel (94%); early help (92%); and changing the payment method for council tax (90%)

¹¹ We have linked a satisfaction survey to 127 service request types and our CRM automatically e-mails a survey to the customer when the service request is closed.

139 Six service request types attained a satisfaction rating of less than 70%. These were requests relating to: complaints (51%); bins - new, replacement or repair (41%); dog or litter bins (40%); draining and flooding (34%); pruning or removing a tree or hedge (34%) and litter clearing (29%)

140 We have investigated the reasons for these low satisfaction levels and the timeliness of both acknowledgement and response is the biggest driver for dissatisfaction.

Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR)

141 286 requests were received during quarter one, 26% more than the same period last year. We responded to 79% of requests within 20 working days, this is below the target (95%).

6.0 Data Tables

Key to Symbols

Performance against target		Performance against comparable groups		Direction of Travel	
	meeting or exceeding target		same or better than comparable group		higher than comparable period
	within 2% of target		worse than comparable group (within 2%)		static against comparable period
	more than 2% behind target		worse than comparable group (greater than 2%)		lower than comparable period

NB: oldest data in left column

Types of indicators

There are two types of performance indicators throughout the report:

1. Key target indicators – targets are set as improvements can be measured regularly and can be actively influenced by the council and its partners; and
2. Key tracker indicators – performance is tracked but no targets are set as they are long-term and / or can only be partially influenced by the council and its partners.

National Benchmarking

We compare our performance to all English authorities. The number of authorities varies according to the performance indicator and functions of councils, e.g., educational attainment is compared to county and unitary councils, however waste disposal is compared to district and unitary councils.

North East Benchmarking

The North East figure is the average performance from the authorities within the North East region - County Durham, Darlington, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton-on-Tees, South Tyneside, Sunderland.

More detail is available from the Strategy Team at performance@durham.gov.uk

Our Economy

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Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
Increase employment land approved and delivered by 300 hectares (Ha) by 2035 (against 2016 baseline)	5.51Ha	2021/22	15.8Ha ▲	36.69Ha ▲	17.29Ha ▲	-	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↑	Yes
Narrow the gap between the number of private sector business per 10,000 head of population within County Durham and England and aim to bring them in line with the national average by 2035	273	2021	Tracker	264 ★	264 ★	425 ▲	271 ★	-	↑	↓	→	↑	No
Narrow the gap between the number of private sector employments per 10,000 head of population within County Durham and England and aim to bring them in line with the national average by 2035	2,651	2020	Tracker	2,779 ▲	2,651 ●	3,946 ▲	3,114 ▲	-	↓	↑	↓	↑	No
Increase the level of GVA per filled job in line with national levels by 2035	£46,245	2020	Tracker	£46,036 ★	£46,245 ●	£58,995 ▲	£48,486 ▲	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
Increase the employment rate for 16-64-year-olds in line with national levels by 2035	70.1%	2021/22	Tracker	72.3% ▲	71.3% ●	75.4% ▲	70.0% ●	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	Yes
Increase the proportion of residents with higher level skills in line with national levels by 2035	32.4%	2021	Tracker	31.6% ★	31.6% ★	43.1% ▲	34.4% ●	-	→	↓	↑	→	No
Increase the number of organisations involved in the Better Health at Work Award (to improve health and wellbeing interventions at work)	87	2021/22	Tracker	81 ★	75 ★	-	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↑	Yes

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
Increase the proportion of young people in education, employment and training to be consistently higher than regional and national levels	94.2%	Jun 2022	higher than regional/national ●	93.6% ★	94.3% ●	95.2% ●	93.9% ●	-	▲	▼	▲	n/a	Yes
Increase the % of 16-17-year-olds in an apprenticeship	8.5%	as at Jun 2022	Tracker	5.5% ★	6.8% ★	4.7% ★	7.6% ●	-	▲	▼	▼	n/a	Yes
Increase the overall disability employment rate / close the gap	46.7	2021/22	Tracker	49.7% ▲	47.5% ●	56.9% ▲	47.1 ●	-	▼	▼	▼	▼	Yes
Attract 11.96 million visitors to the county in 2021 (5% increase on 2020)	15.77m	2021	11.96m ★	11.39m ★	11.39m ★	-	-	-	▼	▼	▼	▲	Yes
Increase the proportion of visitor attractions which are served by public transport (against 2021 baseline)	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
% uptake of free early education entitlement for 3-4-year-olds	93.7%	2022	Tracker	92.8% ★	96.1% ★	90% ★	96% ▲	94.1% ●	➡	▲	▼	▲	Yes
Reduce the number of heritage assets 'at risk' that are categorised as 'Priority A' and/or in 'very bad condition' (against 2021 baseline)	7	2021	Tracker	8 ★	8 ★	-	-	-	➡	➡	➡	▲	No
Improve the proportion of children achieving expected standards in maths and reading at key stage 2 in line with 2030 ambitions* (reported by academic year)	65%	2018/19	Tracker [90% by 2030]	67% ▲	65% ●	65% ★	67% ▲	61% ▲	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No
Improve the average grade of achievement of all our pupils within GCSE English and Maths to a Grade 5 (in line with 2030 ambitions)	data not yet published	new PI	5 by 2030	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
Improve the educational attainment of our most disadvantaged cohorts to meet basic threshold measures in English and Maths	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
Number of Council owned/managed heritage assets classed as 'at risk'	3	2021	Tracker	2 ▲	2 ▲	-	-	-	➡	➡	➡	⬇	Yes
% of Business Durham floor space that is occupied	97%	Apr-Jun 2022	85% ★	87.2% ★	86.4% ★	-	-	-	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	Yes
Gross jobs created / safeguarded as a result of Business Durham activity	912	Apr-Jun 2022	375 ★	2,768 ▲	1,001 ▲	-	-	-	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	Yes
No. of inward investments secured	2	Apr-Jun 2022	1 ★	2 ★	4 ▲	-	-	-	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬇	Yes
Amount of investments secured for companies	£1.61m	Apr-Jun 2022	£1.25m ★	£4.21m ▲	-	-	-	-	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬇	Yes
No. of businesses supported by Business Durham (engagements)	263	Apr-Jun 2022	250 ★	474 ▲	204 ★	-	-	-	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	Yes
No. of new businesses supported by CED Team	61	Apr-Jun 2022	30 ★	57 ●	41 ★	-	-	-	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬇	Yes
No. jobs supported by the visitor economy	10,063	2021	8,153 ★	6,794 ★	6,794 ★	-	-	-	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	Yes
Amount (£ million) generated by the visitor economy	£826.6m	2021	£608.40m ★	£506.75m ★	£506.75m ★	-	-	-	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	Yes
No of tourism businesses actively engaged with Visit County Durham	236	2021	Tracker	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
FTE jobs created through regeneration schemes	12	Apr-Jun 2022	12 ★	-	-	-	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
No. of people attending cultural events/programme events	185,312	2021	Tracker	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
Average number of tickets sold per cinema and theatre screenings/performances held during the quarter	69	Apr-Jun 2022	TBC	15 ★	74 ▲	-	-	-	▲	▲	▼	▲	Yes
No. of people attending Council owned museums (Killhope & town halls)	50,182	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	-	-	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	Yes
No. of library members	215,398	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	229,793 ▲	233,904 ▲	-	-	-	▼	▼	▼	▼	Yes
No. of registrations to employability programmes	259	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	236 ★	256 ●	-	-	-	▲	▼	▲	▲	Yes
No. of participants on employability programmes progressed into employment / education or training	155	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	104 ★	92 ★	-	-	-	▲	▼	▲	▲	Yes
No. of households receiving energy advice from Managing Money Better (MMB) Initiative	189	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	211 ★	209 ▲	-	-	-	▼	▲	▲	▲	Yes

*Not reported for 2019/20 or 2020/21 academic years as no Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) or Key Stage 2 (KS2) assessments took place

Our Environment

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
Increase the proportion of waste diverted from landfill to at least 95%	89.4%	2021/22	95% ▲	91.8% ▲	97.8% ▲	92.2% ▲	92.1% ▲	-	▼	▼	▼	➡	Yes
County Durham to become net zero by 2045	54	2019	Tracker	52 ★	54 ●	-	-	-	▲	▲	➡	▲	No

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
Raise cycling and walking levels in County Durham in line with national levels by 2035	68%	2019/20	Tracker	72.8% ▲	68% ●	69.3% ●	69.5% ●	-	n/a	▲	▼	▲	No
Work towards Durham City Air Quality Management Area NO2 levels being below the government threshold of 40µg/m3	96%	2020	100% ▲	54% ★	96% ●	-	-	-	▼	▼	▼	▲	No
Plant a minimum of 140,000 trees by 2024	40,414	2021/22	Tracker	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
% of household waste that is re-used, recycled or composted	38.1%	2021/22	Tracker	37.3% ★	41.1% ▲	42.3% ▲	33.5% ★	-	-	-	▼	▲	Yes
Contamination rate (%)	32.9%	2021/22	Tracker	34.6% ★	29.95% ▲	-	-	-	▲	▲	▲	▲	Yes
No. of contamination notices issued	7,601	Jul 21- Jun 22	Tracker	8,478 ▲	17,017 ▲	-	-	-	▲	▼	▼	▼	Yes
Overall satisfaction with cycle routes and facilities (%)	54%	2021	Tracker	50% ★	-	50% ★	52% ●	-	▲	▼	▼	▲	No

Our People

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieving a good level of development (reported as academic year)	71.8%	2018/19	Tracker	72.8% ●	-	71.8% ★	71.8% ★	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	No
% of County Durham pupils attending an Ofsted judged 'good or better' school	83.1%	as at 30 Jun 22	Tracker	n/a	-	86.3% ▲	83.9% ●	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes
No. of Children Looked After per 10,000 population	99 [1,005]	as at 30 Jun 22	Tracker	93 [2020/21]	-	67	108	103	▲	▲	▲	▲	Yes
No. of Children in Need per 10,000 Population	369 [3,979]	as at 30 Jun 22	Tracker	361 [2020/21]	-	321	461	421	▲	▲	▲	▲	Yes

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
% of Children Looked After placed within 20 miles of their home address	85%	as at 31 Mar 22	Tracker	87% [2020/21] ●	89% ▲	74% ★	87% ●	89% ▲	↓	↓	→	↑	Yes
% of mothers smoking at time of delivery	14.8%	Jan-Mar 2022	0% ▲	15% ★	18.1% ★	9.4% ▲	12.8% ▲	12.1% ▲	↑	↓	↑	↑	Yes
No. of families on our Stronger Families Programme attaining significant and sustained outcomes	581	Apr-Jun 2022	760 [2022/23] ★	372 ★	311 ★	-	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
% of smoking prevalence in adults (aged 18+) **	14.3%	2020	5.0% ▲	17.0% ★	17.0% ★	12.1% ▲	13.6% ▲	13.5% ▲					No
Reduce the % point gap in breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks between County Durham and the national average	17.4pp	2020/21	Tracker	20.2pp ★	20.2pp ★	-	12.2pp ▲	13.3pp ▲	↓	↑	↑	↓	Yes
Increase the % of children aged 4-5 who are of a healthy weight ***	74.6%	2019/20	90% ▲	75.6% ●	-	76.1% ●	74.5% ★	74.4% ★	→	↓	↑	↓	No
Increase the % of children aged 10-11 who are of a healthy weight ***	61.5%	2019/20	79% ▲	61.1% ★	-	63.4% ▲	61.3% ★	61.3% ★	↓	↑	↓	↑	No
10,000 more adults undertake 150 minute of at least moderate intensity physical activity per week (against 2015 baseline)	260,500	Nov 20 - Nov 21	266,500 ▲	265,800 ●	261,400 ●	-	-	-	↓	↓	↑	↓	No
15,000 less adults are inactive (undertake less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week) (against 2015 baseline)	136,300	Nov 20 - Nov 21	105,800 ▲	132,100 ▲	122,100 ▲	-	-	-	↓	↑	↓	↑	No
No. of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan	4,038	Jun 2022	Tracker	3,855 ▲	3,496 ▲	-	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
Healthy life expectancy at birth - female	59.9 years	2018-20	Tracker	58.3 years ★	-	63.9 years ▲	59.7 years ★	60.2 years ●	↓	↓	↓	↑	No

Page Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
Reduce the gap between County Durham and England for healthy life expectancy at birth – female	4.0 years	2018-20	Tracker	5.2 years ★	-	-	4.2 years ★	3.7 years ▲	▲	▲	▼	▼	Yes
Healthy life expectancy at birth – male	58.8 years	2018-20	Tracker	59.6 years ●	-	63.1 years ▲	59.1 years ●	59.9 years ●	▼	▲	▲	▼	No
Reduce the gap between County Durham and England for healthy life expectancy at birth – male	4.3 years	2018-20	Tracker	3.6 years ▲	-	-	4.0 years ▲	3.2 years ▲	▲	▼	▼	▲	Yes
Healthy life expectancy at 65 – female	10.2 years	2018-20	Tracker	9.0 years ★	-	11.3 years ▲	9.8 years ★	10.1 years ★	▼	▲	▲	▲	Yes
Reduce the gap between County Durham and England for healthy life expectancy at 65 – female	1.1 years	2018-20	Tracker	2.1 years ★	-	-	1.5 years ★	1.2 years ★	▲	▼	▼	▼	Yes
Healthy life expectancy at 65 – male	7.7 years	2018-20	Tracker	8.3 years ▲	-	10.5 years ▲	9.2 years ▲	9.3 years ▲	▼	▲	▼	▼	Yes
Reduce the gap between County Durham and England for healthy life expectancy at 65 – male	2.8 years	2018-20	Tracker	2.3 years ▲	-	-	1.3 years ▲	1.2 years ▲	▲	▼	▲	▲	Yes
Increase self-reported wellbeing (by reducing the proportion of people reporting a low happiness score)	8.8%	2020/21	Tracker	10.9% ★	10.9% ★	9.2% ★	10.1% ★	10.3% ★	▲	▲	▲	▼	No
Reduce the overall suicide rate (per 100,000 population)	14.3%	2018-20	Tracker	13.4% ▲	-	10.4% ▲	12.4% ▲	12.6% ▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	No
No. of admissions under the Mental Health Act	219	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	213	182	-	-	-	▲	▼	▼	▲	Yes
Increase the satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support	69.6%	2019/20	Tracker	67.8% ★	n/a	64.2% ★	67.5% ★	66.2% ★	▼	▲	▲	▲	No

