



15th October 2025

Dear Councillor,

I hereby summon you to attend a meeting of **Peterlee Town Council** on
Monday 20th October 2025 In the **Council Chamber, Shotton Hall,**
Peterlee, SR8 2PH, at 6.30pm

Mr I Hall
Town Clerk

Members of the public are very welcome to attend our meetings. We have a limited number of designated public seating in our Council Chamber and so any members of the public wishing to attend to observe the meeting are advised to contact the Council in advance so that we can reserve a seat for you: council@peterlee.gov.uk or (0191) 5862491.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. To receive declarations of interest

Members are reminded of the need to disclose any interests in items on this agenda, whether pecuniary or otherwise. Please seek advice from the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk **prior to the meeting** if in doubt. Members are reminded that they can check their published declaration of interests here: <https://bit.ly/2wVyeLA>

3. Public Participation

Members of the public will have an opportunity to put questions to the Council. This item of business to last no more than 15 minutes, as per Council Standing Orders.

4. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the following meeting:-

- a. Council Meeting held on 6th October 2025 (Copy attached)

5. Durham County Council Budget Consultation

Report of Town Clerk (Attached)

6. Play Area Report

Report of Neighbourhood Services Manager (Report to follow)

7. Exclusion of Press and Public

To resolve that in view of the confidential nature of the items to be discussed, the committee pass the formal resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 & the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, Part 1, due to the commercial and/or personal information contained in the report.

8. Peterlee Cricket Club Lease – Authorisation for Additional Facilities and Funding Consent

Report of Town Clerk (Attached)

9. Community Asset Transfer Application: Land at Lowhills Road - Update

Report of Town Clerk (Attached)

10. Update on Funday Limited (Roller rink)

Report of the Town Clerk (Report to follow)

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Town Council** meeting held on **Monday 6th October 2025** at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Shotton Hall, Peterlee.

Present: Councillor R. Moore (Mayor) and Councillors, F.J. Black, P. Brown, M.A. Cartwright, P. Cartwright, B. Fishwick, K. Hawley, D Howarth, A. Laing, D. Meadows, I. Pygall, H Pygall, and S. Simpson

Also Present: Ian Hall (Chief Officer and Town Clerk), Deborah Woodhall (Resources Manager), and Sharon Pounder (Pavilion Sport & Community Manager)

C.89/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, D Burrell, M-L Franklin, S Franklin, D Hawley, M Sanderson M Tough and D Wright.

RESOLVED: That the apologies be noted.

C.90/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M A Cartwright and F J Black declared an interest in respect of item No. 11 'Calm CIC' and left the meeting for the duration of that item.

C.91/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No Public were present.

C.92/25 MONTHLY UPDATES FOR DURHAM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

No County Councillors were present at the meeting, with apologies received from Councillor S. Franklin and D Bellingham, no written reports were submitted.

Members were disappointed that no reports were received from County Councillors.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the Town Clerk request in future a written report from County Councillors if they are unable to attend meetings.
 2. That the Town Clerk requests an update on the following items:
 - Parking issues on Durham Way.
 - Update on the implementation of traffic lights on the A19 slip road.

C.93/25 MINUTES

- a. Council Meeting held on 15th September 2025
- b. Events Committee held on 30th September 2025

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the above meetings be approved.

C.94/25 MOTION ON NOTICE

Moved by Councillor R. Moore,

That Council request the Town Clerk to investigate the costs of using an events provider to bring back Peterlee Show and Carnival from summer 2027.

Following discussion a consensus was agreed for the Town Clerk to investigate costs of a verified events company delivering the Peterlee Show for 2027.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk investigate costs of a verified events company delivering the Peterlee Show for 2027.

C.95/25 ESTABLISHMENT OF A PAVILION DEVELOPMENT WORKING PARTY

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, regarding the establishment of a Pavilion Development Working Party with terms of reference set out in the report and to appoint members as appropriate.

Following discussion it was agreed that 9 members be appointed to the Working Party.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That a Pavilion Development Working Party be established with terms of reference as set out in the report.
 2. That the following members be appointed to the Pavilion Development Working Party: Councillors P Brown, M A Cartwright, B Fishwick, K Hawley, D Howarth, A Laing, D Meadows, I Pygall and D Wright.

