



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council



**Council Plan**  
2020 - 2023

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**Councillor Jonathan Dulston**

Leader of Darlington Borough Council



## Foreword by the Leader of the Council Councillor Jonathan Dulston

Welcome to the Council Plan which sets out our vision for the period between now and May 2023. The council's focus over this time will be:

### **DELIVERING SUCCESS FOR DARLINGTON**

And our vision for the borough is:

**Darlington is a place where people want to live and businesses want to locate, where the economy continues to grow, where people are happy and proud of the borough and where everyone has the opportunity to maximise their potential.**

Darlington is a borough of opportunity with much to celebrate and to be proud of. As a borough we outperform many of our North East neighbours, but we want more for Darlington and its residents. We know we cannot rest on our laurels and we must strive for continuous improvement, otherwise we will go backwards.

Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is a major challenge for us. Investment via the Town Fund, the upgrade of Darlington Station and the 2025 railway celebrations are all opportunities for local businesses to be involved and to create job opportunities within our community.

Economic growth is the key lever we have at our disposal to be able to deliver our long-term vision for the borough, and therefore growing Darlington's economy is our top priority.

**Duncan Selbie, the Chief Executive of Public Health England, on a visit to Darlington stated "the best thing to improve people's health and wellbeing is a good job and a good home."**

By growing the economy we are striving to provide the opportunity for everyone to access a good job and a good home, so they can maximise their potential and play their part in Darlington's success.

You will see from our plan on a page that whilst growing the economy is crucial to delivering our vision, that other key priorities are included; we want to maximise people's potential and support those who need our help.

To **Deliver Success For Darlington**, the council will create the conditions and opportunities for growth, but it is the private sector from which much of the investment required to deliver growth will come. Our key partner in growing the economy is the Tees Valley Combined Authority, from which much of the funding required to deliver growth will come and be invested in Darlington and the Tees Valley. A thriving Tees Valley economy is important for Darlington's success and so we will continue to work with and support our neighbouring Tees Valley councils.

The plan shows our vision and top priorities with the following pages detailing actions we intend to take between now and May 2023 to deliver our vision and priorities. The plan will be reviewed annually alongside the council's Medium Term Financial Plan, to take account of changing circumstances and to ensure our plans are affordable. The progress against the plan will be reviewed twice a year, along with other key performance indicators by Cabinet and the various scrutiny committees.

The borough's biggest asset is its residents, they make the place what it is and I hope everyone will get behind our plans to make it an even better place. We should all be proud and emphasise the positive benefits of living and working in a great borough.

# Delivering Success for Darlington

**The Vision** - Darlington is a place where people want to live and businesses want to locate, where the economy continues to grow, where people are happy and proud of the borough and where everyone has the opportunity to maximise their potential.

## Our Priorities

### Growing Darlington's economy by delivering:

- More sustainable well-paid jobs
- More businesses
- More homes

### And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough:

- Clean
- Safe
- Healthy
- Sustainable
- Well-planned
- On the move

### Whilst

- Valuing our heritage and culture

### Maximise the potential of our young people by:

- Working with partners to maximise educational achievement
- Working to remove barriers to young people reaching their potential
- Working at a Tees Valley level to match jobs with skills and training.

### Supporting the most vulnerable in the borough by:

- Providing care and support when needed
- Working with people to build on their strengths to maximise their potential
- Working with partners.

### Working with communities to maximise their potential by:

- Maximising the benefits of a growing economy for all communities
- Targeting services where they are most needed
- Working with partners
- Working with communities.

**Supported by:** A dedicated workforce who are proud to serve the borough and an accessible, effective and engaged council.



**Councillor Andy Keir**

“My vision is a borough that is attractive, green and clean, with a wide variety of activities to be enjoyed, and a transport offer that facilitates efficient movement and reduced carbon emissions in the borough.”



# Deputy Leader and Local Services Portfolio - Councillor Andy Keir

This portfolio focuses on ensuring we have the right balance of high quality services and events to meet the needs and expectations of a wide range of local people. This involves modernising a number of our key public buildings, creating the conditions for a thriving and vibrant town centre, planning and celebrating our rail heritage, regeneration of Darlington station and the surrounding area, and working with partners improve transport links.

Key Actions	Lead Director	Lead Officer
With the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), plan the 2025 celebrations for the Stockton and Darlington Passenger Railway	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Community Services
Ensure the borough is clean with a vibrant town centre with an extensive range of events and festivals	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Community Services
Finalise plans for the Rail Heritage Quarter and initiate implementation of the plans together with partners	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Community Services
Deliver the refurbishment and modernisation of the Crown Street Library service	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Community Services
Review and deliver a revised car parking strategy	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Highways and Capital Projects
Work with TVCA to deliver improved transport links within Darlington and the Tees Valley	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Highways and Capital Projects
Modernise Darlington’s crematorium service	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Community Services
Work with TVCA to develop a sustainable Teesside International Airport	Group Director of Services/ Chief Executive	Assistant Director – Economic Growth



**Councillor Mike Renton**

“My Vision is to build Stronger Communities that are resilient, sustainable and safe to ensure everyone has the best opportunities to succeed.”