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
Increase the satisfaction of carers with the support and services they receive	40.8%	2021/22	Tracker	51.2% ▲	51.2% ▲	36.3% ★	42.0% ▲	39.1% ★	n/a	▼	▲	▼	Yes
Increase % of older people who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services	89.2%	Jan-Mar 2022	Tracker	86.7% ★	87.2% ★	79.1% ★	72.1% ★	80.0% ★	▲	▲	➡	▲	Yes
Increase % of hospital discharges receiving reablement	2.7%	2020/21	Tracker	3.8% ▲	3.8% ▲	3.1% ▲	2.9% ▲	2.8% ▲	▲	▲	▼	▼	Yes
Deliver at least 600 homes suitable for older persons by 2035	245	2021/22	43 ★	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	Yes
Increase the number of homes approved which meet accessible and adaptable standards (Building Regulations requirement M4(2)) by 5,613 by 2035	available in Q2	2021/22	400	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
Increase the average age whereby people are able to remain living independently in their own home	84.4 years	2021/22	Tracker	83.6 years ★	84.2 years ★	-	-	-	▼	▲	▼	▲	Yes
Increase the % of people aged 65+ with aids and assistive technologies in their homes	to be developed	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
No. of gym & swim members	19,618	June 22	19,642 ★	16,906 ★	18,013 ★	-	-	-	▲	▲	▲	▲	Yes
No. of people attending Leisure Centres	752,183	Apr-Jun 2022	911,795 ▲	364,992 ★	814,219 ▲	-	-	-	▲	▲	▲	▼	Yes
No. of Chapter Homes houses built which are for Older Persons	new PI	new PI	6	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
No. of Chapter Homes houses built which meet M4(2) standard	new PI	new PI	6	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
No. of Council houses built which are for Older Persons	new PI	new PI	TBC	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
No. of Council houses built which meet M4(2) standard	new PI	new PI	TBC	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
No. of Care Connect customers	11,234	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	11,189 ★	12,015 ▲	-	-	-	▲	▲	▼	▼	Yes
No. of households accessing the Housing Solutions Service	3,441	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	3,082 ★	3,361 ★	-	-	-	▲	▼	▲	▼	Yes
No. of households helped to stay in their home	1,092	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	Yes
No. of households helped to move to alternative accommodation	218	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	236 ▲	243 ▲	-	-	-	▼	▼	▼	▼	Yes

*Not reported for 2019/20 or 2020/21 academic years as no Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) or Key Stage 2 (KS2) assessments took place

**Smoking prevalence: prior to COVID-19 this was collected via face-to-face interviews. In 2020, this moved to telephone interviews. Data for 2019 and 2020 is therefore not comparable.

***National Child Measurement Programme ceased March 2020 when schools closed due to the pandemic, so north east and nearest neighbour comparators should be treated with caution due to missing data from some LAs. Whilst the data for the academic year 2020/21 has been published, local authority data is not available as only a 10% sample of data was recorded.

Our Communities

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
% of Harbour clients feeling more confident in themselves on case closure	89%	Oct-Dec 2021	Tracker	95% ▲	-	-	-	-	▲	▼	▲	▲	No
% of Harbour clients feeling their quality of life has improved on case closure	76%	Oct-Dec 2021	Tracker	66% ★	-	-	-	-	▼	▲	▲	▲	No
% of children and young people completing an intervention with Harbour and reporting feeling safer	84%	Oct-Dec 2021	Tracker	85% ●	-	-	-	-	▼	➡	▲	▼	No

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
Bring 200 empty homes back into use per year as a result of local authority intervention	55	Apr-Jun 2022	50 ★	24 ★	48 ★	-	-	-	▲	▲	▲	▲	Yes
Increase occupancy rate of all town centres to above national levels by 2035	42%	2021/22	Tracker	50% ▲	58% ▲	-	-	-	▲	▼	➡	▼	No
Return the number of fly-tipping incidents to at least pre-COVID levels by 2035	5,502	Jul 21 - Jun 22	6,548 ★	7,863 ★	6,548 ★	-	-	-	▲	▲	▲	▲	Yes
Maintain the % of land which falls below unacceptable levels of cleanliness in relation to detritus at below 12%	7.9%	Apr-Jun 2022	12% ★	12.1% ★	13.36% ★	-	-	-	▼	▲	▼	▼	Yes
Maintain the % of land which falls below unacceptable levels of cleanliness in relation to litter at below 6%	4.3%	Apr-Jun 2022	6% ★	6% ★	6.6% ★	-	-	-	▲	▲	▲	▲	Yes
Maintain the % of land which falls below unacceptable levels of cleanliness in relation to dog fouling at below 1%	0.6%	Apr-Jun 2022	1% ★	0.8% ★	1.6% ★	-	-	-	▲	▲	▼	▼	Yes
Increase the % of households (within a 5 mile or 15 mile radius) which can access key service locations using public transport (against 2021 baseline)	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
Increase the % of County Durham residents who can access employment sites by public transport (against 2021 baseline)	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
Maintain levels of satisfaction with bus operators at a minimum of 92%	92%	2019	92% ★	91% ★	92% ●	-	-	-					No
Maintain a downward trend in the amount of Highways Maintenance Backlog	£171.2m	2020	Tracker	£172.6m ★	£171.2m ●	-	-	-					No

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100 101 102 103 104 105 106 107 108 109 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000	44%	2021	Tracker	51% ▲	50% ▲	42% ★	42% ★	-	▲	▼	▼	▼	No
Respondents who agree that police and local authorities are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter to them (<i>confidence intervals +/-4pp</i>)	30.7%	2021/22	30.4% ★	30.4% ★	-	-	-	-	▲	n/a	n/a	▲	No
Increase net delivery of new housing by 19,620 units by 2035	433	Apr-Jun 2022	327 ★	471 ▲	431 ●	-	-	-	▼	▲	▼	▲	Yes
Increase net delivery of affordable homes to contribute to meeting identified need of 12,540 by 2035	536	2021/22	836 ▲	478 ★	628 ▲	-	-	-	▲	▲	▼	▲	Yes
Achieve 100% licensing of private rented sector properties covered by the Selective Licensing Scheme by 2027	8%	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	Yes
Reduce ASB rates within the Selective Licensing Scheme areas by 10% (against the 2021 baseline)	data from Q2	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
% of A roads where maintenance is recommended	3.1%	2020	Tracker	3.0% ●	3.0% ●	4.0% ★	3.0% ●	-	▼	➡	▲	▲	No
% of B roads where maintenance is recommended	3.0%	2020	Tracker	3.3% ★	3.3% ★	6.0% ★	4.0% ★	-	▼	➡	▼	▼	No
% of C roads where maintenance is recommended	2.6%	2020	Tracker	2.3% ▲	2.3% ▲	6.0% ★	4.0% ★	-	▼	➡	▼	▲	No
% of unclassified roads where maintenance is recommended	22.5%	2020	Tracker	21.3 ▲	21.3% ▲	17.0 ▲	17.0 ▲	-	➡	▲	▲	▲	No
Bridge Stock Condition – Principal Roads	82.0	2020	Tracker	81.1 ●	81.1 ●	-	-	-	▼	▲	▲	▲	No

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
% of recorded Category 1 highway defects repaired within 24 hours	97%	Apr-Jun 2022	90% ★	95% ★	98% ●	-	-	-	↓	↑	↓	➡	Yes
No. of ASB enforcement action taken	4787	Jul 2021 - 2022	Tracker	3626 ★	2636 ★	-	-	-	➡	↑	↑	↑	Yes
No. of fully licensed private rented sector properties in the selective licensed areas	2,208	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	Yes
No. of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents - No. of fatalities	4	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	2 ▲	5 ★	-	-	-	↑	↓	↓	➡	Yes
No. of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents - No. of seriously injured	44	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	46 ★	41 ▲	-	-	-	↑	➡	↑	↓	Yes
No. of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents - No. of fatalities	0	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	0 ★	0 ★	-	-	-	➡	➡	↑	↓	Yes
No. of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents - No. of seriously injured	4	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	6 ★	4 ●	-	-	-	↓	↑	➡	↓	Yes
No. of business supported through regeneration projects	9	Apr-Jun 2022	8 ●	-	-	-	-	-	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes
Public satisfaction with ease of access (%)	77	2021	Tracker	78 ▲	-	75 ●	-	-	↓	↑	↓	↓	No
No. of Council houses built	0	Apr-Jun 2022	TBC	-	-	-	-	-					Yes
No. of Chapter Homes properties sold	3	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	14 ▲	-	-	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	Yes
Reports of anti-social behaviour	47,520	Jul 21 - Jun 22	Tracker	56,720 ★	36,127 ▲	-	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes
Reports of environmental anti-social behaviour	26,633	Jul 21 - Jun 22	Tracker	37,710 ★	20,606 ▲	-	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
Reports of nuisance anti-social behaviour	17,644	Jul 21 - Jun 22	Tracker	16,481 ▲	13,612 ▲	-	-	-	▲	▼	▲	▲	Yes
Reports of personal anti-social behaviour	3,243	Jul 21 - Jun 22	Tracker	2,529 ▲	1,909 ▲	-	-	-	▲	▲	▲	▲	Yes

Our Council

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
Days / shifts lost to sickness absence per Full Time Equivalent (excluding schools)	12.25 days	Jul 21 - Jun 22	Tracker	9.24 days ▲	10.87 days ▲	-	-	-	▲	▲	▲	▲	Yes
Days / shifts lost to sickness absence per Full Time Equivalent - excluding that which is COVID-19 related (excluding schools)	10.66 days	Jul 21 - Jun 22	Tracker	8.59 days ▲	10.87 days ▲	-	-	-	▲	▲	▲	▲	Yes
% Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations requests responded to within 20 working days	79%	Apr-Jun 2022	95% ▲	83% ▲	86% ▲	-	-	-	▲	▲	▼	▲	Yes
Reduce the council's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030	58%	2020/21	Tracker	51% ★	51% ★	-	-	-	▲	▲	▲	▲	No
% of council tax collected	27.8%	Apr-Jun 2022	27.7% ★	27.7% ★	28.5% ▲	-	28.5% ●	-	▲	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes
% of business rates collected	32.9	Apr-Jun 2022	27.6% ★	27.6% ★	34.4% ▲	-	26.5% ★	-	▲	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes
No. of new housing benefit claims processed	730	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	572	704	-	-	-	▲	▼	▲	▲	Yes

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
% of new housing benefit claims processed within 14 days of all information being received	55.1%	Apr-Jun 2022	67.5% ▲	85% ▲	84.2% ▲	-	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↑	Yes
Time to process new housing benefit claims (days)	37.9 days	Apr-Jun 2022	24.1 days ▲	21 days ▲	15.8 days ▲	-	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
No. of change of circumstances for housing benefit claims	10,107	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	12,546	19,635	-	-	-	↓	↓	↑	↓	Yes
No. of new council tax reduction claims processed	4,398	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	3,324	3,700	-	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↑	Yes
% of new council tax reduction claims processed within 14 days of all information being received	65.1%	Apr-Jun 2022	77.5% ▲	85% ▲	88.5% ▲	-	-	-	↓	↓	↓	↓	Yes
Time to process new council tax reduction claims (days)	40.8 days	Apr-Jun 2022	23.9 days ▲	21 days ▲	17.7 days ▲	-	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
Time to process change of circumstances for council tax reduction (days)	12.8 days	Apr-Jun 2022	14.3 days ▲	9 days ▲	7.91 days ▲	-	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↓	Yes
No. of change of circumstances for council tax reduction claims processed	54,850	Apr-Jun 2022	Tracker	52,032	47,072	-	-	-	↑	↓	↑	↓	Yes
MTFP targets achieved	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No
Audit opinion Q – qualified / UQ - unqualified	UQ (draft)	31 Mar 2021	UQ ★	UQ ●	UQ ●	-	-	-	➡	n/a	n/a	n/a	Yes
No. of employees enrolled on the apprenticeship programme - new posts	267	30 Jun 2022	Tracker	284 ▲	258 ★	-	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↑	Yes
No. of employees enrolled on the apprenticeship programme - existing staff upskilling	192	30 Jun 2022	Tracker	289 ▲	196 ●	-	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↓	Yes

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
% of employees enrolled on the apprenticeship programme	2.8%	30 Jun 2022	Tracker	2.5% ★	1.4% ★	-	-	-	▲	▲	▲	▼	Yes
% of employees aged over 50 years	43.0%	30 Jun 2022	Tracker	43.1%	42.1%	-	-	-	▲	▼	▼	▲	Yes
Employee turnover	9.10%	Jul 21 - Jun 22	Tracker	6.74%	7.15%	-	-	-	▲	▲	▲	▲	Yes
% of CRM service requests received which were self-serve	72%	Jul 21 - Jun 22	Tracker	65% ★	49% ★	-	-	-	▲	▲	▲	▲	Yes
% of respondents satisfied with overall service delivery with services requested through the CRM	82%	Jul 21 - Jun 22	Tracker	79% ★	81% ★	-	-	-	▼	▼	▲	▲	Yes
% of the Corporate Business Intelligence Review completed	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	-	-	-	new PI	new PI	new PI	new PI	No

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

24 October 2022

**Customer Feedback Report,
Quarter One, 2022/23**



Report of Corporate Management Team

Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

**Councillor Susan McDonnell, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Digital and
Customer Services**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present an overview of the wide range of information collected from our customers that describe their experiences of using our services.
- 2 The report covers performance in quarter one 2022/23, April to June 2022.

