



28<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Dear Councillor,

I hereby summon you to attend a meeting of **Peterlee Town Council** on  
**Monday 2nd February 2026** 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](mailto: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 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026 (Copy attached)
- b. Events Committee Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026 (Copy attached)

### 5. Durham County Council Pension Fund Actuarial Valuation Report of the Town Clerk

- 6. Future Use of Hill Rigg House**  
Report of the Town Clerk
- 7. AGAR Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Compliance**  
Report of the Town Clerk
- 8. Dene Park Waterways – Current Issues and Remedial Works**  
Report of the Neighbourhood Services Manager
- 9. 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 personal information contained in the report.
- 10. Evaluation Panel Outcome**  
Report of David Leask, North East Regional Employers' Organisation
- 11. Room Hire at Hill Rigg House**  
Report of the Town Clerk
- 12. Hill Rigg House – Lease Review and Summary**  
Report of the Town Clerk
- 13. Review of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) Maintenance**  
Report of the Town Clerk
- 14. Cricket Lease**  
Report of the Town Clerk

## PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Town Council** meeting held on **Monday 19th January 2026** at **6.30pm** in the Council Chamber, Shotton Hall, Peterlee.

**Present:** Councillor R. Moore (Mayor) and Councillors J Black, P. Brown, D Burrell, M A Cartwright, B Fishwick, M-L. Franklin, S. Franklin, K. Hawley, D. Howarth, A. Laing, D. Meadows, H. Pygall, I. Pygall, L. Sanders, S. Simpson, M. Tough and D. Wright.

**Also** Ian Hall (Chief Officer and Town Clerk), David Anderson (Locum Democratic Services Manager) and Louise Hudson (Democratic Services Assistant).

### **C.150/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, P Cartwright, D. Hawley, E. Sanders and M Sanderson.

**RESOLVED:** That the apologies be noted.

### **C.151/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

### **C.152/25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No Public were present.

### **C.153/25 MINUTES**

a. Council Meeting held on 15th December 2025

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the above meeting be approved.

### **C.154/25 REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS**

Consideration was given to the following request for nominations received from CDALC

- a. Royal Garden Party
- b. CDALC Executive Committee

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Councillor Paul Cartwright be nominated to attend the Royal Garden Party.
2. That Councillor Mary Cartwright was to be nominated to put her name forward to join the CDALC Executive Committee Elections for Winter 2025/26

### **C.155/25 RELOCATION OF THE PASMORE MEMORIAL POLE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to seek Council approval for the relocation of the Pasmore Memorial Pole to the Town Council Pavilion site.

**RESOLVED:** That the Pasmore Memorial Pole be relocated to the Town Council Pavilion site, to create a linked heritage trail with the Pasmore Pavilion and associated artworks.

### **C.156/25 RELOCATION OF STAFF**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to seek approval for the relocation of staff to The Pavilion and authority to progress external engagement and procurement arrangements.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the updated cost information relating to Hill Rigg House be noted.
  2. That, following completion of the sale of Shotton Hall, office-based staff relocate to The Pavilion, with the exception of the Neighbourhood Services Team.
  3. That the use of The Pavilion as the Council's civic headquarters be agreed in principle.
  4. That the proposed layout approach, as detailed in the report, be approved.
  5. That authorisation be given to the Chief Officer & Town Clerk, to:
    - Engage with Sport England regarding the proposed changes;
    - Engage with Durham County Council Procurement to initiate a compliant tender process for the necessary works.
  6. That a further report be submitted detailed costings and a phased implementation programme.

### **C.157/25 INVESTORS IN PEOPLE UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, regarding alternatives to engagement with Investors in People.

- RESOLVED:**
- That the Resources Manager continues negotiations with the North East Regional Employers Organisation (NEREO) regarding participation in the pilot Employee Assessment Programme, which would be delivered at no cost to the Council during the pilot phase.

### **C.158/25 BUDGET 2026/27**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, providing members with an updated draft budget for 2026/27 based on the latest information, particularly the impact of Durham County Council's (DCC) intention to withdraw the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) grant entirely from 2026/27 and taking into account member contributions during formal and informal meetings.