C.96/25 CHANGE TO THE CITIZENS ADVICE SERVICE (CAS) COUNTY DURHAM

Consideration was given to a report of the Pavilion Sport & Community Manager, which had previously been circulated, regarding a request from Citizens Advice Service (CAS) County Durham for the Town Council to continue to honour the agreement for concessionary room usage so that they could continue to offer debt management advice until the end of March 2026. Members noted that Durham County Council had appointed Groundwork Trust to deliver an advice service throughout the County. CAS would however continue to provide debt advice.

The Pavilion Sport & Community Manager advised that since the issue of the agenda she had been contacted by Groundwork Trust to arrange a meeting to discuss the delivery of its advice service in Peterlee. A further report would be submitted to Council following the meeting with Groundwork.

- RESOLVED:**
1. For the Council to continue to offer concessionary use to Citizens Advice Service until March 2026 (subject to review in January/February 2026).
 2. That further report be submitted to Council detailing the outcome of the meeting with Groundwork Trust.

C.97/25 EDEN LANE SKATE PARK – OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a report of the Neighbourhood Services Manager, which had previously been circulated, regarding feedback received from the consultation held on 28th July 2025 on the proposed skatepark at Eden Lane.

Following detailed discussion, members agreed to continue with the installation of the skatepark. (For: 11, Abstain: 1)

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk instructs the contractor to commence work as agreed.

C.98/25 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That in view of the confidential nature of the items to be discussed, the Council passed a formal resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 & the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, Part 1, due to the commercial and personal information contained in the report.

C.99/25 CALM CIC

Councillors M A Cartwright and F J Black, having declared an interest, left the meeting for the duration of this item.

Consideration was given to correspondence with regard to the rent review of premises leased by Calm CIC.

RESOLVED: That the correspondence be noted.

C.100/25 RECOVERY OF COUNCIL PROPERTY - UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk which had previously been circulated, updating Members with regard to the recovery of Council property, a Santa Claus costume, from a former Councillor.

Following detailed consideration, Members were of the opinion that the Council should take legal action through the courts to recover the costume or the cost of replacement if it is not returned in full and good condition.

Councillor M A Cartwright requested it to be noted that she was against putting money into retrieving the Santa Claus costume when she feels the former Councillor would categorically not return the costume.

Councillor K Hawley requested it to be noted that she was not a witness to the former councillor being given the Santa Claus costume.

Moved by Councillor A Laing, seconded by Councillor R Moore that the Council take legal action through the courts to recover the Santa Claus costume or the cost of replacement.

On a vote being taken, the motion was agreed (For: 12, Against 1)

RESOLVED: 1. That the Council take legal action through the courts to recover the Santa Claus costume or the cost of replacement.

2. That the Town Clerk seek legal advice with regard to issuing a statement at an appropriate time.

C.101/25 SALE OF LAND AT ESSINGTON WAY- SECTION OF FORMER TREE NURSERY

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, providing updates regarding the Tree Nursery site at Essington Way.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk invites NE Auto Garage to the next Council meeting to clarify what plans he has for the land.

DRAFT

Report to: Peterlee Town Council

Date: 20th October 2025

Report of: Ian Hall Chief Officer & Town Clerk

Subject: **Durham County Council – Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Budget Consultations 2026/27–2029/30**

Report Purpose: To advise Members of two current Durham County Council (DCC) consultations concerning its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2026/27–2029/30 and associated Council Tax proposals, and to invite Member comment for a corporate response from Peterlee Town Council.

Background: On 19 September 2025 DCC issued a letter to partners (Appendix A) setting out the scale of its financial challenge and inviting comment on options to balance its budget.

Key points from the letter:

- Budget gap: DCC forecasts £117.8 million of unavoidable cost pressures over the next four years, with an estimated £21 million shortfall in 2026/27 and £71 million over four years even after previously agreed £5.66 million of savings.
- Pressures: High inflation; rising demand in statutory services (Children's & Adult Social Care, SEND, Home-to-School Transport); national pay bargaining; National Living Wage; and waste policy changes.
- Council Tax Options:
 - Option 1 – 0% rise over four years (deficit £71.0m).
 - Option 2 – 2% Adult Social Care precept only.
 - Option 3 – 3% core Council Tax rise.
 - Option 4 – 5% total rise (3% core + 2% ASC precept) – would create a small surplus by 2029/30.

Each 1% equates to approximately £3m additional income.

- Other Consultations:
 - Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (working-age claimants) – closes 26 September 2025.
 - Section 13A Policy (exemptions for empty and second homes) – closes 14 November 2025.

