



## **Cabinet**

**Date**        **Wednesday 14 January 2015**  
**Time**        **9.30 am**  
**Venue**      **The Main Hall, Durham Town Hall, Market Place, Durham,  
DH1 3NJ**

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### **Public Question and Answer Session**

#### **9.30 a.m. to 10.00 a.m.**

An opportunity for local people to have a 30 minute informal question and answer session with Cabinet Members.

### **Cabinet Business**

#### **10.00 a.m. onwards**

#### **Part A**

**Items during which the press and public are welcome to attend -  
members of the public can ask questions with the Chairman's  
agreement**

1. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 17 December 2014 (Pages 1 - 4)
2. Declarations of interest

#### **Key Decision:**

3. Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 to 2017/18 (MTFP5) and 2015/16 Budget - Joint Report of Corporate Director, Resources and Assistant Chief Executive [Key Decision: CORP/R/14/02] (Pages 5 - 20)

#### **Ordinary Decisions:**

4. Implications for Durham County Council of the Government's policy programme - Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Pages 21 - 50)
5. County Durham Partnership Update - Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Pages 51 - 70)
6. Annual Report of the Director of Public Health - Report of Director of Public Health, County Durham (Pages 71 - 114)

7. Update on North East Combined Authority Delegated Transport Activity - Report of Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development (Pages 115 - 126)
8. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.
9. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information.

**Part B**

**Items during which it is considered the meeting will not be open to the public (consideration of exempt or confidential information)**

10. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

Colette Longbottom  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall  
Durham  
6 January 2015

To: **The Members of the Cabinet**

Councillors S Henig and A Napier (Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council) together with Councillors J Brown, N Foster, L Hovvells, O Johnson, M Nicholls, M Plews, B Stephens and E Tomlinson

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**DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Cabinet** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Wednesday 17 December 2014 at 10.00 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor S Henig (Leader of the Council) in the Chair**

**Members of Cabinet:**

Councillors J Brown, N Foster, L Hovvells, O Johnson, A Napier, M Nicholls, M Plews, B Stephens and E Tomlinson

**Also Present:**

Councillors J Armstrong, J Clare, P Conway, M Dixon, O Gunn, S Guy, A Hopgood, J Shuttleworth, A Surtees, R Todd and M Wilkes

**1 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**2 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 Medium Term Financial Plan (5), Council Plan and Service Plans 2015/16-2017/18 and Council Tax Base for 2015/16 [Key Decision: CORP/R/14/02]**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director, Resources and the Assistant Chief Executive which provided an update on the 2015/16 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan MTFP (5) and sought approval for the Council Tax base position for 2015/16 and Council Plan and Service Plans 2015/16 to 2017/18 (for copy see file of minutes).

Cabinet members commented that the level of cuts already imposed is unprecedented in local government, and emphasised the impact it would have if the further significant and deeper level of cuts were to come as predicted in the next parliament. Cabinet members commented on the excellent work undertaken by officers on budget and MTFP, including the accurate forecasting by finance colleagues.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

#### **4 Quarter 2 2014/15 Performance Management Report**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which presented progress against the Council's corporate basket of performance indicators and reported other significant performance issues for the second quarter of 2014/15 covering the period July to September 2014 (for copy see file of minutes).

Members commented that despite the scale of cuts made to the authority, that it was extremely commendable for the authority to perform as it is, and that the statistics were a credit to all including the authority's partners.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

#### **5 Update on the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Plan 4**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided an update on progress made at the end of September 2014 on the delivery of the 2014/15 to 2016/17 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP 4) (for copy see file of minutes).

Cabinet members noted that to date £130m in savings had been achieved, and staff were thanked across the authority for their contribution in continuing to provide such a high level of service in these difficult times.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

#### **6 Welfare reform and poverty issues**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Assistant Chief Executive, the Corporate Director, Resources, and, the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development which outlined how the Council is responding to welfare reforms and poverty issues in the County (for copy see file of minutes).

Cabinet members welcomed the paper which provided more detailed information to previous reports as the scope of the welfare reform work had been broadened. They noted the measures being taken and were extremely concerned at the effect that the governments agenda was having on residents in county Durham. The Authority would continue to help as many residents as it could, and would continue to monitor the position.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendation contained in the report be approved.

**7 County Durham Drug Strategy 2014-2017**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director, Children and Adults Services which presented the first County Durham Drug Strategy 2014-2017 (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

**8 Transfer of 0-5 Commissioning Responsibilities for Health Visitors and Family Nurse Partnership**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director, Children and Adults Services which provided an update on the progress regarding the transfer of 0-5 commissioning responsibilities (health visitors and family nurse partnership) to local government (for copy see file of minutes).

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

**9 Review of Current Policy on 20 mph Zones and Limits**

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director, Children and Adults Services, the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economic Development and the Corporate Director, Neighbourhood Services which assessed the effectiveness of 20mph speed zones and limits within the County and recommended options for future policy (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Wilkes, in welcoming the measures to be implemented advised that he had numerous concerns about the criteria that had been used to calculate the 33 schools. These included the computer based system used to prepare the data appeared inaccurate, as the calculation had been taken from the postcode location rather than the entrance or exit of the building, giving the example that due to this some of the colleges should have been included.

Councillor J Armstrong, Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board advised that a working group set up through the Safer and Stronger Scrutiny Committee would look at all the issues and feed into the consultation. He welcomed Councillor Wilkes' participation in the group.

Councillor Stephens advised that the report was the starting point of the review, and welcomed the comments to be input as part of the consultation, which included local members, AAPs, governing bodies and community residents associations.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

**Cabinet**

**14 January 2015**



**Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 to 2017/18 (MTFP5) and 2015/16 Budget**

**Key Decision CORP/R/14/02**

**Report of Corporate Management Team**  
**Don McLure, Corporate Director Resources**  
**Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive**  
**Councillor Alan Napier, Cabinet Portfolio Holder Finance**  
**Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of the Council**

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide Cabinet with an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP(5)) 2015/16 to 2017/18 and the 2015/16 Budget following the Government's Local Government Finance Settlement announcement on 18 December 2014 and feedback from the budget consultation process.

**Executive Summary**

- 2 The financial outlook for the Council continues to be extremely challenging. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's December 2014 Autumn Statement confirmed that funding cuts to the public sector will continue until 2019/20. It is now forecast that Government funding to Local Government will have reduced by over 60% between 2011 and 2019.
- 3 The Autumn Statement confirmed that due to the deterioration in the forecast for the national deficit, additional public expenditure funding cuts would be required in 2016/17. To reflect this, the Council has increased the forecast of Government funding reductions in 2016/17 from £33m to £38m.
- 4 Overall the forecast for total savings between 2011 and 2018 up to the end of the MTFP(5) period is £224.8m. Based upon analysis of public expenditure funding reductions in the Autumn Statement however it is forecast that the savings figure will exceed £250m by 2018/2019.
- 5 The provisional financial settlement was received on 18 December 2014 and details are included within this report. The main points are:
  - (i) Revenue Support Grant will reduce by £39.4m to £99.3m. This is in line with Council forecasts.
  - (ii) Specific grant allocations are broadly in line with Council forecasts.
  - (iii) It is still apparent that deprived areas will continue to see higher levels of funding reduction in 2015/16.

- (iv) Although the Government's Spending Power figures are unrepresentative of actual funding reductions faced by local authorities, they do highlight the regional variation in settlements. The published average spending power reduction for England is 1.8%, for Durham it is 2.7%.

## Background

- 6 The MTFP(5) update report to Cabinet on 17 December 2014 identified the Council faced £225.4m of savings across the period 2011 to 2018. Although the Council would have delivered £136.9m of savings by the end of 2014/15, there was still £88.5m of savings required to balance MTFP(5).
- 7 It was reported that an additional report would be brought to Cabinet on 14 January 2015 which would provide details of the provisional settlement and provide an analysis of the MTFP(5) consultation process.
- 8 The draft Council Plan and Service Plans for 2015/16 – 2017/18 continue to be developed within the context of the financial settlement and budget planning, and will be presented to Cabinet in March once the budget has been set.

## Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement

- 9 The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was published on 18 December 2014. The final settlement will be confirmed in late January/ early February 2015. The settlement is for 2015/16 only. It is hoped that in the future local authorities will receive multi-year financial settlements to aid effective financial management.
- 10 The Council Tax Referendum Limit is confirmed at 2%. The Government has also confirmed that a 1% Council Tax Freeze Grant will be paid to any authority which freezes Council Tax in 2015/16.
- 11 The settlement includes details of core grants e.g. Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Business Rates 'Top Up' Grant. In addition confirmation was received in relation to specific grants. The table below highlights the reduction in the Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA). It is important to note that the Business Rates figure below is a 'notional' figure published by the Government.

Funding Stream	2014/15	2015/16	Variance	
	£m	£m	£m	%
Revenue Support Grant	138.710	99.274	(39.346)	(28.4)
Business Rates	54.045	55.050	1.005	1.9
Top Up Grant	59.357	60.491	1.134	1.9
<b>SFA</b>	<b>252.112</b>	<b>214.815</b>	<b>(37.297)</b>	<b>(14.8)</b>

- 12 The table above highlights that the SFA has reduced by 14.8% in 2015/16. In addition to the above 'core' grants the Council continues to face reductions in other Specific Grants as detailed overleaf.



Specific Grant	2014/15	2015/16	Variance	
	£m	£m	£m	%
Education Services Grant	7.523	6.002	(1.521)	(20)
Housing Benefit Admin Grant	4.091	3.765	(0.326)	(8)
Extended Free Rights to Transport	1.086	0.999	(0.087)	(8)
Local Welfare Assistance	1.900	-	(1.900)	(100)

- 13 In relation to the withdrawal of Local Welfare Provision Grant (£1.9m), the Government have notionally identified a sum of £1.4m in the Council's RSG for Local Welfare Provision but have not transferred additional funding into RSG in this regard.
- 14 It is disappointing to note that the 2015/16 Public Health Grant has been announced unchanged at £45.780m. At a time when health budgets are being protected and receiving above inflation increases it is disappointing that the Public Health budget has not increased in 2015/16.
- 15 The Council has been forecasting the outcome of the settlement and the table below identifies where the settlement in relation to core grants varies from the forecast.

Grant/Income	2015/16 Settlement	2015/16 Forecast	Difference
	£m	£m	£m
Revenue Support Grant	99.274	98.665	0.609
Town and Parish RSG Adjustments	0.270	0.285	(0.015)
Business Rate RPI Increase	1.005	1.203	(0.198)
Top-Up Grant RPI Increase	1.134	1.365	(0.231)
Section 31 Grant Increase	0.509	0.080	0.429
New Homes Bonus (NHB) Increase	1.538	1.500	0.038
NHB Re-imburement	0.377	0.390	(0.013)
<b>Total Variance</b>	<b>103.822</b>	<b>103.203</b>	<b>0.619</b>

- 16 The main issues to note in relation to the table above are as follows:-
- (i) The Government had originally top-sliced £300m from RSG to finance the additional 2015/16 New Homes Bonus. Nationally only an additional £250m has been allocated. The Government has re-instated the £50m difference to RSG resulting in a £0.609m increase in RSG for the Council.
  - (ii) The Government has capped the increase in business rates for 2015/16 at 2%. The forecast was 2.3%. This reduction of £0.429m in Business Rate income and Top Up Grant will be reimbursed via an increase in Section 31 Grant.
  - (iii) The additional New Homes Bonus allocation for 2015/16 of £1.538m is in line with the Council forecast.
- 17 The table above highlights that although overall Government funding has reduced by circa £40m, the settlement is £0.619m better than forecast.

## Impact upon 2015/16 Budget

- 18 The variance detailed in the above table of £0.619m has been utilised in the 2015/16 Budget at this stage by reducing the call on the contingency budget. A revised MTFP(5) model is attached at Appendix 2.
- 19 Based upon the above the savings target for 2015/16 remains unchanged at £16.283m.

## Spending Power

- 20 The Government has published data on the national Spending Power variations. Spending Power includes certain Government grants, Council Tax income and health funding. The national average Spending Power reduction in 2015/16 has been published as 1.8%. This calculation is not representative of the actual challenge faced by local authorities for the following reasons:
- (i) The totality of the Better Care Fund revenue allocation of £39.193m is included in 2015/16 for the first time. The majority of this funding however, is either already being expended by the Council or will be expended within the national health sector. Showing the figures in this way is skewing the data and is masking the actual level of government funding reductions faced by local authorities.
  - (ii) Certain grants are excluded from the Spending Power calculation e.g. the Education Services Grant. In 2015/16, the council has lost £1.521m of Education Services Grant funding but this is not included in the Spending Power calculation.
- 21 Although the actual level of funding reduction is not fairly represented in the Spending Power figures, the government's analysis does reflect the regional variations in the funding settlement. Detailed below are a number of examples of 2015/16 Spending Power variations.

Area	Spending Power Variation
England	-1.8%
Durham	-2.7%
Newcastle	-4.9%
Middlesbrough	-5.6%
North Yorkshire	+1.1%
Wokingham	+2.6%
Surrey County	+3.1%

- 22 The Government has also published details of Spending Power 'per dwelling' for all local authorities. Areas of deprivation like Durham naturally require higher funding levels than affluent areas for a range of reasons including the following:
- (i) In affluent areas, more service users, especially in adult care can afford to contribute to the cost of services. This is especially the case for residential care and home care services for the elderly. In these circumstances the budget required in affluent areas is lower than in deprived areas.

- (ii) Demand for services in deprived areas such as Children’s Social Care is significantly higher than in affluent areas and therefore deprived areas need higher budgets.

23 The logic therefore that local authorities which have higher Spending Power or are more reliant upon Government grant should face higher funding reductions should continue to be challenged.

24 The Spending Power per dwelling data does however highlight that the funding for an area such as Durham is now lower than the national average and lower than affluent areas such as Surrey and Reading. The table below highlights the 2015/16 Spending Power per dwelling for a range of local authorities.

Area	Spending Power Per Dwelling
	£
England	2,083
Durham	2,049
Bristol	2,128
Reading	2,070
Wokingham	1,931
Surrey County	1,863
Surrey County and Districts	2,184

25 It is significant that if the pace of funding reduction continues as forecast, then the Spending Power of Surrey County Council excluding the Surrey Districts will exceed that of Durham by 2017/18 notwithstanding that the Spending Power for Durham is already below that of Surrey County consolidated with the Surrey District Councils. We will continue to challenge how a deprived area such as Durham should have a lower Spending Power per dwelling than an affluent area such as Surrey.

#### MTFP(5) – 2015/16 to 2017/18 Update

26 The MTFP(5) strategy report to Cabinet on 17 December 2014 provided an update on the savings required to balance MTFP(5). The forecast savings for 2016/17 and 2017/18 at that time were as follows:

Year	Savings Requirement
	£m
2016/17	32.389
2017/18	39.829
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72.218</b>

27 At that point for planning purposes the Council was forecasting Government funding reductions of circa £33m for both 2016/17 and 2017/18. The Chancellor of the Exchequer’s Autumn Statement published on 3 December 2014 provided an update on the likely level of public sector funding reductions up to 2019/20. The Autumn Statement detailed that:

- (i) The national deficit at the end of 2014/15 will still be £91bn;
- (ii) Even greater reductions would be required in public expenditure than previously forecast;

- (iii) Funding reductions would continue until 2019/20 enabling a national budget surplus of £23bn to be generated in 2019/20 which could be utilised to repay national debt;
- (iv) The Government intention is still to save £12bn from welfare spend.

28 The table below highlights the impact of the deterioration in public sector expenditure forecasts over the last two years upon the 2016/17 and 2017/18 national budget, based upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget and Autumn Statement announcements. The variance detailed below is in relation to the Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL). These budgets relate to Government departmental budgets and exclude expenditure such as for the state pension, welfare, debt repayments, etc.

Year	FORECAST DEL REDUCTION			
	March 13 Budget	Dec. 13 Autumn Statement	March 14 Budget	Dec. 14 Autumn Statement
	%	%	%	%
2016/17	(3.00)	(2.17)	(3.20)	(5.46)
2017/18	(2.64)	(3.79)	(3.43)	(3.74)
<b>Total DEL Reduction</b>	<b>(5.64)</b>	<b>(5.96)</b>	<b>(6.63)</b>	<b>(9.20)</b>

29 The table highlights that the forecast reduction in DEL for 2016/17 and 2017/18 in the March 2013 Budget was 5.64% whereas the reduction announced in the Autumn Statement 2014 has increased to 9.20%. Of particular note is the increase in the 2016/17 reduction between the March 2014 Budget and the December 2014 Autumn Statement from 3.2% to 5.46%.

30 This increase in the need to reduce public expenditure has resulted from the national deficit not being eradicated and still expected to be £91bn at the end of 2014/15.

31 The size and scope of the funding reductions facing local authorities however are greater than the sums identified in the table above. This is due to significant budgets in DEL being protected. The table below identifies the 2014/15 DEL budgets of protected and unprotected government departments.

Government Department	2014/15 Budget
	£bn
Health	108.3
Education	53.5
International Aid	8.3
Scotland	25.8
Wales	13.7
Northern Ireland	9.7
<b>Unprotected Departments</b>	<b>99.4</b>
<b>TOTAL DEL</b>	<b>318.7</b>

32 The table above highlights that unprotected Government Departments which will face the brunt of funding reductions only have a total budget of £99.4bn or

31% of the total. The major Government departments in the ‘Unprotected’ category are as follows:

Government Department	2014/15 Budget
	£bn
Defence	25.3
Business Innovation & Skills	13.8
Local Government	13.8
Home Office	10.4
Justice	6.7

33 If the required public expenditure reductions are achieved in line with the 2014 Autumn Statement forecasts the budgets of ‘unprotected’ departments would fall to circa £64bn by 2018/19, a reduction of 36%. This would result in Local Government losing in excess of 60% of Government funding between 2011 and 2019.

34 The Council has forecast the reductions in Government funding likely to be faced for 2016/17 to 2018/19 based upon the 2014 Autumn Statement. Previously the Council’s forecasts assumed that the £12bn of welfare savings would not be achieved. It is now felt appropriate to revise this assumption and forecast the achievement of the £12bn welfare savings.

35 The forecast of the future funding reductions for the Council, are based upon the following assumptions:

- (i) Health budgets annually receiving above inflation budget increases;
- (ii) Education funding increasing at 1% per annum;
- (iii) International Aid, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland budgets staying constant;
- (iv) Unprotected Government departments receiving the same percentage reduction;
- (v) Durham receiving a 1.5% higher reduction than the local authority average in line with the last four years settlements.
- (vi) £6bn of welfare savings are realised in each of 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- (vii) Other specific grants e.g. Education Services Grant, Housing Benefit Grant, continue to be reduced.

36 Based upon these assumptions, the forecast Government grant reductions for the Council for 2016/17 to 2018/19 would be as follows:

Year	£m
2016/17	38
2017/18	28
2018/19	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>91</b>

- 37 Based upon this calculation the Council's RSG would reduce to less than £15m in 2018/19.
- 38 In the round, across the MTFP(5) period, the impact upon the current savings requirement is neutral as the funding reduction forecast is £5m higher in 2016/17 and £5m lower in 2017/18. This is as a result of the following:
- (i) The public expenditure reductions in 2016/17 now being significantly higher than previously forecast.
  - (ii) The assumption of the achievement of £12bn of welfare savings partially offsets the 2016/17 position but benefits 2017/18.
- 39 Overall therefore the total savings required for the period 2011 to 2018 is broadly unchanged at £224.8m. It is likely however, once the 2018/19 forecast is included, that savings required by March 2019 will exceed £250m.
- 40 The table below details the revised savings targets for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Year	Savings Requirement
	£m
2016/17	36.770
2017/18	34.829
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71.599</b>

### Consultation results

- 41 During autumn 2013, the Council attracted over 10,000 people to take part in the largest public engagement programme of events ever held in County Durham. These events were managed through the Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) and were held across the county. They provided the opportunity for the public to allocate grants to local projects, set AAP priorities and provide views as to how the Council should manage its budget challenges up to March 2017.
- 42 At these events, almost 1,300 people took the time to take part in 270 budget setting group exercises where, over 30-45 minutes they deliberated with other members of the public as to how the Council should allocate savings of £100 million over the next few years. Feedback from those taking part in the activities was very positive, with 97% of participants feeling that it was a good way to involve local people in decision making.
- 43 In addition to the group exercises, comments as to how the Council should achieve its savings target were also provided through different forms. There were 2,074 completed paper questionnaires and a further 517 completed online.
- 44 The results of this budget consultation, which included over 4,000 responses, were reported to Cabinet on 12 February 2014. A clear message from the consultation was the requirement to minimise the impact upon frontline service provision wherever possible. These have influenced the development of the budget proposals for 2015/16 as set out in this report and it is

anticipated that they will help inform the budget setting process for the next two to three years.

- 45 Having completed such a comprehensive budget consultation in 2013, this year's budget consultation concentrated on seeking views from the 14 AAPs and the key partner agencies that make up the County Durham Partnership. This involved two distinct phases. The first focussed on the AAP Boards and Forums where attendees were asked specific questions, namely:
- Since the public consultation in 2013, has anything changed in your area that you feel would affect which services should have larger or smaller reductions?
  - Where a local organisation has shown interest, should the council explore the opportunity of them managing a facility or service to reduce the impact of budget savings on communities?
  - Are there any council facilities or services in your area that could be managed by local people?
- 46 The second phase of the consultation which will conclude on 15 January 2015, sought views on the draft 2015/16 budget proposals (as reported to Cabinet on 17 December 2014) from AAP Boards and partner agencies.

### **Phase I – Public Consultation**

- 47 The first phase of the consultation which concluded on 12 December 2014 and involved presentations to all 14 AAP Boards as well as the completion of questionnaires at the 14 AAP Forum events. A total of 602 hard copy questionnaires were collected at the AAP Forums and a further 110 were submitted online bringing the overall total to 712.
- 48 Overall, a majority of respondents (65%) said that nothing changed in their area that would affect which services should have larger or smaller reductions. Where respondents did identify change they were more likely to identify services or issues that should be **protected** from larger budget reductions (86%), rather than those to be cut by more (14%).
- 49 Most commonly and in order of priority, respondents who did identify change tended to say the following services should be protected from larger budget reductions:
- Subsidised Bus Travel
  - Roads, footpaths, traffic and lighting
  - Job Creation
  - Support for Community Projects, Centres, Partnerships and Groups.
- 50 Respondents identified the following services that should have larger budget reductions:
- Finance, Legal, information Technologies and Human Resources
  - Gritting and Snow Clearance
  - Roads, footpaths, traffic and lighting

- Democratic Support - Decisions and Elections
  - Social Work and Protecting Vulnerable Children and Adults.
- 51 A full list of the services identified by respondents is available in Appendix 3.
- 52 Older respondents tended to be more likely to identify change than younger ones and most commonly they identified the following issues:
- Subsidised Bus Travel
  - Roads, footpaths, traffic and lighting
  - Social Work and Protecting Vulnerable Children and Adults
- 53 As with the consultation carried out in 2013/2014, there was a general understanding of the scale of the financial challenge facing the council. In the light of this situation, a large majority of respondents (93%) felt that the council should explore opportunities for local organisations to manage council facilities or services as being promoted through The Durham Ask.
- 54 The services respondents felt there could be most scope for transfer, included:
- Libraries
  - Community centres
  - Grass Cutting, flower beds.
- 55 Similar to the questionnaire responses, AAP Boards were in favour of progressing with The Durham Ask. However, in reaching their conclusion, it was suggested the council needed to:
- Ensure the focus includes established organisations (including local councils and other partners) in addition to smaller voluntary organisations and groups.
  - Ensure that groups are confident that they can operate appropriately post transfer.
  - Provide training/support so groups understand the full scale and responsibilities and are able to apply for funding. This support could be offered by council staff or the VCS.
- 56 A number of other suggestions for achieving the necessary savings whilst maintaining community services and facilities were highlighted by AAP Boards. These included proposals that:
- More work should be undertaken to consider whether joint arrangements could be developed with neighbouring authorities and other private sector organisations.
  - Consideration should be given to ensure there is sufficient executive housing across the County to help attract new businesses to the area.
  - When considering service provision/withdrawal, account should be taken of the varying levels of need across the county, in terms of population size (current and planned growth) as well as deprivation levels.



- 57 In general, the most common response from AAP Boards was concern at the level of the cuts facing the council and the need to develop innovative solutions such as The Durham Ask to try to safeguard frontline services.
- 58 Finally, in addition to the consultation set out above, the opportunity was taken to supplement this consultation by seeking views of children and young people at a series of school based events in the east of the county. Overall 724 took part from various schools. Overall, a large majority of children and young people consulted supported last year's results with respect to services that should have a smaller reduction. However, a small majority of respondents disagreed about the services that should receive larger reductions. This was most so with **subsidised bus services** where 62% of children and young people disagreed that the council should save money on this service.

### **Recommendations and Reasons**

- 59 Cabinet is asked to:
- (i) Note the 2015/16 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan update in relation to the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announced on 18 December 2014.
  - (ii) Note that the Council continues to face funding reductions in excess of the national average.
  - (iii) Note the impact of the 2014 Autumn Statement upon the Medium Term Financial Plan.
  - (iv) Note the results of the phase 1 consultation.

### **Background papers**

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**Contact: Jeff Garfoot 03000 261946**  
**Gordon Elliott 03000 263605**

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## Appendix 1: Implications

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**Finance** – The report highlights that the Local Government Finance Settlement is broadly in line with forecasts. A savings target of £16.283m is still required for 2015/16.

**Staffing** – The savings proposals in MTFP(5) could impact upon employees. HR processes will be followed at all times.

**Risk** - Risk will be continually assessed throughout the budget-setting process especially in relation to funding reduction assumptions and risk assessment of savings plans.

**Equality and Diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty** – Equality considerations are built into the proposed approach to developing MTFP(5) as a key element of the process.

**Accommodation** – None.

**Crime and Disorder** – None.

proposals as they are developed and decisions made to take these forward.

**Consultation** – The consultation outputs to date are detailed in the report.

**Procurement** – None.

**Disability Issues** – All requirements will be considered as part of the equality process followed as part of MTFP(5) planning.