During discussion the Chair requested that it be formally recorded in the minutes that the increase in Council Tax was directly attributable to Durham County Council's decision to withdraw the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

(LCTRS) grant in full from 2026/27, and not as a result of additional spending decisions by the Town Council.

Members further agreed that a press release be issued by the Council to explain the reason for the increase in Council Tax.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the precept for 2026/27 be set at £2,141,789 which would equate to a Band D household Council Tax of £448.04 an increase of 9.93%, noting that 75% of households live in Band A properties which equates to a households' Council Tax of £298.70 an increase of £26.99 per year, or 52 p per week.
  2. That the 2026/7 charges for general council services and activities be increased as set out in the report.
  3. That a press release be issued to explain that the increase in Council Tax was directly attributable to Durham County Council's decision to withdraw the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) grant in full from 2026/27, and not as a result of additional spending decisions by the Town Council.

#### **C.159/25 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.160/25 WRITE OFF OF IRRECOVERABLE DEBTS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, to seek Council approval to write off two irrecoverable debts.

Members noted that further monies had been paid on 'Debt 2' and therefore this debt was withdrawn from the report.

It was noted that all reasonable steps to recover Debt 1' had been exhausted and further recovery action would be disproportionate to the debt.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That Debt 1, totalling £140.00, be written off as irrecoverable and the Responsible Financial Officer be authorised to remove it from the Council's accounts.
  2. That Debt 2 be withdrawn from the report, pending further recovery action.

#### **C.161/25 REQUEST TO HIRE TENNIS FACILITY**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, which had previously been circulated, regarding a request to hire the Council's tennis facility at Eden Lane.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the request be agreed in principle
  2. That authority be delegated to the Chief Officer & Town Clerk to agree detailed terms, fees, and conditions for an initial one-year arrangement, including a formal review after the first season.
  3. That no exclusive or long-term rights be granted without further Full Council approval.

**C.162/25 CRICKET LEASE**

Members considered an updated lease, which had previously been circulated, following amendments requested at the Council meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2025. (Minute C.149/25 refers).

Further discussion was given to the wording of the lease to ensure use of the subject land did not adversely affect the operation of the Pavilion.

- RESOLVED:**
- That further advice be sought from the Council's solicitors with regard to the wording of the lease.

## PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Events Committee** meeting held on **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026** at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Shotton Hall, Peterlee.

**Present:** Councillor A Laing (Acting Chair) and H Pygall, S Simpson, M A Cartwright, P Sanders, M Tough and L Sanders

**Also Present:** Laura Freeman (Events Officer), Richard Parker (Pavilion Supervisor (Hospitality)) and Louise Hudson (Democratic Services Assistant)

### **E.19/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors D Howarth, D Hawley, K Hawley.

**RESOLVED:** That the apologies be noted.

### **E.20/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were submitted.

### **E.21/25 UPDATE FROM THE PAVILION SUPERVISOR (HOSPITALITY)**

The Pavilion Supervisor (Hospitality) reported that the Christmas pantomimes had been a huge success and were well attended. The *Peterlee's Young at Heart* afternoon event for residents aged over 60, held on 20 January, was also very successful, with a high level of positive feedback received and a thank-you card submitted.

#### **Upcoming and New Events**

The Pavilion Supervisor (Hospitality) provided an update on the following events:

- **Gimmie, Gimmie, Gimmie Abbaoke**, 14 March – Tickets are currently on sale and selling well.
- **Frankie Mack**, 25 April – 111 tickets have been sold to date.
- **Northern Soul Afternoon** – Options are currently being explored.
- **Ladies Day** – Initial planning is underway for a potential event in June.
- **Robbie Williams Tribute** – This event has been rebooked; the date is to be confirmed.

In addition, due to an increase in private bookings and overall footfall, the Pavilion Supervisor (Hospitality) advised that work is currently underway on developing a new Bistro menu.