# Stronger Communities Portfolio - Councillor Mike Renton

This portfolio focuses on creating the conditions for safe and strong communities, often working in partnership with residents and other agencies to identify and address localised and borough-wide issues. The portfolio holder has responsibility for ensuring the council meets its equality and diversity obligations and is the cabinet champion for tackling inequalities in the borough.

Key Actions	Lead Director	Lead Officer
Utilise the skills and resources of businesses to increase volunteering and corporate social responsibility primarily through Darlington Cares	Chief Executive	Director of Darlington Partnership
Produce, deliver and appraise a pilot for a local neighbourhood renewal scheme including reviewing the approach to private sector landlord operations to ensure residents are best supported and protected	Group Director of Services	Director of Darlington Partnership
Work with partners to address food instability	Chief Executive	Director of Darlington Partnership
Embed the new Community Safety service and review its effectiveness and priorities	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Community Services
Work with Durham Constabulary and other key partners to improve our collective response to dealing with drug and alcohol issues	Chief Executive	Director of Public Health
Support the development of the town centre economy by putting appropriate measures in place and demonstrating it is a safe place to visit	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Community Services
Review our approach to the use of CCTV in supporting community safety and work with partners to enhance the service further	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Community Services
Oversee the implementation of the council’s equality policy	Chief Executive	Head of Strategy, Performance and Communications
Work with partners to assess flood risk for Darlington and develop solutions	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Highways and Capital Projects



### Councillor Scott Durham

“I have a vision for a Council which is on a sound financial footing, offering more services online for residents and ensuring we buy more goods and services locally.”



## Resources Portfolio - Councillor Scott Durham

This portfolio focuses on ensuring the council is running efficiently, effectively, and is well governed in order to ensure a balanced budget. It has oversight of activities that generate income for the council which in turn is used to enhance the services available to residents. It also encourages local public and private organisations to spend locally to enhance the local economy.

Key Actions	Lead Director	Lead Officer
Deliver a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and a positive Value for Money (VFM) outcome	Chief Executive	Assistant Director – Resources
Oversee the successful completion of existing house building joint venture companies	Chief Executive	Assistant Director – Resources
Maximise the council’s income from the council’s Investment Fund, including further joint venture housing companies	Chief Executive	Assistant Director – Resources
Maximise council tax and business rate income through robust income collection processes	Group Director of Operations	Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues
Adopt a local wealth building approach to council procurement and work with the wider public sector in Darlington to do the same	Chief Executive	Director of Darlington Partnership
Increasing the availability of council services online	Group Director of Operations	Head of Strategy, Performance and Communications
Review and refresh the council’s workforce strategy	Group Director of Operations	Assistant Director – Resources



**Councillor Jon Clarke**

“My vision is a borough where young people get the best start in life, can maximise their potential and are safe.”



## Children and Young People Portfolio - Councillor Jon Clarke

This portfolio focuses on ensuring that every child in Darlington has the best start in life so that our children and young people can grow and flourish. There are some groups of children who require enhanced and targeted support to achieve their full potential.

Key Actions	Lead Director	Lead Officer
Provide excellent services for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) - implement a new SEND strategy, increase the number of SEND places in schools and work to raise SEND funding levels from central government	Group Director People	Assistant Director – Education and Inclusion
Reduce the need for looked after children placements through effective implementation of the Darlington Strengthening Families programme	Group Director People	Assistant Director – Children’s Services
Continue to increase the number of in-house foster carers to reduce the need for independent placements	Group Director People	Assistant Director – Children’s Services
Review in-house residential care and consider the council’s place in providing services	Group Director People	Assistant Director – Commissioning, Performance and Transformation/ Assistant Director – Children’s Services
Improve employment opportunities for our children in care and care leavers	Group Director People	Director of Public Health
Work with partners to reduce youth and long-term unemployment, by increasing the opportunity for retraining and apprenticeships leading to gainful employment	Group Director People/ Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Education and Inclusion/ Assistant Director – Children’s Services/ Assistant Director – Economic Growth
Work with schools and the Regional Schools Commissioner to increase educational achievement across the borough and, in particular, for young people from deprived backgrounds	Group Director People	Assistant Director – Education and Inclusion
Deliver and review the In2 Project to support disadvantaged children to participate in Arts, Leisure and Culture to maximise their potential	Group Director of Services/ Group Director People	Assistant Director – Community Services/ Assistant Director – Children’s Services/ Assistant Director – Education and Inclusion
Look for innovative ways to try and deliver school homework clubs and holiday enrichment activities	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Community Services



**Councillor Alan Marshall**

“My vision is a borough where economic growth is high and the benefits are enjoyed by all residents.”