DCC is running a two-phase consultation:

- Phase 1 (current) – 19 September to 14 November 2025 – seeking views on scale of challenge, Council Tax options and savings.

- Phase 2 – late November 2025 to January 2026 – more detailed savings proposals.

Implications for Peterlee Town Council

The County Council's choices on Council Tax levels and budget savings may affect the demand on town and parish council services, local grant funding and partnership work.

This is an opportunity for the Town Council to submit a formal response highlighting:

- Potential impact on our residents and our own services.
- Any mitigation or alternative savings ideas.
- Whether we support or oppose any specific Council Tax options.

Recommendations: Members are asked to:

1. Note the contents of the Durham County Council letter (Appendix 2).
2. Provide comments to the Chief Officer & Town Clerk so they can be collated into a draft corporate response.
3. Agree whether the Town Clerk should draft a formal response for Council approval at the next meeting, or whether Members wish to submit individual responses directly to DCC.
4. Note the deadline for responses to DCC's first-phase consultation is Friday 14 November 2025.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance:

No direct cost to PTC at this stage; future impacts may arise if County funding reductions increase demand on Town Council services.

Staffing:

No direct implications.

Risk:

If PTC does not comment on proposals that affect residents.

Equality and Diversity, Cohesion and Integration:

DCC has asked respondents to consider any disproportionate impacts on priority or characteristic groups.

Crime and Disorder:

No direct implications.

Consultation and Communication:

Members' input to be gathered before the DCC deadline of 14 November 2025.

Procurement:

No direct implications.

Legal & Data Protection:

No direct implications.

Appendix 2: Letter from DCC

Contact: Paul Darby
Direct Tel: 03000 261 930
email: paul.darby@durham.gov.uk
Your ref:
Our ref:



19 September 2025

Dear Colleague

Consultation on further proposals to balance the Council budget

On 17 September 2025, the Council published an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period between 2026/27 and 2029/30, which was presented to our Cabinet – I have attached a link to the report [here](#).

The report reflects several updated financial assumptions, including a long-awaited commitment from the Government to reform how local government is funded, to address some of the inequities in local government funding and provide a three-year financial settlement. However, the scale and timing of these funding changes remain uncertain and will not be confirmed until late December 2025, which makes financial planning particularly for 2026/27 very challenging. The Government has also indicated that it expects councils to raise council tax by the maximum permitted levels over the next three years – which in our case would be an annual increase of 5% per annum – and has factored this into its core spending power that local authorities have available to spend. If the Council does not apply increases in line with the Government's expectations, then it faces a real terms cut in funding over the next three years.

As a council, we also continue to operate in a period of significant financial uncertainty due to the impact of high levels of inflation and increased demand for many of our statutory services, particularly Children and Adult Social Care, Special Educational Needs and **Resources**

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Disability Services and in Home to School Transport. These concerns continue to impact significantly on our financial planning, with the council's spending pressures influenced by matters outside its control relating to national pay bargaining arrangements and national Government policy, particularly in relation to the National Living Wage and on changes to waste management.

Our Cabinet recognise the severe financial challenges which the Council faces and accept that there remains significant uncertainty around the scale of funding changes the Government has indicated it will make. Cabinet has also indicated it wishes to ensure Council Tax increases are kept to an absolute minimum and ideally that we do not increase the Council Tax at all. As a result, we have as a default position, assumed that Council Tax increases will not take place across the four-year period of the medium-term financial planning period for financial forecasting purposes.

The Council has cost pressures across the next four year period totalling £117.8 million (of which £33.6 million fall in 2026/27). None of these cost pressures are local policy driven or “nice to haves”, they are unavoidable cost pressures linked to inflation or national policy decisions.

Based on no council tax increases being applied, and modest assumptions for the potential impact of the proposed local government funding reforms, we estimate total savings required at this stage for 2026/27 to balance the budget to be circa £21.0 million, and circa £71.0 million across a four-year period. These assumptions are after delivery of circa £5.662 million of savings across the next three years that were agreed as part of the last MTFP planning process, and which include a range of areas, including:

- Savings from the back office and efficiencies - £1.993 million
- Income raising and reductions in third party contributions - £1.162 million
- Savings in how we deliver front-line services - £2.507 million.

As part of these £5.662 million of savings proposals, the Council is undertaking a separate consultation on changes to our Section 13A Policy, which provides discretionary exemptions to the Council Tax premiums on long-term empty and unfurnished properties and on second homes. This consultation will run until 14 November 2025 and will inform decisions on potential changes to that policy, with options to tighten and limit the scale of discretionary exemptions applied.