**RESOLVED** That the updates provided be noted.

**E.22/25**

## **EVENTS BUDGET**

Consideration was given to a report of the Events Officer, which had previously been circulated, to present the approved Town Events and Town Activities budgets for the 2026/27 financial year, to explain the key changes from 2025/26, and to provide a framework for Members to put forward and agree which events and town activities they wish to be delivered during the year within the approved budget envelope.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Town Events and Town Activities budgets for 2026/27, comprising £33,780 gross expenditure and £1,200 income for Town Events (net £32,580) and £8,000 gross expenditure for Town Activities (net £8,000), were approved by Full Council on 19th January 2026 as part of the budget and precept-setting process.
2. That the reduction in the Town Events budget of £13,220 compared with 2025/26 and that this reduction arises primarily from Durham County Council's withdrawal of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) grant.
3. That Members are happy with the proposed ideas for events and town activities to be delivered during 2026/27 within the approved budget envelope.

**E.23/25**

## **MARTYN'S LAW AND IMPLICATIONS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Events Officer, which had previously been circulated, to inform Members about Martyn's Law (the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025), its anticipated implementation timeline, and the implications for Peterlee Town Council's public events and venue operations, particularly the Pavilion and other spaces where the public gathers.

Members held detailed discussions, during which a query was raised regarding the possibility of arranging steward training for existing staff. The Events Officer further advised that training is also being planned for Members and delivered at a future Council meeting.

In addition, the Events Officer explained that handheld attendance counters ("*clickers*") would need to be purchased to monitor attendee numbers at larger events, in line with the requirements of Martyn's Law.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the introduction of Martyn's Law (Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025), and the Government's stated intention for the legislation to come into statutory force during 2027, following a



national implementation and preparation period, be noted.

2. That Council-managed venues, including the Pavilion, and certain high-attendance Council-organised events are likely to fall within the scope of the Act and will therefore be subject to new financial and statutory duties relating to protective security, risk assessment and preparedness, be noted.
3. That the Events Officer explore options for steward training for existing staff.
4. That the Events Officer purchase attendance counters (“clickers”) for use at applicable events.

#### **E.24/25**

#### **UPDATE FROM THE EVENTS OFFICER**

The Events Officer provided Members with an update on recent and forthcoming events. She advised that a second Peterlee Young at Heart afternoon event for residents aged over 60 is scheduled to take place on Friday 27 February. Following the positive feedback received from the initial event, confidence was expressed that this event would also be well received.

Members were further informed that three Fun Days are being planned for Summer 2026, including a Fun Run proposed for June, which it is hoped will be delivered in collaboration with local running clubs, together with two additional Fun Days during the summer half-term period in July/August.

The Events Officer also proposed exploring the possibility of decorating a Council-owned tractor as a festive sleigh, complete with lights and music, for Christmas 2026, with the intention of visiting all five wards. Members welcomed the proposal and enquired whether small items could be distributed to children attending, and whether a tracking system could be introduced to allow families to follow the sleigh’s location, thereby reducing time spent waiting outdoors in cold weather.

In addition, the Events Officer outlined a potential “Letter from Santa” initiative, whereby children would be invited to write letters to Santa and post them in specially designated post boxes located around the town, with replies then being delivered to children via their schools.

In response to Members’ comments, the Events Officer confirmed that small gifts from Santa could be distributed to children and advised that she would also investigate the feasibility of introducing a tracking system and the proposed Letter from Santa scheme.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the update on past and forthcoming events be noted.
2. That the Events Officer progress planning for the proposed Summer 2026 Fun Days, including further exploration of a Fun Run in collaboration with local running clubs.
3. That the Events Officer investigate the feasibility, costs and logistical arrangements associated with the proposed Christmas 2026 festive sleigh, the distribution of small gifts, the potential use of a tracking system, and the "Letter from Santa" initiative, and report back to a future meeting.

**E.25/25**

**NEXT EVENTS COMMITTEE MEETING**

**RESOLVED**

That the Events Committee Chair be consulted to agree the next meeting date.