**Legal Implications** – None.

**Appendix 2: Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP(6)) 2015/16 - 2017/18 Model**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Government Funding</b>			
Government Net Funding Reduction	32,599	38,000	28,000
Town and Parish Council RSG Adjustment for LCTSS funding	-270	-196	-211
Business Rates - RPI increase (2%/2%/2%/2%)	-1,005	-1,070	-1,090
Top Up Grant - RPI increase (2%/2%/2%/2%)	-1,134	-1,210	-1,240
Section 31 Grant	-509	-70	-70
<b>Other Funding Sources</b>			
Council Tax Increase (2% per annum)	-3,370	-3,440	-3,510
New Homes Bonus	-1,538	-1,000	0
Council Tax Base increase	-1,891	-1,000	-750
Business Rates Tax Base Increase	-850	-500	0
Business Rates 2014/15 Collection Fund Surplus	-500	500	0
Replenishment of 2014/15 Use of General Reserve	933	0	0
NHS Funding - Social Care Transformation	-15,864	-4,432	0
<b>Estimated Variance in Resource Base</b>	<b>6,601</b>	<b>25,582</b>	<b>21,129</b>
Pay inflation (2.2% (15 months) - 1.5% - 1.5% - 1.5%)	2,750	3,300	3,200
Price Inflation (1.5% - 1.5% - 1.5% - 1.5%)	2,650	2,450	2,400
Corporate Risk Contingency Budget	-598	-2,802	0
<b>Base Budget Pressures</b>			
Employer National Insurance increase - State Pension changes	0	4,700	0
Single Status Implementation	0	0	4,500
Council Housing - costs related to Stock Transfer	3,550	0	0
Additional Employer Pension Contributions	760	940	1,000
Energy Price Increases	500	500	500
Durham Living Wage	250	0	0
Concessionary Fares	320	100	100
CAS Demographic and Hyper Inflationary Pressures	1,000	1,000	1,000
Use of Earmarked Reserve in CAS	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
<b>Prudential Borrowing to fund new Capital Projects</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>2,000</b>
<b>Capital Financing for current programme</b>	<b>-2,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL PRESSURES</b>	<b>9,682</b>	<b>11,188</b>	<b>13,700</b>
<b>SUM TO BE MET FROM SAVINGS</b>	<b>16,283</b>	<b>36,770</b>	<b>34,829</b>
<b>Savings</b>	<b>-16,283</b>	<b>-36,770</b>	<b>-34,829</b>
<b>Deferred Savings (Utilisation of PDP)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-10,000</b>
<b>SAVINGS REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>-16,283</b>	<b>-36,770</b>	<b>-44,829</b>
<b>Planned Delivery Programme (PDP)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>REVISED SAVINGS REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>-16,283</b>	<b>-26,770</b>	<b>-34,829</b>
<b>Cumulative Use of PDP Reserve To Support MTFP</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>20,000</b>

## Appendix 3 - Council Budget Consultation

### Full Tables of responses

Q1 Since the public consultation in 2013, has anything changed in your area that you feel would affect which services should have larger or smaller reductions?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	224	34.5%
No	425	65.5%
Total	649	100.0%

Q2 If so, please outline the changes.

Smaller Reductions	Number of mentions
Subsidised Bus Travel	36
Roads, footpaths, traffic and lighting	26
Job Creation	21
Support for Community Projects, Centres, Partnerships and Groups	20
Collection, disposal and recycling of waste	13
Street Cleaning	13
Social Work and Protecting Vulnerable Children and Adults	11
Grass cutting, trees and flower beds	10
Services to keep people safe	9
School Support and Education Services	8
Sports, parks and play areas	8
Day Centres and support for families	7
Gritting and Snow Clearance	6
Libraries	6
Support for Adults in their Homes	3
Art, museums and theatres	2
Other	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>237</b>

Larger reductions:	Number of mentions
Finance, Legal, information Technologies and Human Resources	7
Gritting and Snow Clearance	4
Roads, footpaths, traffic and lighting	4
Democratic Support - Decisions and Elections	2
Social Work and Protecting Vulnerable Children and Adults	2
Street Cleaning	2
Other	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>237</b>

Q3 Where a local organisation has shown interest, should the council explore the opportunity of them managing a facility or service to reduce the impact of budget savings on communities?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	573	92.7%
No	45	7.3%
Total	618	100.0%

Q4 Are there any council facilities or services in your area that could be managed by local people? If so, please outline them below.

Facilities which could be managed by local people	Number of mentions
Libraries	59
Community centres	40
Grass Cutting, flower beds	19
Sports facilities	16
Leisure centres	12
Parks	11
Street Cleaning	10
Surestart/Day centres	8
Litter pick/Dog waste (emptying)	6
Other	27
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>225</b>

### Equalities Breakdown

Responses were broadly representative of all age groups (shown in the table below), although older people were more likely to take part and make reference to experiencing changes since the last consultation than younger people.

In addition, supplementary consultation with 724 children and young people at a series of school based events was conducted in the east of the county.

What is your age?	Frequency	Percent
Under 16	16	3.0%
16-24	36	6.8%
25-44	125	23.5%
45-54	110	20.7%
55-64	113	21.3%
65-74	92	17.3%
75+	39	7.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The responses from the different age groups to the question asking if anything had changed in the area are shown below.

<b>Since the public consultation in 2013, has anything changed in your area that you feel would affect which services should have larger or smaller reductions? * What is your age?</b>				
<b>What is your age?</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
Under 45	Frequency	55	108	163
	Percentage	33.7%	66.3%	100.0%
45-64	Frequency	71	132	203
	Percentage	35.0%	65.0%	100.0%
65+	Frequency	49	71	120
	Percentage	40.8%	59.2%	100.0%
Total	Frequency	175	311	486
	Percentage	36.0%	64.0%	100.0%

When asked to outline those changes Over-65s responded to changes affecting the following services. These focused mainly on applying a smaller reduction with only three respondents citing services for a higher reduction.

<b>Smaller Reductions:</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Subsidised Bus Travel	9
Roads, footpaths, traffic and lighting	5
Social Work and Protecting Vulnerable Children and Adults	5
Services to keep people safe	4
Collection, disposal and recycling of waste	3
Libraries	3
Street Cleaning	3
Support for Community Projects, Centres, Partnerships and Groups	3
Grass cutting, trees and flower beds	2
Gritting and Snow Clearance	2
Job Creation	2
Support for Adults in their Homes	2
Other	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49</b>

### **Other protected characteristic groups**

We received feedback from individuals from various protected characteristic groups such as:

- Gender
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Ethnicity

However, there were no discernible differences in the responses they made.

## Cabinet

14 January 2015

**Implications for Durham County Council  
of the Government's policy programme**



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**Report of Corporate Management Team  
Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive  
Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of the Council**


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**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 On 7 May 2014, Cabinet considered the most recent report on the implications of the government's policy programme. This report provides Cabinet with an update on the major policy developments and announcements since then and analyses the implications for the council and County Durham.

**Executive Summary**

- 2 The most significant announcements since the last report to Members relate to the following, outlined in more detail below:
  - Autumn Statement;
  - Local authority funding;
  - Welfare reform;
  - Queen's speech;
  - Transformation Challenge Fund;
  - Public procurement;
  - Economic growth and devolution;
  - Planning reform proposals;
  - Transport funding;
  - Social mobility and poverty issues;
  - Care Act;
  - Integration of health and social care;
  - Criminal Justice and Courts Bill;
  - Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act;
  - Counter Terrorism and Security Bill;
  - Children and Families Act;
  - Early years and schools funding.
- 3 Since the coalition government was formed in 2010, it has embarked on a major programme of public service reform.
- 4 In the initial years of this government, the pace of policy announcements and reforms was intense. However, compared with previous policy implications reports to Cabinet, it is apparent that the government has made fewer major policy announcements. In part, this reflects the shift in policy effort from policy

development, reform and legislation seen in the first few years to the subsequent implementation of those reforms. However, in recent months, we have started to see some announcements which begin to shape the policy landscape in the run-up to this year's General Election.

- 5 Of particular note is the Autumn Statement and the initial indication around the scale of further austerity cuts to come over the next five years if government policy remains the same. This could have significant financial implications for the council and its partners in future years and for our poorer communities, given the proposed freeze in overall welfare spending and the tightening of the household benefits cap.
- 6 Clearly, the various policy changes will have major implications for the council and the steps it is taking to develop an 'altogether better Durham'.
- 7 The council and its partners are continuing to analyse the impact that government policy will have on local communities and on our ability to deliver the sustainable community strategy and are responding accordingly. Wherever possible, the council and its partners are working together to respond proactively to the government's policy changes, which have been taken into account in the refresh of the County Durham Sustainable Community Strategy and the council plan and supporting service plans, as considered by Cabinet at its meeting of 19 March 2014.

## **Background**

- 8 Cabinet has considered a number of reports on government policy since the general election in 2010, the most recent of which was on 7 May 2014. Where necessary, Cabinet has also received further policy reports on specific topics, such as changes to the NHS, health and social care and welfare reform. This report builds upon these previous briefings.
- 9 Since the coalition government was formed in 2010, it has embarked on a major programme of public service reform, which has included the following:
  - a) Deficit reduction measures across all government departments, but particularly local government;
  - b) Structural reforms to reduce the number of government agencies and arm's length bodies;
  - c) The 'red tape challenge' to reduce government bureaucracy and regulation;
  - d) Changes to welfare to reduce spending and encourage more people to be independent;
  - e) NHS and public health reforms including the introduction of clinical commissioning groups and the transfer of public health to local government;
  - f) Police reforms including the introduction of directly elected police and crime commissioners;



- g) Expansion of the academy programme and the introduction of free schools;
- h) Major reform of the planning system with new national planning policy guidance and the revocation of regional spatial planning;
- i) Abolition of the regional development agencies and the introduction of the national Regional Growth Fund and local enterprise partnerships;
- j) Initiatives to open up public services to greater transparency and more diverse and local patterns of control.

10 In the recent past, the government has tended to make fewer major policy announcements, in part, reflecting the shift in policy effort from policy development, reform and legislation seen in the first few years to the subsequent implementation of those reforms. However, in recent months we have started to see some announcements which begin to shape the policy landscape in the run up to this year's general election campaign.

## **Update**

11 The most significant announcements and developments since the last report to Members in May 2014, relate to the following, which are outlined in more detail below:

- Autumn Statement;
- Local authority funding;
- Welfare reform;
- Queen's speech;
- Transformation Challenge Fund;
- Public procurement;
- Economic growth and devolution;
- Planning reform proposals;
- Transport funding;
- Social mobility and poverty issues;
- Care Act;
- Integration of health and social care;
- Criminal Justice and Courts Bill;
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act;
- Counter Terrorism and Security Bill;
- Children and Families Act;
- Early years and schools funding.

12 More detailed updates on welfare reform and poverty issues were considered by Cabinet on 10 October 2014 and 17 December 2014.

## **The Autumn Statement**

13 On 3 December 2014, the Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered his Autumn Statement.

14 He advised that the growth forecasts for this year had been revised up from 2.7 percent in March to 3 percent now. The forecast for 2015 remained the same at 2.4 percent, but for the following four years have been revised down to 2.2 percent, 2.4 percent, 2.3 percent and 2.3 percent, reflecting concerns about the wider global economy.

15 With regards to government borrowing, revised figures from the Office for Budget Responsibility suggested that since the beginning of this parliament, the deficit has been halved. From its post-war peak of 10.2 percent of GDP in 2009/10, public sector net borrowing is forecast to be halved this year to 5.0 percent; to fall to 4.0 percent of GDP in 2015/16, the final year for which the government has set departmental spending plans; and to reach a small surplus of 0.2 percent of GDP in 2018/19 and 1.0 percent in 2019/20.

16 The government's plan to consolidate public spending in the next parliament is reflected in the fiscal assumption that Total Managed Expenditure (TME) will fall in real terms in 2016/17 and 2017/18 at the same rate as between 2010/11 and 2014. The government's neutral assumption is that TME will be held flat in real terms in 2018/19. The Autumn Statement confirmed that the government intends to extend the neutral fiscal assumption to 2019-20, with TME held flat in real terms for a further year.

17 Accordingly, public sector current expenditure (PSCE) is forecast to reduce as follows:

2013/13	£317.5bn
2014/15	£316bn
2015/16	£316.3bn
2016/17	£299bn
2017/18	£287.9bn
2018/19	£282.9bn
2019/20	£279.7bn

18 In his 2013 Autumn Statement, the Chancellor advised that departmental spending would be reduced by £1bn a year over the next three years (2014-17). The Chancellor has now confirmed that the government will seek a further £10bn of efficiency savings by 2017/18.

19 Other key announcements included:

- a) revisions to Stamp Duty, replacing the slab rate system with a variable incremental rate;
- b) an extra £2bn a year for the NHS until 2020 and £1.2bn investment in GP surgeries, funded by income from bank fines;
- c) a commitment to complete public service pension reforms, saving £1.3bn a year;
- d) Small business rate relief will be doubled for another year to April 2016;

- e) increasing the £1,000 business rates discount for shops, pubs, cafes and restaurants with a rateable value of £50,000 or below, to £1,500 in 2015-16;
- f) National Insurance on young apprentices under the age of 25 to be abolished and employers will no longer pay National Insurance contributions for any employees or apprentices under the age of 21 on earnings up to the upper earnings limit;
- g) Research and Development Tax Credit for small and medium companies will be increased to 230 percent and the credit for large firms to 11 percent from April 2015;
- h) A 25 percent tax will be levied on profits generated by multinationals that are shifted out of the UK. This is set to raise £1bn over five years;
- i) Inflation-linked increase in business rates will be capped at two percent, with a full review of the business rates system in 2016 after the General Election;
- j) Theatre tax break extended to orchestras and a new tax credit for producers of children's TV and animation;
- k) Support extended to small businesses with £500m of bank lending plus £400m government-backed venture capital funds which invest in SMEs;
- l) £45m package of support for exporters, with a particular focus on emerging and growing markets in Africa, Asia and South America and first time exporters;
- m) Expand tax relief on business investment in flood defences;
- n) New and modern trains will be procured to replace the old 'pacer' carriages on Northern Rail and the Trans-Pennine Express;
- o) £5.9bn will be invested into the UK's research infrastructure over 2016-21 including a £2.9bn Grand Challenges fund (investment in research facilities of national significance) and £95m to take the lead in the next European mission to Mars (may be of benefit to Durham University with its world-class expertise in space sciences);
- p) the government will work with local authorities and businesses on a local licensing simplification programme, with an expectation that, by 2018, every local authority will offer a single online application process where businesses only need register their details once.

### **Local authority funding**

- 20 A more detailed report on the outcome of the local government financial settlement for 2015/16 is also on the agenda for this meeting of Cabinet.
- 21 More generally, Cabinet may wish to note that on 19 November 2014, the National Audit Office published its 2014 report on the financial stability of local authorities.
- 22 The report concluded that while local authorities have coped well with reductions in government funding, some groups of authorities were showing

clear signs of financial stress and that the Department for Communities and Local Government had a limited understanding of authorities' financial sustainability and the impacts of funding cuts on services.

- 23 The Office reported that the government will reduce its funding to local authorities by an estimated 28 percent in real terms between 2010/11 and 2014/15. Further planned cuts will bring the total reduction to 37 percent by 2015/16, excluding the Better Care Fund and public health grant.
- 24 Although there have been no financial failures in local authorities to date, a survey of local auditors showed that authorities are showing signs of financial pressure. Over a quarter of single tier and county councils had to make unplanned reductions in service spend to deliver their 2013/14 budgets and auditors were increasingly concerned about local authorities' capacity to make further savings, with 52 percent of single tier and county councils not being well-placed to deliver their medium-term financial plans.

### **Welfare reform**

- 25 On 1 October 2014, the government launched a consultation on the funding of welfare assistance support in 2015.
- 26 Since the withdrawal of Social Fund support in 2013, local authorities have received funding to develop local welfare assistance schemes for the most financially vulnerable. However, from April 2015 the government intends that local welfare provision should be funded from general grant to local government, as opposed to an identifiable sum being made available specifically for that purpose.
- 27 The consultation sought views on three options:
- a) Funding from existing local government budgets;
  - b) Separate visibility of local welfare provision funding;
  - c) Top slice Revenue Support Grant to fund a section 31 grant.
- 28 The government also invited consultees to come forward with other options for delivering and funding welfare provision.
- 29 On 26 November 2014, the National Audit Office published a report into the implementation and roll-out of Universal Credit.
- 30 It concluded that it was too early to determine if the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) will achieve value for money in its implementation of the Universal Credit programme.
- 31 The report acknowledged that the delivery risks had been reduced since the implementation timetable was reset in early 2013. This had been achieved by significantly extending the timetable for introducing Universal Credit by two years to the end of 2019 and choosing a more expensive twin-track approach:

rolling-out its 'live service' using pre-2013 ICT assets, while at the same time developing a new 'digital service'. However, the NAO identified that it was becoming increasingly unlikely that the DWP could transfer over one million tax credit claimants on to Universal Credit in April 2016 as planned without significant operational risks.

- 33 The report advised that the new programme was already six months behind schedule and that there are no contingency plans to deal with any delays in implementation. This prompted the NAO to warn that a further six-month delay could mean a £2.3bn loss in the societal benefits expected from moving people into work.
- 34 In his Autumn Statement, the Chancellor also confirmed a number of further benefit changes to reduce welfare spending:
- a) Working age benefits to be frozen for two years;
  - b) Migrants to lose unemployment benefits if they have "no prospect" of work after six weeks;
  - c) £3m to further extend pilots which join-up health and employment services to help unemployed benefit claimants with mental health conditions.

### **Queen's speech**

- 35 On 4 June 2014, the Queen presided over the State Opening of Parliament and delivered a speech which outlined the government's legislative programme for the final session of parliament before the General Election later this year.
- 36 Compared with previous sessions, the programme was relatively limited, consisting of 11 new bills plus three further bills which have been published in draft form for pre-legislative scrutiny:
- a) Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill (England and Wales);
  - b) National Insurance Contributions Bill (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland);
  - c) Infrastructure Bill (Mostly England);
  - d) Pension Tax Bill (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland);
  - e) Private Pensions Bill (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland);
  - f) Childcare Payments Bill (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland);
  - g) Modern Slavery Bill (England and Wales);
  - h) Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Bill (England and Wales);
  - i) Service Complaints Bill (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland);
  - j) Serious Crime Bill (England and Wales - with certain provisions elsewhere);

- k) Recall of MPs Bill (UK-wide);
- l) Draft Governance of National Parks (England) and the Broads Bill (England only);
- m) Draft Riot (Damages) Act Bill (England and Wales only);
- n) Draft Protection of Charities Bill (England and Wales).

37 In addition, six bills were carried over from the 2013/4 parliamentary session:

- a) Consumer Rights;
- b) Criminal Justice and Courts;
- c) Deregulation;
- d) Finance;
- e) High Speed Rail (London to West Midlands);
- f) Wales.

38 Appendix 2 provides more detail on the bills in the legislative programme together with other government commitments included in the Queen's Speech.

### **Transformation Challenge Fund**

39 On 12 September 2014, the government announced that County Durham Fire and Rescue Service working with the council and Durham Constabulary had been awarded £500,000 in 2014/15 from the Transformation Challenge Fund. The funding will help to extend the Total Home Safety project to provide outreach workers to visit vulnerable, isolated and elderly people to make sure they receive crime and safety advice and protection.

40 On 28 November 2014, the county was awarded a further £1.4m for 2015/16 towards the Durham Ask project, which seeks to transform the way local services are provided by encouraging and supporting local groups and organisations interested in taking over the ownership and management of some council services.

41 In the Autumn Statement, the government confirmed that it intends to continue with the Transformation Challenge Fund, and to build upon the work of the Transformation Challenge Panel, set up to look at service integration and transformation. It committed to developing the principles of service integration that underpin the Troubled Families programme, extending the approach to other groups of people with multiple needs.

## Public procurement

- 42 On 16 October 2014 the government launched a consultation on the new power in the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill to help small businesses gain better access to public sector contract opportunities.
- 43 The proposed enabling power would allow the government to introduce a range of measures to make procurement simpler and reduce barriers as the need arises. These measures would be introduced through secondary legislation at a future date and would impose duties on procuring authorities. At this stage the government is proposing introducing duties to:
- a) exercise procurement functions in an efficient and timely manner;
  - b) make available, free of charge, information or documents, or processes necessary for any potential supplier to bid for a contract opportunity;
  - c) accept electronic invoices.
- 44 The consultation closed on 13 November 2014 and the government's response is expected later this year.

## Economic growth and devolution

- 45 On 7 July 2014 the government confirmed a Local Growth Deal with the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP). This will provide £47.9m of additional funding for 2015/16 with a further £69.6m for 2016/17 to 2021.
- 46 This is in addition to £93.1m previously committed as part of Local Growth Deal funding for the area. The government also confirmed a provisional award of a further £78.7m of funding for projects starting in 2016 and beyond, taking the overall amount of Local Growth Deal funding allocated between 2015/16 to 2021 to £289.3m.
- 47 Specific projects in Durham benefiting from the award include:
- a) Merchant Park 2, to support inward investment and supply chain development adjacent to Hitachi's new manufacturing plant in Newton Aycliffe;
  - b) Phase 3 of infrastructure development at NETPark;
  - c) Sector-based skills improvement via East Durham College;
  - d) Western Relief Road in Durham City;
  - e) Horden rail station.
- 48 On 9 July 2014 the Communities and Local Government Select Committee published its report on devolution in England - the case for local government.
- 49 It called for the transfer of a range of tax raising powers to local authorities, including business rates, stamp duty, council tax and other smaller taxes and charges, along with greater flexibility to borrow for investment. It argued that

releasing groups of authorities in England - centred on large city and county regions - from the fiscal grip of Whitehall could re-energise local democracy, boost England's economic performance and lead to more balanced growth across the country.

- 50 In part, the government has responded to the call for greater devolution through its policy of encouraging the establishment of combined authorities in different parts of the country, most notably Greater Manchester, where the government has agreed to devolve a further £2bn to the combined authority, which will be led by a new directly-elected Mayor. While it was expected that the Chancellor would make significant announcements about further devolution in his Autumn Statement, he fell short of devolving significant powers and budgets, but said that his door was open to local areas which wanted to follow the lead of Manchester.
- 51 Instead, the Chancellor made a number of announcements intended to support the economic development of a 'northern powerhouse' to complement the capital. These included:
- a) a further £1bn from the £12bn Local Growth Fund announced in Spending Round 2013 to be used to fund a second wave of Growth Deals;
  - b) £28m for a National Formulation Centre as part of the High Value Manufacturing Catapult based at NETPark, Sedgefield;
  - c) a new long-term investment fund, called the 'sovereign wealth fund' established from tax revenues from shale gas extraction in the north to fund reinvestment in local communities in the north;
  - d) £10m to support the expansion of the very best academy chains in areas of the north;
  - e) the possibility of extensions to Enterprise Zones;
  - f) tendering for Northern Rail and Trans-Pennine Express franchises to replace pacer carriages with modern trains.

### **Planning reform proposals**

- 52 On 5 June 2014, the Infrastructure Bill was introduced to the House of Lords, setting out a range of proposals including reforms to increase efficiency in the planning system as follows:
- a) making changes to the procedures in the Planning Act 2008 for handling minor changes to existing development consent orders (DCOs) for nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs). It would also simplify the processes for making significant changes;
  - b) allowing the examining authority, (a panel of planning inspectors who consider DCO applications), to be appointed earlier on in the process, immediately after an application has been accepted;
  - c) allowing the examining authority panel to comprise only two inspectors; and



- d) allowing certain types of planning conditions to be regarded as discharged if a local planning authority has not notified the applicant of their decision within a set time period.

53 In the Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced a number of further reforms to the planning system including:

- a) the publication of new data on local authorities' performance in meeting their statutory duty to process smaller planning applications within eight weeks;
- b) the government's intention to work with industry and local authorities to test whether more can be done to support the approval of small sites in the planning system;
- c) increasing the minimum performance threshold for making decisions on major planning applications on time to 50 percent and keeping under review the speed of decisions on major applications;
- d) publishing proposals for consultation with the Budget in 2015 on making the Compulsory Purchase Regime clearer, faster and fairer, with the aim of bringing forward more brownfield land for development;
- e) the publication of revised guidance on the process for establishing the principle of development and the government will consult on a faster process for reaching agreement, considering how timescales for agreement could be introduced, and improving transparency on the use of section 106 funds.

## **Transport funding**

54 On 11 July 2014, the government announced that it will provide £64m towards schemes in the latest round of its Local Sustainable Transport Fund, with Local Enterprise Partnerships investing over £100m of the funding they received as part of the Local Growth Fund. Further match funding will take the value of the package to over £440m.

55 The county was awarded £3.98m against total programme costs of £33.79m for the Walk To project and £840,000 against total project costs of £3.1m for the Durham Local Motion to Work.

56 In the run-up to the Autumn Statement, the government confirmed £1.5bn for 84 roads projects in England, including improvements to the A19 in Tees Valley, the A1(M) western by-pass at Team Valley and the partial duelling of the A1 in Northumberland (a project which has been announced on a number of occasions before).

57 The roads investment forms part of a £15bn strategy to improve infrastructure, which also included £100m to improve cycling provision at 200 key locations across the network, as well as a commitment to cycle-proof any new schemes being developed, a £300m environmental fund to mitigate carbon emissions and serious noise pollution and £100 million to unlock future growth and housing developments.