Executive summary

- 3 Customer feedback such as satisfaction with, and general experiences of, the services and support we provide, is an important aid to improve customer service and align our actions with customer need.
- 4 Performance is reported on an exception basis with key messages under three summary sections of going well, areas which require attention and other areas to note.
- 5 As we transition into a post-pandemic world, the impacts of COVID-19 can still be seen in our performance reporting. The last two financial years are not representative for many areas of performance and will be an unfair comparison due to pandemic impacts.
- 6 We have therefore, wherever possible, tried to make the comparison of current performance against pre-pandemic data. Whilst COVID-19 continues to impact on certain performance metrics, there is evidence of some areas returning to pre-pandemic levels.

- 7 However, the biggest challenge for our residents, local businesses and the council is the current cost of living crisis. Inflation is currently running at 10.1%¹ with the Bank of England forecasting it to peak at 13.3% at the end of March 2023. The inflationary increase is largely driven by the rise in the cost of fuel and energy bills, which is being impacted significantly by the war in Ukraine.
- 8 The cost-of-living crisis impacts our contact with our customers in three key ways:
- Demand for financial support and advice services. High inflation is outstripping wage and benefit increases resulting in a fall in income in real terms. This has been further exacerbated by the tax increases implemented in April. This will result in increased demand for services to help support people facing financial hardship or who are in crisis.
 - As we continue to administer support schemes provided through Government funding, customer contact increases as residents make enquiries in relation to their own circumstances. The Government's Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme has resulted in significant increases in customer contact as residents make enquiries and also need support to progress claims (Non Direct Debit payers).
 - As resources are allocated to enable the implementation of additional support schemes, this can have an impact on the performance and delivery of mainstream services which can prompt further contact and potentially complaints.

Recommendation(s)

- 9 That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board notes the overall position and direction of travel in relation to customer feedback, particularly in relation to the continuing impact of COVID-19 and the increased cost of living.

¹ UK Consumer Price Index for 12 months to July 2022

Background

- 10 Successful organisations listen and respond to their customers and one way to gain this valuable insight is by gathering and utilising customer feedback. This should then be used to inform learning and continuous improvement across services

Analysis of Customer Feedback

Going well

- 11 82% of the 22,000 respondents to our CRM satisfaction survey (which is automatically e-mailed to the customer when their service request is closed within the CRM) stated they were satisfied with overall service delivery. 83% of customers who requested a service via an online form gave a rating of four or five stars.
- 12 99% of respondents to the annual care connect survey stated their support needs were met and 40% stated there was nothing they disliked about the service. But three specific areas were highlighted: the desire for more contact, the cost of the service and issues with equipment specifically that pendants can be easily activated by mistake.
- 13 Across the three venues of the Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire, 97% rated their experience as 'good' or 'very good'. However, only 70% rated food and drink facilities as 'good' or 'very good', with the most frequent cause for complaint being long queues and slow service.
- 14 Although service demand has increased and requests have become more complex, both complaints and compliments, as a proportion of demand, have fallen. Fewer complaints are progressing to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Areas which require attention

- 15 During quarter one, we were able to assess 43% of service requests against a performance standard. Although the standard was only met in 61% of cases, it is important to note that greater service demand and increased complexity have led to extended service delivery times over the reporting period.
- 16 Dissatisfaction continues to be mainly linked to not keeping customers informed of progress, not explaining our decision making, taking too long to complete tasks, and not resolving the issue long-term.
- 17 An estimated 29% of complaints escalated to independent investigation could have been avoided through either timelier or more comprehensive updates from services, and/or completion of the agreed action in the first instance.

Customer Contact

- 18 Contacts are almost 300,000 higher (+19%) than pre-pandemic, mainly driven by transferring telephone lines to our Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system, continued high demand for services, and more recently queries surrounding the £150 energy rebate.
- 19 Although the telephone remains the most frequently used method for contacting us, digital contact continues to increase and now makes up 23% of all contact. This compares to 15% pre-pandemic.
- 20 In addition, compared to pre-pandemic, the number of households with a do-it-online account has increased by 30%, customers receiving their council tax bill via e-mail has almost doubled (to around 30% of all households), and residents using the revenues and benefits open portal to view their council tax account has more than doubled to just over 73,000.
- 21 Although our Customer Access Points (CAPs), which were closed during the pandemic, have re-opened, contact is about a third of the volume received during the same period pre-pandemic.
- 22 Many service areas experienced increased demand during the pandemic. Although for most demand has since returned to their pre-pandemic volumes, some services continue to be requested in relatively high numbers, most notably across our waste services (missed bins, bulky waste, waste permits) but also account changes and birth, death and marriage certificates.
- 23 Six complaint types collectively make up 42% of all complaints. The most frequent cause for complaint remains missed bins (17% of all complaints) but this equates to only 0.003% of bins scheduled for collection.
- 24 The report in Appendix 2 provides the detailed update on Customer Feedback during quarter one 2022/23 and the actions put into place as a result

Using Feedback to inform learning

- 25 During the next quarter, work will be undertaken with services to ensure that customer feedback is being used to better understand the experience of accessing the Council's services from a customer's perspective.
- 26 Meetings will be held with service management teams during Customer First week (first week in October) to present data on customer feedback and discuss the volumes/trends/issues being raised and opportunities for improving the overall experience. The outcomes from these meetings will

inform future Customer Feedback reports and also feed into the refresh of the Digital Strategy.

- 27 As part of this process, opportunities for future co-production with our residents will be explored to ensure that the council is developing services with the customer at the core.

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable.

Finance

Information on financial remedies in relation to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman is included within the report.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Complaints regarding any equality and diversity aspect are handled in consultation with the Council's Equality Team.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.



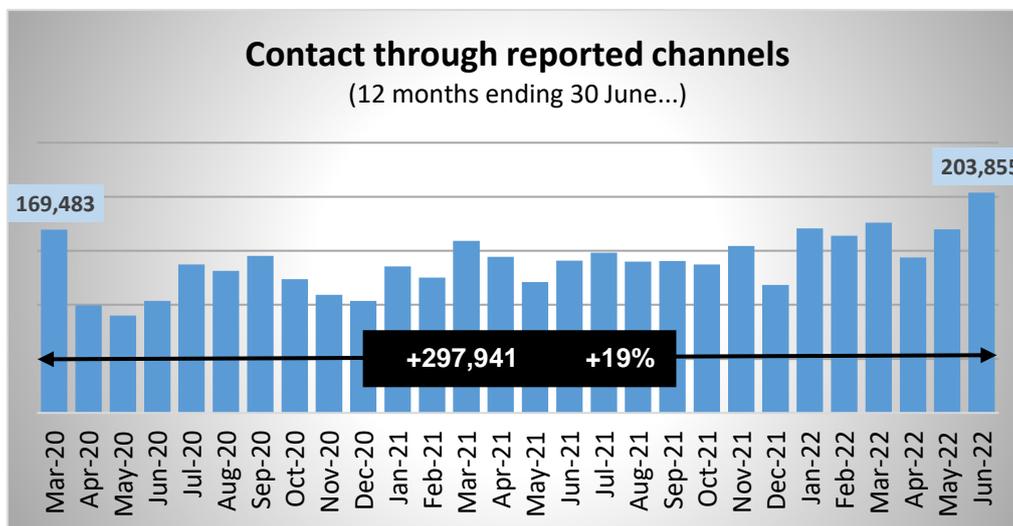
Durham County Council Customer Feedback Report Quarter One, 2022/23



Contact through our reported channels

Volume

- 1 Contact through our reported channels over the last 12 months is almost 300,000 higher than the pre-pandemic year².



- 2 There are three main reasons for this increase.
- 3 The first reason is transferring telephone lines to our automated call distribution (ACD) system³. Since the start of the pandemic, we have transferred 104 non-ACD lines to the ACD system. As we can't migrate past data, transfers create artificial increases in call volumes.
- 4 Lines transferred to the ACD system since the start of the pandemic include selective licensing, bereavement services, Durham Music Service, early help, electoral services, fostering and adoption, registrars, school admissions, trade waste, and the leisure centres.
- 5 83% of council services are now fully migrated to the ACD system.
- 6 The second reason is continued high demand. Many service areas experienced increased demand during the pandemic, and although most have since returned to their pre-pandemic volumes, some services continue to be requested in relatively high numbers.

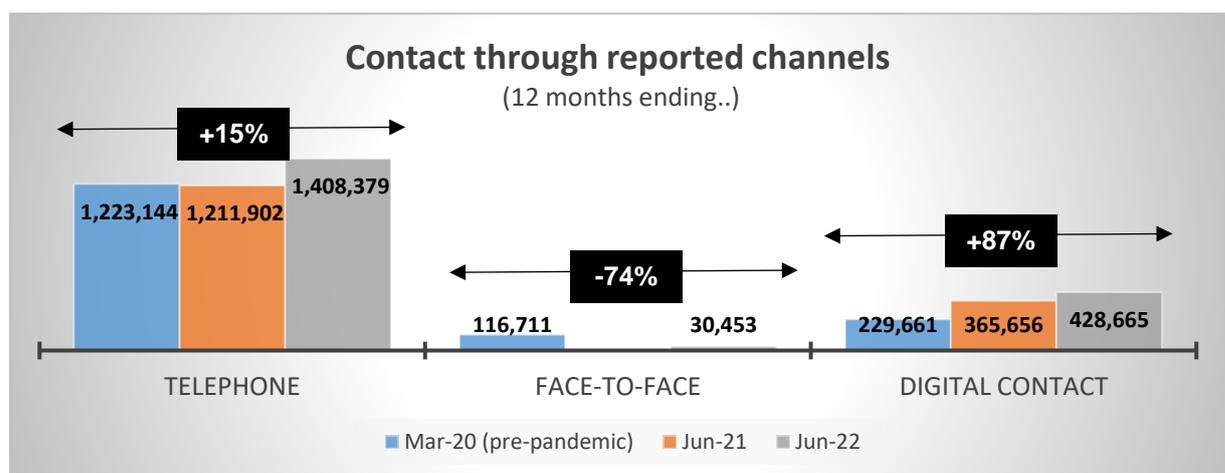
² 12 months ending 31 March 2020

³ Telephone calls are received either through our Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) system, which routes calls to groups of agents based on a first-in-first-answered criteria, or directly to a telephone extension (non-ACD). Only calls received via our ACD system are included in our telephone statistics. When we transfer non-ACD lines into the ACD system, there is no past data. Consequently, it appears that call volume has increased.

- 7 Service areas experiencing increased levels of contact include council tax, waste, registrars, social care direct, welfare assistance, blue badge applications and the concessionary bus line.
- 8 Refuse and Recycling collection routes were changed across two operational areas in May. This impacted approximately 165,000 properties with around 10% having a change in collection day. However unexpected resource issues over the Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday period (2 to 3 June) in one operational area resulted in a significant number of missed bins. Staff worked to minimise the impact and the collections were carried out as soon as possible.
- 9 Reason three is the more recent queries surrounding the £150 energy rebate. We have received more than 26,000 contacts which can be broadly categorised as: requesting help with the application (49%), general enquires related to energy rebate (37%) and customers chasing up their payment (14%).

Contact channels

- 10 The telephone remains the most frequently used method for contacting us. However, digital contact continues to increase and now makes up 23% of all contact. Compared to 15% pre-pandemic.



- 11 As mentioned earlier in the report, the increase in telephone contact is due to transferring lines to the ACD system, and more recently queries relating to the £150 energy rebate.
- 12 The reduction in face-to-face contact is a consequence of the closure of our Customer Access Points (CAPs) during the pandemic. Although, the CAPs have re-opened, contact through this channel is about a third of the volume received during the same period pre-pandemic. Two common reasons for visiting a CAP since they re-opened are providing

documentation or attending an appointment with customer services. The most frequent queries relate to the £150 energy rebate, bus passes and libraries.

- 13 The increase in digital contact is mainly driven by the increase in service requests with more customers requesting these services through Do-it-online. Our webchat function is also increasing in popularity (70% of webchat during quarter one was linked to the £150 energy rebate scheme).
- 14 In addition to more households signing up for Do-it-online, more customers are requesting their council tax bill via email, and more are using the open portal to view their council tax account.

Account		Pre-pandemic volume	12 months ending 30 June...		Change since pre-pandemic	
			2021	2022		
Do-it-online (CRM)		129,876	151,961	166,715	+36,839	+28%
Revenues & Benefits	Open Portal	33,876	37,472	73,205	+39,329	+116%
	Council tax e-bills	36,193	34,031	69,936	+33,743	+93%

Comments relating to policies, procedures, decision-making and charges.

- 15 The following table summarises the feedback received over the 12 months ending 30 June 2022.

43 objections to our decisions (-1)	Two objections related to operating hours / building closures, six for planning decisions and one for not proceeding with customer's complaints. The remainder were mainly operational decisions, e.g., road closures.
83 dissatisfied with fees and charges (-21)	Almost half of the feedback related to leisure centres (23) or replacement bins (17). The remaining comments related to a wide variety of service areas in small numbers
56 comments about policies / procedures (-139)	75% of comments related to our household waste service (about one third to our recycling centres and two thirds to kerbside collection). The remaining comments related to a wide variety of service areas in small numbers.

Performance Standards

- 16 43% of all CRM service requests received during quarter one can be assessed against a performance standard⁴.
- 17 Three service areas met their performance standard in at least 80% of cases: waste permits (96% within one day), join the garden waste scheme (81% within one day), and complaints (80% within 10 days).
- 18 However, three service areas met their performance standard in less than 50% of cases: rubbish in gardens and yards (48% within 10 days), grass cutting, shrubs and flower beds (37% in five days) and missed bins (20% in three days).
- 19 We have recently set up a dedicated team to tackle the delays in clearing rubbish in untidy yards and gardens which should lead to improved response times.
- 20 In relation to the other areas showing performance standards of less than 50%, the service areas are working with our data teams to resolve some glitches in the system which could be impacting the data and carry out further analysis to understand the issue.