<b>Report to:</b>	Peterlee Town Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2026
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Durham County Council Pension Fund Actuarial Valuation</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Ian Hall Chief Officer/Town Clerk
<b>Report Purpose:</b>	To inform members of the outcome of a valuation of the Durham County Council Pension Fund by the actuary resulting in a proposed reduction in employer contributions to the fund.
<b>Background:</b>	<p>The Durham County Council Pension Fund (part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)) is revalued every three years. Notification has been received of the latest valuation and Aon, the Pension Fund Actuary, has provided provisional employer results. These results give the proposed LGPS employer contribution rates that will apply for Towns and Parish Councils from 1 April 2026.</p> <p>The employer rate for Towns and Parish Councils from 1st April 2026 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2029 is proposed to be 15.3%. The reduction from the current rate of 19.5% would result in savings within the Council's salary budgets.</p> <p>The final valuation report will be produced before the end of March 2026, and this will include a schedule of employer contribution rates certified by the actuary. No significant changes are expected from the proposed figures.</p>
<b>Recommended:</b>	That the information be noted and adjustments be made to the employers pension contribution when certified by the actuary.

**Appendix 1: Implications**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Implication</b>
<b>Finance:</b>	Savings as a result of lower employer pension contributions.
<b>Staffing:</b>	No direct implications
<b>Risk:</b>	No direct implications
<b>Equality and Diversity, Cohesion and Integration:</b>	No direct implications.
<b>Crime and Disorder:</b>	No direct implications.
<b>Consultation &amp; Communication:</b>	No public consultation required.
<b>Procurement:</b>	No direct implications.
<b>Legal:</b>	No direct implications

**Report to:** Peterlee Town Council

**Date of Meeting:** 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026

**Subject:** **Future Use of Hill Rigg House**

**Report of:** Ian Hall Chief Officer/Town Clerk

**Report Purpose:** To consider and determine the future use of Hill Rigg House following Council's decision to relocate staff to The Pavilion, including consideration of proposals for the building to operate as a community centre through the establishment of a Community Interest Organisation (CIO), and to authorise further engagement with Durham Community Action should Members agree in principle.

**Background:** At its meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026, Council resolved that, following completion of the sale of Shotton Hall, office-based staff would relocate to The Pavilion, which would become the Council's civic headquarters in principle. This decision removed the requirement for Hill Rigg House to accommodate Council staff and administrative functions.  
As a result of that decision, Hill Rigg House is now surplus to the Council's internal operational requirements, and Members requested that options for its future use be brought forward for consideration. During informal discussions, Members have expressed an interest in exploring the potential for Hill Rigg House to be developed as a community centre.

**Details:** **Future Option for Hill Rigg House**  
With staff no longer relocating to Hill Rigg House, the Council now has an opportunity to consider alternative uses for the building. One option that has emerged through Member discussion is the use of Hill Rigg House as a community-led facility, operating as a community centre for the benefit of residents.  
This approach would align with the Council's wider objectives around community development, social inclusion, and the effective use of Council assets to deliver local benefit.

**Community Interest Organisation (CIO) Proposal**

Members have indicated interest in exploring the establishment of a Community Interest Organisation (CIO) to operate Hill Rigg House as a community centre.

Under this model:

The CIO would be a separate legal entity established specifically to manage and operate the building for defined community purposes. The Council would act as the founding body, with Members proposed to act as trustees of the CIO, subject to legal advice and governance arrangements.

The CIO structure would allow the organisation to:

- Apply for external grant funding not available directly to the Council.
- Operate with flexibility while retaining strong governance and accountability.
- Ring-fence the building and its activities for community benefit.

The CIO would be established with a clearly defined name, charitable objects and purpose, which would be developed and agreed by Members as part of the formation process.

Support from Durham Community Action

Should Members agree in principle to pursue this option, it is proposed that a formal meeting be arranged with Durham Community Action.

Durham Community Action has specialist expertise in:

- Establishing CIOs and community-led organisations.
- Advising on governance, trustee responsibilities and compliance.
- Supporting the development of charitable objects, operating models and funding strategies.

The purpose of the meeting would be to:

- Guide Members through the CIO formation process.
- Discuss appropriate governance arrangements.
- Assist with defining the proposed name and community purpose of the organisation.
- Identify risks, responsibilities and next steps before any formal commitment is made.