## Social mobility and poverty issues

- 58 On 20 October 2014, the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission published its second annual State of the Nation report for 2014.
- 59 The Commission reported that some progress had been made in addressing social mobility and child poverty but that the country faced a challenge to prevent Britain becoming a permanently divided society.
- 60 Progress has been made against the child poverty targets in the Child Poverty Act 2010 and relative child poverty was at its lowest level for 30 years, with absolute child poverty was close to record low levels.
- 61 While the pace of the economic recovery was faster than expected, with GDP exceeding its pre-recession peak and employment increasing, real wages were still falling and jobs were becoming less secure. The Commission concluded that different parts of society were having different experiences of recovery with big variations by age, income, family type and region.
- 62 The Commission made 12 recommendations for consideration by the next government:
- a) Supplement the existing child poverty targets with new measures to give a more rounded picture of poverty and publish a new timescale for achieving them;
  - b) Ensure that welfare reforms and fiscal policies protect the working poor from the impact of austerity, including empowering the Office for Budget Responsibility to report on each Budget's impact on poverty and mobility;
  - c) New focus in the early years on ensuring children are school ready at age five, with 85 per cent of children school ready by 2020 and all by 2025;
  - d) A national parenting campaign to be launched to help more parents become excellent parents, funded by removing childcare tax breaks from families where at least one parent earns over £100,000 per year;
  - e) Higher pay to get the best teachers into the worst schools in deprived areas of the county through a new Teachers' Pay Premium and new pay grades commissioned from the Teachers' Pay Review Body;
  - f) End illiteracy and innumeracy among primary school leavers by 2025 and a new focus on quality careers advice, character development and extra-curricular activity in secondary schools;
  - g) Closing the attainment gap between poorer and better-off children to be a priority for all schools so that by 2020 more than half of children entitled to free school meals are achieving five good GCSEs rising to two-thirds by 2025;
  - h) Long-term youth unemployment to be ended by 2020 through a package of measures including half of all larger workplaces providing

- apprenticeships and a new 'day one' support service to help unemployed young people straight back into work or education;
- i) Britain to become a Living Wage country by 2025 at the latest, underpinned by a new national pay progression strategy and an expanded role for the Low Pay Commission;
  - j) More shared ownership options for young people to get on the housing ladder and longer-term tenancies to become the norm for families with children in the private rented sector;
  - k) Universities to use the removal of the student numbers cap to significantly close the access gap so that by 2020 they are aiming to admit 5,000 more students from a free schools meals background, with Russell Group universities aiming to admit 3,000 more state school students who have the grades but currently do not get the places;
  - l) Unpaid internships to be ended – through legislation if necessary – by 2020.
- 63 On 9 October 2014, the Competition and Markets Authority published proposals to increase price competition between payday lenders and help borrowers get a better deal.
- 64 The use of payday lenders has grown significantly since the recession and concerns have been expressed about responsible lending practices within the industry and the impact they have on personal debt amongst financially vulnerable people.
- 65 The Authority's key proposals relate to measures to encourage the development of a high quality price comparison sector for payday loans, so that consumers make more informed decisions and choices if and when they choose pay-day finance. Its principal proposals include:
- a) measures to promote the use of effective price comparison websites;
  - b) a recommendation to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to take steps to improve the disclosure of late fees and other additional charges;
  - c) a recommendation to the FCA to work with lenders and other market participants to help customers shop around without unduly affecting their ability to access credit;
  - d) a recommendation to the FCA to take further steps to promote real-time data sharing between lenders;
  - e) a requirement for lenders to provide existing customers with a summary of the cost of borrowing;
  - f) a recommendation to the FCA to take steps to increase transparency around the role of lead generators.
- 66 The Authority believes that its proposals would help stimulate greater price competition in a market, where many borrowers currently do not shop around due to the difficulties in accessing clear and comparable information on the cost of borrowing, and also make it easier for new entrants to become

established and challenge existing suppliers by offering better deals for borrowers.

- 67 On 11 November 2014, the FCA confirmed the price cap structure to control excesses in the payday lending sector:
- a) An initial cost cap of 0.8 percent per day - this lowers the cost for most borrowers. For all high-cost short-term credit loans, interest and fees must not exceed 0.8 percent per day of the amount borrowed;
  - b) Fixed default fees capped at £15 – this protects borrowers struggling to repay. If borrowers do not repay their loans on time, default charges must not exceed £15. Interest on unpaid balances and default charges must not exceed the initial rate;
  - c) Total cost cap of 100 percent – this protects borrowers from escalating debts. Borrowers must never have to pay back more in fees and interest than the amount borrowed.
- 68 As a result of the controls, from 2 January 2015, no borrower will ever pay back more than twice what they borrowed, and someone taking out a loan for 30 days and repaying on time will not pay more than £24 in fees and charges per £100 borrowed.

#### **Care Act 2014**

- 69 The Care Act 2014 received Royal Assent on 14 May 2014. It represents the most significant reform of care and support in more than 60 years, putting people and their carers in control of their care and support. For the first time, the Act will put a limit on the amount people aged 65 and over will have to pay towards the costs of their care (£72,000).
- 70 In August 2014 the Department of Health undertook a consultation on the draft regulations and guidance associated with the Care Act. The consultation focused on the changes that will come into effect from April 2015.
- 71 The consultation received over 4,000 responses from many different sources. The response document, published on 23 October 2014 set out the government response to the consultation, and summarised changes to the regulations and guidance as a result of the consultation.
- 72 The Department of Health have made changes that include clarifying the guidance on adult safeguarding and revising the eligibility criteria to focus on outcomes and better address social isolation.
- 73 The second phase of the reforms under the Act will be the implementation of the cap on care costs, the extended means test, and a new appeals system from April 2016. A second consultation is expected shortly.
- 74 As part of the June 2013 Spending Review, the government announced that they would make £335m of national funding available to local authorities in 2015/16 so that they can prepare for reforms being implemented as part of

the Care Act 2014. £50m of this relates to capital monies already included in the Better Care Fund, leaving £285m 'new burdens' funding.

- 75 Since the announcement of the above funding the Department of Health issued a further consultation on two options for distributing the Care Act funding to local authorities, both of which result in a reduction in the proportion of the £285m that Durham will receive. Option 1 would result in an allocation of £2,786,645 which is a reduction of £565,355 or 16.87 percent and option 2 would result in an allocation of £2,639,594 which is a reduction of £712,406 or 21.25 percent. Durham submitted a response to this consultation.
- 76 Cabinet received a report in relation to the implementation of the Care Act in Durham at the Cabinet meeting on 15 October 2014.

### **Integration of health and social Care**

- 77 The £3.8bn Better Care Fund (formerly the Integration Transformation Fund) was announced by the government in the June 2013 Spending Round, to ensure a transformation in integrated health and social care. The Better Care Fund is a pooled budget which will be deployed locally on health and social care initiatives from 2015/16. Local authorities were required to submit their Better Care Fund plans to NHS Area Teams in April 2014 and following an assurance process Durham submitted its final plans on 19 September 2014. As a result of a change of policy of the £1.9bn NHS contribution to the BCF, £1bn will remain within the BCF, but will now be either commissioned by the NHS on out-of-hospital services or linked to a reduction in total emergency admissions to ensure that the risk of failure for the NHS in reducing emergency admissions is mitigated.
- 78 In December 2014 Durham's Better Care Fund Plan was formally approved.

### **Criminal Justice and Courts Bill**

- 79 At the time of writing and subject to its parliamentary progress, the Criminal Justice and Courts Bill was expected to receive Royal Assent by the end of 2014. The Bill makes wide-ranging reforms to the justice system as well as targeted provisions to protect the public better and reduce reoffending.
- 80 The Bill will:
- deliver a package of sentencing and criminal law reforms that properly punish serious and repeat offenders and better protect victims and the public;
  - put education at the heart of youth custody, giving young offenders the tools they need to turn their backs on crime.

### **Transforming Rehabilitation**

- 81 The Ministry of Justice 'Transforming Rehabilitation' programme of probation reforms sets out proposals for reforming the delivery of offender services. The

split of probation services into two new organisations was completed on 1 June 2014 and currently exists as:

- a new public sector National Probation Service (NPS) dealing with all those who pose the highest risk of serious harm to the public;
- 21 regional public sector Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) managing all other offenders.

82 The nature of the working relationship between the new National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Companies continues to evolve.

83 The programme of reform continues at speed with tight and challenging deadlines in place. The Ministry of Justice are now in the implementation phase of these changes. Forthcoming key milestones include:

- completion of the competition process by the end of 2014;
- contract Package Areas awarded and ownership of the Community Rehabilitation Companies transferred in to private ownership. (January – March 2015).

### **Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act**

84 The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 has introduced simpler, more effective powers to tackle anti-social behaviour that provide better protection for victims and communities. The powers contained within the Act came into effect on 20 October 2014.

85 The new community trigger and community remedy will empower victims and communities, giving them a greater say in how agencies respond to complaints of anti-social behaviour and in out-of-court sanctions for offenders.

86 The Act will simplify the way in which groups can be dispersed by police, premises can be closed where drug misuse is causing nuisance in the neighbourhood and public spaces can be protected by simplifying the banning of alcohol or gating off alleyways.

### **Counter Terrorism and Security Bill**

87 The Counter Terrorism and Security Bill received its first reading in Parliament on 26 November 2014. The Bill has been presented in response to the growing threat of a terrorism attack which has led to the government raising the UK Threat Level to severe; meaning that an attack is highly likely.

88 The Bill is expected to proceed at pace and enacted at the earliest opportunity.

89 The Bill has seven parts and is designed to reduce the terrorism threat to the UK by giving new powers to the police to help stop people travelling overseas to fight for terrorist organisations and to manage their return to the UK. It will strengthen law enforcement agencies' ability to monitor and control the actions of those in the UK who pose a terrorist threat and enhance the

government's ability to combat the underlying ideology that feeds, supports and sanctions terrorism.

## **Children and Families Act**

- 90 The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms form part of the Children and Families Act 2014 and came into force on 1 September 2014.
- 91 The reforms change the way parents and children with SEND and young people up to age 25 with SEND receive support from local authorities. A new 0-25 years coordinated assessment process and single Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCs) have replaced Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN). Local authorities and their partners (including health colleagues) work together to identify needs and joint processes are in place to commission and purchase goods and services for children and young people with SEND. Young people and parents of children who have EHC Plans now have the option of a Personal Budget giving greater independence, choice and control over their support. The reforms also require local authorities to publish the 'local offer' which clearly sets out the services available for children and young people with SEND.
- 92 Durham's Local Offer was launched on 1 September 2014. Guidance has also been developed for schools and services about the content of their own Local Offer.

## **Schools and early years funding**

- 93 On 17 July 2014, the government confirmed its Fairer Schools Funding Arrangements for 2015/16.
- 94 In March, when the Department for Education consulted on a proposal to provide additional funding to the least fairly funded authorities in 2015/16, it proposed first to ensure that all local authorities will be funded at least at the same cash level per pupil as in 2014/15; and then to allocate an additional £350m for 2015/16 to fund schools in the least fairly funded authorities.
- 95 Accordingly, Durham will receive an increase in funding of 1.7 percent, which is estimated to be £4.7m, based on October 2013 pupil numbers.
- 96 On 23 October 2014, the Department for Education confirmed £50m of early years premium funding to help disadvantaged three and four year old children.
- 97 Schools, nurseries and childminders will be given up to £300 for every three and four year-old from a low-income family to help prevent them falling behind before they start school. Nurseries will have the freedom to decide how to use the funding to help children learn and develop, for example by appointing more qualified staff or specialists in activities like speech and language to give an extra focus on basic skills.

- 98 The government also announced that seven areas will share a £1m pot to trial the new support for two year olds ahead of national roll-out next April.

## **Consultations**

- 99 Since the last report to Cabinet in May 2014, the government has opened 203 consultations and calls for evidence. Appendix 3 details the consultations and calls for evidence which are currently open (as at 9 December 2014).

## **Implications**

- 100 The government's policy proposals have many implications for the county and the council, its role and function and the way it works with and relates to local communities and strategic partners. Below, we provide a commentary against the strategic themes of the Council Plan and County Durham Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **Altogether better council**

- 101 The Autumn Statement re-confirmed the government's intention to maintain its austerity programme beyond 2015/16. Total managed expenditure is forecast to reduce over the next three years and to be held flat in 2019/20 as well as 2018/19 as announced in the 2014 Budget.
- 102 Whereas initially, the government suggested that it would reduce the deficit through a programme of 80 percent spending reductions and 20 percent tax increases, the Chancellor is now focussing efforts on maximising spending cuts as opposed to increasing taxes.
- 103 If the government maintains its pledge to protect spending on schools and the NHS, the cuts for other public services would be on a scale never seen before. The Office for Budget Responsibility calculated that spending per head in real terms in 2019/20 on the public sector minus health and schools would be £1,290, or 57 percent less than in 2009/10.
- 104 The Institute for Fiscal Studies<sup>1</sup> (IFS) has forecast that the government will need to make a further £55bn worth of cuts by 2020 in addition to the £35bn already made. It described these as spending cuts on a 'colossal scale', which will take total government spending to its lowest level as a proportion of national income since before the last war. The Institute estimates that £21bn of welfare cuts will be needed by 2020 to avoid other government departmental budgets being cut further.
- 105 In addition to having to manage spending reductions on an unprecedented scale, the uncertainty in how council services will be funded is set to continue given the proposed review of business rates, which will also look at the

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/budgets/as2014/as2014\\_johnson.pdf](http://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/budgets/as2014/as2014_johnson.pdf)



collection and administration of business rates revenue as well as the rating and taxation system itself.

- 106 While the £1.9m the county secured through the Transformation Challenge Fund is very welcome, it represents a further extension of the 'challenge fund' approach, where the council has to compete for funding against other areas, whereas in the past it would have been funded on the basis of need.
- 107 Again, this increases uncertainty, but also the amount of cost and resources involved in securing funding for the council and the county.

### **Altogether wealthier**

- 108 The confirmation of Local Growth Deal (LGD) funding for the NELEP is welcome and will help to fund important projects in the county including the further development of investment and employment around the new Hitachi plant and the continuing development of NETPark.
- 109 However, to put the award in context, the total amount of LGD funding allocated between 2015 to 2021 at £289.3m, compares with annual funding of One North East at £250m.
- 110 Some government announcements will help to progress the strategic programme to regenerate the county. For example, funding has been confirmed for the Western Relief Road in Durham City, which is a major infrastructure proposal included in the County Durham Plan and the Durham City Masterplan. In addition, the high value manufacturing catapult project at NETPARK stands to benefit from the £28m investment in the National Formulation Centre.
- 111 However, the continuing squeeze on welfare spending will continue to have a disproportionate impact on the county, given the large number and high proportion of benefit claimants in the county. Working age benefits are to be frozen for two years and the household benefits cap reduced by £3,000, at a time when low income households are having to contend with rising prices for essential items such as food, energy and housing.
- 112 In addition, the consultation on the funding of welfare assistance in 2015 seemed to be based on the premise funding will be cut, leaving welfare assistance to be funded from wider local government budgets.
- 113 Both the council and the Association of North East Councils (ANEC) responded to consultation, requesting that funding be continued, given the help and support being provided. The council is currently considering options for how it could continue to provide assistance beyond March 2015, should the current funding end.

## Altogether Healthier

- 114 The Care Act will have significant implications for local authorities in the coming years. New duties will be placed on local authorities from April 2015 (care and support duties) and April 2016 (new financial duties).
- 115 Nationally and locally, concerns have been raised in terms of the timescales and financial challenges the Care Act presents.
- 116 The reforms are expected to create an increased demand for adult social care services. It is expected that there will be an increased demand for financial and care and support assessments from self-funders (people who currently fund their own care), carers, young people who will have social care needs after they reach 18 and prisoners, including people in approved premises and on bail.
- 117 Due to the number of prisons in County Durham the introduction of the duty to meet the social care needs of prisoners will have an impact on resources. The short timescales for the introduction of this duty also presents a challenge to the authority.
- 118 The Care Act implementation is taking place at the same time as unprecedented financial reductions in local government, placing additional pressures on the council while it works to meet the requirements of the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 119 With regards to the Better Care Fund, the County Durham Better Care Fund has been split into the following seven work programmes:
- **Short term intervention services** which includes intermediate care community services, reablement, falls and occupational therapy services;
  - **Equipment and adaptations** for independence which includes telecare, disability adaptations and the Home Equipment Loans Service);
  - **Supporting independent living** which includes mental health prevention services, floating support and supported living and community alarms and wardens;
  - **Supporting Carers** which includes carers breaks, carer's emergency support and support for young carers;
  - **Social inclusion** which includes local coordination of an asset based approach to increase community capacity and resilience to provide low level services;
  - **Care home support** which includes care home and acute and dementia liaison services;
  - **Transforming care** which includes maintaining the current level of eligibility criteria, the development of IT systems to support joint working and implementing.

## Altogether Safer

- 120 The Transforming Rehabilitation Programme aims to reform local delivery of probation services and effective probation and offender management services in the county need to be maintained during the transition process.
- 121 Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust's contract with the Ministry of Justice ended on 31 May 2014. Probation staff have been identified and aligned to either the National Probation Service or the Community Rehabilitation Company and the migration and splitting of probation services and systems over the weekend of 1 June 2014 went smoothly and with no disruption to services.
- 122 The public sector Community Rehabilitation Company will provide probation services until the end of January 2015 (this date is still flexible), before a mobilisation phase transferring over to the new private Community Rehabilitation Company contract provider by March 2015.
- 123 On 29 October 2014 the Ministry of Justice announced the list of 'Preferred Bidders' for each of the 21 Contract Package Areas. In the Durham Tees Valley area, the 'Preferred Bidder' status for the Community Rehabilitation Company has been won by ARCC (Achieving Real Change in Communities) Community Interest Company. The preferred bidder status means that ARCC are now the only supplier with whom Ministry of Justice is in talks to arrange the CRC contract within Durham Tees Valley. Once the preferred bidder stage has concluded, the final offer will be presented and the contract awarded.
- 124 The Counter Terrorism and Security Bill places a general duty on specified authorities, including local authorities, police, prisons, probation, further and higher education, NHS Trusts/Foundation Trusts and clinical commissioning groups, who must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
- 125 The Contest Silver Group in County Durham has strong and robust arrangements in place to take forward counter terrorism work and this new duty will put these existing arrangements on a statutory footing requiring local areas to:
- understand the terrorist ideology and the threat and risk this presents to the local area;
  - ensure front-line staff understand 'prevent' and are able to recognise when an individual shows potential signs of being vulnerable to radicalisation and what to do about it;
  - provide early intervention so that those most at risk are given support at an early stage.
- 126 Since 2009 the Contest Silver Group has undertaken significant awareness raising activity and the council has been at the forefront of this work delivering training and producing e-learning materials for front-line staff across a number of organisations. However, there is still more to do in order to fully embed 'prevent'.

- 127 Local Authorities are to become the 'responsible local authority' required to put in place, chair and manage a multi-agency group/panel that will receive referrals of those who are suspected of being vulnerable to radicalisation. Local arrangements, called 'Channel' have been in place since 2008 and have been led by Durham Constabulary, however, there will be implications in terms of raising staff awareness, developing local procedures and resourcing and managing the panel. Although it is anticipated at this stage that the number of referrals will be small, delivering specialist interventions could be challenging for the local authority. It will be important that criteria for receiving a referral to the Channel process is maintained in order that the panel deal only with individuals who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

### **Altogether Better for Children and Young People**

- 128 The Children and Families Act has changed the authority's processes for providing for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and also assessments for children turning 18. This could result in an increase in the number of assessments carried out, which would increase pressure on the council and NHS services.

### **Implications for partnership working**

- 129 Given the scope of government reforms, the council continues to work with partners to ensure that we achieve the aims of the sustainable community strategy.
- 130 The County Durham Partnership considers these policy implications reports alongside Cabinet and Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Emerging government policy and legislation have been taken into consideration, as the partnership refreshed the sustainable community strategy for the county, which was considered by Cabinet on 19 March 2014.

### **Conclusions**

- 131 Since the coalition government was formed in 2010, it has embarked on a major programme of public service reform.
- 132 In the initial years of this government, the pace of policy announcements and reforms was intense. However, compared with previous policy implications reports to Cabinet, it is apparent that the government has made fewer major policy announcements. In part, this reflects the shift in policy effort from policy development, reform and legislation seen in the first few years to the subsequent implementation of those reforms. However, in recent months, we have started to see some announcements which begin to shape the policy landscape in the run-up to this year's General Election.
- 133 Of particular note is the Autumn Statement and the initial indication around the scale of further austerity cuts to come over the next five years if government policy remains the same. This could have significant financial implications for the council and its partners in future years and for our poorer

communities, given the proposed freeze in overall welfare spending and the tightening of the household benefits cap.

- 134 Clearly, the various policy changes will have major implications for the council and the steps it is taking to develop an 'altogether better Durham'.
- 135 The council and its partners are continuing to analyse the impact that government policy will have on local communities and on our ability to deliver the sustainable community strategy and are responding accordingly. Wherever possible, the council and its partners are working together to respond proactively to the government's policy changes, which have been taken into account in the refresh of the County Durham Sustainable Community Strategy and the council plan and supporting service plans, as considered by Cabinet at its meeting of 19 March 2014.

### **Recommendations**

- 136 Members are recommended to note the contents of this report and the actions taken to anticipate and respond to the government's reforms.

### **Background papers**

Cabinet, 7 May 2014, Implications for Durham County Council of the Government's policy programme

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## Appendix 1: Implications

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**Finance** – The government’s decision to continue with its austerity programme will have on-going financial implications for the council, which will have to continue to reduce spending within its medium term financial plan.

**Staffing** – No specific implications have been identified.

**Risk** – Individual assessments of the risks associated with specific policy proposals are undertaken as a matter of course in council project planning and management.

**Equality and Diversity** – Equality impact assessments will be undertaken on individual policy proposals the council develops in response to the government’s reforms.

**Accommodation** – No specific implications have been identified.

**Crime and Disorder** – No specific implications have been identified.

**Human Rights** – No specific implications have been identified.

**Consultation** – No specific implications have been identified.

**Procurement** – No specific implications have been identified.

**Disability Discrimination Act** – No specific implications have been identified.

**Legal Implications** – A number of the government policy changes outlined above, place new statutory duties on the council and change the regulatory framework in which it operates. The council considers the legal implications of all decisions it takes.

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## **Appendix 2: Legislative programme outlined in the Queen's Speech 2014**

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### **Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill (England and Wales)**

Small firms will be given fair access to government and other public sector procurement. A register of beneficial ownership will outline who owns and controls British companies. There will be tougher penalties for firms flouting minimum wage rules and "abusing" zero hours contracts. A new statutory code for pub tenancies will be created, with an adjudicator to rule on disputes between publicans and pub owners. Childcare regulations will be made more flexible. Highly paid public sector workers will be prevented from claiming redundancy and returning to the same line of work within 12 months.

### **National Insurance Contributions Bill (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland)**

The way national insurance contributions are collected from the self-employed will be simplified. Revenue and Customs will be given new powers to enforce payments in tax avoidance cases. Targeted anti-avoidance rules will be introduced to determine whether arrangements are designed to avoid or minimise national insurance payments.

A legislative timetable is to be developed so that the bill takes effect from April 6, 2016 (for the 2015-2016 tax year onwards).

### **Infrastructure Bill (Mostly England)**

The Highways Agency will be turned from an executive agency into a government-owned company, with a shake-up of its funding. The process of applying for a development consent order (DCO) for building projects of national significance will be simplified and speeded up. The Homes and Communities Agency will be able to assume control of land directly from other government quangos. Subject to the outcome of a consultation, developers will be able to run shale gas pipelines under people's land without their permission. Energy firms will have to pay a levy to fund a beefed-up market regulator. A new "super agency" for the North Sea will be set up. Construction firms will be able to "offset" the carbon emissions of new homes after they have been built, to meet zero carbon standards due from 2016. 'Species Control Orders' would be introduced to control non-native species that threaten infrastructure, biodiversity and the water environment. On planning, the Bill will allow for some planning conditions to be discharged should local planning authorities fail to notify developers within a certain time period and the responsibilities of the Land Registry would be extended, with statutory responsibility for local land charges register and local land charges searches transferred to it.

### **Pension Tax Bill (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland)**

People aged 55 and over with defined contribution pensions will be able to withdraw their savings as they wish, subject to marginal rates of income tax and scheme rules. No-one will be required to buy a guaranteed lifetime annuity with their pension pot and all other existing restrictions on accessing entitlements will be lifted. New measures will be introduced to prevent exploitation for tax purposes.

### **Private Pensions Bill (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland)**

New "defined ambition" collective pension schemes will be launched as an alternative to other existing options. This would allow thousands of people to pay into the same scheme and share the risk. All those approaching retirement who have defined contribution pensions will be entitled to guidance. Pending the outcome of a consultation, the government will have the power to ban people transferring out of private and unfunded public defined benefit schemes.

### **Childcare Payments Bill (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland)**

A new tax-free childcare subsidy worth up to £2,000 a year per child will be introduced in the autumn of 2015. All parents with children under the age of 12 will be eligible, if they are in paid work, earn less than £150,000 a year and meet other eligibility criteria including conditions relating to the number of hours they work, age, residency and other sources of government support.

For every £8 paid by parents towards the cost of childcare, the state will provide a £2 top-up. The existing employer-supported childcare scheme will be repealed.

### **Modern Slavery Bill (England and Wales)**

Existing criminal offences relating to slavery will be consolidated into one piece of legislation. Those convicted of the most serious offences, including trafficking, could get life sentences while others will be subject to restrictions on their movements and activities. The courts will be able to order offenders to compensate their victims, and powers on asset confiscation will be strengthened. An anti-slavery commissioner will be established to coordinate the response of law-enforcement agencies. Victims of slavery who are forced to commit an offence will not be treated as criminals. It will be made easier for the authorities to act when they suspect criminal activities are taking place on board vessels at sea. Statutory guidance on victim identification and victim services will also be provided by the Bill and with an enabling power for child advocates to support child victims of trafficking.

### **Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Bill (England and Wales)**

People who are sued after intervening in emergencies or acting to protect the safety of others will have new legal defences. When considering negligence and breach of duty cases, courts will have to consider the "wider context" of defendants' actions, including whether they behaved responsibly and "for the benefit of society" or had taken "heroic action" to help people in danger with no regard to their own safety.



## **Service Complaints Bill (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland)**

The commissioner who investigates complaints against members of the armed forces will be given added powers. A revamped ombudsman will be able to look into whether grievances have been handled properly and to be able to overturn a decision to exclude a complaint. They will also be able to recommend actions to the authorities. New powers will allow charitable donations to continue to be made to organisations supporting the armed forces in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

## **Serious Crime Bill (England and Wales - with certain provisions elsewhere)**

The laws on recovering criminal assets will be strengthened. The scope of serious crime prevention orders will be extended. A new offence of knowingly participating in an organised crime group will be created. The possession of "paedophilic manuals" will be made a criminal offence. There will be tougher sentences for cybercriminals and those disabling computer systems. A new offence of causing psychological harm to children through parental neglect will be created. Habitual as well as permanent residents of the UK will be liable for prosecution for female genital mutilation. Those suspected of attending terrorist training camps abroad, such as in Syria, and other acts preparatory to terrorism will be liable for prosecution in the UK.

## **Recall of MPs Bill (UK-wide)**

Voters will be able to trigger a by-election where an MP has committed serious wrongdoing and 10% of their registered constituents have signed a petition over an eight-week period. The "recall" process would be triggered if an MP is convicted of an offence and receives a custodial sentence of less than 12 months and when the Commons agrees to such a process.

## **Draft Governance of National Parks (England) and the Broads Bill (England only)**

It would allow direct elections to be held for key positions in England's 10 National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority, which manages the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads. It would enable parish councils to choose their representatives on the authorities from a wider group of candidates.

## **Draft Riot (Damages) Act Bill (England and Wales only)**

The system for compensating individuals and businesses that have been victims of criminal damage and financial loss as a result of riots would be modernised. Subject to consultation, damage to vehicles would be covered, but there would be a cap on payments to very large businesses and their insurers. It would establish a riot-claims bureau.