Customer suggestions

- 21 Whilst we receive and review all suggestions, the majority have been addressed previously and/or considered as part of service development.
- 22 A small sample of customer suggestions received during the latest quarter is attached at Appendix three.

Customer Compliments and Star Rating Feedback

- 23 In line with previous reports, most compliments relate to satisfaction with service provision – although we continue to receive praise relating to the actions of specific individuals.
- 24 There were recurring themes in the feedback received through the star rating system. Respondents rating the service as three star and above tended to have positive feedback in relation to our website (e.g., simple to use, professional, easy to navigate); our processes (ease of completing forms); overall service delivery; and staff.
- 25 Respondents rating the service as one star or two stars tended to have negative feedback in relation to our website (slow, unresponsive,

⁴ We do not apply performance standards if the process is not fully managed within CRM which accounts for 48% of processes. We did not apply performance standards to many of the COVID-related service requests, partly due to the speed of the set-up, but also due to the complexity / unknown elements of request which often resulted in required modifications as the pandemic progressed.

confusing to use, crashes); service delivery (failure to provide); contact channels (difficulties reaching us using telephone); and the time spent on trying to resolve an issue.

- 26 A small sample of the compliments and star rating feedback received during the latest quarter is attached at Appendix four and five.

Customer satisfaction through the CRM⁵

- 27 Seven service request types attained a satisfaction rating of at least 90%; birth death and marriage certificates (98%), bulky waste (97%), waste permits (97%), joining the garden waste scheme (95%), applying for free school travel (94%), early help (92%), and changing the payment method for council tax (90%).
- 28 However, six areas recorded satisfaction levels of less than 70%: clearing litter (29%), drainage and flooding (34%), tree or hedge pruning / removal (34%), dog and litter bins (40%), bins - new, replacement, or repair to bin (41%) and service complaints (51%).
- 29 The main driver for these low satisfaction levels is timeliness (both acknowledgement and response).
- 30 The survey also showed that overall:
- 93% found it easy to contact the right service,
 - 87% were satisfied with our handling of the initial contact,
 - 97% felt their request was handled knowledgeably and effectively handled,
 - 87% felt they were treated with dignity and respect,
 - 87% were provided with clear information,
 - 79% were informed of how long it would take to complete the task,
 - 91% were kept informed of progress,
 - 83% were satisfied with the time taken to complete the task.

⁵ Customer satisfaction surveys are automatically e-mailed to the customer when their service request is closed within the CRM. The response rate has improved over the last two years and is currently around 7% of service requests. As the results are taken from a sample survey, we are carrying out further work to determine if the results are statistically relevant.

Customer satisfaction with theatre provision⁶

- 31 Overall, across the three venues of the Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire, respondents rated the following as 'good' or 'very good':
- Ticket booking experience: 95%
 - Staff welcome: 95%
 - Food and drink facilities: 70%
 - Quality of event: 97%
 - Value for money: 96%
 - Whole experience: 97%
- 32 The most frequent cause for complaint in relation to food and drink facilities was long queues and slow service.

Customer satisfaction through the annual care connect survey⁷

- 33 The survey showed that overall:
- 96% of respondent's calls were answered within 1-3 minutes of calling (65% of these were answered within 1 minute).
 - 100% felt staff handled their call appropriately.
 - 95% stated staff arrived at their home within 0-45 minutes (63% of these arrived within 20 minutes).
 - 99% said their support needs were met on that occasion.
 - 100% reported staff were polite and professional.
 - 100% found staff helpful.
- 34 The survey also asked customers what they least liked about the service, 31 of the 49 responses related to three specific areas: the desire for more contact, the cost of the service and issues with equipment specifically that pendants can be easily activated by mistake.

⁶ January to October 2022. After every performance, the survey is sent to attendees for which we have an e-mail address

⁷ Based on a sample of 10% of Care Connect's current customer base (selected at random) with a 28% response rate.

Customer satisfaction through the annual Adult Care and Carers Surveys⁸.

- 35 Based on those who responded to the surveys:
- 64% of service users were satisfied with service provision
 - 81% of service users felt in control of their daily life
 - 41% of service users and 42% of carers stated they would like more social contact
 - 65% of service users and 68% of carers felt they could access information easily.
- 36 All results were in line with previous years except the percentage of service users who felt they could access information easily, which was significantly lower than the 2020/21 result.

Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR)

- 37 286 requests were received during quarter one, 26% more than the same period last year. We responded to 79% of requests within 20 working days, this is below the target (95%).

Priority Correspondence

- 38 The main topics of priority correspondence during quarter one were enquiries relating to housing, planning and the £150 energy rebate. We also received enquiries in relation to supporting refugees.
- 39 A pilot scheme to analyse member feedback to support service improvements is now underway.

Complaints⁹

Corporate Complaints

- 40 Corporate complaints have increased slightly compared to pre-pandemic volumes (+3%). However, this needs to be considered within the context that demand across many of our services remains high and

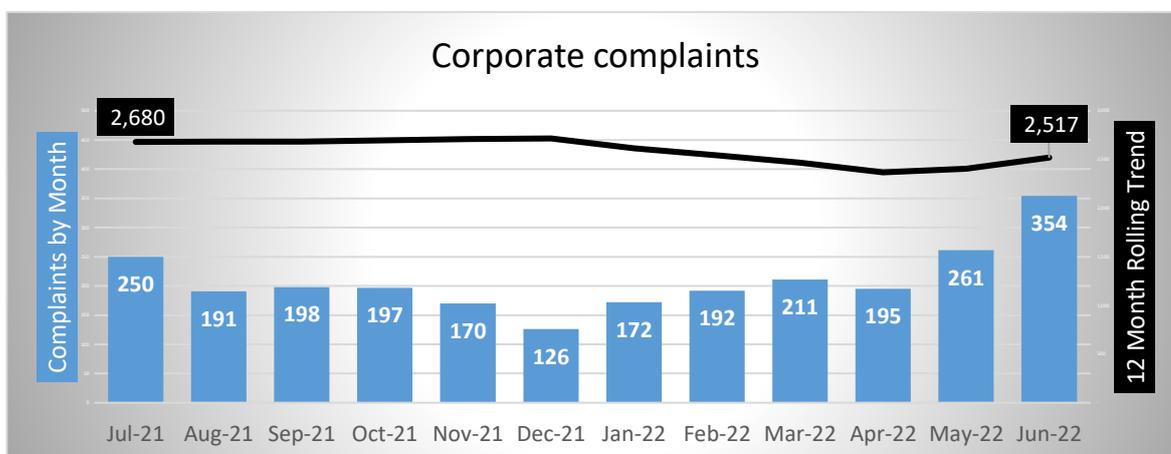
⁸ Both are 2020/21 surveys – national data not yet released.

Of the 7,890 service users in the cohort eligible for the Adult Social Care Survey, 1,430 participants were selected and 460 responded

Of the 5,115 carers in the cohort eligible for the Survey of Adult Carers, 1,023 participants were selected and 303 responded

⁹ statutory complaints that arise from our duties as a local social services authority and corporate complaints that cover all other complaints

is, in many cases, becoming more complex. Of those complaints investigated, 51% were upheld.



- 41 There were six main areas of complaint which collectively make up 42% of all complaints.
- 42 In line with previous reports, the most frequent cause for complaint was missed bins. However, although they make up 17% of all complaints, this equates to only 0.003% of bins scheduled for collection. Around 75% of these complaints were upheld.
- 43 8% related to staff practices (which includes not returning bins to their collection point) and staff behaviour; 7% to billing / payment issues (mostly council tax recovery action); 5% to maintenance activities; 5% due to not actioning a service request; 3% to issues with correspondence, mainly contamination notice disputes.

Corporate complaints subjected to independent investigation

- 44 Complaints progressing to independent investigation have become more complex, and the average time to resolve has increased. Consequently, 64% were responded to within the performance standard, compared to 76% last year.
- 45 Analysis shows that up to 29% of these complaints could have been avoided if there had been a timelier or more comprehensive update from the service at the first stage response.
- 46 Details of complaints upheld by independent investigators during quarter one are included in Appendix six.

Statutory Complaints: Adult Health Services (AHS)

- 47 There were three main areas of complaint to AHS: 30% related to dissatisfaction with charges (26 complaints), 22% to timeliness and 20% to the application of service guidance and/or procedures.

48 During quarter one, we improved the statement of account template to improve clarity and reduce confusion, and reviewed parameters for single point of contact.

Statutory Complaints: Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)

49 Complaints to CYPS are complex and up to three reasons can be recorded for each. The main reasons for complaint to CYPS during the latest 12 months were communication, staff behaviour and refusal or lack of a service.

Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (the Ombudsman)

50 17 of the 31 decisions delivered during the latest quarter were upheld (55%) and details are included in Appendix seven. Additional information regarding complaints escalated to the Ombudsman is available [here](#).

Recent developments that enhance the customer experience

51 In June 2022, we piloted our chatbot project across our waste services (selected due to the high volume and low complexity). The project will provide accurate and appropriate automated information (AI) and help reduce avoidable contact.

52 During quarter two, National Customer Service Week takes place in the first week of October. This will be used to launch a refreshed approach to using customer feedback to inform learning.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- Previous Customer Feedback reports presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

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Appendix 3: Sample of suggestions received during quarter one, 2022/23

Suggestion: increase the availability of lane swimming at a weekend.

Our Response: We hope to bring back some public swimming to the weekend afternoon timetable soon.

Suggestion: open the library earlier.

Our Response: library opening hours were part of our recent customer survey which will help shape our future library offer. We are reviewing feedback and preparing proposals for consultation.

Suggestion: put in cycle lanes from Carrville, Belmont and Gilesgate to Durham.

Our Response: We are currently looking at options to improve the cycling and walking links from Belmont and Carrville to the City centre.

Suggestion: clearer information about park and ride bus stops

Our Response: Information is available on our website, on leaflets located at the park and ride sites and from the park and ride office (0191 374 1702). Drivers will also answer any queries.

Suggestion: the council's social media doesn't meet the needs of young people. Young people need more say in the decisions we make that impact them

Our Response: we created the Durham Youth Council to consult with young people across county and introduced a Durham Youth Council Facebook account.

Suggestion: we don't celebrate the achievements of young people enough

Our Response: we now hold an annual Youth Award Ceremony as part of the Durham Youth Council.

Suggestion: Allow swim memberships at Wolsingham swimming pool.

Our Response: Swim memberships are available at Wolsingham pool but this information was omitted from our website in error. The website is being updated.

Suggestion: mow lawns less frequently to encourage nature to thrive.

Our Response: We are working with local community groups and partners to reduce the cutting of vegetation and rewild where appropriate. More than 35,000 m² of land is meadow planted.

Suggestion: use electronic message boards to inform motorists of changes to the Highway Code: specifically giving way to cyclists and pedestrians going straight ahead at junctions.

Our Response: How we use variable message signs (VMS) is defined by legislation. As changes to the highway code have neither been authorised for use on VMS by the Department of Transport nor run as a national campaign, we are unable to display this information on the VMS.

Suggestion: install additional benches at Lanchester graveyard for elderly and disabled people.

Our Response: we are reviewing the locations of the current seating to ensure it is in the most appropriate places.

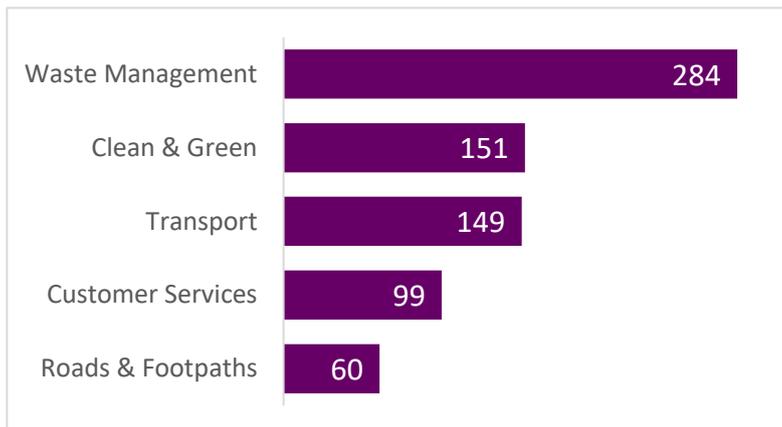
Suggestion: more dog waste bins in Hilda Park, Chester-le-Street.

Our Response: dog bin usage in the area is being monitored and an additional resource will be added if necessary

Suggestion: more charging points for electric vehicles

Our Response: 50 additional charge points are scheduled for the next three months with a further 100 scheduled for next year (as part of the pilot of LEVI funding). There are two pilot schemes for charge points outside terraced housing. We are expanding our team in response to the release of more LEVI funding which will significantly increase charging points.

Appendix 4: Sample of compliments received during quarter one, 2022/23



thank you for having missed bin returned for and emptied, customer service officer was very helpful and polite

I had a result from you within a few hours - wonderful service from Durham County Records Office.

in relation to a fly tipping incident. The warden was brilliant and very professional and helpful and so was his colleague.

thanks for the work getting the licence in place for car parking at school site.

would like to thank the Support and Recovery team for the help and support received.

The work that has been carried out along the boundary fencing is excellent. The amount of debris caused by "undesirables intent on glue sniffing and taking drugs" has rapidly reduced and they cannot carry out their actions hidden by bushes anymore. Thank the people who did the work.