No legal or financial commitment would be entered into at this stage without further reports being brought back to Council.

Next Steps

If Council agrees in principle to explore this option, officers will:

- Arrange a meeting with Durham Community Action.
- Bring back a further detailed report covering:
  - Governance and trustee arrangements.
  - Legal structure and responsibilities.
  - Financial implications and sustainability.
  - Proposed use, operating model and community benefits.
  - Risks and mitigation measures.

**Recommended:** That Members:

1. Note that, following the decision to relocate staff to The Pavilion, Hill Rigg House is no longer required for Council operational use.
2. Consider and agree in principle that Hill Rigg House be explored for use as a community centre.
3. Agree in principle to the establishment of a Community Interest Organisation (CIO) to operate Hill Rigg House, with the Council acting as the founding body, subject to further detailed reporting.
4. Authorise the Chief Officer & Town Clerk to arrange a meeting with Durham Community Action to:

- Discuss the CIO formation process;
  - Explore governance, trustee responsibilities, and compliance requirements; and
  - Assist with developing the proposed name and purpose of the organisation.
5. Request that a further report be brought back to Council setting out detailed governance, legal, financial and operational proposals before any formal decision is made.

## Appendix 1: Implications

Area	Implication
<b>Finance:</b>	No direct implications at this stage.
<b>Staffing:</b>	No direct implications
<b>Risk:</b>	Establishing a CIO carries governance and trustee responsibilities which must be clearly understood and managed. This risk will be mitigated through specialist advice from Durham Community Action and further detailed reporting to Council before any formal commitments are made.
<b>Equality and Diversity, Cohesion and Integration:</b>	The proposed exploration of a community centre use supports inclusive access to services and facilities and has the potential to deliver positive outcomes for a wide range of community groups. Equality and accessibility considerations will form a key part of any future proposals.
<b>Crime and Disorder:</b>	No direct implications.
<b>Consultation &amp; Communication:</b>	Initial engagement will take place with Durham Community Action. Wider consultation with community groups and stakeholders will be considered as part of any future detailed proposals.
<b>Procurement:</b>	No direct implications.
<b>Legal:</b>	The establishment of a CIO would create a separate legal entity. Legal advice will be required before trustees are appointed, governing documents are finalised, or any asset arrangements are entered into. No legal commitments will be made without further Council approval.



**Report to:** Peterlee Town Council

**Date of Meeting:** 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026

**Subject:** **AGAR Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Compliance**

**Report of:** Ian Hall, Town Clerk

**Report Purpose:** To update Members on progress on meeting Assertion 10 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

**Background:** 'Assertion 10 - Digital and Data Compliance' has been added to the Annual Governance and Accountability Return from 2025/26 financial audit.

To obtain a positive response, the Council needs to demonstrate that it has taken the following actions: (paragraph numbers refer to the Practitioners Guide 2025)

- 1.47 Email management - Every authority must have a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain, for example clerk@abcparishcouncil.gov.uk or clerk@abcparishcouncil.org.uk rather than abcparishclerk@gmail.com or abcparishclerk@outlook.com for example.
- 1.48 All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must meet legal requirements for all existing websites regardless of what domain is being used.
- 1.49 All websites must meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (where applicable).
- 1.50 All websites must include published documentation as specified in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Transparency code for smaller authorities (where applicable).
- 1.51 All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must follow both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.
- 1.52 All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must process personal data with care and in line with the principles of data protection.
- 1.53 The DPA 2018 supplements the GDPR and classifies an authority as both a Data Controller and a Data Processor.

- 1.54 All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must also have an IT policy. This explains how everyone - clerks, members and other staff - should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This relates to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment.

In order to meet the requirements of Assertion 10 the Council has:

**Peterlee.gov.uk domain**

The Council has used a .gov.uk domain for many year

Peterlee Town Council has used a .gov.uk domain (peterlee.gov.uk) for its website and email addresses for official communications for many years.

**Email Addresses**

peterlee.gov.uk email addresses are used by all relevant staff. Generic email addresses are also used for general enquiries.