## Draft Protection of Charities Bill (England and Wales)

Subject to the outcome of a consultation, the powers of the Charity Commission would be strengthened to tackle those abusing the rules and presenting a "known risk".

### Carried-over bills

In addition, six bills were carried over from the 2013/4 parliamentary session:

- Consumer Rights
- Criminal Justice and Courts
- Deregulation
- Finance
- High Speed Rail (London to West Midlands)
- Wales

### Other commitments

The government also re-affirmed its commitment to a number of other measures, including:

- **Plastic bag carrier charge** - from October 2015, the government intends to introduce a 5p charge on all single-use plastic carrier bags in England. The government has stated that it expects retailers to donate the proceeds of the charge to good causes through a voluntary agreement.
- **Updated Charter for Budget Responsibility** - the government is currently reviewing its fiscal policy objectives and mandate and intends to present an updated Charter for Budget Responsibility to Parliament alongside the 2014 Autumn Statement later this year. (It was subsequently confirmed that consultation will take place in early 2015.)
- **ISAs and Premium bonds** - it was announced in the Budget that the overall ISA limit would be increased to £15,000 as of July 1 2014. From April 2015, the starting rate of savings income tax will be lowered from 10 per cent to zero and the band to which it applies will also be extended.
- **Welfare cap and reform** - the government reaffirmed its commitment to a new cap on the overall benefits bill, with any further increase subject to Parliamentary approval.
- **Housing supply and Housing ownership** - the Queen's Speech reaffirmed the commitment to extend the Help to Buy scheme to 2020 through a £6bn fund announced in this year's Budget. The Speech confirmed that delegated legislation would be introduced in the new session to allow for a new garden city in Ebbsfleet. Delegated legislation will also be amended to reform the change of use rules to make it easier for empty buildings to be converted into productive use.
- **Apprenticeships** - the government has committed to increasing the total number of apprenticeship places to two million by the end of the new session. It was also

announced that the third phase of the Trailblazers apprenticeship standards redesign would be announced in September.

- **Education** - the government will be investing over £7bn from 2015 to 2021 to ensure that the supply of free school places meets need. New GCSE and A level courses will be linear with exams at the end of the course. The new qualifications will be phased in from 2015 to 2017. From September 2014 every child in reception, year one and year two in state-funded schools will receive free school meals.
- **Scottish independence** - the government re-affirmed its belief that United Kingdom should be kept together and its commitment to provide Scotland with greater fiscal responsibility through implementation of the Scotland Act 2012.
- **Northern Ireland** - the government reiterated that it remained on course to make a final decision on the potential devolution of corporation tax powers no later than the Autumn Statement 2014.
- **International relations** – the government reaffirmed its commitment to reform the European Union, including its proposal of a ‘red’, ‘yellow’ and ‘green’ card system to strengthen the role of national parliaments when the Commission makes new proposals. The government reaffirmed its commitment to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria and confirmed that the transition of lead security responsibility to the Afghans was on track for completion by the end of 2014.
- **Climate change** - the commitment to reduce emissions by 80 per cent was reaffirmed.
- **Transferable tax allowance for married couples** - from 2015/16 a new transferable tax allowance for married couples and civil partnerships will be available, worth up to £210 per couple. It is currently being legislated for in the Finance Bill 2014.
- **Electricity market reform** - it was confirmed that the Contracts for Difference and Capacity Market mechanisms, introduced in the Energy Act 2013, would be implemented by the end of the year through delegated legislation.

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**Appendix 3: : Government current consultations and calls for evidence**


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<b>Consultation</b>	<b>Government Department</b>	<b>Closing date</b>
Update to the draft river basin management plans	Environment Agency	10/04/2015
Open consultation: Reforming environmental guidance and information obligations	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	31/03/2015
Standard Rules Consultation No. 12 – new and revised standard rule sets	Environment Agency	06/03/2015
Funding for children and young people with SEND	Department for Education	27/02/2015
Guidance for Enforcement Authorities and Food Businesses on the Use of Private Water Supplies in Primary Production in relation to Regulation (EC) No 852/2004	Food Standards Agency	18/02/2015
The Food Law Code of Practice (England) Review	Food Standards Agency	04/02/2015
Waste classification and assessment - technical guidance WM3	Environment Agency	03/02/2015
Confidentiality and information sharing for direct care - Guidance for health and care professionals	Department of Health	31/01/2015
Draft flood risk management plans	Environment Agency	31/01/2015

**Cabinet****14 January 2015****County Durham Partnership Update**

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**Report of Corporate Management Team****Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive****Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of the Council****Councillor Brian Stephens, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Durham County Council's Cabinet on issues being addressed by the County Durham Partnership (CDP) including key issues from the Board, the five thematic partnerships and all area action partnerships (AAPs). The report also includes updates on other key initiatives being carried out in partnership across the county.

**Summary**

2. A huge amount of partnership activity has been delivered in the last few months of 2014 that evidences the connected and yet diverse work led by all parts of the partnership.
3. The renewed Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), the overarching strategy for the county, was launched at the CDP event in November and confirms the partnership's vision and priority themes as well as looking ahead and key areas of focus of the partnership in the years to come. Some of the strategies that underpin the SCS have also been refreshed including 'No Health without Mental Health' and the Healthy Weight Strategic Framework, both recently ratified by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
4. In periods of austerity it is important to recognise the achievements of local communities and organisations and the partnership has done this through a number of award ceremonies and events. The Environment Partnership celebrated the 25<sup>th</sup> annual Environment Awards in November and recognised three projects with an Outstanding Award, the first time it has done so. Durham Community Action held its first Volunteering Awards in October culminating with the Volunteer of the Year being officially recognised for their hard work and dedication to helping others. All parts of the partnership came together at the CDP Event in November to celebrate the achievements over the last five years and to look at how we tackle some of the challenges going forward together. In addition to this, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the AAPs have all held consultation events using a variety of mechanisms to engage. The new VCS Better Together Forum has also held two meetings in recent months. This brings together over 20 of the larger or specialist VCS organisations working across county and aims to share good practice and prepare for the future collaboratively. Thousands of people have been engaged

with the partnership through this wide range of activity, all of whom play a valuable role in achieving the objectives set out in the SCS.

5. Expressions of interest continue to be submitted on the Durham Ask. This asset transfer programme is building on the successful community buildings programme which is now nearing completion with the majority of the buildings due for transfer imminently and over £500,000 of external funding brought in. The lessons learned from this will help shape the Ask going forward. £1.4 million recently received from the Government's Transformation Challenge Award (TCA) will help with the delivery of the Ask as well as supporting the voluntary and community sector to build sustainable support for volunteers. This follows on from the Fire Service successfully bidding for £500,000 under the TCA 2014/15 programme to deliver their Safer Homes project, building on their Total Home Safety work.
6. In addition to the above funding, the European Social Investment Fund Strategy and Operational Programmes have been submitted to Government with approval expected in the New Year. This will lead to over €156 million for County Durham, its share of the €537 million fund in total.
7. Welfare Reform and the poverty agenda continue to be key area of focus for the partnership with all partners working together to mitigate the impacts of changes on local people. As well as two conferences, all AAPs are addressing this issue with additional funding approved by Cabinet earlier this year. As the challenge increases the CDP has identified six key areas of focus and will regularly update the CDP Board and Cabinet on these going forward.
8. The council has carried out a light touch consultation on its budget following on from the comprehensive one carried out in November 2013. This was through the AAP forums as well as at other specific events and online with findings being reported to Cabinet at a future meeting.

### **Partnership Event**

9. The CDP held an event on Thursday 20 November that looked back over the first five years of the work of the partnership and with Cllr Henig highlighting some of the key achievements to date. The event was the first of its kind and offered an opportunity for all parts of the wider partnership to come together to share best practice and look at how we can continue to work positively together moving forward.
10. The renewed Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) was launched at the event by Cllr Henig. This builds on the SCS published in 2010 and sets out the partnership's ambitious vision for what the County will look like in 2030. It is the overarching plan for the county and summarises the work ongoing across the five priority themes of Altogether wealthier; better for children and young people, healthier; safer and greener and the 14 AAPs. It also sets out how partners work with the voluntary and community sector and the town and parish councils across the county and the benefits of working together.
11. Board Members, Thematic Chairs and Board Members and AAP representatives all played a key role in the event on the day and in preparation which made it a positive and engaging event. Helen Marriage, Director of Artichoke, was keynote speaker, and spoke of the incredibly positive experience of working with partners in

Durham. Chief Constable Mike Barton also spoke to delegates on problem solving and showed how using different approaches and thinking of issues in a different way can be useful in tackling problems going forward.

12. Feedback received, both from delegates on the day and from evaluation forms, has been very positive with people also commenting on actions that they will take following their attendance at the event.

### **Durham Ask**

13. The Council continues to focus on the 'Durham Ask' which is about working with community groups, town and parish councils and local organisations to transform the way local services are provided by transferring them to local management. To help achieve this ambition the Council has been successful in its bid for £1.4 million from the Government's Transformation Challenge Award fund. The funding is to support local authorities to transform the way they work, make changes to their business processes and work with the wider public sector to improve services for local people. This will increase the number of social and community enterprises and encourage volunteering and enhance the volunteering experience. It will also reduce council spending whilst protecting the services and facilities local people most value.

### **Joint working with the Voluntary Sector and Local Councils**

14. The **Local Councils Working Group** invited a representative from Northumberland's County Association to its October meeting to hear about how town and parish councils work together as well as how they work with Northumberland County Council. It was interesting to find out that five of the newer parish councils, created immediately prior to Local Government Reorganisation, have Partnership Agreements that cover a range of services delivered by Parish Councils. These involve a financial contribution from the parishes of £200,000 raised through precept increases. They involve joint teams covering neighbourhood service type activity currently with the hope of rolling them out to other services such as leisure and youth activities etc.
15. The December meeting heard from Andy Coulthard, AAP Co-ordinator for Mid Durham, about the positive working arrangements that exist with the County Durham Association of Local Councils local forum in their area. This has included parishes in the area contributing financially towards participatory budgeting and shared projects including Silver Talk, which has been rolled out nationally.
16. The **Voluntary and Community Sector Working Group** invited Karen Lynn from Cornforth Partnership to talk to the group on consortia working. This was a comprehensive presentation which included the requirements for successful consortia working and the challenges /barriers involved. Karen highlighted the key considerations which organisations need to take account of before entering into consortia and also gave examples of successful consortia across the region.
17. Julie Form gave feedback from the first gathering of the **Better Together Forum**. Membership is made up of the larger countywide or regional VCS organisations operating in the county, with DCA representing smaller voluntary and community groups. The purpose of the forum is to horizon scan, share best practice and look for new opportunities to collaborate. A quick straw poll had identified that fifteen organisations present had a combined annual turnover of £18M; employed 480

staff; and worked with 1500 volunteers. The second meeting on 3 December included a workshop led by Sue Parkinson on preparing for EU Funding. Julie also introduced a regular slot for organisations to share their recent successes, key opportunities they are pursuing and any learning points from any recent disappointments.

18. The County Durham Volunteering Awards, organised by Durham Community Action, showcased the work of individual volunteers from across the county. The awards ceremony, involving over 200 people, took place at Ramside Hall Hotel, Durham on 16 October 2014. The aim of the event was to recognise and celebrate the work done by volunteers who freely give up their time to improve the lives of others. The award categories mirrored the five altogether themes, together with a Young Volunteer of the Year and a County Durham Volunteer of the Year. The awards were supported by the Northern Echo and Smooth Radio and sponsored by the Council, Beamish Museum, Banks group; Northumbrian Water; the two Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Police and Crime Commissioner.
19. In addition to the DCA Awards, **East Durham AAP** also held their own Volunteering Recognition Awards which built on the Volunteer Awards ceremony held in 2012 and highlights the significant contribution made by volunteers in the area. The event which was also the East Durham Area Action Partnership Autumn Forum, was attended by 195 people, all of whom were offered the opportunity to vote on the AAP 2015/16 priorities.

### **Additional External Funding Secured**

20. Through the Community Buildings Asset Transfer Programme over £570,000 has been brought into the county to support management committees of community buildings. This programme of work is nearing completion and will see 96 remain in community use. The significant additional income for the programme has been achieved through the work of Community Buildings Team, alongside colleagues in the voluntary and community sector and the AAPs, who have empowered groups to bring in their own funds for projects and capital works and providing support to enable the groups to write the actual bids. They have also liaised with funders such as Big Lottery, Awards for All and Locality as well as some lesser known charities and sources of funding including the Scotto Trust, COMA and the Postcode Lottery. Town and Parish Councils have also contributed to the success of the programme. Links to expert advice and guidance from the council's central funding team and County Durham Community Foundation have also been very valuable.
21. The transfer of Quarrington Hill Community Centre to its management committee is a positive example of joint support given to a community building by the council and the VCS. Initially this was in establishing a new management committee and then guiding the new committee through the lengthy process of asset transfer, to become one of the first to complete the process in the county.
22. With the new management committee in place, they secured nearly £7,000 from the AAP's Its Up 2U Participatory Budget scheme to carry out refurbishments to the centre, enabling the group to offer a wider range of activities and functions from the centre, which in turn generates a larger income to sustain it. In 2014 the committee also successfully bid for 46,019 external funding from Lafarge Tarmac. This enabled more substantial refurbishment of the centre including changing rooms



being transformed to become new meeting rooms, offering more rentable space for the centre.

23. **Mid Durham AAP** and its partners work closely with a variety of community groups across the AAP area to support them with governance, policy, funding, information and advice. They have supported, alongside Durham Community Action and Durham County Council's Regeneration Service Grouping, a range of community venues to bring in external funding, develop business plans and policies. The team has worked with sports clubs to develop successful funding bids and local businesses and developers to support community cohesion projects. The creation of village action plans where local residents have had the ability to feed in their local issues and work with the AAP and partners to try and solve them has led to this work.
24. The Council and partners work closely with County Durham Community Foundation (CDCF) as the prime funding agency for small and medium sized local voluntary groups with AAPs building close links in localities. **Chester Le Street and District AAP** is one AAP that has had early successes through supporting two groups to obtain £7,000 between them from CDCF. Further applications are in the process of being developed.
25. Over £40,000 of funding was secured to construct a MUGA pitch within the Horndale area of Newton Aycliffe through **GAMP AAP**. The AAP has also been proactive in supporting a wide range of local community groups access external funding to develop their projects. Funding was secured from Livin, Section 106 monies and a wide range of local trusts and charities. This partnership approach also resulted in Great Aycliffe Town Council allocating land for the development and agreeing to undertake all future maintenance and insurance obligations.
26. **Weardale AAP** supports their partners at the Killhope North of England Lead Mining Museum in trying to attract more visitors and enhance their visitor offer. They have also helped the museum's team by working on a submission for HLF funding.
27. There is a potential of a £1.5m investment into the **Bishop Auckland and Shildon AAP** area through a number of community initiatives such as Shildon Community First, Gaunless Gateway Big Local and the Shildon Health Express. The AAP has also successfully brokered an arrangement with a Charitable Trust which has seen further investment not only in the BASH AAP area but across the County. This arrangement has involved showcasing and introducing potential projects to the trust via a series of project visits. In the last 12 months this has seen an investment of £228,000 into the County with projects in BASH, 3 Towns, East Durham and Teesdale AAP Areas benefitting.
28. A number of AAPs (**Stanley, 3 Towns and Teesdale**) have recently launched small grants funds through their forums with different amounts available depending on the area. Teesdale's is focused on its children and young people's priority group and is delivered in partnership with the YMCA whilst 3Towns' must be led by children and young people themselves. These types of grants are invaluable to local groups and charities and enable them to put on events as well as providing small amounts of support to their members.

29. **East Durham AAP** Team has attracted over £4.5m in match funding into East Durham and delivered an average of over 110 projects a year since 2010. Since May 2014 a total of £102,766 has been secured for ten community based projects. The community development role of the officers has resulted in the delivery of community based projects that have also attracted this additional funding for the area.

### **Altogether wealthier**

30. The **County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP)** at its Board meeting in November focused its discussion on Enabling Growth in County Durham. Some of the key issues, challenges and areas of discussion included plans for developing transport infrastructure within the county and the role of the North East Combined Authority (NECA), as the single body with the responsibility for strategic transport across the all seven local authority areas within the North East.
31. An EU workstream update report was presented to the board to illustrate the breadth of activity that is being considered via partners. Core activity has included the Social Inclusion conference held in September 2014 with over 160 partners in attendance and continued communication with the North East Local Enterprise Partnership at both individual and group level. The UK's Partnership Agreement has now been agreed with the European Commission. This is the high level strategy, which sets out how European Structural and Investment Funds will be spent across the UK. The more detailed Operational Programmes for ERDF and ESF for England are now being negotiated with the Commission. The outcome of these negotiations may have further implications for County Durham depending on the detail that is included in the Operational Programme.
32. The Durham City Board continues to provide strategic governance and leadership to a series of interrelated initiatives and partnership activities in the City. Setting out a strategy for the future development of the City requires a multi – faceted approach while balancing people, business and place. To support the wide nature of the agenda and incorporate a broad section of views, membership has recently been reviewed and the group has welcomed new members from the Durham City BID, Atom Bank, Durham City MP, Federation of Small Business and Carillion. The group further supports and builds on the aspirations to deliver schemes like Freeman's Reach, Aykley Heads, Northern Quarter, infrastructure and transport within the city, Millburngate House and North Road, as well as developing 'place promotion' through inward and business investment and building the Durham City brand. Working with Visit Durham, partners on the board have proactively support initiatives to improve the City
33. The promotion of the county's food and drink offer, the final stage in Visit County Durham's three year Regional Growth Fund (RGF) national marketing campaign, went live at the beginning of September 2014 through high profile media activity. Activities included posters on the London Underground, digital billboards at Edinburgh Waverley and Manchester Piccadilly train stations, online adverts on the Telegraph and Guardian websites and editorial in the Telegraph, Observer and Evening Standard. Durham also features in the launch of the new national Magna Carta Trails, the tourism activity developed to celebrate the Magna Carta 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015.

34. AAPs continue to support altogether wealthier as the county's top priority with a range of projects and initiatives aimed at supporting local businesses and individuals looking to re-enter the job market or retrain.
35. In the last two years **East Durham Rural AAP** has given £33,929 area budget, matched with £34,000 of Community Economic Development County Wide Targeted Business Improvement funding for its targeted business improvement scheme aimed at improving shop fronts and boosting the appearance of town and village centres. The scheme has helped to safeguard these businesses as the improvements made have meant increased footfall and therefore jobs have been secured.
36. As showcased at the recent County Durham Partnership Event, **GAMP AAP** and South Durham Enterprise Agency (SDEA) are working in partnership to provide a package of training and business development grants for new business within the GAMP area. This project lends assistance to individuals looking to start up small businesses in the area by providing a financial package to assist with their start-up costs. The project links closely with the support offered by the GAMP funded Employability Skills Fund and the suite of support available through staff and projects at SDEA. To complement the support service and financial package the project also provides a range of workshops to assist with key business. To date 22 local residents have been assisted in establishing their business, with all 22 continuing to successfully trade.
37. The **Spennymoor AAP** led Destination Employment project has already engaged a total of 36 clients from the area and has started to deliver a comprehensive programme of ICT support, training, mentoring and work placements. Clients are able to access ICT support and have been receiving help with Universal Job Match, Job Match and CV development. A qualified mentor is working closely with clients to provide Information, Advice and Guidance and employability skills training. They have also been asked to carry out benefit calculations for clients. An Information Day was held in August last year at St. Pauls Centre with local residents invited to attend. At the event attendees were able to find out about the scheme, access CV Workshops, ICT Support, training information and support with welfare reform issues. Local residents that did come along to the event provided really positive feedback. At the event people signed up for work experience and training, with one client asking for specialist support around domestic violence. The event also offered an ideal opportunity to network with other providers and the project made some excellent links.
38. As part of the project, County Durham Furniture Help Scheme (CDFHS) is currently supporting clients with a programme of practical work experience and in house training. Clients are gaining valuable experience in a variety of roles including front office/customer service, IT, graphic design, van crew/delivery and warehouse work. The project has also provided a work experience placement for a young person from Whitworth Park School. The individual in question came on a long term placement as she was at risk of exclusion from school. She worked up until the summer and gained valuable work experience.
39. The project is currently developing a referral pathway and is already receiving referrals from Job Centre Plus and the National Careers Service. It has also developed links with a number of local organisations including Profound, ILM

Associates, Nordic Focus Training Group, Cornforth Partnership, Northern Pinetree Trust and Moving.

40. The **3Towns AAP's** Citizens Advice Project in Willington in its first six months of operation has given support to 43 clients with 59 per cent of enquiries welfare benefit related, the remaining enquiries relate to housing, legal, employment, consumer, relationship or debt related. The project achieved over £44,000 in financial gains for its clients, 47% of which are either disabled or have long term health problems.
41. This project supports the continuation of a free confidential advice service in Crook (three mornings a week). In the first six months of 2014 2265 clients accessed the service in person and a further 926 received advice and information by telephone of which: 913 people received advice on benefits resulting in an additional £218,586 being claimed by those entitled; 177 families were helped with housing matters and 55 families with child tax credit forms; 7 cases of domestic violent were referred to specialist partners, 74 legal cases were passed to solicitors and 136 debt cases were referred to CAB; 150 people were helped with utility bill issues. And a further 148 people were helped with consumer matters and 265 clients were referred for food parcels/emergency utility payments. The figures indicate the demand and scope of the project.

### **Altogether better for children and young people**

42. The **Children and Families Partnership** has an overarching responsibility for delivering better outcomes for children, young people and their families and in order to make this happen they actively engage with children and young people to gather their views. Children and young people attend each of the Children and Families Partnership meetings to highlight and discuss issues which are important to them. This influences services and helps to shape how the partnership does things in the future to meet the needs of children and young people.
43. Young people have raised issues to the Partnership about access to mental health services. This feedback has been shared appropriately for consideration as part of the Child and Adolescence Mental Health (CAMHS) strategy. Information provided by young people in relation to alcohol has also been shared for consideration in the refresh of the Alcohol Harm Reduction strategy.
44. Following discussions with young carers, the Partnership agreed to sign up to the County Durham Young Carers Charter. This is an opportunity for the partnership to show a commitment to improving facilities, services and support available to young carers. Work is currently taking place with Family Action's 'The Bridge Young Carers project' to progress the sign up and to meet the commitments in the charter. Feedback from children and young people is used to inform the refresh of the Children, Young People and Families Plan. The refreshed document for 2015-18 will be agreed in March 2015, and presented to Cabinet at a future meeting.
45. From 1 October 2015, the responsibility for commissioning public health services for 0-5 year olds, delivered by health visitors and the family nurse partnership, will transfer from NHS England to local authorities. This transition marks the final part of the overall public health transfer to local authorities from the NHS, following implementation of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, and aims to encourage integrated working.

## Altogether healthier

46. The **Health and Wellbeing Board** has signed up to the NHS Statement of Support for Tobacco Control, supporting the bolder vision of 'Making Smoking History'. The Statement has been developed to support local government in their tobacco control work, it provides a public commitment to work towards further reducing smoking prevalence; to demonstrate a commitment to take action; and to publicise the NHS's dedication to protect local communities from the harm caused by smoking.
47. The Board has also formally ratified the 'No Health without Mental Health' Local Implementation Plan, which was developed by the Mental Health Partnership Board as the overarching strategy to improve mental health and wellbeing across all ages within County Durham. It is the local implementation plan of the national 'No Health without Mental Health' strategy and is supported by a number of strategies and work relating to mental health, including the national Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat, which is a commitment from organisations to prevent mental health crises. The key aim of the concordat is to develop joined up service responses to people who are suffering from mental health crisis. The next step is to develop, agree and publish a joint action plan before 31 March 2015 to bring about the local improvements needed. There is agreement to develop this across County Durham and Darlington in conjunction with both Health and Wellbeing Boards, as a number of partners operate across the populations of both County Durham and Darlington.
48. A Healthy Weight Strategic Framework has been developed as a local response to 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People: A Call to Action on Obesity in England'. In County Durham over 75% of children are a healthy weight when they start school, but less than 25% of adults are a healthy weight. The strategy aims to achieve a sustained upward trend in healthy weight for children, young people and adults in County Durham by 2020. The Healthy Weight Alliance, which is a multi-agency partnership working to promote healthy weight in County Durham, will lead on this work.
49. The Health and Wellbeing Board's Engagement Event took place last October and was attended by over 240 people from various groups including voluntary organisations, patient reference groups, service users and carers. The focus of the event was informing people about what has been achieved, or about work which is already taking place or is planned to take place. The event consisted of a mix of local and national speakers and had a number of themed workshops relating to health, social care and the wider wellbeing approach and gave people the opportunity to provide their views on how services should be developed. Feedback from the event has been used to influence future services through the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Children, Young People and Families Plan, as well as in the development of plans such as the School Nursing review, and the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy.
50. Whilst health and wellbeing is not a recognised priority for all AAPs they do support a wide range of health based initiatives across the county. **Stanley AAP and Derwent Valley AAP** are both supporting Age UK County Durham to provide IT training courses for people aged 50+ living in their areas which will enable older people to get online. Both AAPs have purchased IT equipment including laptops and iPad as well as broadband installed in some venues.

51. Each year of the project Age UK County Durham will host training courses in different venues across the two areas. Age UK County Durham will also deliver a minimum of eight outreach sessions over the two years using the laptops, iPads and Tablets, tailored to need, in suitable venues in the AAP area, thus helping to increase sustainability of these community venues. These sessions will also include mobile phone training. Older people who have become confident will also be able to attend the Internet cafe at the Stanley Resource Centre and take advantage of the free Wi-Fi.
52. Participants will be provided with a support pack which will include information including guidance on how to stay safe online and a crib sheet that they can complete with the help of the tutor providing a guide specifically tailored to their needs/equipment. Age UK County Durham will also provide older people with a stylus as it has been identified that due to arthritic fingers most find it difficult to manage a touch screen.
53. The project is an IT course and a series of discussions with older people about the opportunities that modern technology presents, whether or not they wish to try some of it (or maybe just improve existing skills) and also address any worries they may have about getting online. The practical, hands-on aspect of the project will offer a range of activities that will be led by what the older people want and this may include: setting up an email address (and attaching photos), saving money by buying train or theatre tickets online, shopping online or using other web-based services e.g. benefits applications, car tax etc.
54. This project will provide a mixture of learning formats and also offer friendly, informal learning at a pace to suit the people who come along as learning IT can be daunting. For those older people who become good at IT, the project will encourage them to volunteer to support the project and advise their peers.