Garden waste bin crew returned after emptying bin and driving away to double check that they had emptied bin following missed bin a couple of weeks prior. Great service

wanted to say how well the warden addressed the situation, very pleasant and he sorted the job in a timely manner.

thank the Clean & Green team for removing the items that were dumped on the footpath by the car park. It was done very quickly and customer and 3 x neighbours wanted to pass on grateful thanks to the team for expediting it so quickly.

to thank us for fixing streetlight promptly

Care Connect Team - wishes to thank all concerned - wonderful service - thank you all for your help :-)

wanting to pass on his thanks to everyone who helped him when he fell

thank you to the members of the Blue Badge Team who helped with the renewal process for his Blue Badge.

it was lovely to find such a caring considerate person on the other end of a phone call

thank the crew who dealt with this query in such a timely fashion. I would also like to thank them for being tidy and helpful while performing their task. WELL DONE ALL!

would like to pass on how nice she thought the you man was who collected her glass box and recycle bin today. She was amazed how quick he was and he was polite. Also the young girl who often collects her bins is also amazing. She thinks you are all doing an amazing job and she would like to thank you.

thank you for work which had been completed on the footpath outside her house. She rang on 16th to say the kerb had dropped near parking area beside her house. She said someone came out the same week to repair and was pleased it had been done so promptly.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the transport team who attended my address this morning and helped me following an unfortunate incident. Your member of staff is a credit to your organisation and displayed a high level of care, consideration and patience which was way beyond the call of duty.

thank the Clean & Green team for removing the items that were dumped on the footpath by the car park. It was done very quickly and customer and 3 x neighbours wanted to pass on grateful thanks to the team for expediting it so quickly.

Appendix 5: Sample of comments received with the star ratings during quarter 1, 2022/23

5★ - Retail business support enquiry – “Easy to use and helpful staff when I rang”	5★ - Customer satisfaction survey – “Your collection service of bulky household furniture is outstanding”	5★ - Road or footpath obstruction (vehicle) – “Yet again easy to use site. Simple, straight forward, no waiting for someone to answer the phone”
5★ - Customer satisfaction survey – “I can access digital services but some people cannot for various reasons. Being able to speak to a person should always be an option so that some people are not excluded.”	4★ - Garden waste (join the scheme) – “Yes it was very good”	4★ - Waste permit – “Would have preferred if I could have applied for more than one permit at a time. Apart from that it was OK”
5★ - Customer satisfaction survey – “Would be useful to upload videos for reports”	4★ - Tree or hedge pruning, removal – “Would have been much easier sending an email with info & pictures direct to your office”	1★ - Bin (New, replacement, repair) – “Would not let me order a replacement rubbish & recycling bin together”
3★ - Pest Control (Domestic) – “Website was very slow and I was only able to book pest control after disabling all my adblockers”	5★ - Taxis (Apply for a vehicle licence) – “Worked as expected”	4★ - Research Approval Group Application Form – “Would be beneficial if you could save and come back later”
4★ - Bulky waste, white goods collection – “Website a touch slow but easy to organise collection of fridge freezer”	2★ - Bin (Not Emptied) – “Website was a bit flakey today. I had to re-set password and programming code was visible to the right of the page throughout”	2★ - Waste permit – “Why cant you have an option to tick all the items instead of having to keep adding an item one at a time”
1★ - Complaints – “Website is not fit for purpose”	3★ - Customer document submission – “Would be good to have a message or confirmation that information/form has been successfully submitted to receive bus pass and an idea of the length of time I would be awaiting the pass. (A reminder after completing the form)”	4★ - Flytipping – “Was unable to upload more than 3 photos for evidence of fly tipping”
5★ - Move (Start your journey!) – “Very straightforward”	5★ - Customer Satisfaction survey – “Very easy, clearly set out and relevant to request. Importantly a short time to complete.	5★ - Retail Business Support Enquiry – “Very easy to navigate and straight forward”
3★ - Bin (New, replacement, repair) – “Very slow website”	2★ - Litter – “Third attempt. Crashed twice.”	3★ - Account update (Change of personal details) – “Very easy to register and get started; I got quite a way through my ‘request’ and then all was lost and finding it difficult to re-start”
		5★ - Customer satisfaction Survey – “Think for older people it’s better to talk to someone rather than try and go online”

Appendix 6: Independent investigations by Customer Feedback Team where corporate complaints were upheld

Complaint upheld	Recommendation
Customer dissatisfied with a series of missed bins.	Apologise for level of service.
Customer dissatisfied with broken glass repeatedly left behind following recycling collections.	Remind crews in situations such as this to arrange for additional cleansing as soon as possible.

Complaint partially upheld	Recommendation
Customer dissatisfied with the actions of staff when collecting bulky waste.	Remind crews to promptly report events of this nature.
Customer disagrees with the extent of the adopted highway.	Apologise for giving the customer incorrect information.
Customer disputes they are responsible for maintaining a wall adjacent to their property and is dissatisfied with our lack of response to this issue.	Although no fault was found with the decision relating to the wall, apologise for the lack of efficiency.
Customer dissatisfied with time taken to respond to challenge of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).	Apologise for the time taken to respond.
Customer dissatisfied with the assisted collection process for bulky waste collection.	Items to be collected from the front of the complainant's property.
Customer dissatisfied with our response to their complaint.	Apologise for failing to respond to all contact prior to the formal complaint.
Customer dissatisfied with a planning decision.	Offer refund of all planning fees (£512).

Appendix 7: Complaints upheld by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (the Ombudsman)

Ombudsman's final decision	Agreed action
<p>The council failed to properly determine a neighbour's planning application before granting permission.</p>	<p>Provide a written apology which addresses each area of fault and injustice identified.</p> <p>Pay £1,000 to acknowledge the distress, uncertainty and time and trouble caused.</p> <p>Pay £2,500 to acknowledge the interference with his amenity by reason of the overlooking of the development. The payment will help the complainant adopt measures to reduce the impact of this.</p> <p>Pay £540 to reimburse reasonably incurred professional costs and advice.</p>
<p>The council unreasonably refused the complainant's request for alternative school transport for their child.</p>	<p>Amend the council's school transport policy and arrange for a further appeal for the customer.</p>
<p>The council did not prosecute the complainant's former landlord for illegal eviction.</p>	<p>Apologise in writing for the fault causing injustice.</p> <p>Pay £100 for the distress and uncertainty caused.</p> <p>Remind relevant staff to routinely ask people about any reasonable adjustments.</p>

Data Tables

Key to Symbols

Performance against target		Performance against comparable groups		Direction of Travel	
★	meeting or exceeding target	★	same or better than comparable group	↑	higher than comparable period
●	within 2% of target	●	worse than comparable group (within 2%)	→	static against comparable period
▲	more than 2% behind target	▲	worse than comparable group (greater than 2%)	↓	lower than comparable period

NB: oldest data in left column

Types of indicators

There are two types of performance indicators throughout the report:

1. Key target indicators – targets are set as improvements can be measured regularly and can be actively influenced by the council and its partners; and
2. Key tracker indicators – performance is tracked but no targets are set as they are long-term and / or can only be partially influenced by the council and its partners.

National Benchmarking

We compare our performance to all English authorities. The number of authorities varies according to the performance indicator and functions of councils, e.g., educational attainment is compared to county and unitary councils, however waste disposal is compared to district and unitary councils.

North East Benchmarking

The North East figure is the average performance from the authorities within the North East region - County Durham, Darlington, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton-on-Tees, South Tyneside, Sunderland.

More detail is available from the Strategy Team at performance@durham.gov.uk

Description		Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:			Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter	
						Pre-COVID	National	North East						Nearest neighbour
No. of contacts through reported channels		1,867,497	Jul-21 to Jun-22		1,577,558	1,569,556	-	-	-	↑	→	↑	↑	Yes
% of contact through reported digital channels		23%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		23%	15%	-	-	-	↑	↑	↓	→	Yes
% of contact received through reported non-digital channels		77%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		77%	85%	-	-	-	↓	↓	↑	→	Yes
% of CRM requests meeting performance standard		61%	Apr-Jun-22		57%		-	-	-		↓	↑	↓	Yes
% respondents were satisfied with overall service delivery (CRM)		82%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		79% ★	81% ★	-	-	-	↓	↑	↑	→	Yes
% of customers who request a service via an online form who give a rating of 4 or 5 stars		83%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		83%	N/A	-	-	-	↑	↓	↑	↓	Yes
statutory complaints	No. received	86	Jul-21 to Jun-22	75 ▲	78 ▲	84 ●	-	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↑	Yes
	% within performance standard	100%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		100% ★	100% ★	-	-	-	→	→	→	→	Yes
Adult and Health Services	% upheld (fully or partially)	64%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		40%	44%	-	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
statutory complaints	No. received	30	Jul-21 to Jun-22	46 ★	46 ★	100 ★	-	-	-	↓	→	→	↓	Yes
	% within performance standard	77%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		74% ▲	76% ●	-	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↑	Yes
Childrens' Services	% upheld (fully or partially)	53%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		39% ▲	33% ▲	-	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↓	Yes
No. of corporate complaints		2,517	Jul-21 to Jun-22		2,691 ▲	2,447 ★	-	-	-	↓	↑	↓	↑	Yes

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
Ratio of corporate complaints to service requests	0.6	Jul-21 to Jun-22		0.6	0.7	-	-	-	➡	➡	➡	➡	Yes
No. of Independent investigations	198	Jul-21 to Jun-22		211	192	-	-	-	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	Yes
No. of complaints submitted to Ombudsman	43	Jul-21 to Jun-22		79 ★	91 ★	-	-	-	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	Yes
% of complaints responded to within performance standard	43%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		81% ▲	81% ▲	-	-	-	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇	Yes
% of corporate complaints upheld	51%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		51%	55%	-	-	-	⬇	➡	⬇	⬆	Yes
No. of priority correspondence	2,009	Jul-21 to Jun-22		2,113 ★	N/A	-	-	-	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	Yes
% of priority correspondence responded to within performance standard	75%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		72% ★	N/A	-	-	-	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	Yes
% Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations requests responded to within 20 working days	79%	Apr-Jun 2022	95% ▲	83% ▲	86% ▲	-	-	-	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	Yes
% of CRM service requests received which were self-serve	72%	Jul 21-Jun 22	Tracker	65% ★	49% ★	-	-	-	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	Yes
No. of compliments	737	Jul 21-Jun 22	Tracker	1,007 ▲	688 ★	-	-	-	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇	Yes
No of suggestions	526	Jul 21-Jun 22	Tracker	576 ▲	546 ▲	-	-	-	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇	Yes

**Overview and Scrutiny Management
Board**

24 October 2022

**AHS Annual Statutory Representations
Report 2020/21**

Ordinary Decision



Report of Corporate Management Team

Jane Robinson, Corporate Director- Adult and Health Services

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide an overview of statutory representations relating to adult social care services for the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022.

Executive summary

- 2 The Annual Statutory Representations Report is prepared under the provisions and requirements of the '*Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009*'. The report content reflects the requirements detailed in the regulations.
- 3 Analysis of performance has identified the following are the key messages for 2021/22:
 - a) There has been an increase in the number of complaints investigated from 75 in 2020/21 to 79 in 2021/22.
 - b) There was also a reduction in the number of complaints that the Council declined during 2021/22; 4 compared to 10 in the previous performance year.
 - c) Durham County Council (DCC) Adult and Health Services (AHS) received 3 complaints where the contribution of colleagues from Health were needed to inform upon the Council's response, leading in these investigations and responding on behalf of all involved organisations in line with joint protocols. This was a reduction from 4 in the previous performance year. The Council also contributed to a further 2 investigations led by Health, a reduction from 6 in the previous performance year.

- d) Older People/Physical Disabilities/Sensory Impairment received 34.25% of the overall complaints about adult social care services, an increase from 31% in 2020/21. Complaints relating to Finance increased significantly in number from 15 complaints in 2020/21 to 26 in 2021/22, representing an overall percentage increase from 20% to 33%.
- e) The most common reason for making a complaint in 2021/22 was **Finance – Charging Policy** (24). This replaced the category of **Covid-19 related** about which 21 complaints were received in 2020/21 but only 1 complaint in 2021/22.
- f) The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) raised 15 adult social care complaints with the Council during 2021/22, compared to 22 in 2020/21, taking action and/or reaching a decision on 11 of these cases with 4 still being investigated at the time of writing this report.
- g) The service received 48 compliments about adult social care services during 2021/22, a decrease from 66 in 2020/21 with compliments for County Durham Care and Support totalling 11, representing a plateauing of compliments for this service when compared to the previous performance year (10) after previous highs.
- h) Nearly 32% of complaints investigated through to a finding were not upheld, compared with 52% not upheld in the 2020/21 performance year (5.4% of complaints were still under investigation with an outcome pending at the time of writing the 2020/21 annual report). All complaints had been investigated through to a finding in 2021/22 with 68.5% having some or all aspects of the complaint upheld.

Recommendation(s)

- 4 Overview and Scrutiny Management board are requested
 - a) to note the contents of the report and approve the AHS Annual Statutory Representations Report;
 - b) to agree to the publication of the AHS Annual Statutory Representations Report as required in line with the regulations.

Background

- 5 Complaints handling and the production of the annual report are managed under the provisions and requirements of the '*Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009*'. This is a single joint complaints process for both social care and health services where there are no fixed timescales for managing a complaint with a greater focus on local resolution. If all proportionate resolution mechanisms have been exhausted and if the complaint remains unresolved, the complainant can refer outstanding issues to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). The regulations also introduced a duty for health and social care services to cooperate, should this be required, in complaints investigations.
- 6 The report aims to identify the topics and trends from the compliments and complaints received, as well as illustrating where this feedback has been used to improve services.

Main Implications

- 7 Information contained within the Annual Statutory Representation Report was considered by Corporate Management Team (CMT) on 31 August 2022.

Conclusion

- 8 The complaints function is a statutory requirement for social care services, and it plays a vital role in contributing to quality improvement across adult social care as it provides an understanding of the service users' experiences. Acting upon the learning arising from complaints provides the opportunity to change practice and improve service delivery with transparency and accountability.
- 9 A collaborative approach is continually promoted during the management of complaints, where the complainant is central to the process and resolution is proactively sought and encouraged.

Background papers

- AHS Annual Statutory Representations Report 2020/21

Other useful documents

- None

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The report has been developed in line with the 'Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009'. Day to day management of complaints is supported by Legal Services when appropriate.