All Councillors have been offered a Peterlee.gov.uk email address for council business to:

- ensure that sensitive information is handled in a controlled environment with appropriate security measures. This approach aligns with GDPR principles such as data minimisation, integrity and confidentiality.
- provide a clear record of communications, which is essential for transparency and accountability. This helps in maintaining an audit trail and ensures all authority-related communications are accessible for review if needed.
- maintain a consistent and professional image for the authority and ensures all communications are easily identifiable as coming from the authority. This is increasingly important as cyber scams are on the rise.
- make Data Subject Access and Freedom of Information Requests easier to manage.

The issue of a council email address is subject to councillors completing training and is governed by the Members Email and Device Policy. (See below).

**Council Device**

Relevant staff are issued or have access to it equipment for official use as relevant to their posts. The use of equipment is governed by the policies.

In line with the roll out of Peterlee.gov.uk email address Council devices (tablets) have been offered to all Councillors for business use to ensure the security of email communications and storage of council documents.

The issue of a council device is subject to councillors completing training and is governed by the Councillor Email and Device Policy. (See below).

### **Policy**

The use of emails and IT equipment is governed by the following policies which aim to ensure compliance with relevant legislation including Data Protection, GDPR and support Freedom of Information regulations.

Council agreed a Members Email and Device Policy at its meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025. (Minute No C.82/25 refers).

The policy mandates the use of authority-owned email accounts and devices for official business only. The policy is designed to ensure that all communications are conducted in a manner that is consistent with the authority standards and legal obligations.

### **Website Accessibility**

The Council's website ( [www.peterlee.gov.uk](http://www.peterlee.gov.uk) )complies with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

The website includes an [Accessibility Statement](#) which is kept under review and is updates as and when required.

It is currently partially compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA standard, due to certain non-compliances and exemptions listed within the Accessibility Statement.

### **Data Protection**

To ensure compliance with data protection regulations the Council has:

- Appointed the Town Clerk as the Data Protection officer to oversee data protection and ensure compliance with GDPR.
- Conducts regular data audits to identify what personal data is held, how it is used and make sure it is processed lawfully.
- Implements a Data Protection policy on data handling, storage and sharing.
- Provides regular training to ensure all staff and members are trained on data protection principles and practices.
- Has appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect personal data from breaches.

The Council has adopted and maintains a [Publication Scheme](#) which details the publication of information by the authority which is approved by the Information Commissioner.

The Council is committed to being open and transparent in its decision making processes and in spending tax payers' money and strives to meet the publication requirements set out in the Local Government Transparency Code 2015. The required information can be found on the [Data Transparency](#) page of the Council's website.

### **Training**

Training on the Council's policies relating to the use of IT and data protection, freedom of information is mandatory for staff.

The roll out of council email addresses and devices to Councillors is conditional on completion of relevant training, in accordance with the Councillor Email and Device Policy.

### **Recommended**

1. That Members note the requirements of the AGAR Assertion 10.
2. That progress in achieving compliance with the new Assertion be noted and Members continue to support the associated principles.

**Appendix 1: Implications**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Implication</b>
<b>Finance</b>	No direct implications
<b>Staffing.</b>	No direct implications
<b>Risk</b>	None compliance with Assertion 10 could result in a qualified audit.
<b>Equality and Diversity, Cohesion and Integration</b>	No direct implications.
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	No direct implications.
<b>Consultation &amp; Communication</b>	No public consultation required.
<b>Procurement.</b>	No procurement requirements contained in the report
<b>Legal</b>	The Council must comply with legislation and regulations referenced in the report.

**Report to:** Peterlee Town Council

**Date of Meeting:** 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026

**Subject:** **Dene Park Waterways – Current Issues and Remedial Works**

**Report of:** Wayne Harriman, Neighbourhood Services Manager

**Report Purpose:** To inform Members of recent issues affecting the Dene Park North waterways, specifically following an incident involving silt accumulation caused by collapsing side walls on the outer edge of the water ways. The report purpose is to outline potential remedial works required, and to highlight possible financial implications and funding opportunities.