### **Altogether safer**

55. The **Safe Durham Partnership** supported County Durham Safer Homes initiative, led by the Fire and Rescue Service, has been successful in attracting £500,000 of 'Transformation Challenge Award' funding for 2014/15. Neighbourhood Watch volunteers will be trained to recognise a range of vulnerabilities which will be recorded on a single basic assessment of need carried out in the home.
56. Once a vulnerable individual is referred by a volunteer, carer or professional, they will be assessed for specialist security and safety equipment designed to prevent burglary and fire in the home. This will be provided in one of three ways: Low cost equipment permanently fixed to the home; Specialist mobile equipment fitted until the vulnerability ceases providing for sustainability and permanently fitted specialist equipment to properties owned by Housing Associations for allocation to those most at risk.
57. As previously reported, the Ministry of Justice 'Transforming Rehabilitation' programme has resulted in the split of probation services. A new public sector National Probation Service is dealing with all those who pose the highest risk of serious harm to the public. Twenty one regional private sector Community Rehabilitation Companies will manage all other offenders. The 'Preferred Bidder' status for the Community Rehabilitation Company for the Durham Tees Valley area has been won by ARCC (Achieving Real Change in Communities and a consortium

made of agencies from the public, private and third sectors) Community Interest Company. The preferred bidder status means that ARCC are now the only supplier with whom MoJ is in talks to arrange the Community Rehabilitation Company contract within Durham Tees Valley. Once the preferred bidder stage has concluded, the final offer will be presented and the contract awarded.

58. Work has been undertaken by the Safe Durham Partnership and Local Safeguarding Adults Board to develop a multi-agency approach to hoarding and hoarding behaviours within local communities. This follows a Coroner's report highlighting several issues relating to a hoarding related fire death and the Coroner writing to Registered Social Landlords and Durham County Council requesting action to eliminate or reduce the risk of death created by such circumstances. As a result, throughout 2014 the partnership has worked with local housing providers and other agencies to create a multi-agency Hoarding toolkit; identify key points of contact; and establish clear roles and responsibilities. A one day conference was delivered in August 2014 to raise awareness of hoarding and hoarding behaviours whilst sharing local case studies and practical solutions. This issue is now being taken forward by the Hoarding and Housing Group, following a governance review of the Safe Durham Partnership.
59. In September, approximately 150 delegates attended a counter terrorism seminar to raise awareness of 'Prevent'; the Government's strategy for stopping people becoming involved in or supporting terrorism. The seminar featured leading terrorism commentator and lecturer Dr David Sloggett as a key speaker. Dr Sloggett is an international authority on the subject and provided a fascinating insight into terrorist events. The purpose of the seminar was to continue the work to raise awareness and understanding about the threat everyone faces from those who promote terrorism and how organisations can recognise and support people at risk of being drawn into terrorism.
60. Outside the work of the Safe Durham Partnership itself, the **County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority** (CDDFRA) has provided an update on their estate renewal and improvement programme which began in 2010. Its aim is to modernise the estate ensuring it is fit for purpose and provides a basis for delivering efficient and effective services and partnership opportunities for the community in future years.
61. The key areas of this programme are: the relocation of the Headquarters from Framwellgate Moor to a new building in Belmont in 2013, followed by the Command and Control Centre moving into this building in October 2014. The building provides first class facilities and equipment to reflect the requirements of a modern day fire service whilst also being utilised in a partnership arena to host meetings and test operational preparedness. Workshops and stores have been relocated in from the Framwellgate moor site to a Technical Services Centre at Bowburn and the Service training centre will also relocate to a purpose built facility at Bowburn in early 2015.
62. The Fire Service and Durham Constabulary were successful in a bid for funding from the Police Innovation Fund and as a result they will deliver their incident command training from the new centre. Also, as part of the Fire Service's partnership commitment with Durham Constabulary, the fire station at Newton Aycliffe has been converted to a shared station with the Police, enabling them to

reinstate their presence in Newton Aycliffe town centre and demonstrate excellent partnership working between the two organisations.

63. A Community Fire Station at Crook was opened in May 2014 replacing the old and inadequate premises that did not provide any training facilities for the firefighters of crook. In addition, Durham Fire Station, currently situated at Framwellgate Moor will relocate to new premises at Sniperly in early 2015, again providing a more efficient environmentally sustainable building which can also be utilised by the communities. These new stations will greatly enhance the Services ability to recruit and retain on-call firefighters that provide such a vital response to their local areas.
64. The Service was recently successful in gaining funding from government to build a 'Quad Service' station at Barnard Castle. The station will enable the relocation of Police and Ambulance teams from existing sites in Barnard Castle into a new shared facility on the existing fire station site. Teesdale and Weardale Search and Mountain Rescue Team (TWSMRT) will also relocate from their current base at Barnard Castle Police Station into the shared site, believed to be the first 'Quad-Service' station in the country. Sharing accommodation is part of a broader strategic commitment between the blue-light services to collaborate wherever possible which will promote interoperability which will ensure that the emergency services are able to respond effectively to major incidents within the County and also nationally. It also allows financial efficiencies to be realised without reducing frontline services.
65. **Great Aycliffe and Middridge AAP's** Crime and Fire Prevention project has enabled the Neighbourhood Policing team covering Newton Aycliffe and Middridge and the Fire Service to purchase items of crime and fire prevention equipment in order to enhance their existing service of providing free home fire safety checks and advice to residents within the GAMP area.
66. The funding also supports the Neighbourhood Policing Team to attend community forums such as coffee mornings, drop in sessions at local community centres, gatherings of elderly residents and to hold talks on bogus officials. The team will revisit people who have been victims of crime, and - for example, in cases where sheds/garages/outhouses have been broken into, officers will issue equipment providing reassurance to the victim, making them feel more protected and also reducing the likelihood of them becoming a repeat victim.
67. Each year Newton Aycliffe Fire Station personnel carry out 1400 Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) in the Aycliffe and Middridge area in support of the service vision of "Safest People, Safest Places." In approximately 15% of all HFSCs carried out in the Aycliffe and Middridge area by the Fire Service the misuse of electrical equipment is observed and is more prevalent in the more elderly members of the community. The Fire Service will utilise the AAP funding to purchase additional equipment not currently available to the service. The Fire Service also responds to requests from the Police where members of the community are at increased risk of arson due to neighbourhood disputes, domestic violence etc.

### **Altogether greener**

68. The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Environment Awards was held on 13 November 2014 at the Radisson Hotel, Durham. A record-breaking 119 entries from across County



Durham were submitted for this year's awards in 12 categories. The annual awards recognise great design, environmental achievement and community spirit. Judges selected 53 projects or individuals to be honoured for their hard work, dedication and commitment to improving their surroundings. Three projects were judged as 'outstanding' i.e.: a country house restoration, a refurbished community arts building and Britain in Bloom were the big winners in a prestigious environmental awards scheme.

69. Lartington Hall in Teesdale, Barnard Castle's The Witham, and the Durham in Bloom campaign were all judged "outstanding". In the built environment category, Lartington Hall, a listed country house, at Lartington, near Barnard Castle, was commended after being restored in keeping with its 17th Century origins. It now hosts celebrations as well as fundraising events and opens to the public for special visits or community gatherings. The Witham, a key part of Barnard Castle's heritage, was recognised in the built environment section. After its future was secured for use by the local community, the building was designed to provide cultural and commercial facilities for a wide range of users. Completing the trio of outstanding entries was Durham in Bloom, a community based partnership of 15 organisations, praised in the places and spaces category. Volunteers have dedicated nearly 3,500 hours to transforming Durham's public and private open spaces and recently won gold in the prestigious Britain in Bloom.
70. The **Environment Partnership Board** in September 2014 launched the 'Caring for Your Environment Award' in order to give recognition to individuals, community groups and projects which carry out environmental improvement works in their local area. This award will be awarded throughout the year and gives recognition to those within our local communities who conduct positive environmental improvements. To date recipients of the 'Caring for Your Environment' award include;
71. 'Durham in Bloom' (where over 1,000 volunteers, local businesses, schools, community groups, individuals, AAP's and Town and Parish Councils dedicated nearly 4000 hours into making Durham City's horticultural initiative nationally recognised in the Britain in Bloom competition) and; Derek Briggs from Chester-le-Street Central Residents' Association who secured a £500 grant from the Chester-le-Street and District AAP to provide a community clean up and install a commemorative bench to improve the appearance of the entrance to the Osborne Road car park in the town centre. The bench was designed with the help of students from Park View School. The design features the town crest, depicting St. Cuthbert's Cross as well as the spring gentian – the flower of County Durham. Both projects are excellent examples of delivering environmental improvements which the Environment Partnership Board has given recognition to.
72. Nominations for a 'Caring for Your Environment Award' can be emailed to the Environment Partnership - [environmentpartnership@durham.gov.uk](mailto:environmentpartnership@durham.gov.uk) or by contacting a board member directly.
73. A new Chair of the Climate Change Group (Tara Duncan, Sustainability Manager, Durham University) has been appointed. This position will not only give representation from Durham University but also strengthen the Environment Partnership as there are opportunities to engage further with the University in terms of its Environmental programme and local activities. The remit of the Group is currently being addressed as the Climate Change Strategy in the main has been

delivered. Future topics which the group will cover include flooding, education and domestic energy.

74. Locally based initiatives to support the work of the Environment Partnership can be found across the county. Board Members from the **Spennymoor AAP** organised a community litter pick where members of the Board, along with members of the community and young people from our Youth Council, carried out the litter pick on Saturday October 21 and was featured in the Northern Echo. The litter pick was organised as a result of feedback from Forum Members in relation to litter issues. Board Members are keen to see this continue and are actively seeking members to sign up and be part of future volunteer litter picks.

### **Area Action Partnerships Forums**

75. The AAPs have recently held their autumn/winter forums where their priorities are voted on for the forthcoming year. The format of the forums varied across the county from some AAPs holding a number of smaller events within their areas to some linking with existing Christmas events.
76. **Mid Durham AAP** held their Forum at the end of November which took a workshop format using three of the AAP's task group themes – supporting older people, employment/job prospects and supporting the voluntary and community sector. The workshops highlighted the projects and programmes that the AAP and its partners had developed for each theme and looked at key issues and potential gaps. The event was used as a show case with targeted local groups and partners invited in to work more closely with the AAP and support the promotion and take up of the services promoted. Survey Monkey was also used to request feedback from Forum members and residents regarding the AAP priority themes for 2015/16.
77. In an attempt to maintain and increase the number of people within the **EDRC AAP** community engaged their Forum followed a different approach this year. Voting roadshows took place within primary and secondary schools that students who live or study in the EDRC AAP area attended, supported by the AAP team and Investing in Children. Over 500 pupils aged between eight and 16 viewed the project display boards, and voted on which projects they feel should receive funding via the It's Up 2 U Voices Project Participatory Budgeting Scheme, which was developed by the EDRC AAP Youth Forum.
78. The EDRC AAP Board agreed to allocate £40k for projects through this scheme which must be 'for young people, by young people'. The overall aim of the scheme is to support projects in the AAP area that have the potential to improve the lives of children and young people. The scheme aims to support community groups and organisations to deliver projects that will help address the activities for children and young people priority chosen by local people.
79. The **Derwent Valley AAP** chose this year to combine its Forum with its Christmas in Consett event and Christmas lights switch on, the aim being to engage a wider range of residents whilst adding a festive element to the priority voting exercise. The festive Forum took place in November in Consett with free live music, dance, theatre and comedy related entertainment taking place throughout the day and a range of market stalls selling Christmas crafts and gifts. A free Santa's grotto was also provided which benefited 300 families who also got to meet Christmas Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Peppa Pig and Frosty Magic characters.

80. At the event, which was attended by between 350-400 residents, anyone aged 11 years or over could vote for their local priorities using coloured baubles which they were asked to hang off Christmas trees to create a festive display as a back drop for the event. Over 480 votes were cast on the day and these votes will be combined with the voting results from the second Christmas event taking place on 3 December down in Blackhill and Consett Park along with the results from the new on-line voting survey.
81. Similarly the **4 Together Partnership** held its Winter Warmer Forum event with excellent partner involvement and information stands. Early planning for next year will look at ways of combining our events with other existing community events for November/December 2015 to further increase participation.
82. The AAP has had successful project callouts for two out of its three priorities. After widespread publicity for both the employment and the older people's task groups the partnership has had Area Budget requests of £113,440 for the £70,000 available. The 4 Together AAP is oversubscribed with good project submissions and if priorities continue for another year this means the partnership has a strong starting point for project development in the new financial year.
83. The **3 Towns Partnership** has taken a different approach to the November forum and priority voting this year, choosing not to hold a traditional forum event instead joining in with an elected members funded project to deliver forum activities as part of the Crook Town Christmas event. The 3 Towns forum maximised the opportunity for a larger number of people from the area to take part in having their say on the priorities for the partnership for 2015/16.
84. A separate online survey was utilised on the 3 Towns Facebook page with 70 people participating. Young people aged 11 plus were asked to complete an electronic survey at Parkside Academy and Wolsingham school with 391 3 Towns' young people taking part. As a result 37 new young people indicated they were interested in becoming Youth Forum members and 15 Facebook participants would like to join the forum. 718 residents have taken part in total, the highest number to date.
85. This year **Teesdale Action Partnership (TAP)**, through a number of routes, have engaged with over 340 people in the decision making process for next year's priorities. People voted in a number of ways including, by post, electronically or by attending one of four events. The main Forum event was held in Barnard Castle and was supplemented by three mini forums in Cockfield, Middleton in Teesdale and Winston. These events were organised in response to concerns raised after last year's event regarding people being able to access a one off event on a Saturday in Barnard Castle. Young people were engaged in the priority vote via a session with Teesdale School. All of this information will be considered by the TAP Board before a final decision on the 2015/16 priorities are decided.
86. The Forum also gave organisations support by TAP funding in the past to get together to show what they were working on. Over 20 local community groups and support organisations attended the forum which was an opportunity for those involved to share ideas and get advice on support and funding.

87. **Weardale AAP's** forum event included twelve five minute presentations from participants who had worked with the AAP to support the Weardale community. The presentations varied from young people talking about what the apprenticeships meant to them, to Wheels to Meals project that reduced the factors that lead to social isolation. In the words of one resident: "I found the Forum inspirational this year. It was really refreshing to hear from real people and groups which had benefited from the approach – the sense of community was palpable and very uplifting. As someone who lives and works in Weardale (and the wider North Pennines), it was really good to see."
88. Other AAPs followed a more traditional approach to their forums. The **BASH AAP** held its November Forum event on 20 November 2014. As always it was a well-attended and well received event by the community. The forum event was an opportunity for the partnership to take a step back and consider some of its achievements over the last three years from the projects it has supported. Priorities for the BASH AAP have been fairly constant since the launch of the AAPs in 2009 with Employment, Children and Community Safety featuring every year. This has allowed the partnership to maintain and develop some major flag ship projects which have made a real impact against the priorities local people have identified.
89. The **Durham AAP** November Forum was hailed as a success by the Durham Times with one visitor remarking in her feedback: 'The thought and effort which had gone into making the event go with a swing came from various quarters, of course, including the table-top displays of the various applicants and their physical presence, some of them engaging very pro-actively and informatively, but what was immediately noticeable, from the moment of coming through the doors was the presence of AAP staff and other DCC input, all of you welcoming, helpful, and enthusiastic...as were others, such as various Durham AAP Board members, looking bright-eyed and involved!'
90. 500 attended on the day with almost 200 questionnaires filled in providing feedback on the latest proposals relating to the council's budget position; 460 people voted on the AAP priorities for 2015/16 with the results to be announced at January's Board meeting when the Board will set the priorities for the coming year. To add to the event money that was raised from selling refreshments was put towards their recent Macmillan Coffee morning to make a total of £775 raised by the team.
91. One the day 19 projects competed for a share of the £20K pot with ten being successful. The winners varied from local community groups wanting to put on singing lessons, providing employment skills to those with mental health issues, to purchasing disabled friendly equipment for bowlers. For those that were unsuccessful the AAP is now working with County Durham Community Foundation to find alternative funding.

### **Area Action Partnerships Update**

92. In addition to individual projects the AAPs are collectively involved in a number of different pieces of work. This covers a wide variety of project work as well as the broader support focused on attracting funding highlighted earlier in the report. Some further examples of their work are detailed below.
93. The Chester-le Street & District War Memorial Association have had ambitions to install a new more fitting war memorial in a public place within **Chester-le-Street**

since the inception of the AAPs. Over the course of the last two years they have been gradually fundraising towards their target needed to both purchase and install a new memorial in the Market Place within the town. Chester le Street and District AAP has been successful in working alongside them to achieve this helping them access section 106 funding as well as other funding (£68k in total) and also in helping with the practical issues of dealing with planning and in public consultation regarding the siting of the memorial. The association have often come through the AAP team for advice and guidance at each of the crucial stages of the memorial construction.

94. Having built this relationship it came as no surprise that the AAP was asked to help co-ordinate the first ever outdoor remembrance parade in the town around the newly built War Memorial. Given the short-notice the AAP had to start from a low base in terms of information and detail of how this is to undertaken. Taking a methodical approach and working with church and service representatives the AAP managed to help achieve a very successful outdoor service to appropriately mark remembrance particularly given the Centenary of World War I. This was the largest public remembrance service delivered in Chester-le-Street with approximately two thousand public in attendance alongside the many civic and service representatives. This is likely to be a collaboration for the future, as the War Memorial Commemoration Event which we are assisting with is currently in the planning stages, to be held in May 2015. A review of the parade is scheduled before the new year to help build upon this success.
95. The Salvation Army- Hunger, Heat and Hope project in the **3Towns AAP** area supports the food bank to provided gas and electricity top ups and food to those In Need. This enables people to cook hot meals with the food provided by the food bank. One of the biggest issues during cold weather is choosing between heating, eating and finding money to cook food. Food bank usage has increased over the last couple of years; October 2013 – September 2014 – The Foodbank provided food for 967 Adults and 424 Children. The majority of the people are coming from benefit delays rather than sanctioning. Some of the stories are about debt piling up until no money remains apart from paying debt repayments. A proportion of people using the foodbank have no life skills so cannot budget or cook from fresh, these are encouraged to take part in the Victory Programme set up to directly help those in this situation.
96. The **Weardale AAP** team, alongside local YMCA staff, have developed a “meals outreach service”, the idea developed from a luncheon club losing its current supplier, working alongside the group we identified prospective supply methods, identifying what would be the “best fit” for the group. The local YMCA with fully fitted kitchens and staff where approached to see if they could met the needs of the luncheon club, this relationship has now forged a bond with the two voluntary groups who work to each other’s mutual benefit.

## Summary

97. The CDP has been involved in a range of diverse activity since the last update report to Cabinet in September 2014. The launch of the SCS refocuses the vision and priorities of the Partnership with a range of plans underpinning this also refreshed.

98. It has held a range of events engaging and consulting with local people and celebrating contributions made by a range of individuals and groups across the county as well as bring nearly 200 people together at the whole partnership event in November. Other ambitions achieved are the community buildings programme and the attraction of funding to support the delivery of the Durham Ask which continues to receive expressions of interest.

### **Recommendations and reasons**

99. It is recommended that Cabinet note the report.

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**Contact: Clare Marshall, Principal Partnerships and Local Councils Officer**  
**Tel: 03000 263591**

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## Appendix 1: Implications

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**Finance** - Area and Neighbourhood budgets are utilised and delivered through the 14 AAPs and ensure the Council (and AAPs) receive improved information on the outputs achieved through use of locality budgets.

**Staffing** - None

**Risk** - None

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty** - The actions set out in this report aim to ensure equality and diversity issues are embedded within the working practice of AAPs.

**Accommodation** - None

**Crime and Disorder** - Altogether safer is the responsibility of the Safe Durham Partnership.

**Human Rights** - None

**Consultation** - The County Durham Partnership framework is a key community engagement and consultation function of the Council and its partners. The recommendations in the report are based on extensive consultation with AAP partners and the establishment of a Sound Board to progress the recommendations and will continue this consultative approach.

**Procurement** - None

**Disability Issues** - None

**Legal Implications** – None

## Appendix two

### Partnership Events 2015

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event Title</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
14 January 2015	Voluntary Sector Stakeholder Forum	Office of the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner	<a href="mailto:enquiries@durham-pcc.gov.uk">enquiries@durham-pcc.gov.uk</a> 03000 264631 quoting VCS Forum
6 February 2015	Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy Consultation event	Public Health, Durham County Council	Dawnn Roe <a href="mailto:dawnn.roe@durham.gov.uk">dawnn.roe@durham.gov.uk</a>



## Cabinet

14 January 2015

## Annual Report of the Director of Public Health




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**Report of Corporate Management Team**
**Report of Anna Lynch, Director of Public Health, County Durham**
**Councillor Lucy Hovvels, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Safer and Healthier Communities**


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**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report asks Cabinet to receive the 2014 annual report of the Director of Public Health for County Durham.

**Background**

2. Under the Health & Social Care Act 2012, one of the statutory requirements of each Director of Public Health is to produce an annual report about the health of the local population. The relevant local authority has a duty to publish the report. The government has not specified what the annual report might contain and has made it clear that this is a decision for individual Directors of Public Health to determine.
3. It is important to note that most data and information on the health status of the communities in County Durham is detailed in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment available on the Council's website. Further information on public health programmes can also be found in the public health business plan and the joint health & wellbeing strategy. Detailed information on health protection issues for County Durham residents is contained in a Public Health England report – *Protecting the population of the North East from communicable diseases and other hazards – Annual Report 2012/13*. This is available on request.
4. The 2014 annual report focuses on tackling social isolation and the action that needs to be taken by a range of organisations to reduce the impact on the health and wellbeing of communities. Social isolation has been identified in the joint health and wellbeing strategy as an issue raised by communities during the consultation period. The Better Care Fund programme includes a social isolation workstream that focuses on community action that support cohesion and connectedness which facilitates greater resilience and independence. This report attempts to develop an understanding of the issues and ways it can be addressed. The key messages from the report are detailed in Appendix 2.
5. The annual report will be uploaded onto the council website and hard copies provided to a range of organisations and individuals including the County Durham clinical commissioning groups, NHS England, third sector organisations, foundation trusts, Public Health England, North of England Commissioning service etc. In addition, copies will be made available to the members library, to individual members (where requested), Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny Committees and officers.

## Recommendations

6. Cabinet is requested to:
  - a. Receive the 2014 annual report of the Director of Public Health, County Durham and note the key messages and recommendations,
  - b. Note that the report is used to inform commissioning plans, service developments and assessment of need to support a range of funding bids, particularly by third sector organisations

## Background Papers

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**Contact: Anna Lynch, Director of Public Health, County Durham**

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**Tel: 03000 268146**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Finance**

The publication of the report is funded by the ring fenced public health grant.

### **Staffing**

No impact

### **Risk**

No impact

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

No impact

### **Accommodation**

No impact

### **Crime and Disorder**

No impact

### **Human Rights**

No impact

### **Consultation**

This is the independent report of the Director of Public Health and is not subject to consultation

### **Procurement**

No impact but should inform council commissioning plans in relation to services that impact on the health of the population

### **Disability Issues**

No impact

### **Legal Implications**

No impact

## Appendix 2

### KEY MESSAGES

- Social isolation and/or loneliness is a significant and growing public health challenge for County Durham's population. It is associated with poor physical, mental and emotional health including increased rates of cardio-vascular disease, hypertension, cognitive decline and dementia.
- Anyone along the lifecourse can suffer from social isolation, not just older people. It can affect anyone at any point in their lives, though some individuals are at higher risk.
- People with stronger social networks are more likely to be healthier and happier. Those with weaker social networks can become isolated, and as a result, more likely to experience poor physical and mental health and require support and intervention from the local health and care services.
- Earlier interventions could help prevent some of the negative effects of social isolation from accumulating further and impacting on health and wellbeing as people get older.
- Social isolation is an issue that requires all organisations, communities and individuals to become involved and to recognise that all have a key role to play.
- The causes of social isolation are complex and varied. As well as supporting individuals who are, or who are potentially at risk of social isolation, partner organisations must continue to tackle the underlying causes such as stigma and discrimination, education, poverty, skills and employment etc.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Partner organisations should identify those who are, or who are at potential risk of becoming socially isolated. There is a role for communities and individuals to support isolated people at a local level, and to build resilience and social capital in their communities.
- Organisations should support the building of local connectedness in communities, working across partnerships in order to protect those most at risk of social isolation.
- Organisations, including the voluntary and community sector and Action Area Partnerships (AAPs) should work towards creating an environment where people can connect with their neighbours, communities or people of the same interest.
- Front-line professionals should consider the impact of social isolation on their patients/clients and signpost or support them to sources of help.
- Relevant strategies should identify actions to tackle social isolation wherever appropriate.
- Service developments, new commissions and contract specifications should consider the impact of social isolation on client / patient groups.
- Appropriate training and policies should be in place to support volunteers in County Durham communities.
- Partners should continue to focus on 'upstream' approaches that tackle the underlying causes of social isolation.





***“Individuals who are socially isolated are between two and five times more likely than those who have strong social ties to die prematurely.”***

**Marmot M (2010), Fair Society, Healthy Lives.  
The Marmot Review.**

## Introduction

This year my Director of Public Health annual report is different to previous versions as I have decided to focus on a single issue that impacts on health and wellbeing: social isolation. I hope this report has a wide readership, particularly from local community organisations and front line practitioners working regularly with local people and that it stimulates thought about how we can tackle the issue of social isolation at all levels.

The multi faceted nature of social isolation presents us with a complex challenge. Although acknowledging that social isolation affects many people living in County Durham and has a significant negative effect upon health and wellbeing, this report concentrates on two specific groups - children and young people and the elderly. We hear a lot about social isolation but what does it mean? Who is at risk? What are we doing about it? How does it impact on health and wellbeing? Hopefully some of the answers are in this report and by drawing attention to the scale of the issue, action will follow.

Although academics now identify and define social isolation and loneliness as separate issues, this report is treating them as interchangeable as the root causes and the methods we can use to tackle them are largely the same. Put simply, isolation refers to the involuntary, complete or near complete lack of contact with people and society. It includes many people with different characteristics and it impacts on an individual's quality of life and their wellbeing.

The Marmot Review 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' (2010) makes the case for tackling social isolation by noting that "individuals who are socially isolated are between two and five times more likely than those who have strong social ties to die prematurely". The report also makes it clear that health inequalities result from social inequalities and that action is needed across all the social determinants of health (e.g., poverty, housing, employment and education) taking a 'lifecourse' approach. These social determinants of health have been described as 'the causes of the causes of health inequalities'. They are the 'conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age' and are also contributory factors to social isolation.