Finance

Complaints can lead to financial claims for remedy; in 2021/22 this equated to £1,200 as a result of recommendations made by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Consistent with national and local requirements, with the representations procedure taking into account equality and diversity whilst ensuring accessibility.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

Compatible with Human Rights Act – able to record and respond to complaints about alleged breaches.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

Staff are made aware of compliments and feedback given, any areas of underperformance highlighted as a consequence of staff actions within a complaint are acted upon with the individuals/teams concerned.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

Upheld complaints can lead to reputational risk for the Local Authority.

Procurement

None.



Adult and Health Services

Annual Statutory Representations Report
Adult Social Care Services 2021/22

Annual Statutory Representations Report

Adult and Health Services 2020/21

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Part One - Introduction

Welcome to Durham County Council's (DCC) Adult and Health Services (AHS) Annual Report which details representations made in relation to adult social care services. The report covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

The report is published under the provisions and requirements of the relevant regulations: *The Local Authority Social Services and NHS Complaints (England) Regulations 2009*. This is a single joint complaints process for both adult social care and health services where there are no fixed timescales for managing a complaint with a greater focus on local resolution. If all proportionate resolution mechanisms have been exhausted and if the complaint remains unresolved, the complainant can refer outstanding issues to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). The regulations also introduced a duty for health and adult social care services to cooperate, should this be required, in complaints investigations.

This process aims to:

- Make it as easy and accessible as possible for service users or their nominated representatives to raise complaints;
- Foster an organisational culture in which complaints are accepted, owned and resolved as efficiently as possible;
- Ensure high levels of customer satisfaction with complaints handling;
- Resolve individual issues when they arise and reduce the number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman; and
- Enable the Council to identify topics and trends in relation to adult social care complaints and improve services as a result.

In recording and reporting upon the Council's performance in relation to the above, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to produce an annual report under Regulation 18 of the statutory instrument detailed above.

Other key features of the Regulations include:

- the requirement for local authorities to appoint a Complaints Manager; and
- a 12-month time limit to make complaints.

During 2021/22 the AHS Development and Learning Manager fulfilled the role of 'Complaints Manager' in accordance with the requirements of the regulations, with a Complaints Officer allocated to undertake the day-to-day supervision of the complaints function, both being independent of adult social care services' operational line management, thus ensuring a high level of independence in the way adult social care complaints are managed within the Council.

Part Two - Summary of key messages

The key headlines from this report are as follows:

There has been an increase in the number of complaints investigated from 75 in 2020/21 to 79 in 2021/22.

There was also a reduction in the number of complaints that the Council declined during 2021/22; 4 compared to 10 in the previous performance year.

Durham County Council (DCC) Adult and Health Services (AHS) received 3 complaints where the contribution of colleagues from Health were needed to inform upon the Council's response, leading in these investigations and responding on behalf of all involved organisations in line with joint protocols. This was a reduction from 4 in the previous performance year. The Council also contributed to a further 2 investigations led by Health, a reduction from 6 in the previous performance year.

Older People/Physical Disabilities/Sensory Impairment received 34.25% of the overall complaints about adult social care services, an increase from 31% in 2020/21. Complaints relating to Finance increased significantly in number from 15 complaints in 2020/21 to 26 in 2021/22, representing an overall percentage increase from 20% to 33%.

The most common reason for making a complaint in 2021/22 was **Finance – Charging Policy** (24). This replaced the category of **Covid-19 related** about which 21 complaints were received in 2020/21 but only 1 complaint in 2021/22.

The LGSCO raised 15 adult social care complaints with the Council during 2021/22, compared to 22 in 2020/21, taking action and/or reaching a decision on 11 of these cases with 4 still being investigated at the time of writing this report.

The service received 48 compliments about adult social care services during 2021/22, a decrease from 66 in 2020/21 with compliments for County Durham Care and Support totalling 11, representing a plateauing of compliments for this service when compared to the previous performance year (10) after previous highs.

Complaints continue to provide invaluable information and learning from which adult social care services can improve. Some examples of which are detailed below:

- AHS Complaints processes were reviewed so that they considered potential conflicts with investigations by other bodies at the earliest opportunity, such as the Police or the Coroner, to ensure complaints are only put on hold where essential.
- The Council reviewed its decision-making process, including the use of discretion in the treatment of properties where customers are in residential care, incorporating an examination of the Care Act 2014, Government guidance and the Council's own policies and procedures in this area, including the appeals process.

Part Three - The adult social care complaints process

When a complaint is received, it is risk-assessed to ensure that there are no safeguarding or other procedural issues that might supersede the complaints procedure and that it is within the 12-month limitation period. Consent must be obtained to confirm that someone making a complaint on another's behalf has been given the authority to do so.

Once the above determinations have been made, complainants are engaged in planning how their complaint is to be addressed and the timescales for doing so, along with what they hope to see happen as a result of making a complaint in the form of desired outcomes. A Complaints Resolution Plan (CRP) is produced which summarises this information along with the specific elements of complaint for investigation and the complainant is encouraged to suggest any changes to this document so it accurately reflects the issues they wish to be examined.

The Council's focus is always on the resolution of the complaint and engagement with the complainant in order to resolve matters to their satisfaction. Where resolution is not achieved, the complainant remains dissatisfied and the Council's complaints procedure is deemed to have been exhausted, the complainant is invited to raise any outstanding issues with the LGSCO.

Whilst a complainant can refer their complaints to the LGSCO from the outset, the Ombudsman will not usually investigate a complaint until the Council has conducted its own investigation and provided a response. In some circumstances where there has been a joint investigation with Health Services, progression may also involve the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO).

Part Four- Complaints made to the Local Authority (AHS)

AHS formally investigated 79 complaints through to a formal finding during 2021/22.

In addition to this number, 4 complaints were declined. In 2 cases, complaints were made on behalf of service users by a relative but without the service user's knowledge or consent, and when questioned, both service users did not agree with nor give their consent for a complaint to be made on their behalf. In the remaining 2 cases, complaints were made after service users had passed away with the individual making the complaint being advised that they would need to provide evidence that they were the Executor of the deceased service user's estate or possess a letter of administration in relation to the estate before we would accept complaint and release any personally identifiable information in any complaints response. In both of these cases, no such verification was subsequently forthcoming.

Complainants can approach the LGSCO with a request that they review the Council's decision to decline their complaint. At the time of writing this report the Ombudsman has not approached the Council with an instruction to investigate any of these declined complaints.

AHS led on 3 complaint investigations that incorporated contributions from our partners in Health which was a slight decrease from 4 in 2020/21. This involved joint complaint investigations with Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) (1) and

County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) (2). These 3 complaints are included in the figures presented in this report.

The Council also contributed information to complaint investigations led by TEWV (1) and CDDFT (1). This was a reduction from 6 in the previous performance year. These figures are not included in this report as the lead organisation will include these within their own annual reporting.

During the 2021/22 performance year the Council also came to an agreement with the North of England Commissioning Support Unit (NECS) who deal with complaints on behalf of the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), establishing a joint protocol for dealing with complaints which encompass the actions and decision making of both organisation in health and social care matters. This joint protocol is included as Appendix 1.

Comparison of number of complaints received by service area 2020/21 to 2021/22

Service Area	Number of Complaints 2020/21	% of Total Complaints 2020/21	Number of Complaints 2021/22	% of Total Complaints 2021/22
Older People/ Physical Disabilities/Sensory Impairment	23	31%	27	34.25%
Learning Disability/Mental Health/Carers/Substance Misuse	17	23%	15	19%
Commissioning	14	18%	6	7.5%
County Durham Care and Support	3	4%	1	1.25%
Safeguarding, Practice Development & Access	3	4%	1	1.25%
Finance*	15	20%	26	33%
Emergency Duty Team (EDT)	0	-	2	2.5%
Operational Support	0	-	1	1.25%
Total	75	100%	79	100%

**Finance is no longer part of AHS, but the complaints were regarding statutory adult social care services*

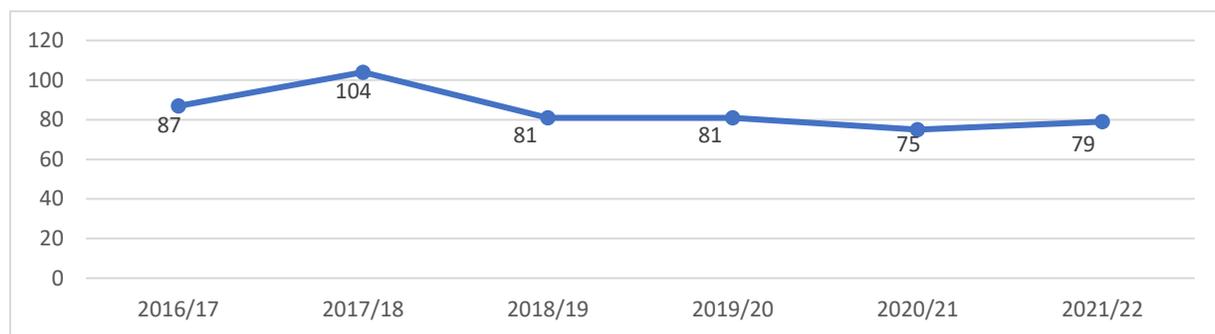
The number of complaints for some service areas remained relatively consistent with changes representing an increase or reduction in complaints by only 1 or 2.

Complaints relating to finance increased significantly due to the Financial Assessment Team and the Debtors and Collections Team working through a substantial caseload brought about by the pandemic. This related to the introduction of Covid-19 funding by the Government for certain service users in receipt of domiciliary or residential care services, depending upon their personal circumstances. This has significantly increased the workload of the aforementioned teams as the Government's initiatives

are applied to service users' accounts, then adjusted as the criteria for receipt of Covid-19 funding was changed and eventually removed. These teams have also been involved in the implementation of the new Adult Social Care Case Management System (Azeus) in June 2021. This has led to some delays in relation to carrying out financial assessments, recalculating charges due and issuing invoices for any resulting recharges, which has resulted in complaints.

The graph below shows the number of complaints received by adult social care services over the last 6 years, peaking in 2017/18 but maintaining at around a similar number since this peak.

Year on year trend - adult social care complaints 2016 – 2022



Complaints completed within timescales

Complaints Resolution Plans (CRPs) were completed in all of the 79 complaints received in the year. Of the CRPs compiled, all included a projected timescale for a response which was initially calculated based upon the perceived complexity of the case.

In 23 complaints investigations (29%), more time was needed for service areas to fully complete their enquiries for a variety of reasons such as the availability of staff for interview, unforeseen complexity, further information required from the Complainant and the need to seek legal advice. This figure is fluctuating as it increased from 25% to 29.5% in 2018/19 and then has dropped to 12.5% in 2019/20. In the previous performance year of 2020/21 the deadline for a response was extended in 17% of cases linked to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown and re-opening of services instigated by the Government from March 2020.

Over the 2021/22 performance year the impact on complaints investigations and the need to extend timescales was most keenly felt by the Learning Disabilities/Mental Health/Substance Misuse service area with 9 of their 15 complaints needing more time to be concluded. It is noted that there was a significant degree of complexity in the matters raised within some of these complaints and that some were from challenging service user who could be deemed to be persistent complaints.

Where the Council needed more time to fully investigate and report upon a complaint, the complainant in each case was updated and fully informed of developments along with a new projected response date.

Of the 79 complaints received, all had been responded to at the time of writing this report. All complaint investigations relating to complaints submitted in 2020/21 were

completed and associated responses issued within the projected or extended timescales notified to the complainant.

Categories of complaints received and findings in 2021/22

When complaints are received, they are recorded and categorised according to the subject matter of the issues raised.

Detailed below is the outcomes of complaints in 2021/22 in the associated categories (the highest three totals are shown in bold):

Complaint Category / Issue	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Total
Application of Service Guidance/Procedures	4	4	3	11
Confidentiality	-	1	1	2
COVID-19 related	-	-	1	1
Discrimination	-	1	1	2
Disputed Decision – disagreement with an assessment	2	1	1	4
Disputed Decision – disagreement with a report	-	-	1	1
Disputed Decision – disagreement with an explanation or decision	4	4	4	12
Finance – Assessment	1	4	1	6
Finance – Charging policy	7	12	5	24
Finance – Direct Payments	-	1	1	2
Lack of Communication – no information received	3	3	2	8
Lack of Communication – not updated about case	-	-	5	5
Lack of Communication – unreturned phone calls/texts	4	3	-	7
Lack of Communication – other	4	5	3	12
Lack of Explanation / Explanation not understood	5	6	2	13
Lack of Service – contact/visits	-	1	1	2
Lack of Service – denied service	2	2	5	9
Lack of service – referral of concern not actioned	2	2	-	4
Provision of Service – assessment	2	2	-	4
Provision of Service – equipment	-	-	2	2
Provision of Service – placement provision	1	-	1	2
Quality of Service – late referral	-	1	-	1
Quality of Service – missed or incorrect medication	-	-	1	1
Quality of Service – missed/late domiciliary care calls	-	2	-	2
Quality of Service – personal financial issues	1	1	-	2
Quality of Service – report writing	1	1	-	2
Quality of Service – work of other agencies	1	1	-	2
Safeguarding	1	4	2	7
Speed of service	9	7	4	20
Staff attitude	2	-	2	4
Staff being or seeming to be untruthful	-	1	2	3
Staff not acting in best interest of service user	1	2	3	6
Staff not adhering to statutory timescales or responsibilities	-	-	1	1
Staff not turning up for/attending a meeting	-	-	1	1
Standard of care	1	1	2	4
Overall Total	58	73	58	189

It should be noted that a complaint can have more than one category assigned to it.