Over the summer we have also consulted on a range of potential changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, to reduce the cost of the scheme, which provides a means tested reduction in council tax liabilities for pensioners and working age households based

on their household income and circumstances. The consultation and potential changes relate to the scheme that covers working age households only, as pensioners are fully protected. Our current scheme for working age claimants is more generous than most other local councils, and therefore any increase in uptake in this scheme has an impact on the level of Council Tax generated.

We have provided options to move towards an income banded scheme and to potentially cap the support provided, but this comes with the risk of potentially not recovering some of the additional Council Tax charges that would be levied as a result.

The financial impact of these proposals and any changes are not factored into the MTFP forecast at this time, and the consultation results will be reviewed by our Cabinet on 19 November 2025. The consultation on the [Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme](#) continues to run until 26 September 2025.

In 2025/26, we used £3.503 million of reserves to balance the budget, which will have to be addressed in 2026/27. We may need to use a certain level of reserves again in 2026/27, however such an approach is only a temporary and very short-term measure, with more long-term options needing to be identified, to address our budget shortfalls.

Recognising the budget gap we face, we have agreed with Cabinet that we must consider options to also raise Council Tax. As part of the Cabinet report on 17 September 2025 we have presented four options for Council Tax, based on:

- Option 1 – a 0% rise in council tax.
- Option 2 – a 2% rise in council tax - specifically relating to the adult social care precept element.
- Option 3 – a 3% rise in council tax – the core element of Council Tax.
- Option 4 - a 5% rise in Council Tax – based on a combined 3% rise in core council tax and 2% rise in the adult social care precept element.

Every 1% increase in Council Tax raises an addition £3 million for the Council, and this has a significant impact on the funding position of the Council and the potential scale of any savings that will need to be made, on top of the £288 million of savings the council has had to find over the last 16 years. The impact on the deficits for various council tax increases is set out below (please note all figures are in millions):

Options	Description	Deficit for 2026/27	Deficit for 2027/28	Deficit for 2028/29	Deficit for 2029/30	Total deficit over the 4-year period
Option 1	No Council Tax increase across the 4-year period.	£20,047	£16,926	£19,995	£14,051	£71,019
Option 2	A 2% annual increase in Adult Social Care Precept each year across the 4-year period.	£14,047	£10,826	£13,795	£7,751	£46,419
Option 3	A 3% annual increase in the core Council Tax each year across the 4-year period.	£11,047	7,726	£10,595	£4,451	£33,819
Option 4	A 5% annual increase in Council Tax (3% core Council Tax and 2% Adult Social Care Precept) each year across the 4-year period (in line with the Government's assumptions).	£5,047	£1,726	£4,495	£1,649 surplus	£9,619

The Council intends to undertake a two-phase consultation on its budget and MTFP planning this year. The first phase of the consultation seeks views on the size of the financial challenges faced by the council and views on how further savings can be found, including considering options 1-4 outlined above for raising council tax, and outlines the already agreed savings. This consultation commences today, Friday 19 September, and will run through to Friday 14 November 2025.

On 19 November 2025, Cabinet will consider a further update report on its financial forecasts, and this will include any budget savings proposals which are being developed to help balance the 2026/27 budget, alongside an outline of progress to develop more substantial transformational savings. A second public consultation on these savings measures will take place between late November 2025 and January 2026.

It is very important that we continue to involve key partners and the public in our decision-making process. We would be grateful if you could consider the contents of this report and take time to read the Cabinet report dated 17 September 2025 and submit any comments to the first budget consultation by **Friday 14 November 2025**. There is a useful and detailed executive summary contained within the 17 September 2025 Cabinet report, which you can access [here](#).

When commenting on the consultations, please consider:

- If any of the proposals will have a negative impact on your organisation's priorities and workload.
- If you consider this will be the case, please let us know how these might be minimised.
- If you feel a proposed change should not go ahead, please let us know what alternatives the council could consider to meet its budget reduction target.
- If you consider that the proposals will have a detrimental impact on priority or characteristic groups, please let us know.