Much is already being done to address social isolation in County Durham by a wide range of individuals and organisations. The Health and Wellbeing Board recognises the value of communities working together to reduce isolation and increase resilience and the benefits that a well connected society can bring. Social isolation has been identified as a priority in the [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) and through the Community Wellbeing Partnership (see Appendix 2) and the Wellbeing for Life programme, initiatives are being undertaken in partnership with communities to address isolation.



We are working with communities to undertake asset mapping, improving links to local health services, promoting the role of voluntary and community services and working with them to help create an environment where people can connect with their neighbours, communities or people of the same interest. Social isolation is also one of the seven work streams of County Durham's Better Care Fund programme (Appendix 3), recognising that this impacts on the health and wellbeing of our residences.

However, no one organisation can tackle social isolation. It is everyone's business and we must look at how we can work collectively to tackle this issue. Increasingly, we are seeing that communities and individuals are taking greater responsibility in supporting local people across a range of issues, including social isolation and this report aims to build on this approach and encourage wider awareness and involvement. This is about co-production, about less reliance on formal intervention and about working together irrespective of which organisation or community is involved. Together we can, and must, do more - as our population ages social isolation is likely to become a bigger issue.

I want to bring to the reader's attention that this report may appear to be focused on the consequences of social isolation rather than tackling the causes. Much work is taking place to address the social, political and economic dimensions that impact people's lives and can lead to social isolation. This includes approaches to reducing poverty, tackling stigma and discrimination and supporting groups who feel isolated and outside the 'mainstream' of society.

For those readers who like to explore data sets and detail, I refer you to the [County Durham joint strategic needs assessment](#), a comprehensive collection about the health and care needs of County Durham residents.

I hope this report stimulates thought and discussion and is a call to action - we must work more collaboratively to support those in our community who are at risk of, or already suffering from, social isolation. I look forward to hearing both the progress of current initiatives and new developments underway over the next year.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Lynch". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Director of Public Health, County Durham**

***“Loneliness is the poverty of self;  
solitude is the richness of self.”***

**May Sarton**

***“Loneliness - the pain of being alone  
Solitude - the glory of being alone”***

**Paul Johannes Tillich**

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## Key messages

- **Social isolation and/or loneliness is a significant and growing public health challenge for County Durham's population. It is associated with poor physical, mental and emotional health including increased rates of cardio-vascular disease, hypertension, cognitive decline and dementia.**
- **Anyone along the lifecourse can suffer from social isolation, not just older people. It can affect anyone at any point in their lives, though some individuals are at higher risk.**
- **People with stronger social networks are more likely to be healthier and happier. Those with weaker social networks can become isolated, and as a result, more likely to experience poor physical and mental health and require support and intervention from the local health and care services.**
- **Earlier interventions could help prevent some of the negative effects of social isolation from accumulating further and impacting on health and wellbeing as people get older.**
- **Social isolation is an issue that requires all organisations, communities and individuals to become involved and to recognise that all have a key role to play.**
- **The causes of social isolation are complex and varied. As well as supporting individuals who are, or who are potentially at risk of social isolation, partner organisations must continue to tackle the underlying causes such as stigma and discrimination, education, poverty, skills and employment etc.**



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## Recommendations

- **Partner organisations should identify those who are, or who are at potential risk of becoming socially isolated. There is a role for communities and individuals to support isolated people at a local level, and to build resilience and social capital in their communities.**
- **Organisations should support the building of local connectedness in communities, working across partnerships in order to protect those most at risk of social isolation.**
- **Organisations, including the voluntary and community sector and Action Area Partnerships (AAPs) should work towards creating an environment where people can connect with their neighbours, communities or people of the same interest.**
- **Front-line professionals should consider the impact of social isolation on their patients/clients and signpost or support them to sources of help.**
- **Relevant strategies should identify actions to tackle social isolation wherever appropriate.**
- **Service developments, new commissions and contract specifications should consider the impact of social isolation on client / patient groups.**
- **Appropriate training and policies should be in place to support volunteers in County Durham communities.**
- **Partners should continue to focus on ‘upstream’ approaches that tackle the underlying causes of social isolation.**



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## What is the issue?

Social isolation has become increasingly recognised as a significant and growing public health issue facing communities today. It has a negative impact on individual health and wellbeing, it is costly to local health and care services and it can increase the chances of premature death.

The links between isolation and loneliness and poor physical and mental health are strong. Effects can include depression, decreased immunity and longer recovery from illness, poor nutrition, increased anxiety, fatigue, social stigma and ultimately increased morbidity and (premature) mortality. Recent studies suggest isolation:

- Has a more negative effect on wellbeing than physical inactivity, obesity or smoking 15 cigarettes a day<sup>1</sup>,
- Can increase an older person's chances of premature death by 14%<sup>2</sup>,
- Increases the likelihood of admission into residential or nursing care<sup>2</sup>, and
- Increases morbidity, depression and suicide as well as health service use<sup>3</sup>.

In 1995 research suggested a 'substantial body of evidence that indicates that the extent to which social relationships are strong and supportive is related to the health of individuals who live within such social contexts'<sup>4</sup>. 'The Solid Facts'<sup>5</sup> referred to the harm caused by social isolation and how this might be overcome by improving social connectedness. It suggested that 'friendship, good social relations and strong supportive networks' were key in order to 'improve health at home, at work and in the community'.

People with stronger social networks are more likely to be healthier and happier; those with weaker social networks can become isolated and, as a result, more likely to experience poor physical and mental health and increase the demand on local health and social care systems.

## What is the challenge?

Taking action to reduce social isolation and loneliness in our communities can reduce the impact and cost on local health and care services, whilst improving the health and wellbeing of our population.

The Office for National Statistics recently suggested that Britain is the 'loneliness capital of Europe'<sup>6</sup>, finding that residents are less likely to have strong friendships or know neighbours than inhabitants of any other country in Europe. It is these strong friendships or social networks/connections that make people happier, healthier and more resilient. Those with weaker social networks can become isolated and, as a result, are more likely to experience those negative effects on health and wellbeing highlighted above.

This is where local action can make a difference and everyone has a role to play. Today's economic climate, where resource is scarcer than ever, requires cost effective solutions aimed at reducing demand on local services.



Interventions aimed at reducing isolation through harnessing community based networks are highly effective, and at the same time continued action to address the causes of the causes of health inequalities is needed.

The evidence is very clear that communities with high levels of social capital have better outcomes in health and can enjoy greater levels of social cohesion. For these reasons (among others), reducing social isolation needs to be a key priority for a range of organisations. The challenges are therefore:

- To identify those who are, or who are at risk of, becoming isolated or lonely and may often be hidden in plain sight,
- To give appropriate support that helps to build and improve social connections in communities, working across partnerships, in order to protect those most at risk of isolation and loneliness,
- To create an environment through co-production where people can connect with their neighbours, communities or people of the same interest, and
- To create a fairer environment where stigma and discrimination are challenged.

Only through engaging local communities in co-producing local solutions can the issues relating to social isolation be addressed. Work in partnership with community groups, local faith groups, the voluntary and private sectors is needed to build community cohesion and to offer the personal and integrated approach that supports those suffering from social isolation.

‘Healthy lives, healthy people: the strategy for public health in England’ sets out a range of local approaches to improve physical and mental health, recognising the community and environment in which people live can also strongly influence both population and individual mental health and wellbeing. Approaches of particular importance include:

- Reducing isolation, providing support during times of difficulty and increasing social networks and opportunities for community engagement,
- Providing good access to continued learning,
- Improving support for informal carers,
- Developing warm homes initiatives, and
- Promoting physical activity and physical health.

There are numerous examples of initiatives and programmes in County Durham that build and improve social connections in communities. These work across partnerships to support those most at risk of isolation and loneliness and it is impossible to capture them all in this report. Some offer one to one support, some group support and others offer support that is broader and across a community of either interest or geography. The value of this work should not be underestimated and there is a growing evidence base that demonstrates the effectiveness of a range of interventions. For example, a study referenced by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) in 2011 estimated that a befriending scheme costing £80 per person resulted in savings of £300 per person per year<sup>7, 8</sup>.

## Who is at risk?

Anybody can be affected by social isolation or loneliness. It can 'affect any person, living in any community'<sup>9</sup>. Older people are particularly vulnerable due to factors such as bereavement, reduced mobility, sensory impairment or limited income. The Campaign to End Loneliness suggests that over 700,000 people aged over 65 in the UK report that they are lonely<sup>10</sup>. Of course, as this elderly population grows then so does the number at risk of social isolation. Estimates suggest that 20% of the older population is mildly lonely and a further 11% are intensely lonely<sup>11</sup>.

**For County Durham this would mean around 19,000 people aged 65+ being lonely, with over 10,000 experiencing intense loneliness.**

However, other groups in the population are at risk including:

- New, young or lone parents,
- Carers (both young and old),
- People experiencing domestic abuse,
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender,
- Long term unemployed,
- People with autism or a learning disability,
- Those with a physical disability or long term condition,
- Black minority ethnic and recent migrant communities,
- Those experiencing poverty and deprivation,
- The young,
- The homeless, and
- Those with substance misuse problems.

Public Health England estimates that 7% of the 18-64 population is socially isolated<sup>12</sup>.

**For County Durham this would mean around 22,000 people aged 18-64 being socially isolated.**

This report explores the issue in relation to children and young people and older people whilst recognising that social isolation also impacts on the wider population and specifically those groups mentioned above.

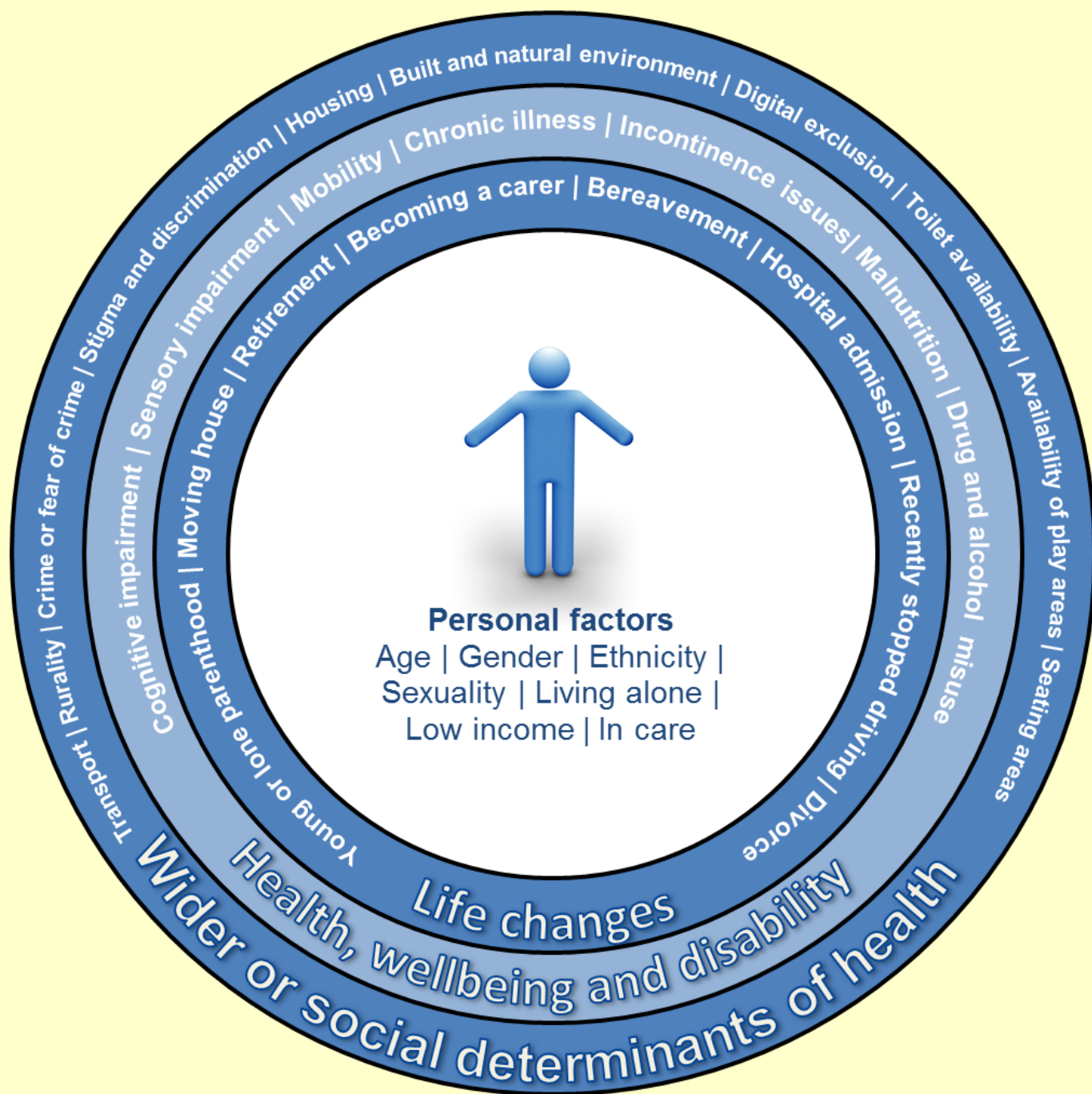
Risk factors for isolation and loneliness can be categorised into four distinct areas:

- Personal factors
- Life changes
- Health, wellbeing and disability
- Wider or social determinants of health

Individual risk factors within these four areas are shown in Figure 1 overleaf.

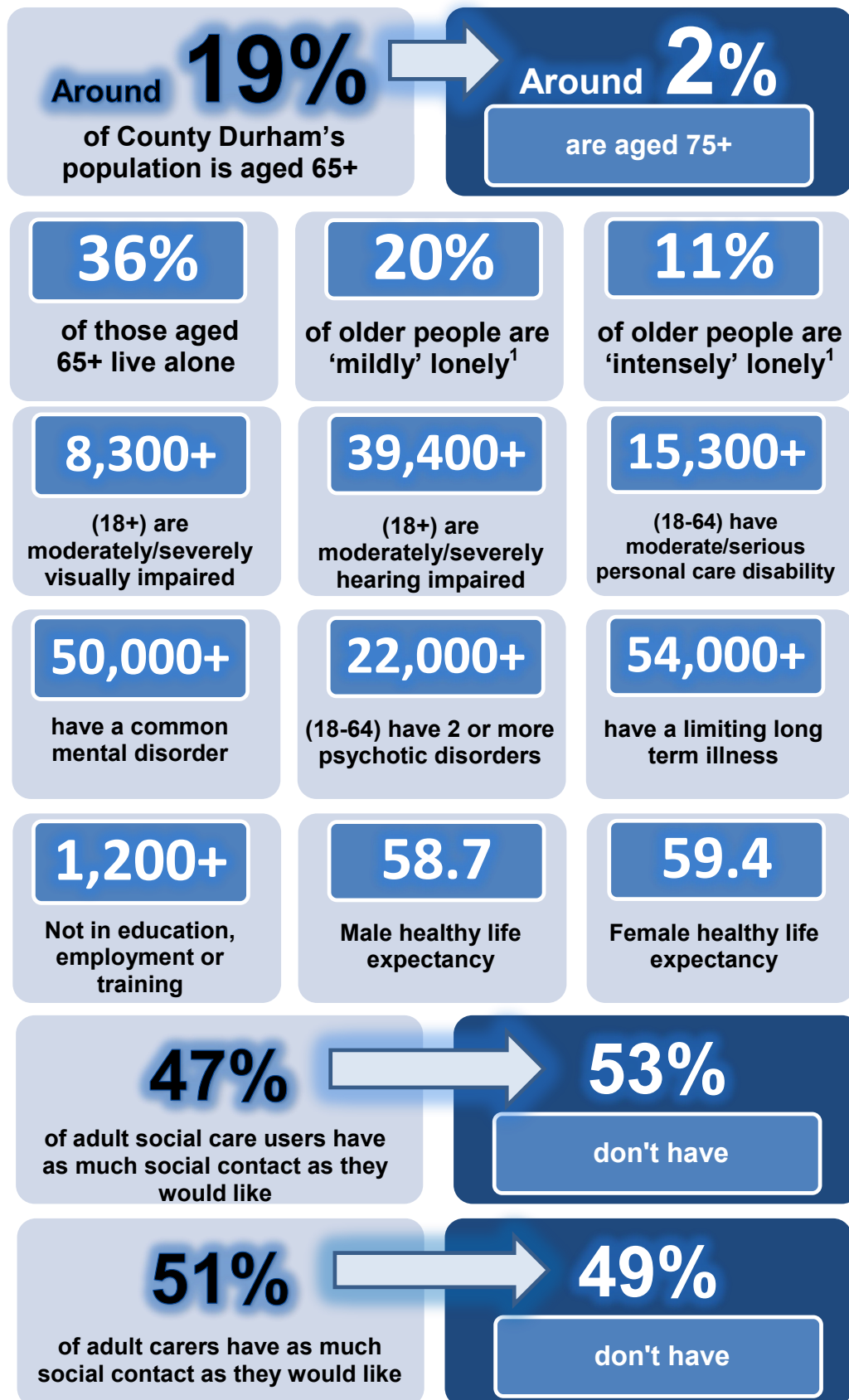


Figure 1: Individual risk factors by category (all ages)



## General factors linked to social isolation and loneliness

The information below, drawn from a wide variety of sources and estimates, is intended to provide an overview of the possible scale of those potentially at risk of social isolation in County Durham.



## General factors linked to social isolation and loneliness

The information below, drawn from a wide variety of sources and estimates, is intended to provide an overview of the possible scale of those potentially at risk of social isolation in County Durham.



\* Learning disability

## Definitions

Social isolation and loneliness aren't the same thing, but are used interchangeably. People can feel lonely without being isolated and isolated without being lonely. Whilst there is a strong and complex relationship between social isolation and loneliness, one does not necessarily follow the other, although many of the risks or triggers are shared and there is a large overlap between the two<sup>13</sup>.

Although the links between isolation and loneliness and poor physical and mental health are strong, only social isolation (and not loneliness) has been shown to be associated with increased mortality<sup>14</sup>.

### Social isolation

An objective experience and relates to the lack of, or frequency of social contacts, interactions or social support structures, or the lack of input into wider community activities.

Social isolation is commonly an involuntary state and is often brought about by marginalisation, deteriorating mental capacity or discrimination. It is a precursor to loneliness, but can also be a consequence of it. It can manifest over short or prolonged periods of time linked to a risk factor (disease, event or behaviour).

### Loneliness

A subjective experience which relates to the evaluation of the quality of social contacts an individual has. It is possible to be lonely in a room full of people if there is nothing to connect them.

Loneliness can be further split into two categories. Emotional loneliness relates to the absence of a 'significant other' such as a partner or close friend and social loneliness, which relates to the lack of social networks, work colleagues, neighbours or a wider group of friends.

### Stigma and discrimination

Discrimination can leave people feeling isolated, affecting daily life, health and wellbeing. Its causes are societal and individual prejudice against people viewed as being different (e.g., not white, able-bodied, heterosexual and male). This results in the range of oppressive attitudes such as homophobia, ageism, racism, sexism and disableism that pervade our society; having a negative impact on community and individual health and wellbeing. This is not only felt by those stigmatised individuals but also diminishes the people and organisations that knowingly or unwittingly promote and support such prejudices.

The effect of this upon daily life and mental wellbeing is likely to be profound, not only impacting on mental health and self-worth but also preventing individuals seeking help.

## Definitions

The Marmot Review 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' (2010), championed a social determinants approach to reducing health inequalities, with clear links to participatory decision making, community engagement, social connectedness and building social capital. Social capital and social connectedness are closely linked, strong social connectedness creates strong social capital.

### Social connectedness

Refers to the relationships people have with others and the benefits these relationships can bring to the individual as well as to society. It is a measure of how people come together and interact socially and is the opposite of social isolation.

Individual connectedness may refer to the number of social contacts or support structures an individual has. In terms of community, it may refer to the sense of community and social cohesion.

### Social capital

Refers to the 'degree of social cohesion within communities' (NICE) and 'social connections and all the benefits they generate' (ONS). The benefits for people having these social connections can occur either at an individual level (e.g. family support) or at a wider collective level (e.g., volunteering). It is also associated with values such as tolerance, solidarity or trust which are beneficial to society and are important for people to be able to co-operate.

### Resilience

Refers to the ability of people, places and communities to cope with life's stresses and challenges and to adapt to adversity. Levels of resilience can change over the lifecourse and are closely linked to connectedness. Resilient people, places and communities have robust social networks.

### Five ways to wellbeing

The five ways to wellbeing is a set of evidence-based public mental health messages aimed at improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole population. Developed by NEF (the new economics foundation) as the result of a commission by Foresight, the UK government's futures think-tank, (part of the Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing). More detail on the five ways can be seen later in this report.





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**Quotes from County Durham residents  
who are participants in local programmes.**

*“...because of Cree I now have friends to socialise and spend recreational time with, .... for the first time in months I feel I have a purpose in life ...and feel less isolated.”*

*“Thank you all so much, I wouldn't have got through without you.”*

*“...the Get Active programme is a great way to overcome a lot of physical or mobility problems and make new friends while doing it.”*

*“Without the Wellness on Wheels Truck ...generating local interest and enthusiasm, this walking group would never have got off the ground and our lives would have been less rich as a result.”*

*“...Come Eat Together has helped me to eat healthily, get away from everyday problems, and socialise.”*

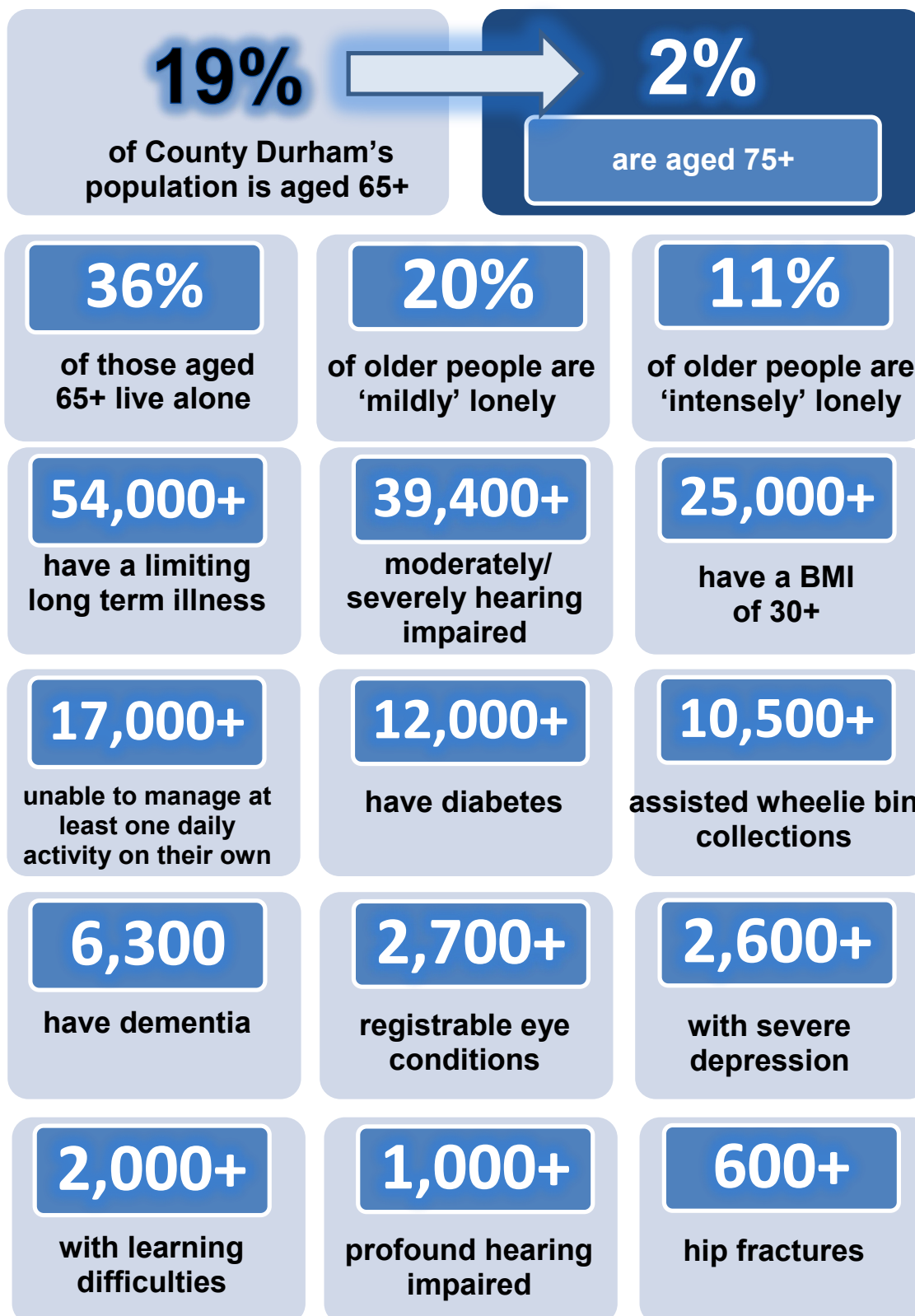
*“...there's a lovely atmosphere and I've made new friends. The project has made all the difference to me, getting me out of the house.”*

*“Coming to the session, getting out of the flat, meeting people, mixing socially...moving around the flat, couldn't even do that before!!”*

# Older people

## Key figures for older people

The information below, drawn from a wide variety of sources and estimates, is intended to provide an overview of the possible scale of those potentially at risk of social isolation in County Durham.





## Older people

### What is the issue?

Loneliness and isolation are significant issues for older people. Whilst anyone can be lonely or socially isolated, older people are particularly vulnerable. Certain risk factors that increase the risk of social isolation are more numerous in the older population. These include bereavement, generally poorer health and mobility, sensory impairment, absent family members, reduced income, a small social network, inadequate social support, ageism, potentially unsafe or inaccessible neighbourhood or community (built environment) and a reduction in the ability to travel which is particularly relevant in rural areas.

Preventing isolation for older people is essential in order to enable them to maintain their independence. Older people suffering from isolation are more likely to have increased need for long term care, visit their GP more often, have higher use of medication and a higher incidence of falls<sup>15</sup>. They are more likely to experience earlier entry into residential or nursing care<sup>16</sup> and use A&E services independent of chronic illness<sup>17</sup>.