From the 189 different categories assigned to the 79 complaints received in 2021/22, the top 3 reasons for making a complaint are listed below:

Finance – Charging Policy was the most common reason for making a complaint, appearing 24 times (12.5%). This category was second in 2020/21 and often relates to the charges services users are asked to pay for adult social care services where the

amounts are disputed, for example, where the services have not been delivered as frequently or to the standards expected. In 2020/21, this category often appeared alongside **Covid-19 related** when government funding for residential care placements ended and service users disputed charges going forward. It is noted that **Covid-19 related** complaints were the main reason for making a complaint in 2020/21 (appearing 21 times representing 10.5% of complaints) but only appeared once within this performance year.

Speed of Service was the second most common reason for making a complaint, appearing 20 times (10.5%). This category was very much linked with **Finance – Charging Policy**, with 50% of these complaints linked to being notified of charges and the delay in notifying service users of such charges, hence complainants having an issue with the **Speed of Service**.

Lack of Explanation – Explanation Not Understood was the third most common reason for making a complaint appearing 13 times (7%). Such complaints again are often linked to charges for care and support, where a service user does not understand how charges have been calculated or where they were of the understanding that they would receive free Intermediate Care for up to a maximum of 6 weeks.

Outcome of complaints by service area 2021/22

Service Area	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Total	Not Upheld as a % of Total	Upheld/ Partially Upheld as a % of Total
Older People/ Physical Disability & Sensory Impairment	5	9	13	27	16.5%	18%
Learning Disability/ Mental Health / Substance Misuse	6	3	6	15	7.5%	11.5%
Safeguarding, Practice Development & Access	-	1	-	1	-	1.25%
Commissioning	1	4	1	6	1.25%	6%
County Durham Care and Support	1	-	-	1	-	1.25%
Emergency Duty Team (EDT)	1	-	1	2	1.25%	1.25%
Finance	11	11	4	26	5%	28%
Operational Support	1	-	-	1	-	1.25%
Total	26	28	25	79	31.5%	68.5%

In performance year being reported upon nearly 32% of complaints investigated through to a finding were not upheld, compared with 52% not upheld in the 2020/21 performance year (5.4% of complaints were still under investigation with an outcome pending at the time of writing the 2020/21 annual report). All complaints had been investigated through to a finding in 2021/22 with 68.5% having some or all aspects of the complaint upheld.

Complaints that are upheld or partially upheld are of particular interest to adult social care services. In these cases, the service actively looks to identify what it could have

done better and what action it can take with the aim of resolving matters to the complainant's satisfaction.

These complaints give the service the opportunity for learning, on an individual level for example, where a social worker can be supported by management to improve their personal performance and sometimes across the whole service, where a policy or procedure is improved as a result of a complaint. Further examples of learning and service improvement as a consequence of complaints received are outlined in Part Six of this report.

Part Five - The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

Where a complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint, they can refer any outstanding issues to the LGSCO who will determine what action to take after considering the presenting issues.

Complaints considered by the LGSCO 2021/22

Service Area	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Declined/ No Action	Ongoing	Total
Older People/ Physical Disability & Sensory Impairment	1	-	2	4	-	7
Learning Disability/ Mental Health / Substance Misuse	-	-	1	-	2	3
Finance	-	-	1	-	1	2
Commissioning	1	-	-	1	-	2
Safeguarding, Practice Development & Access	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total	2	-	4	5	4	15

In the 2021/22 performance year the Ombudsman approached AHS in relation to 15 adult statutory social care complaints, down from 22 in 2020/21, and concluded their enquiries in 11 of these cases.

Of the 5 cases declined, closed or identified as needing no further action:

- Two complaints were made in 2020/21 on behalf of the same service user by relatives who were not next of kin, subsequently being escalated to the LGSCO in the 2021/22 performance year. DCC had previously declined the complaints after deciding that neither individual was acting in the service user's best interests. The Ombudsman concurred with the Council's view and closed both complaints after initial enquiries, concluding that neither person was a suitable representative for the service user, taking no further action.
- In another case the Ombudsman decided not to investigate a complaint about DCC's decision to charge the service user for the cost of their care because they were unlikely to find fault. The charging rules for residential care are set out in the Care & Support (Charging & Assessment of resources) Regulations 2014 & the Care & Support Statutory Guidance 2014, which the Council followed.
- The Ombudsman closed one complaint because a service user lacked the capacity to make a decision about their accommodation needs, a placement was

made in their best interests and the LGSCO decided that the Court of Protection was the body best placed to consider the issues being raised by family as the Ombudsman cannot achieve the outcome the Complainant was looking for, therefore they should raise the matter via the Court.

- The Ombudsman identified 2 separate complaints where the complainant had not exhausted the Council's own complaints procedure and advised that the Local Authority should conduct their own investigation before any unresolved matters would be considered by the Ombudsman.
- The LGSCO decided not to investigate a complaint about a residential care placement commissioned by the Council because the investigation already conducted led to the care provider accepting there were some issues with the care received, it apologised and set out the changes it had made. The Ombudsman decided not to investigate the complaint because an investigation would be unlikely to add anything to the response already received or achieve the outcomes the Complainant would like.

Of the 2 cases upheld where the Ombudsman identified maladministration and injustice:

- In one case, the Ombudsman did not find fault with DCC's decision to not provide overnight care, but it should have communicated the reason why. DCC should have also clearly communicated who would administer the service user's insulin before the proposed move to a residential care placement. The Complainant was paid £200 in recognition of the uncertainty caused by the Council's faults.
- The Ombudsman found that the failings in care and the impact upon a service user whilst in a residential care placement commissioned by the Council were neglect. The Council apologised, made a symbolic payment of £1,000 to reflect the family's avoidable distress and took action to minimise the risk of recurrence.

On 24 February 2022 the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman issued a report entitled: **Unprecedented Pressure: Learning from complaints about council and care provider actions during the COVID-19 pandemic** which can be accessed via the following link:

[Ombudsman's COVID report highlights how councils and care providers coped - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

During the course of the pandemic since March 2020, adult social care services had only one 'Covid-19 related' complaint investigated through to a finding by the Ombudsman, where a family objected to the restrictions placed upon visiting their mother who resided within a care home. The Ombudsman did not uphold the complaint. The above report comments on all Council services, not just adult social care services, to highlight how councils and care providers coped with the Covid-19 based upon their experiences of investigating complaints linked to the response to the pandemic.

Part Six - Learning and service improvement

Complaints provide invaluable information from which the service learns how to improve. Complaints also act as a prompt to ensure all staff work consistently to policies and procedures. Even where complaints are not upheld, full explanations, further information and often apologies are given.

Some of the learning outcomes and actions taken in response to complaints included:

- instructing a care provider to remind their staff about the importance of adding information to their IT systems promptly and accurately.
- auditing all of a Social Worker's cases after identifying a lack of clear explanations and effective communication within a service user's review document which was deemed to be of poor quality.
- refunding a service user the costs of 3 days of service provision that should have been covered by Covid-19 funding.
- reviewing decision-making processes, including the use of discretion in the treatment of properties where customers are in residential care, when calculating a service user's level of personal contribution towards the costs of their care and support.
- issuing an instruction to officers sending final account invoices to modify their covering letters and where appropriate include an apology when there has been an unusual delay outside of the Council's normal service standards.
- reminding a care provider of the contractual requirement to inform the Council when care calls are consistently being delivered in less than the allocated time, with future compliance being monitored by our Commissioning Service going forward.
- updating Direct Debit procedures and circulating these to appropriate officers, together with instructions on the correct approach to take to avoid delays in processing notifications from the 'Tell Us Once' service, upon being notified of the death of a service user.
- all staff from the Billing Team being reminded of the correct way to add temporary and permanent residential placements to the new adult social care computer system after errors were made on a service user's record which resulted in a delay to invoices being issued for their care and support.
- current practice on both recording and case management functionality was reviewed after a carer's survey was issued in error linked to a person who was deceased and to reduce the likelihood of such an incident occurring in the future the following measures were implemented:
 - Similar cases were identified and records manually amended to remove any active carers where the carer was deceased.
 - The software providers were contacted and asked to implement enhancements to the case management system which would automatically

remove any related carer record when the carer's own record is marked as deceased.

- Instructions/advice was issued to all Adult Care staff to ask them to ensure that they review their caseload records to make sure that open carer and related records were correct.

Payments were made where failures constituted maladministration and/or injustice as defined by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. See the LGSCO section in Part Five of the report. Within the 2021/22 performance year payments of £1,200 were made. It should be noted that financial redress was only considered (and agreed in line with the Council's Scheme of Delegation) where there was strong evidence of shortcomings.

It is recognised that where adult social care services are responsible for service failures that have caused losses and significant emotional distress, there is clearly the duty for this to be acknowledged and further distress to the complainant be avoided. In each of the complaint responses issued, full explanations and where appropriate, apologies were offered.

Complaints continue to provide invaluable information and learning from which adult social care services can improve. At the conclusion of each complaint investigation, the Strategic Manager with responsibility for the service area being complained about ensures that any proposed action is completed. They also disseminate any learning across their own area of the service and to a wider audience across AHS where appropriate.

Part Seven - Compliments

There is no statutory requirement to publish data on compliments for the period in question. These are included in this report in order to provide a more holistic view of what service users and their nominated representatives think about the services they receive and to understand what elements of the service that are valued.

There were 48 recorded compliments during 2021/22, a decrease from the 66 received in 2020/21. As shown in the table below, the majority of the compliments in 2019/20 were for County Durham Care and Support (CDCS), the in-house provider services.

Total number of compliments by service area 2020/21 to 2021/22

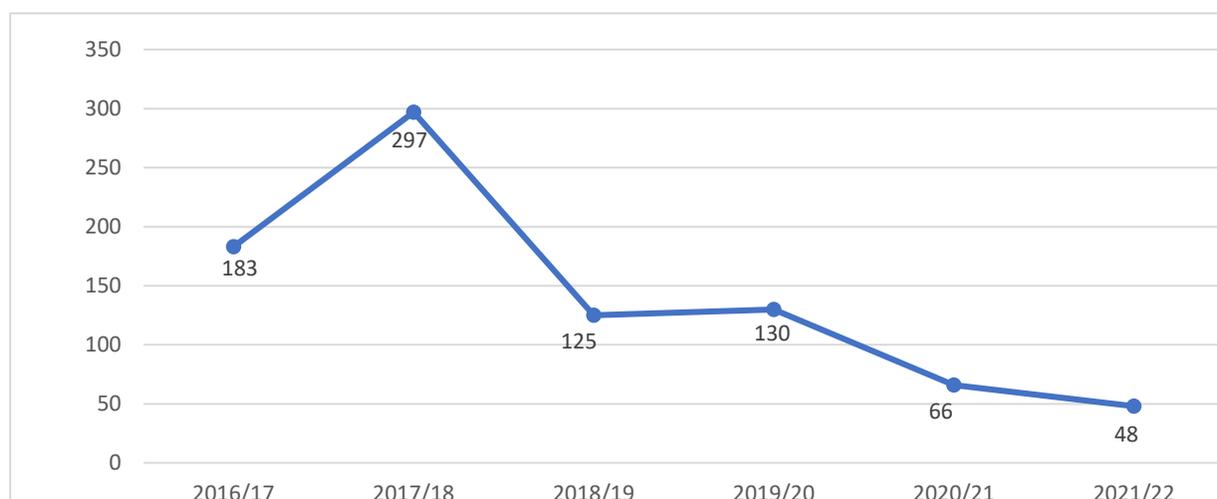
Service	Total Compliments 2020/21	% of Total Compliments 2020/21	Total Compliments 2021/22	% of Total Compliments 2021/22
Older People/ Physical Disabilities/ Sensory Impairment	33	50%	31	64.5%
Learning Disability/Mental Health/ Carers/Substance Misuse	23	35%	4	8.5%
County Durham Care and Support	10	15%	11	23%
Safeguarding, Practice Development & Access	-	-	1	2%
Emergency Duty Team (EDT)*	-	-	1	2%
Total	66	100%	48	100%

**Although managed by CYPS, this compliment was given during the course of dealing with adult social care issues.*

Prior to the significant increase in compliments in the 2017/18 performance year, there has previously been a similar number of compliments received year on year until 2020/21 and the Covid-19 pandemic. It is noted that during 2017/18 the CDCS teams affected by the prospect of outsourcing captured a lot of positive feedback for their area of the service. Now that these elements of the service are no longer part of DCC, the number of compliments plateaued, followed by a significant reduction since then.

Staff are relied on to share compliments so that they can be logged and as colleagues have been working from home during a significant part of 2021/22, as well as the focus within Extra Care on keeping tenants safe during the pandemic, this appears to have impacted upon the receiving and recording of compliments. It is also noted that in June 2021 AHS replaced its Social Services Information Database (SSID) with new Azeus computer system and staff have had to be trained on how to add compliments to this new system.

Year on year trend - adult social care compliments 2016 – 2022



Compliments for reporting purposes must meet specific criteria. Managers are encouraged to ensure that all compliments in the form of positive comments, letters, emails and cards are captured and shared with their staff and teams to re-inforce their value.

Compliments highlight that service users have appreciated the following:

- Feeling respected, listened to and supported.
- Having decisions explained to them.
- Being kept informed.
- Staff explaining issues in a way the client understood.
- Professionalism, care and commitment of staff.
- Being able to contact staff easily.

The number of compliments received has consistently been higher than the number of complaints received as shown in the graph below, until 2020/21, when for the first time there were more complaints than compliments. This trend has continued in 2021/22. The ratio of compliments to complaints received across AHS is 0.6:1. This means that for every 1 complaint received, there were 0.6 compliments. In 2020/21 this ratio was actually 0.88:1.