In addition to consulting with organisations such as yours, the public is being encouraged to give its views by:

- Completing our online survey - paper copies are available from any of our [libraries](#).
- Attending online consultation events happening on 14 and 22 October
- Emailing letstalkcountydurham@durham.gov.uk

Full details of this consultation, and consultation covering our Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for working age people and Exceptions to the Empty and Unfurnished Properties and Second Homes Council Tax Premium are available at [Let's Talk County Durham](#)

The results of these consultations will be reported and summarised in subsequent Medium Term Financial Planning Cabinet reports, including the Council's budget reports to Cabinet on 21 January 2026 and 11 February 2026, followed by a decision by Full Council on 18

February 2026. These meetings are quite late in the budget planning cycle but reflect the timescales of Government funding announcements and the challenges this creates.

Thank you for your consideration and should you have comments, please forward them to letstalkcountydurham@durham.gov.uk by **Friday 14 November 2025**.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Darby', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul Darby
Corporate Director of Resources
Durham County Council

Report to:	Peterlee Town Council
Date:	20 th October 2025
Report of:	Wayne Harriman Neighbourhood Services Manager
Subject:	Vandalism and Strategic Investment in Peterlee's Play Areas
Report Purpose:	This report provides an overview of the growing vandalism issues affecting the Town's play areas and open spaces and proposes a long-term investment strategy to protect and enhance these community assets. It highlights the escalating repair costs, loss of public confidence, and risks to safety, and recommends focusing future investment on sustainable, well-designed, and centralised play and recreation areas.
Background:	Over recent years, there has been a notable increase in vandalism across several of Peterlee's play areas, including graffiti, damaged or burned play equipment, littering, anti-social behaviour, and destruction of safety surfacing and fencing. This trend has led to: • Frequent and costly repairs; • Prolonged closures and loss of amenity; • Safety risks for children and families; • Decline in community use and engagement. Many of the Town's nine play areas are over a decade old and have not benefited from modernisation. The combination of ageing equipment and persistent vandalism has created an unsustainable situation requiring a strategic shift from reactive repairs to proactive investment. Current Position A review by the Neighbourhood Services Team has identified that vandalism hotspots such as Heath Close, Hampshire Place, and the top area of Helford Road are consuming disproportionate amounts of the Council's maintenance budget without improving community outcomes. Some sites are regularly repaired only to be damaged again within weeks, creating a cycle of expense and frustration. This issue has also impacted staff resources and public perception of council-managed spaces. Strategic Investment Need It is proposed that the Council transitions towards a more sustainable model of play provision, investing in fewer but higher-quality, centrally located facilities that are easier to manage, more resistant to vandalism, and supported by local communities. Woodhouse Park has been identified as the ideal focus for long-term investment, with the potential to become Peterlee's flagship family recreation site. Proposed features could include:

- Durable, vandal-resistant play equipment;
- Improved lighting and CCTV coverage;
- Natural and sensory play areas;
- Seating, shade, and community amenities;
- Youth engagement elements such as murals, a skatepark upgrade, or a splash zone.

This approach would reduce the need for multiple smaller, vandal-prone sites and foster community pride and ownership in a high-quality, safe environment.

Financial Impact

The Council currently spends a significant portion of its annual play budget on repairs and replacements following vandalism. Redirecting these funds toward a capital investment programme could create long-term savings while improving outcomes for residents.

A phased investment plan of £150,000–£250,000 is proposed, subject to detailed design and consultation. Funding options may include:

- Section 106 developer contributions;
- External grant programmes;
- Town Council capital budgets or earmarked reserves.

Recommendations: Council is requested to consider:

1. Feasibility study for the redevelopment of Woodhouse Park, including public consultation and design options.
2. Pause non-essential repairs on smaller, high-risk play areas pending risk assessments.
3. Explore capital funding and grant opportunities.
4. Engage local schools and youth groups in co-design activities.
5. Receive a full business case and implementation plan within six months.

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance:

Estimated investment of £150,000–£250,000, potentially funded via capital budgets, Section 106 agreements, and external grants.

Staffing:

No direct implications.

Risk:

Moderate linked to capital costs, vandalism risk, and project delivery timescales. Mitigated through design, community engagement, and surveillance. Reduction in unsafe or damaged play equipment. Compliance with EN1176 & EN1177.

Equality and Diversity, Cohesion and Integration:

Inclusive design to support children and families of all abilities.

Crime and Disorder:

CCTV, lighting, and community ownership expected to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Consultation and Communication:

Community engagement planned with residents, schools, and youth groups.

Procurement:

No direct implications at this stage.

Legal & Data Protection:

No direct implications at this stage.