# Economy Portfolio - Councillor Alan Marshall

This portfolio’s focus is growing the local economy in a post-Covid19 world, implementing a long-term plan for the development of the Borough. It is imperative that we create the conditions to attract new businesses and help our indigenous businesses to grow and maximise employment opportunities for Darlington residents.

Key Actions	Lead Director	Lead Officer
Work with Market Asset Management to deliver a refurbished and vibrant covered market and successful outdoor market	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Economic Growth
Deliver the Town Centre Strategy leading to a diversified and successful town centre	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Economic Growth
Develop key economic sites to be investor ready at Central Park, Ingenium Park and Faverdale	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Economic Growth/ Assistant Director – Highways and Capital Projects
Encourage new investment in the Borough and maximise employment opportunities for Darlington residents	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Economic Growth
Work with indigenous companies to identify and attract further job creating investment	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Economic Growth
Successful adoption of the Local Plan	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Economic Growth
Create the conditions to deliver hundreds of new homes each year, ensuring sufficiency of affordable homes	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Economic Growth
Develop the council’s response to the agreed Climate Change Emergency and begin delivery of the agreed plan	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Economic Growth
Develop the Darlington Station project and regeneration opportunities for the surrounding areas including Victoria Road, the cattle market and Neasham Road areas	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Highways and Capital Projects



### Councillor Kevin Nicholson

“My vision is a borough where people enjoy productive, healthy lives. They will have access to excellent leisure facilities and recognising the importance of having a home, there will be access to quality social housing.”



## Health and Housing Portfolio - Councillor Kevin Nicholson

This portfolio focuses on helping people across the borough to live long and healthy lives. It looks at the facilities available to help people keep fit and healthy, services that help people to be physically and mentally well, the provision of high quality council housing and the prevention of homelessness.

Key Actions	Lead Director	Lead Officer
Review the vacant space within the Dolphin Centre to improve the leisure offer and so maximise income	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Community Services
Work to, and continue to review the Local Outbreak Plan for Coronavirus	Group Director of Services	Assistant Director – Economic Growth
Continue to build new council houses and ensure the existing council housing stock is maintained to a high standard and environmentally friendly	Group Director of Operations	Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues
Maximise rental and service charge income from council tenants to ensure we are able to provide them with a comprehensive range of good quality housing management and support services	Group Director of Operations	Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues
Review the Darlington Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	Group Director of Operations	Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues
Maintain oversight and offer challenge to health and care services that support individuals to achieve good mental, physical and emotional health as identified in a wide range of partnership plans such as Best Start in life, autism awareness, alcohol plan, suicide prevention, healthy workforce, and ageing well	Group Director People	Director of Public Health
Implement the Darlington Child Healthy Weight Plan with partners	Group Director People	Director of Public Health
Implement the Darlington Oral Health Plan 2017-2022 with partners	Group Director People	Director of Public Health
Continue the reduction in smoking to achieve a smoke free Darlington (i.e. just 5% of total population smoking) by 2030	Group Director People	Director of Public Health
Continue to deliver the Lifeline services and increase promotion and take up	Group Director of Operations	Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues



**Councillor Lorraine Tostevin**

“My vision is for the most vulnerable residents of Darlington to receive the care, support and assistance they require to maximise their independence and wellbeing and empower them to contribute to and feel valued in their communities.”



# Adults Portfolio - Councillor Lorraine Tostevin

This portfolio focuses on supporting the most vulnerable adults in our society and helping them remain in their own homes by maximising their independence. Adult services will continue find creative and innovative ways to deliver good outcomes for our most vulnerable residents.

Key Actions	Lead Director	Lead Officer
Continue to implement initiatives that tackle social isolation	Group Director People	Assistant Director – Commissioning, Performance and Transformation
Work with individuals to maximise independence and reduce demand on services	Group Director People	Assistant Director – Adult Social Care
Continue to deliver modern transformed Adult Social Care that results in positive outcomes	Group Director People	Assistant Director – Adult Social Care/ Assistant Director – Commissioning, Performance and Transformation
Promote and increase the use of assistive technology	Group Director People	Assistant Director – Adult Social Care/ Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues
Maintain significant and strong relationships with the voluntary sector, foundation trust and community nursing to support and promote admission avoidance, discharges from hospital and homecare where required	Group Director People	Assistant Director – Adult Social Care/ Assistant Director – Commissioning, Performance and Transformation