The ratio of compliments to complaints 2016 – 2022



Part Eight – Developments and Conclusion

Developments

Whilst the Local Authority has a statutory duty to operate and administer a system for dealing with and reporting upon adult social care complaints, DCC AHS does not simply meet that duty but continuously strives to achieve and maintain a high level of service in relation to the management of complaints. With this aim in mind, a number of developments have been undertaken during 2021/22 to include:

- The continuous improvement of tracking and monitoring systems to ensure actions and learning outcomes arising from complaints are implemented in a timely and effective way and fully embedded, in order to compliment the LGSCO's focus on the monitoring of improvement actions as a consequence of decisions they have made on complaints.
- Close working with external and internal development teams charged with implementing the new Azeus computer system which was introduced in June 2021 and included a bespoke representations function within the new system for use by AHS, designed to replace and update current systems currently in use.
- Closer working with Transactional and Customer Services in relation to the finance aspects of adult social care services which are delivered via the Financial Assessment Team, Deputy and Appointee Team and the Debtors and Collections Team, who have all experienced an increase in workloads brought about by the pandemic. This is due to the introduction of Covid-19 funding by the Government for certain service users in receipt of domiciliary or residential care services, depending upon their personal circumstances. In dealing with these workloads, these teams have also had to manage cases as they transitioned from the SSID computer system to its replacement, Azeus, from June 2021.

- Closer working with the complaints teams in health services, such as the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG), North of England Commissioning Support Unit (NECS), Tees, Esk, Wear Valley (NHS) Foundation Trust (TEWV) and County Durham and Darlington (NHS) Foundation Trust (CDDFT) , with a focus on a consistency in approach for complaints requiring joint investigations.

Reporting

Complaints information is reported on a quarterly basis and circulated as part of the corporate Customer Feedback Report, as well as at the financial year end within the annual report as required by *The Local Authority Social Services and NHS Complaints (England) Regulations 2009*.

Conclusion

The complaints function is a statutory requirement for social care services and it plays a vital role in contributing to quality improvement across adult social care as it provides an understanding of the service users' experiences. Acting upon the learning arising from complaints provides the opportunity to change practice and improve service delivery with transparency and accountability.

A collaborative approach is continually promoted during the management of complaints, where the complainant is central to the process and resolution is proactively sought and encouraged.

Further information regarding anything in this report is available by contacting:

Lesley Martin
AHS Development and Learning Manager
Durham County Council - County Hall
Tel: 03000 267393

Appendix 1 – Joint Protocol

Agreed Joint Protocol for Health and Social Care Organisations

Durham County Council – Adult and Health Services – North East Commissioning Services and Clinical Commission Groups Guidance for handling complaints involving more than one organisation

DCC, NECS and the CCGs recognise that during the course of a patient's care pathway and service delivery, they may access services provided by several organisations. People who are dissatisfied have the right to complain to both organisations and The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 require a single approach for dealing with complaints across health and social care services.

There is an expectation that organisations will work jointly to address complaints spanning multiple organisations and examples of good practice in managing such complaints include:

- A single consistent and agreed contact point for complainants resulting in a single reply
- Regular and effective liaison and communication between complaints teams and complainants
- An open, flexible process focused on resolving complaints locally with a more personal and comprehensive approach, and
- That learning points arising from complaints covering more than one body are identified and addressed by each organisation

Depending on the complexity of the complaint, determination of lead may involve a multi-agency meeting and action plan before any investigations are carried out. When determining which organisation will take the lead role in a joint complaint, the following will be taken into account:

- Which organisation manages the services involved
- Which organisation has the most serious complaints about it
- Whether a larger number of the issues in the complaint relate to one organisation compared with the other organisation(s)
- Which organisation originally received the complaint (if the seriousness and number of complaints are about the same for each one)
- Whether the complainant has a clear preference for which organisation takes the lead
- The impact on the organisations' governance arrangements

It is incumbent on the organisations involved to resolve any disputes in relation to responsibilities for particular issues within individual complaints. Any unresolved disputes between the nominated managers should be escalated within the relevant

organisations. This includes situations where complaints staff from the organisations involved are unable to reach agreement about who should take the lead role in which case they will refer to directors/heads of service in their organisations for resolution.

The complainant must give their written consent before information relating to the complaint is passed between organisations. The complainant is entitled to a full explanation of why their consent is being sought.

If the complainant does not agree to the complaint being passed to the other organisation, the complaints manager of the receiving organisation should:

- Clarify with the complainant the remit and responsibility of the receiving organisation
- Offer any liaison that could contribute to resolving matters with other agencies, and
- Remind the complainant of their entitlement to contact the other organisation(s) direct

Close co-operation between complaints teams in the organisations involved is crucial to ensure that confidential case file information is shared appropriately and that the necessary safeguards are put in place.

The lead organisation ensures that:

- A comprehensive assessment is undertaken
- A responsible organisation and/or departments for each aspect of the complaint is identified
- They communicate with colleagues in all affected organisations, via the complaints departments
- They acknowledge receipt and offer to discuss the complaint with the complainant within three working days
- They coordinate production of a summary of the complaint with the complainant and other agencies which includes details of timescales for completion;
- The suggested timescale for completion of a multi-agency complaint is three months from receipt (or from receipt of consent and/or approval of the complaint plan)
- Organisations seek to avoid any unnecessary delay
- If difficulties arise with meeting the timescale, the complainant is be consulted at the earliest opportunity with the aim of reaching agreement of a revised timescale
- The complainant is kept updated on action being taken
- They answer any queries during the process, in consultation with the other organisations

- A suitable officer is identified to sign the final decision letter of a complaint as agreed in the planning process
- All organisations involved are given a copy of the final response
- Ensure points of learning are acted upon within each organisation as required.

Assisting organisations ensure that:

- A named officer is identified as a point of contact with regard to the complaint
- The written response is in the form of a formal, signed letter on the organisation's letterhead
- This information be is made clear from all organisations involved and presented in such a way that the lead agency can easily incorporate the information provided into the single response letter
- The response explicitly states whether issues are unsubstantiated or partially or wholly substantiated
- Any learning points are identified and included in the response to the complainant
- Corrective/improvement actions taken or to be taken are clearly stated

All documentation produced in a complaint investigation will be the joint property of each organisation. Such documentation shall not be shared or otherwise disclosed to any third party unless with the permission of each organisation.

Where cross-boundary costs are envisaged, they will be identified, agreed and apportioned by the organisations involved following an assessment of the appropriateness and proportionality of those costs. Methods of payment, e.g. conventional invoicing, will be agreed between the organisations involved.

Where a multi-agency complaint has been responded to and subsequent issues are raised by the complainant which require a supplementary response, it may be preferable for the organisation which took the lead originally to maintain coordination of the response. However, where the original lead organisation is not implicated in the outstanding issues, a determination will be reached between all parties involved if a coordinated response is required. Where only one organisation is implicated in the outstanding concerns, they will take the lead in coordinating the further response.

Each organisation will follow the required processes to respond to the LGSCO/PHSO and, if applicable, will look to coordinate information and the reply as required.

Each individual organisation has a responsibility for identifying the lessons learned and actions to be taken as a result of the complaint.

Each individual organisation must take responsibility for implementing and monitoring their own learning/action plans and all organisations will agree any joint learning and or actions.

It is vital to identify communication, procedural, operational or strategic issues within and across each organisation. It may also be necessary to share information with other organisations when serious concerns are raised about a health or social care worker.

Guidance

Step 1

1. Organisation receiving complaint to acknowledge receipt no later than three working days after the day on which it is received.
2. Seek to resolve any immediate issues, e.g. urgent medical needs, safeguarding intervention.

Step 2

1. Contact all relevant organisation complaint managers.
2. Provide them with all details of complaint available so far.
3. Arrange how to seek their view, e.g. email, phone or meeting.
4. Record all views on how to proceed, i.e. intervention options.
5. Each organisation considers any risks relating to the complaint/complainant.
6. Agree lead organisation taking into account:
 - Proportions of issues
 - To whom the complaint was addressed
 - Risk
 - Views of complainant
7. Agree role of lead e.g.
 - Manage and coordinate all investigations via the complaints teams.
 - Single point of contact for all communication to/from complainant.
 - Coordinate production of a summary of the complaint with the complainant which includes details of timescales for completion*.
 - Keep all parties involved/up to date during including informing of changes/delays.
 - Agree how and who to sign off response, e.g. one or all organisations (default: Director of lead organisation on behalf of all).
 - Ensure all parties have a copy of the final response
 - Corrective/improvement actions taken or to be taken are clearly stated

* Please note agreement has been reached for this policy that the partners will look to agree timescales based on 6 weeks if single agency involvement or up to 3 months for multi-agency involvement

Step 3

1. Failure to agree revisions of Complaints Resolution Plan should be escalated within the organisations.

2. Organisation representatives should meet to discuss what went well, not so well and any lessons for future case.

Step 4

1. If the lead organisation is contacted by the LGSCO they will respond to the queries raised and if required liaise with the partner agency.

Appendix 2 - Glossary of abbreviations

AHS	Adult and Health Services
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CDCS	County Durham Care and Support
CDDFT	County Durham and Darlington (NHS) Foundation Trust
CHC	Continuing Healthcare
CRP	Complaints Resolution Plan
DCC	Durham County Council
LGSCO	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
NECS	North of England Commissioning Support Unit
NHS	National Health Service
PHSO	Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
SSID	Social Services Information Database
TEWV	Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys (NHS) Foundation Trust



Adult and Health Services

Annual Statutory Representations Report Adult Social Care Services 2021/2022

Lesley Martin, AHS Development and Learning Manager
Tel: 03000 267393

Mark Pickering, AHS Complaints Officer
Tel: 03000 266855

Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format, such as Braille, Audio or Large Print.

**AHS Complaints, Room 2/130, County Hall,
Durham, DH1 5UJ Tel: 03000 266855**

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**Corporate Overview and
Scrutiny Management Board**



24 October 2022

Notice of Key Decisions

Report of Corporate Management Team

Helen Lynch, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To consider the list of key decisions that is scheduled to be considered by the Executive.

Recommendation(s)

- 2 The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny management board is recommended to give consideration to items listed in the notice.

Background

- 3 New rules in relation to Executive decisions were introduced by The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, which came into force on 10 September 2012.
- 4 The regulations took away the requirement for the Executive to produce a Forward Plan of key decisions, however introduced that the decision maker cannot make a key decision unless a document has been published at least 28 clear days before the decision is taken, unless either a general exception or special urgency requirements have been met. The document which has to be published must state:
 - a) that the key decision is to be made on behalf of the relevant local authority
 - b) the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made

- c) where the decision maker is an individual, that individual's name and title if any and where the decision maker is a decision making body, its name and list of its members
 - d) the date on which or the period within which the decision is to be made
 - e) a list of the document submitted to the decision maker for consideration in relation to the matter of which the key decision is to be made
 - f) the address from which, subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure copies of, or extracts from any document listed as available
 - g) that other documents relevant to those matters may be submitted to the decision maker
 - h) the procedure for requesting details of those documents (if any) as they become available.
- 5 The requirements also apply to an exempt matter as previously it did not strictly have to be included in the Forward Plan. Now a publicity document must contain particulars of the matter, but may not contain any confidential exempt information or particulars of the adviser or political adviser or assistant.
- 6 Notices of key decisions that are being produced meet the legal requirements of publication, as well as continuing to provide information for a four month period. Members will therefore be able to consider key decisions as previously for the four month period.

Current Notice of Key Decisions

- 7 The notice of key decisions that is attached to the report at Appendix 2, is the latest to be published prior to the papers for the Board being dispatched to members. The notice complies with the requirements for Cabinet to be able to take key decisions at the meeting held on 12 October 2022. It also contained information on those key decisions that are currently scheduled to be considered by the Executive up to 31 January 2023.

Contact: Michael Turnbull

Tel: 03000 269714

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet. To publish the notice of key decisions in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Finance

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Consultation

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Climate Change

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Human Rights

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Crime and Disorder

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Staffing

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Accommodation

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Risk

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

Procurement

Will be reflected in each individual key decision report to Cabinet.

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SECTION ONE - CORPORATE

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information	Scrutiny Involvement
CORP/R/22/01	12/10/22	MTFP - Update on development of MTFP including consideration of options for		Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council		Jeff Garfoot, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services Tel: 03000 261946	Scrutiny members will have input into the formulation of the MTFP through COSMB meetings
CORP/R/22/02	16/11/22	Council Tax Base 2022/23 and Forecast Surplus / Deficit on Collection Fund		Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council		Jeff Garfoot, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services Tel: 03000 261946	Scrutiny members will have input into the formulation of the MTFP through COSMB meetings
CORP/R/22/01	14/12/22	MTFP - Update on development of MTFP including analysis of the Autumn Statement		Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council		Jeff Garfoot, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services Tel: 03000 261946	Scrutiny members will have input into the formulation of the MTFP through COSMB meetings
CORP/R/22/01	18/01/23	MTFP - Details of Provisional Finance Settlement		Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council		Jeff Garfoot, Head of Corporate Finance and Commercial Services Tel: 03000 261946	Scrutiny members will have input into the formulation of the MTFP through COSMB meetings

SECTION TWO - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information
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SECTION THREE - ADULT AND HEALTH SERVICES

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information
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SECTION FOUR - REGENERATION, ECONOMY AND GROWTH

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information	Scrutiny Involvement
REG/08/22	16-Nov-22	Inclusive Economic Strategy		Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships		Mike Allum, Spatial Policy Manager Tel: 03000 261906	The Economy and Enterprise OSC will be considering the draft Inclusive Economic Strategy at its meeting on the 7 November 2022.
REG/09/22	12-Oct-22	Concessionary Fares Budget		Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships		Mark Jackson, Head of Transport and Contract Services Tel: 03000 263577	

SECTION FIVE - NEIGHBOURHOODS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Ref. No.	Date of Decision (i.e. date of Cabinet meeting)	Description of Decision to be Made	Background Documents	Lead Cabinet Member	Main Consultees & Means of Consultation	Contact details for further information	Scrutiny Involvement
NCC/04/22	12/10/22	Ecological Emergency - Outline Strategy and Action Plan		Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Climate Change		Steve Bhowmick Environment & Design Manager Tel: 03000 267122	The Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC has an update in relation to the action plan scheduled for both the January and May 2023 meetings of the committee.

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