The Social Care Institute for Excellence reported in 2012 that an 'increasingly ageing population makes the issue of acute loneliness and social isolation...one of the biggest challenges facing our society'<sup>18</sup>. As the older population increases, so does the number of older people at risk of isolation and loneliness, as in turn does the demand on local health and care services. The impact of loneliness and social isolation on older people can:

- Increase the pressure on a wide range of council and health services,
- Be responsible for a significant number of GP attendances, and
- Be a tipping point for referral to adult social care

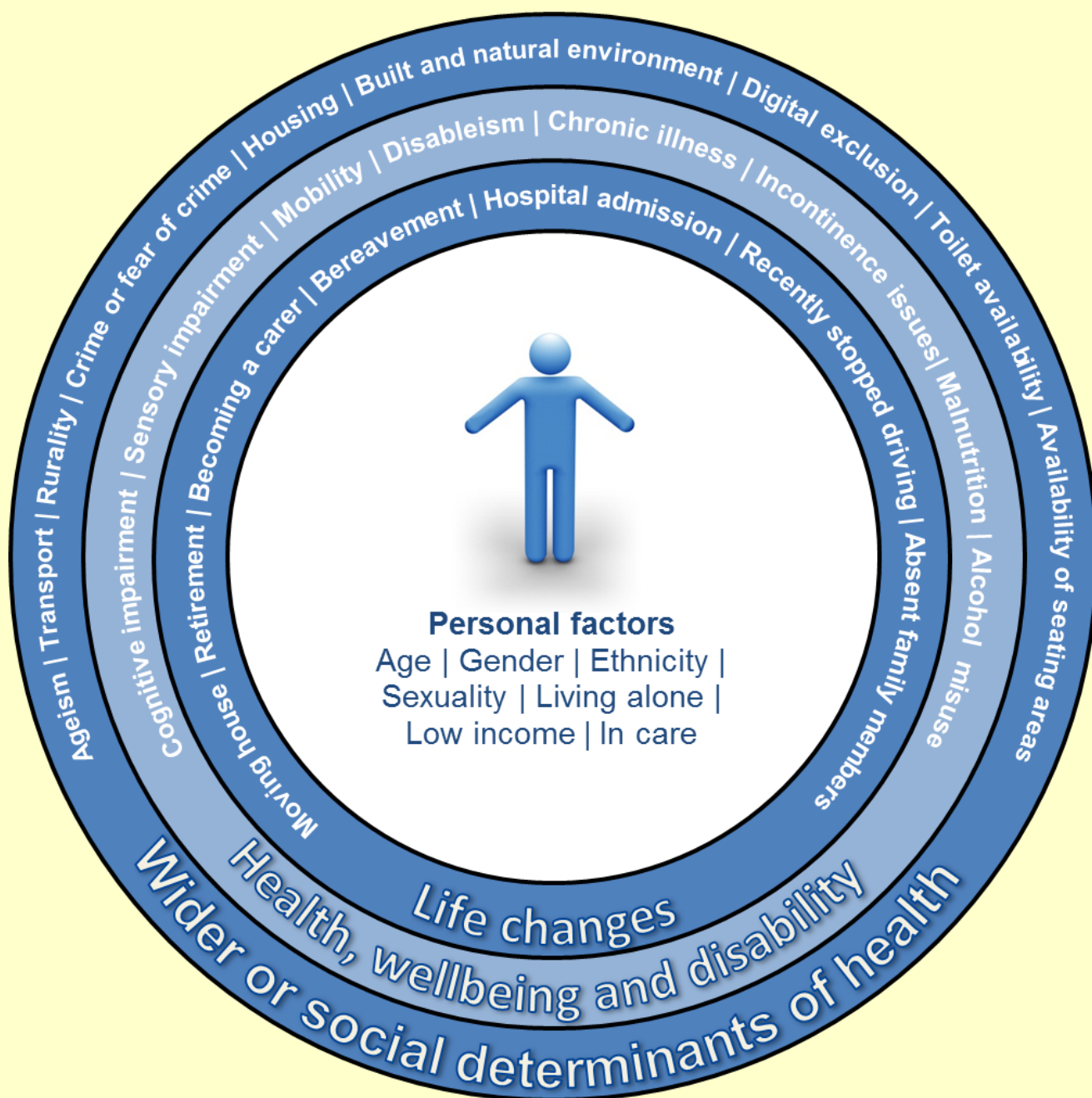
The negative impact of isolation and loneliness upon individual health and wellbeing is well documented elsewhere in this report. The importance of tackling social isolation and loneliness, particularly among older people cannot be underestimated.

Age UK recently estimated that 37% of older people in the UK say that the television is their main source of company<sup>19</sup>. Applying this to the population of County Durham would suggest that almost 36,000 older people have television as their main source of company. Estimates suggest that between five and 16% of those aged over 65 report loneliness and 12 per cent feel isolated<sup>20</sup>. These figures are likely to increase as the number of people aged more than 80 is expected to treble in the next 20 years while those over 90 will double. This, combined with increasing family dispersal, indicates that the issue of loneliness and social isolation in old age is likely to escalate.

Vulnerable or 'at risk' older people are those who have low resilience (at individual, family, or community level). Risk factors for isolation and loneliness specific to older people can be categorised into four distinct areas (figure 2 overleaf) but can also include those with physical disabilities, learning difficulties or poor mental health.

## Who is at risk and why?

Figure 2: Individual risk factors specific to older people, by category



### Those aged 65+ living alone

POPPI (Projecting Older Peoples Population Information System) estimates around 19% of County Durham's population is aged 65 or over and 36% of these live alone (2014).

### Those with limiting long term illness or sensory impairment

Older people with a limiting health condition, the onset of a disability or impairment are particularly vulnerable to loneliness. Declining physical mobility can impede the ability to get out and about and therefore interact socially. Similarly, increasing sensory impairment can affect the ability to communicate which can have an isolating impact. Illness, disease or impairment, combined with disability in later life has a significant impact on social engagement.

### **Black and minority ethnic (BME) including Gypsy, Roma Travellers (GRT)**

BME populations may experience disproportionately high levels of deprivation, coupled with insufficient services and facilities to support them and may face negative attitudes. In some cases English may not be the first language. Evidence suggests that older BME groups face more barriers to service access, alongside overcoming stereotype assumptions and the challenge of mainstream services<sup>21</sup> not tailored to their specific needs.

### **Those with a continence issue**

Continence issues can have a profound impact on the quality of life for older people and can lead them to withdraw from social contact in an effort to manage their incontinence (Help the Aged, 2007). Lack of public awareness of incontinence and a lack of access to toilet facilities can leave some older people feeling isolated as they choose to stay at home rather than going out into their communities to meet friends and family. Ironically this may also limit their ability to access the services and community support networks designed to help them.

### **Transport**

Poor transport can contribute significantly to isolation, particularly in rural areas. In older age driving skills and income levels decline, resulting in accessible transport being identified as a risk factor for social isolation. For those with mobility problems, a physical disability or with poor mental health use of public transport may prove problematic. Poor transport links may also restrict access to ongoing education, training, employment and to shops and amenities. Transport, it can be argued, is one of the single biggest barriers to tackling social isolation.

### **Housing, planning and the wider built environment**

The environment in which people live can have a significant impact upon their health and wellbeing. It can both enhance community involvement or increase isolation. Good amenities, such as seating, lighting and open spaces can encourage use by the public and increase feelings of safety and security.

### **Fear and perception of crime**

Fear of crime and the perception of rising levels of crime can have a significant effect on mental health and wellbeing, particularly for older people. Local data<sup>22</sup> for County Durham shows the following percentage of residents perceiving the following to be a problem:

- 69% - speeding vehicles,
- 47% - underage drinking and sale of alcohol to youths,
- 40% - drug dealing and misuse,
- 40% - burglary, including sheds, farm buildings etc.,
- 41% - groups of people hanging around in public spaces, causing a nuisance,
- 38% - drinking and causing nuisance in public spaces.

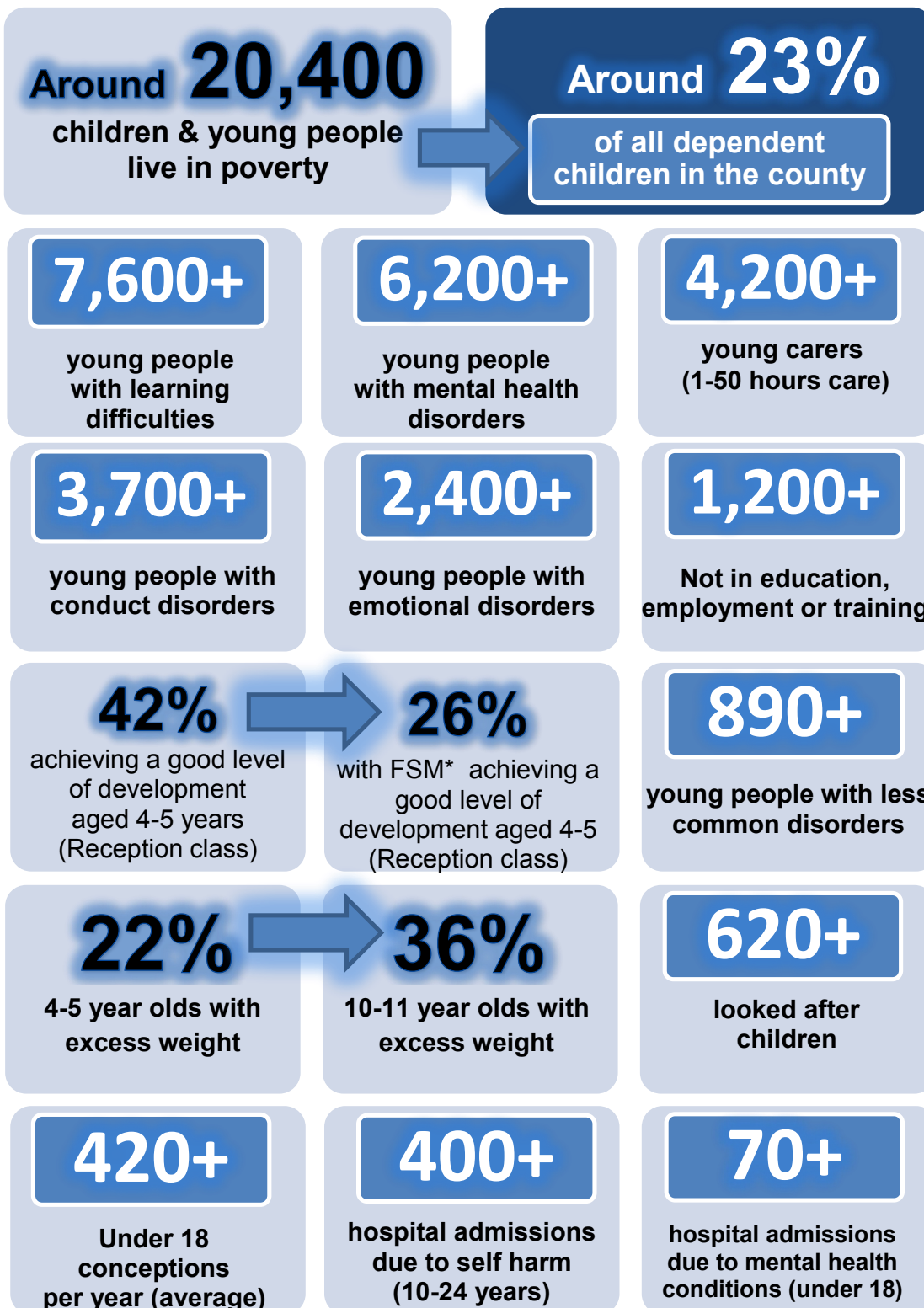
### **Older Men**

A recent report by Independent Age<sup>23</sup> identifies that older men experience greater levels of social isolation than older women and that the interventions to address the issue need to be tailored and innovative in their reach. In their words, they need to be 'blokey' and need to reach places 'where they hide'.

# Children and young people

## Key figures for children and young people

The information below, drawn from a wide variety of sources and estimates, is intended to provide an overview of the possible scale of those potentially at risk of social isolation in County Durham.



\* Free School Meals

## What is the issue?

Although social isolation is most common in the elderly, it is not limited to that age-group and children and young people may also be affected. Emotional and social wellbeing creates the foundations for healthy behaviours, educational achievement, helps prevent emotional and behavioural problems, violence and crime, teenage pregnancy and the misuse of drugs and alcohol.

Marmot<sup>16</sup> reinforced the need for a life course approach to tackling inequalities, arguing that support should be in place prior to birth and followed through the lifecourse in order to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people across the social gradient thus giving children the best possible start in life. Evidence shows that children who suffer social isolation and loneliness may have cognitive and social impairments as adults, with the effects accumulating throughout the lifecourse.

A Mental Health Foundation survey<sup>25</sup> found loneliness to be a greater problem for younger people than the elderly. Almost 60% aged 18 and 34 spoke of feeling lonely often or sometimes, compared with 35% of those aged over 55. Eighteen to 34 year olds surveyed were also more likely to worry about feeling alone and to feel depressed due to loneliness than the over 55s.

Some children and young people have both emotional and behavioural conditions and poor mental and physical wellbeing. Durham County Council's Public Mental Health Strategy (2013) reports that children and young people with emotional disorders are:

- Almost five times more likely to report self-harm or suicide attempts,
- Four and half times more likely to rate themselves or be rated by their parents as having 'fair/bad health', and
- Over four times more likely to have long periods absent from school.

Durham County Council's Children and Young People's Survey (2014) reports that:

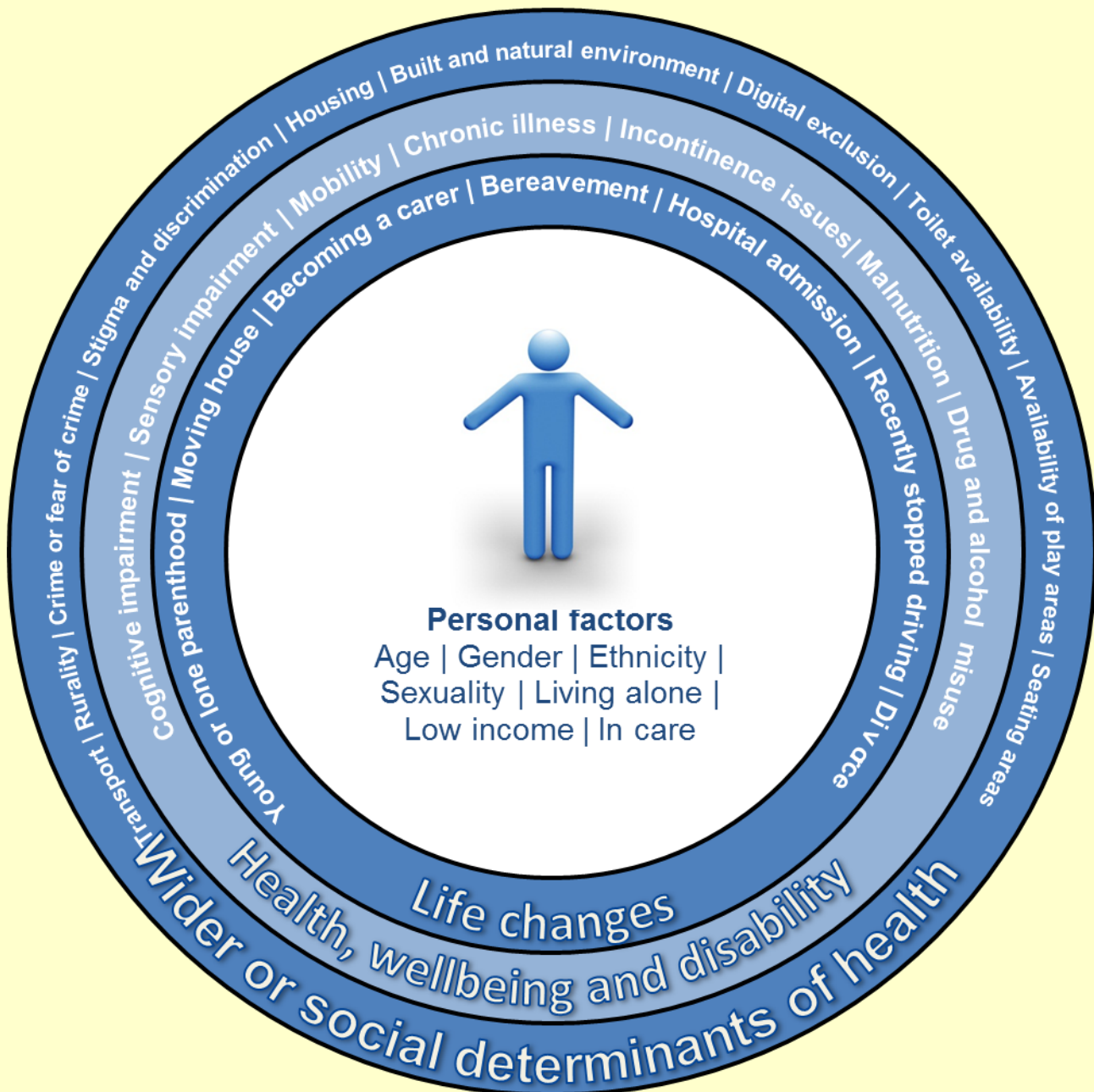
- Girls are more likely to feel lonely than boys,
- 20% of primary school children report they feel lonely,
- 25% of primary school children report they feel awkward or out of place,
- 27% of secondary school report they feel lonely.

## Who is at risk and why?

Vulnerable or 'at risk' young people are those who have low resilience (at individual, family, or community level). Risk factors for isolation and loneliness specific to children and young people can be categorised into four distinct areas (figure 3 overleaf) but can also include communities such as BME, lesbian, gay, transsexual and transgender (LGBT) .



Figure 3: Individual risk factors specific to children and young people, by category



**Young people living in poverty**

Over 20,000 young people in County Durham are classified as income deprived (23%). The relationship between poverty and social isolation can be described as cyclical as each is driven by, and drives, the other.

**Young mothers**

Young mothers may find it difficult to adjust to becoming a parent, particularly if they live alone or have no, or poor, support networks. Related factors can include a higher risk of living in poverty, worklessness, lower uptake of education, training or employment opportunities and post-natal depression.

**Looked after children and care leavers**

Young people in or leaving care are more likely to experience difficulties regarding social integration if established support networks are not in place. They are more likely to have faced multiple disadvantages such as poverty, poor family relationships, rejection, disruption and loss in their lives. Subsequent life-chances, including outcomes closely related to social isolation such as mental health problems, low educational attainment and worklessness are significantly influenced by these experiences.

**Young carers**

A Durham County Council needs assessment of carers (2010) aged between 18 and 25 found young adult carers to be a hidden group as individuals often do not present themselves to services, commonly suffer from social isolation, an absence of friends and feel that they have no independence.

**Young people with physical disabilities**

Young people with physical disabilities, and their families, face an often overwhelming combination of financial, emotional and practical pressures. Siblings of disabled children often receive less time and attention and many parents feel that their own needs as carers are often forgotten. Outcomes for many disabled young people are poor, they are more likely to live in poverty, have poor physical and mental health, be socially isolated and economically inactive.

**Young people with mental health needs**

Good mental health is important in helping to improve young people's resilience, strengthen families, improve educational achievement and enable social engagement and participation. Half of those with lifetime mental health problems experience their first symptoms before age 14 and early intervention can make a significant difference in helping them to fulfil their potential.

**Young people with learning difficulties**

People with learning disabilities generally have poorer health than their non-disabled peers. Young people with learning difficulties may experience problems with communication, have less well developed social and interpersonal skills and low self esteem thus making connecting with others difficult and hampering social interaction.

**Young people in transition**

Transitions are the movements, passages or changes from one position, state, stage, subject or concept to another. These changes can be gradual or sudden and last for differing periods of time. Young people may be vulnerable due to a lack of solid social and emotional wellbeing in their early years. Being vulnerable is not just about circumstances but about having the emotional resilience to cope with the transitional stages of life. These transitional stages could include moving into the education system, moving from primary to secondary school, moving from children to adult services within the social care or mental health system.

**Children who are bullied**

Bullying often involves a person or group exploiting the fact that they feel more powerful than another. This can lead to children and young people being excluded from a social circle and being singled out as different. Bullying takes on many forms and can cause both physical and mental harm.

## What does the evidence tell us? Interventions that tackle social isolation.

The Campaign to End Loneliness suggests that strategies to address social isolation and loneliness should be undertaken in partnership and as part of a wider strategic approach to issues facing older people<sup>26</sup>. It notes that services will include, but will not be limited to, interventions delivered by both the voluntary and the public sector which fall into the categories detailed in the table on the next page.

Neighbourhood action can reduce the impact of loneliness and build more resilient communities. The evidence suggests that a community development approach alongside professional support will have the greatest impact. This approach offers value for money as relatively small investments can realise significant citizen action. To prevent or delay the deterioration of wellbeing resulting from ageing, illness or disability, and delay the need for more costly and intensive services, action to address social isolation should:

- Be part of a part of a wider strategic approach,
- Be targeted to identify those in, or at risk of, social isolation,
- Aim to promote resilience and build capacity within communities,
- Promote independence, and
- Combat stigma and discrimination.

Evidence<sup>27</sup> suggests that effective interventions to prevent loneliness include:

- Group interventions with an educational focus,
- Targeted support activities either place based i.e., live in a certain area, community of interest based i.e., sharing the same interests or groups that share the same characteristics, such as young carers,
- Befriending, mentoring, gatekeeping.

**Befriending** is an intervention that introduces the client to one or more individuals whose main aim is to provide additional social support through the development of an affirming, emotion-focused relationship over time. Programmes cover many varied initiatives, involving volunteers or paid workers visiting an individual in their own home on a regular, time-limited basis and may include telephone or group befriending.

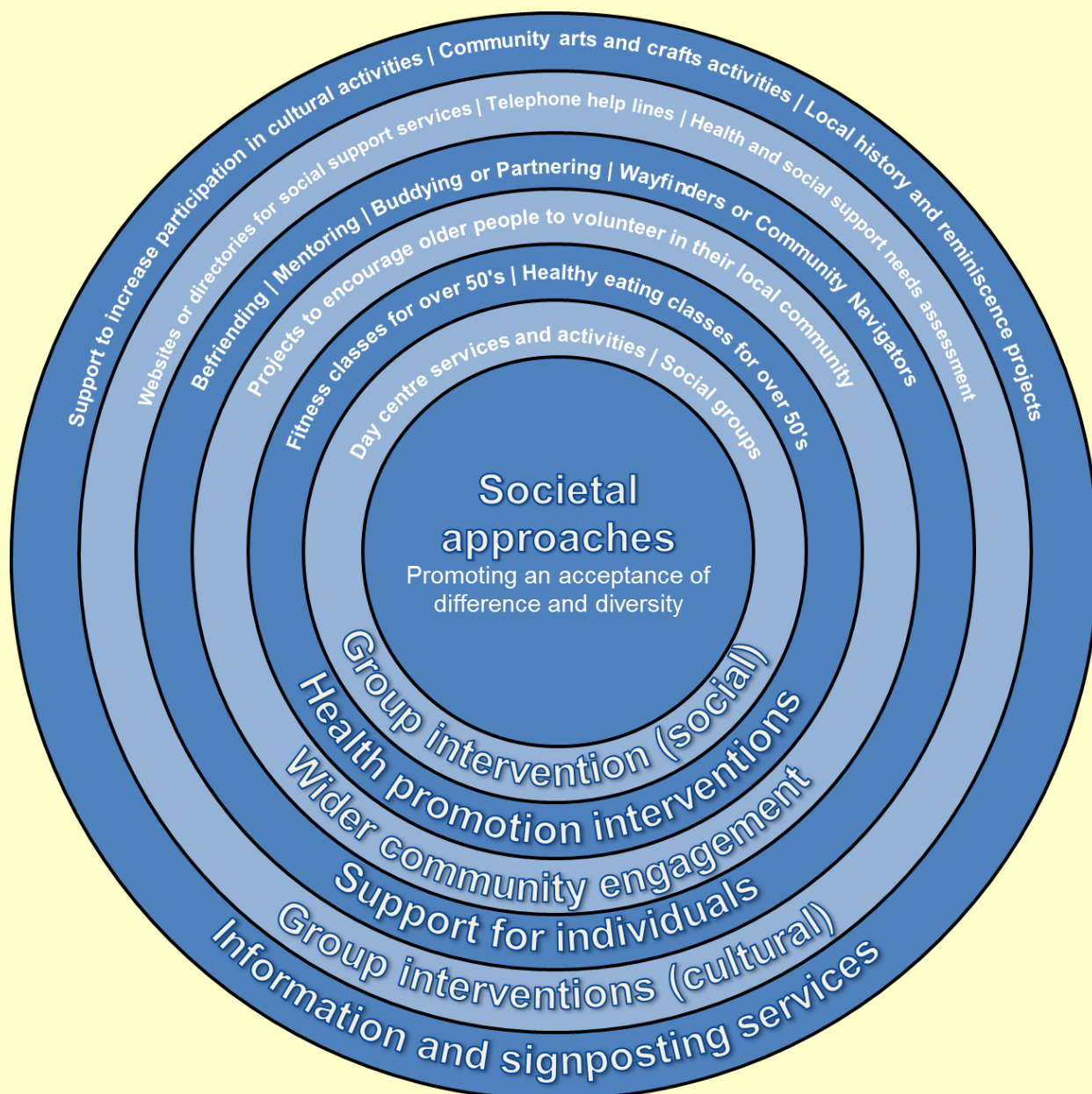
**Mentoring** is a relationship between a volunteer and an individual based on meeting agreed objectives set at the onset and where a social relationship, if achieved, is incidental. Mentors work with the individual on a short-term basis and one goal is to develop the necessary skills and abilities that help to continue any achieved changes after the end of the mentoring period.

**Gatekeeping** uses volunteers as an interface between vulnerable or 'hard-to-reach' people and community and public services, providing them with emotional, practical and social support and helping them access appropriate interventions.

Further detail on effective interventions to tackle loneliness can be seen in Appendix 4.



Figure 4: Interventions to tackle loneliness



'Fair Society, Healthy Lives'<sup>28</sup> made clear that the communities in which people live influence health and wellbeing. Communities facing multiple deprivation often have high levels of stress, isolation and depression. The report suggested interventions and policies that could reduce social isolation fall into the categories below:

- Better quality information from communities, leading to health improvements and reduced health inequalities through an increased uptake of more effective services, particularly preventative services, and/or more effective interventions,
- Improving governance and guardianship and promoting and supporting communities to participate in directing and controlling local services and/or interventions,
- Develop social capital by enhancing community empowerment,
- Increasing control and community empowerment may result in communities acting to change their social, material and political environments.