**Background:** The Dene Park waterways form a key environmental and recreational asset within the Peterlee area contributing to flood management, biodiversity, and public amenity. The watercourse is subject to natural erosion processes; however, sections of the outer bank shoring have shown increasing signs of deterioration and instability.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 2025 Northumbrian Water was required to attend the site following a significant build-up of heavy silt and sewerage within the watercourse. Investigations identified that the silt accumulation was largely caused by the collapse of side walls along the outer edge of the watercourse.

**Details:** Recent Incident and Immediate Response

- Collapsing side walls resulted in substantial deposits of silt entering the channel.
- The silt restricted water flow, raising concerns regarding:
  - Increased flood risk upstream
  - Contamination to water treatment plant on the south side of the Dene
  - Deterioration in water quality
  - Potential impacts on wildlife habitats
  - Northumbrian Water undertook emergency works to unblock and restore water flow.

While these works addressed the immediate obstruction, they did not resolve the underlying structural instability of the banks.

Northumbrian Water are willing to assist further regarding the cleanup operation required, however they have strongly suggested reducing the floor area within the waterways to create a continual flow of surface water that would reduce the build-up of the silt deposits.

### Current Issues and Risks

Without further intervention, the following risks remain:

- Continued erosion and further collapses of the watercourse side wall
- Recurring silt build-up, leading to repeat callouts and increased maintenance costs
- Heightened flood risk, particularly during periods of heavy rainfall
- Environmental degradation, affecting habitats and biodiversity
- Reputational risk to the Council if the asset is seen to be inadequately maintained

### Required Remedial Works

Initial assessments suggest that necessary remedial works may include:

- Stabilisation and reinforcement of collapsed and vulnerable bank sections
- Removal of accumulated silt beyond emergency clearance
- Installation of erosion control measures (e.g. regrading, revetments, or soft engineering solutions)
- Ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the watercourse

Further technical surveys will be required to determine the most appropriate and cost-effective long-term solution.

### Members should be aware that:

- Remedial works are likely to result in significant costs, depending on the scale and method of intervention
- Emergency works undertaken to date do not remove the need for planned capital or revenue expenditure
- Failure to act may result in higher future costs, including repeated emergency responses or flood damage

At this stage, costs are unknowing and will be subject to detailed assessment and procurement.

### Funding Opportunities

There may be additional external funding opportunities available to support works in this area, including:

- Environmental or flood resilience grants
- Watercourse or partnership funding in collaboration with Northumbrian Water
- Regional or national funding streams related to climate adaptation, biodiversity, or infrastructure resilience

Officers are exploring these options and will report back once eligibility and timescales are confirmed.

**Recommended:** Members are asked to:

1. Note the recent incident and ongoing risks associated with the Dene Park waterways
2. Acknowledge the potential financial implications of required remedial works
3. Support officers in pursuing further investigations and external funding opportunities
4. Request a further report once costings and funding options are confirmed



## Appendix 1: Implications

Area	Implication
<b>Finance:</b>	There are currently no confirmed costs associated with the proposed remedial works, as further technical surveys and assessments are required to determine the scale and method of intervention.
<b>Staffing:</b>	No direct implications
<b>Risk:</b>	Failure to address the underlying structural instability of the watercourse presents ongoing risks, including continued erosion, recurring silt build-up, increased flood risk during periods of heavy rainfall, deterioration in water quality, and potential harm to wildlife habitats.
<b>Equality and Diversity, Cohesion and Integration:</b>	No direct implications.
<b>Crime and Disorder:</b>	No direct implications.
<b>Consultation &amp; Communication:</b>	No direct implications.
<b>Procurement:</b>	Any future remedial works would be subject to the Council's Financial Regulations and procurement procedures. This may include obtaining specialist surveys, technical reports, and engaging suitably qualified contractors through compliant procurement routes.
<b>Legal:</b>	The Council has a duty to manage and maintain its assets in a safe and responsible manner. Failure to address known risks associated with the waterways could expose the Council to potential liability in the event of flooding, environmental damage, or injury.