## Five ways to wellbeing

The Five Ways to Wellbeing, developed by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) from evidence gathered in the UK government's Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing, is a set of evidence based actions which promote wellbeing. These activities are simple things individuals can do in their everyday lives for themselves and others.



### CONNECT

**Talk with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. With those around you at home, work, school or in your community.**



### BE ACTIVE

**Step outside. Go for a walk, run or ride. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Take the stairs.**



### TAKE NOTICE

**Be curious. Ask questions, listen to answers. Remark on the unusual. Notice the weather. Savour the moment.**



### KEEP LEARNING

**Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Challenge yourself.**



### GIVE

**Give time to a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer. Join a club. Look out, as well as in.**



### CHALLENGE

**What can we do as citizens, communities, providers, commissioners, stakeholders to enable these five simple activities to occur?**

## No wellbeing without connectedness

People's lifestyles and the conditions in which they live and work act together to influence their health and wellbeing. Poor socio-economic circumstances can affect health and wellbeing throughout life, resulting in health inequalities. The NEF's 'dynamic model of wellbeing' describes a model of well-being and its drivers and how they impact on well-being.

Figure 5 below describes how the two main elements of wellbeing, feeling good and functioning well (the top two boxes) are affected by the key drivers of 'personal resources' (i.e., who you are), 'what you do' and 'external conditions' (income, employment status and social networks etc.). When these come together, people function well and experience good feelings (flourishing). It's important to note when viewing this model that people are not made happy by things, but by doing things. This explains the lack of a direct arrow from 'External conditions' to 'Good feelings'.

**Figure 5: NEF's dynamic model of wellbeing (2012)**



## Case studies

These case studies have been shared by individuals living in County Durham and demonstrate how some residents living in social isolation are being supported by our voluntary and community sector. This is not of course, in any way a comprehensive picture of the extensive work taking place across the county and is a small snapshot that hopefully allows the reader to appreciate the value and impact interventions can make to the lives of individuals.

Case studies are based on the actual health and wellbeing journeys of our citizens but names have been changed.

<b>Case study 1: Jack. Waddington Street Centre Mens CREE</b>	
<b>Profile</b>	Jack is 50, living on his own in one of the former pit villages near Durham City. He was known to social services community based teams as being someone who was isolated, had limited social skills and kept himself to himself.
<b>Making the change</b>	Jack had heard about the weekly 2 hour CREE from a support worker and came for the first time on his own. After a period of attending the CREE staff team started to be able to engage more with the man, although he continued to be very reserved.
<b>Impact</b>	Over time support workers noticed that Jack enjoyed reading magazines about trains, and had joined a walking group. After a ten pin bowling session it became apparent that this was something that he also enjoyed which has been proven by his enjoyment at participating in subsequent bowling sessions.
<b>Outcome</b>	Jack remains on fringes of the Men's group, never becoming fully involved in discussions but always attending the weekly CREE. He is accepted for this by the other participants, never pushed to do more, is always acknowledged and included. Attending the Mens CREE has allowed Jack to have a feeling of belonging, to be able to control his extent of participation and even though his integration into the group has been slow it has been at his pace. Jack's confidence levels have grown due to him attending this supportive group of men that he now feels comfortable within and that his social isolation levels have been greatly reduced as a result.

<b>Case study 2: Claire. Chit Chat, East Durham Trust</b>	
<b>Profile</b>	Claire had been feeling very low following the death of a family member.
<b>Making the change</b>	Claire was referred to Chit Chat by her GP surgery due to her low mood.
<b>Impact</b>	Claire received her first Chit Chat call from East Durham Trust in January 2014. She had been receiving regular weekly calls where the Chit Chat Volunteer established a good relationship with her and was able to encourage her to start to get out and about a little more and get back in contact with her friends.
<b>Outcome</b>	In July the volunteer had noticed that Claire had not answered her phone in a while. A letter was sent to ask if she would still like to receive calls. Claire got back in touch to say that due to the encouragement she had found herself a new job and was starting to go out a lot more therefore no longer needed the Chit Chat calls.

## Case studies

### Case study 3: Victoria. Connected Communities, Murton Mams Project

<b>Profile</b>	Victoria is 43 years old and lives in Murton. Prior to attending the Murton Mams Project she had been experiencing poor mental health, including anxiety and depression. Her daughter had also been experiencing poor mental health, which in turn contributed to Victoria's stress levels.
<b>Making the change</b>	Victoria has attended Murton Mams since the start of the project, with her cousin for support. Initially she was interested in a craft session.
<b>Impact:</b>	Initially Victoria was shy and didn't verbally contribute to the group often, simply choosing to take part in sessions. This taking part has made Victoria feel better, it has given her a chance to forget about her own worries for a few hours, relax and have a chat with other women.
<b>Outcome</b>	Since joining the group Victoria has come forward with an interest in becoming a Welfare Champion and has attended training.

### Case study 4: Keith. Good Companions

<b>Profile</b>	Keith suffered from a stroke three years ago, following which he lost the use of his left arm. Being entirely left-handed, this was particularly difficult to cope with.
<b>Making the change</b>	A formerly physically active man, Keith was unable to go out on his own. As his wife doesn't drive he became almost housebound and isolated from his community, "getting fat in a chair". He decided to teach himself to paint (right-handed).
<b>Impact</b>	On learning of Good Companions from a volunteer Keith began being taken to photography sessions, which he thoroughly enjoyed. Then the volunteer who drove him there mentioned the New Age Kurling, so he joined that group and has been going ever since. He is thinking also of going to an art group. Some of his paintings are now displayed on the walls of local hospitals.
<b>Outcome</b>	Keith believes the Good Companions scheme has given him a reason for going out again. He feels healthier, is more active and loves being able to meet people.

### Case study 5: Charles. Silver Talk

<b>Profile</b>	Charles is 50, and was struggling with mobility issues and poor self confidence. In effect he had become a recluse.
<b>Making the change</b>	Charles heard about Silver Talk through a care worker and was persuaded to give it a go.
<b>Impact</b>	After a few months as a client of Silver Talk Charles felt his confidence begin to grow and decided to ask about training as a volunteer for Silver Talk.
<b>Outcome</b>	Charles is now a volunteer with Silver Talk, making regular calls to clients who were in a similar situation to him not too long ago. He also now regularly attends volunteer coffee mornings.



## Case studies

### Case study 6: Danny. The Hut, Stanley Men's CREE, East Durham Trust

**Profile:** Danny was a homeless young man, very quiet with little self confidence and low mood. He had very little social interaction with anyone.

**Making the change:** Danny was referred to the Stanley Hut via Single Homeless Action Initiative Durham (SHAID).

**Impact:** Over time Danny has taken part in many group activities such as mindfulness, cooking, and dog training. He now interacts really well with the other CREE\* members, volunteers, visitors and staff. His self confidence/esteem has shown a massive increase since he first joined the group.

**Outcome:** Danny has now started volunteering 3 mornings per week at SHAID's main office, gaining valuable work experience. Danny now volunteers at the HUT covering general administrative duties including answering the telephone and IT, including maintaining databases of CREE activities and attendance.

### Case study 7: Colin. Colour your life, Pioneering Care Partnership

**Profile:** Colin is a 77 year old gentleman who lives alone with his dog 'Tilly', having expressed that he was feeling 'quite down' with a poor sense of self worth. Colin had a bad fall in January this year and ended up in hospital for three weeks, which left him with a lack of confidence and a feeling of only wanting to carry on for the sake of looking after his dog.

**Making the change:** As an experienced artist Colin felt he had a lot of knowledge to give to others. He came to the group for social contact and to help people with their drawing skills.

**Impact:** Since joining CYL Colin has since been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, however, he has made new friends and has gained confidence enough to have joined an art group at The Spennymoor Settlement, which he has wanted to join for many years. This group is for experienced artists to meet up, swap painting techniques and methods, and for social activities.

**Outcome:** Joining this group has led to Colin attending coffee mornings every Saturday morning, where he has asked if he can sell his artwork to help raise funds. This has helped build his resilience and his social connections in the community.

\* A Cree or Men's Shed is a larger version of the typical man's shed in the garden. A place where he feels at home and pursues practical interests with a high degree of autonomy. They are places of skill-sharing and informal learning, of individual pursuits and community projects, of purpose, achievement and social interaction. A place of leisure where men come together to work. Although Crees were originally aimed at men, some have developed for women and young people. Whichever activities are pursued the essence of a Cree is not a building, which some don't have, but the network of relationships between the members.

## And finally....

Of course, after reading this report the reader will legitimately ask “so what happens next?”. As Director of Public Health, I hope to influence the planning and commissioning of services that will impact on health and wellbeing and improve outcomes for County Durham residents. I will ensure that the issue of social isolation remains a focus of the Community Wellbeing Partnership and that collectively partners consider how they can address this through either their commissioning or delivery of services.

Social isolation is now being identified as a public health issue and is clearly going to be a priority for future years as our population profile changes and we have a larger proportion of over 65s and over 85s. However, we can only address social isolation by working collaboratively and involving a wide range of partners organisations.

It is everyone’s business!

Many thanks to Michael Fleming, Public Health Epidemiologist and Chris Woodcock, Social Marketing lead for their support in pulling this report together.

Thanks also to those who have shared their stories - they are understandably the most powerful element of this report.

As this is a new format for the Director of Public Health Annual Report comments and feedback are very welcome. Please send comments to Anna Lynch, Director of Public Health, County Hall or [publichealth@durham.gov.uk](mailto:publichealth@durham.gov.uk)

# Appendix 1

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## Appendix 2

### Community Wellbeing Partnership

The Community Wellbeing Partnership (CWP) is a multidisciplinary group whose aim is to support transformational change in order to improve the health and wellbeing of the residents of County Durham, and reduce inequalities and social isolation.

The Partnership aims to:

- Progress the development of an integrated and holistic community wellbeing for life approach,
- Develop approaches that support people to live well, by addressing the factors that influence their health and well-being, and building their capacity to be independent, resilient and maintain good health for themselves and those around them,
- Adopt a holistic approach to health i.e. a model of health that considers not only the body-focused biological components of health, but also the individual and societal contexts of the individual's experience of health,
- Go beyond looking at single-issue, healthy lifestyle services and a focus on illness, and instead take a whole-person and community approach to improving health and
- Harness the power of the community to sustain health change and recognise people as contributing to their own health and wellbeing and not purely as receivers of costly services/interventions.

## Appendix 3

### Better Care Fund

The Better Care Fund (BCF) was introduced to develop integrated health and social care and support for local people. The BCF aims to create a local single pooled budget to incentivise the NHS and local government to work more closely together around people, placing their well-being as the focus of health and care services.

The vision for the BCF in County Durham is to 'Improve the health and wellbeing of the people of County Durham and reduce health inequalities'. The following seven work programmes underpin the Better Care Fund plan in County Durham:

- Short term intervention services which includes intermediate care community services, re-ablement, falls and occupational therapy services,
- Equipment and adaptations for independence which includes telecare, disability adaptations and the Home Equipment Loans Service
- Supporting independent living which includes mental health prevention services, floating support and supported living and community alarms and wardens
- Supporting Carers which includes carers breaks, carer's emergency support and support for young carers
- Social inclusion which includes local coordination of an asset based approach to increase community capacity and resilience to provide low level services
- Care home support which includes care home and acute and dementia liaison services
- Transforming care which includes the development of IT systems to support joint working and implementing the Care Act

## Appendix 4: Interventions to tackle loneliness

### Societal approaches

- Celebrate diversity
- Cultural awareness
- Promote the challenge of discrimination and stigma

### Group intervention (social)

- Day centre services such as lunch clubs for older people, and
- Social groups which aim to help older people broaden their social circle, these may focus on particular interests e.g., reading, knitting.

### Health promoting activities

- Fitness classes for people over 50, and
- Healthy eating classes for people over 50.

### Wider community engagement activities

- Projects that encourage older people to volunteer in their local community (e.g. local volunteer centres and time banks).

### Support for individuals

- Befriending: visits or phone contact, it may include assistance with small tasks such as shopping,
- Mentoring: usually focused on helping an individual achieve a particular goal, generally short term,
- Buddying/partnering: helping people re-engage with their social networks, often following a major life change such as bereavement, and
- Wayfinders/Community Navigator initiatives: helping individuals, often those who are frail or vulnerable, to find appropriate services and support.

### Group intervention (cultural)

- Initiatives that support older people to increase their participation in cultural activities (e.g., use of libraries or museums),
- Community arts and crafts activities (e.g., Craft Café), and
- Local history and reminiscence projects.

### Information and signposting services

- Websites or directories including information about social support services,
- Telephone help-lines providing information about social support services, and
- Health and social support needs assessment services (postal or web based questionnaires/visits).



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## Cabinet

14 January 2015

### Update on North East Combined Authority Delegated Transport Activity



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#### Report of Corporate Management Team

**Ian Thompson, Corporate Director Regeneration and Economic  
Development**

**Councillor Neil Foster, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economic  
Regeneration**

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#### Purpose of the Report

1. To update Cabinet on the transport activity carried out by the Council under delegation from the North East Combined Authority (NECA); and to agree to the arrangements for providing transport planning capacity at NECA.

#### Background

2. On 16 April Cabinet received a report in relation to the transfer of transport functions to the Combined Authority and the subsequent delegation back to the Executive in accordance with the Combined Authority's Constitution and Operating Agreement.
3. Cabinet agreed to authorise the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Economic Development to discharge these transport functions in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder.

#### Reporting to NECA

4. The NECA Operating Agreement includes a requirement that the Portfolio Holder will provide reports when required to the Transport North East Committee (TNEC) of NECA, advising on how the delegated functions have been exercised.
5. The report at appendix 2 gives a summary of transport activity carried out since April 2014. It is intended that this report will be tabled at the February meeting of TNEC.

#### Combined Authority Transport Planning Resource

6. The NECA transport agenda needs to sustain sufficient capacity to support its functions, to influence external partnerships and investment decisions by national government, to coordinate funding opportunities and assess

projects and to provide policy advice to members of the Leadership Board, LEP and Transport North East Committees.

7. The NECA Transport Officers Group, led by Newcastle City as portfolio holders for transport, is in the process of reviewing the resource requirements to fulfil the above agenda. The resource will likely be delivered from a review of the existing capacity across the Tyne & Wear, Durham and Northumberland current support arrangements.
8. Funding for this capacity could come from a combination of charges against the capital programme, as part of the topslice of the Local Growth Fund (which has a substantial transport element) that has already been proposed, through a top-slice of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) arrangements and through in kind support of officer time from existing policy teams, working collaboratively across the NECA geography.

### **Recommendations**

9. Members are recommended to note the contents of this report.

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**Contact:     Adrian White, Head of Transport & Contract Services**  
**Tel: 03000 267455**

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Finance –**

A separate report on the finance of the delegated passenger transport activity will be submitted to TNEC. The funding requirements for the NECA transport policy team are under discussion.

### **Staffing –**

No additional staff requirements but will require greater collaboration between staff across the NECA geography.

### **Risk –**

N/A

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty –**

N/A

### **Accommodation –**

N/A

### **Crime and Disorder –**

N/A

### **Human Rights –**

N/A

### **Consultation –**

N/A

### **Procurement –**

N/A

### **Disability Issues –**

N/A

### **Legal Implications –**

The requirement to report to the NECA on transport activity is included in the NECA Operating Agreement.

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**North East Combined Authority (NECA)**  
**Durham County Council Transport Activity Report**  
**April-Dec 2014**

**Introduction**

1. The County Council operates an 'Integrated Transport Unit' in line with Government's best practice guidance. The ITU delivers public transport, home to school transport, SEN transport and adult social care transport. It also has close links with health, clinical commissioning groups and the North East Ambulance Service.
2. Integrating transport in this way enables the authority to create packages of work across sectors to maximise the use of vehicles and staff, ensure full use is made of existing local bus services for education and social work purposes and deliver consistency of standards across different modes. The opportunities to integrate commissioning and delivery of local authority transport with non-emergency healthcare transport have also helped to deliver a simpler and more understandable service for the user.
3. The formation of a Unitary Authority under the 2009 Local Government Reorganisation facilitated the harmonisation of policy and delivery across the economic development, planning, housing and transport functions. This created the structure to ensure that we maximise transport's contribution to economic growth in the County.

**Bus Service Network**

*Current State of Commercial and Subsidised Networks*

4. Bus operators' own commercial services provide a high proportion of the network in most of County Durham. Go North East and Arriva provide the majority of the services, with approximately equal market shares; six other firms also run locally significant commercial services. All the main towns have at least two operators providing commercial services, except for Consett and Newton Aycliffe; Bishop Auckland has six commercial operators each providing at least hourly services.
5. Total bus boardings in 2013/14 increased year on year by 3.3% to 24.6 million, mainly rebounding from the effect of severe winter weather in 2012/13 but with some element of underlying growth. This trend continues so far in 2014/15.

6. The majority of the commercial network in County Durham has been essentially stable since October 2012, when Arriva revitalised its services following some retrenchment in preceding years. The bus fleet has also benefitted from considerable investment in new buses.
7. Recent DCC activity has focussed on issues with Arriva's commercial services in east Durham, which have led to Arriva making considerable changes implemented on 26th October. These address some long-standing DCC and community concerns while also responding to the competition from Go North East by an increase in services on the Peterlee–Sunderland corridor. In an offsetting economy, Arriva is withdrawing a loss-making commercial service competing with a small operator between Willington and Bishop Auckland, which will continue to serve the corridor at a sustainable half hourly frequency.
8. A local service in the Stanley area operated commercially by Stanley Buses ceased at Christmas causing significant local concern. DCC has secured replacement transport to cater for school time travel in partnership with Tanfield School. Following discussion with potential operators, Go North East has come forward with a replacement for the main part of the service, which they will operate without subsidy. This outcome has been appreciated by the local community.

#### *Secured Service Retendering Activity*

9. General DCC practice is that our contracts for bus services are arranged on 4 year cycles with DCC holding a right to extend to 5 years. Normally all contracts in an area are renewed in the same cycle, with contracts changing at the start of the school summer holidays to enable operational synchronisation with school bus contract changes commencing the start of September. Contracts in much of Co Durham were renewed to start in autumn 2012, with the rest renewed in July 2013. The current year is therefore a period of low activity in retendering core bus services.
10. Contracts are eligible for an annual price review, calculated to reflect the average change in costs of operating bus services in Co Durham. The August 2014 review has provisionally found a 1.5% increase, with falls in the cost of fuel offsetting some increases in wages and other costs. If the current fall in fuel cost is sustained to April 2015, it will mean only a very low increase is likely in 2015. Prices may even fall at the next review.

#### **Park and Ride**

11. The contract for the Durham Park and Ride service has been retendered and the new contractor started on 27th October 2014, to run for five years plus up to two further years at DCC's option. The contract reverted from Arriva to Scarlet

Band, who had operated the service in its initial years; affected staff had the opportunity to transfer under TUPE regulations. The new contract specifies an unchanged timetable with new buses meeting Euro VI emissions. The contract is considerably cheaper and the outcome is considered very satisfactory.

### **Clean Bus / Vehicle Technology Funds**

12. Durham and Sunderland's successful bid in partnership with GNE for funding under the 2013 Clean Bus Technology Fund has been delivered during summer 2014 in partnership with the similar scheme led by Gateshead and Newcastle. A total of 20 buses on routes between Co Durham and Sunderland have been upgraded with innovative exhaust treatment equipment improving emissions from Euro III to near Euro VI.
13. The same partnership team led development of two complementary bids for funding under the 2014 Clean Vehicle Technology Fund, to equip GNE buses on four services across the NECA area with a kinetic energy recovery system. The bid led by Newcastle for Blyth - Newcastle and Newcastle - Sunderland services won funding in the first round of awards. The Durham-led bid covering Durham - Newcastle and Newcastle - South Shields services was awarded funding in a second round announced in December.

### **Concessionary Fares**

14. Reimbursement payments under Durham's concessionary fare scheme for older and disabled people form the major element of DCC's spending on public transport. Largely fixed price arrangements have been negotiated with the two major operators. So far results in 2014/15 have fallen within the range of the "cap and collar" provisions and we expect this to continue.

### **Public Transport Information**

15. DCC provides a comprehensive range of passenger information on all local bus services operating within the County. This includes maintaining current timetable displays at over 2,800 bus stops, providing electronic displays at bus stops, printed county public transport map, printed timetable leaflets and a web based interactive bus map. The interactive bus map shows bus routes and individual timetables for all registered services in downloadable format. Work is currently underway to develop a new and improved interactive public transport website for bus and rail services including real time data from individual bus stops.
16. DCC also provides the data management and system development roles for the North East Traveline journey planning service. This includes processing and collation of bus service data from Tyne & Wear, Northumberland, Tees

Valley and Cumbria on a continuous basis. Work is ongoing to enable the web based journey planner to become more compatible with mobile devices.

### **Real Time Passenger Information**

17. DCC is working in partnership with Nexus, Northumberland CC, Tees Valley Unlimited and local bus operators to deliver a new Real Time Passenger Information system for the wider North East region. This system is currently being tested on-site with completion planned for early 2015. The service data from this system will be displayed on electronic displays at bus stops and on-line via Traveline North East, NextBus and the DCC interactive bus map.

### **Home to School/Social Care Transport**

18. Home to school and social care transport forms the major part of DCC Sustainable Transport Group's operations, with a total spend of approximately £13 million pa and about 1,200 contracts in operation. This includes an increasing provision of places on school transport buses that are paid for by parents and or schools, as DCC's current policy for provision of free transport has retrenched to essentially statutory entitlement for year groups starting primary or secondary schooling from Sept 2012. Some 3,000 pupils currently travel under these concessionary terms. Two new schemes covering over 400 pupils start in January 2015.
19. General DCC practice is that our contracts for Home to School Contract Hire services are arranged for up to a maximum 4 year period with DCC holding a right to extend to 5 years. Tendering is carried out over a three year period on an area by area basis. Contracts are renewed in each area to commence at the start of the school year in September. South and West Durham contracts were renewed to start in autumn 2012, East Durham contracts in 2013 and North and Central contracts in 2014. The current year is therefore a period of lower activity in retendering with focus on renewing some short term contracts. The Tender prices have been very competitive across the range of service throughout this period. Despite an increase in the number of SENs transport services, actual spend has remained the same. Some 6,500 mainstream and SEN pupils currently travel under these arrangements.
20. Contracts are eligible for an annual price review, calculated to reflect the average change in costs of operating bus services in Co Durham. The August 2014 review has provisionally found a 1.5% increase, with falls in the cost of fuel offsetting some increases in wages and other costs.

### **Travel Response Centre (TRC)**

21. TRC operates a booking and scheduling service for people with disabilities, the elderly and those without a direct bus service to their destination. Around 80,000 calls are handled on an annual basis.
22. TRC is a central point for people ringing to book on to DCC's dial a ride service (Link2) and health transport services or for travel information. In some instances TRC directs callers to commercial operators and the community/volunteer sector.
20. The Health Booking Service is delivered on behalf of the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups in Durham. Following an eligibility assessment, patients are booked on to North East Ambulance Patient Transport Services. Patients and visitors who are ineligible for NHS patient transport are where possible, booked on alternative services providing access to hospitals or advised on how to make their journey by public transport.
23. The TRC also processes referrals from Social Workers and other care staff for client travel to day care.
24. TRC has a large data base of approved operators providing social care and pupil transport and has close links with NEAS, private ambulance services, community transport and volunteer driver schemes.

### **Community Transport**

25. The CT sector predominantly concentrates on group hire, although Weardale Community Transport has operated a summer-only Sunday bus service for the third year in 2014, supported by DCC engagement. DCC's programme of capital grants to assist Community Transport continues. We expect to provide approximately 70% grants to at least 3 groups in 2014/15. Groups are required to demonstrate a viable business plan for the sustainable operation of the buses from revenue raised. We are also working to support groups bidding to the government's Rural Community Transport Minibus Fund, announced in November 2014.
26. We are also continuing our use of RSCTI funding to support the CT sector to develop its capacity, with a particular focus on the recruitment of volunteers.

### **North East Smart Ticketing Initiative (NESTI)**

27. DCC is undertaking in conjunction with NESTI two pilot trials of the forthcoming regional Stored Travel smartcard. A trial involving DCC's Cathedral Bus

service in Durham has been running successfully since May. A trial on GNE services started successfully in October.

### **Multi Operator Ticketing Scheme**

28. DCC is working with bus operators in County Durham to implement a scheme of multi-operator bus fares reflecting the bus market of County Durham, with an intention to start at least an initial phased roll out in the first half of 2015. The concept entails a zonal fares structure initially focussing on adult weekly tickets. Consultants are providing independent expert support on zones and pricing.

### **Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF)**

29. The LSTF South Durham *Local Motion* project is encouraging the adoption of low-carbon travel habits through a complimentary package of sustainable transport measures targeted at businesses, schools and local communities. It is currently being delivered in Bishop Auckland, Shildon and Newton Aycliffe with a focus on cross-boundary journeys to Darlington. The DfT has allocated £2.008m to Durham CC for the project over the period 2012-2015.
30. From April 2015, the project will expand towards Durham City and target Spennymoor, Crook and Willington to improve connectivity to access work and training opportunities within South Durham and further afield to Darlington and Durham City. The programme has been awarded a grant of £840k through the LSTF to enable successful delivery in 2015-16.
31. DCC is also the lead authority for the national LSTF Living Streets *Walk to School Outreach* project. This project is a partnership of 11 local authorities and Living Streets and is encouraging more walking to school. Measures are focussing on where the school run is having a significant negative impact on congestion, journey times and economic growth. The DfT has allocated £4.671m to Durham CC as lead authority for the project to cover the period 2012-2015.
32. From April 2015, the project will deliver an ambitious and innovative project to increase levels of walking among people of all ages. Targeting areas of high congestion, the Living Streets *Walk To* project will extend the reach of our hugely successful Walk to School Outreach project through working closely with schools, businesses and communities. A range of engaging interventions are planned which will support significant changes in people's travel behaviours leading to reduced congestion and an improved environment whilst also benefitting health and well-being. The programme has been awarded a grant of £3.980m through the LSTF to enable successful delivery in 2015-16.

33. In December 2014 DCC were asked by DfT to become the lead authority for the national Modshift *STARS Accreditation Scheme*. This programme rewards achievement in schools for the successful promotion of walking and cycling as well as encourage schools to engage in the sharing of inspiration, knowledge and experience for the benefit of all. LSTF grant funding totalling £184,000 has been awarded for the period 2014/15 to 2015/16. This funding will expand the current Modeshift STARS project on a national basis and allow the remaining 19,000 schools across the country to sign up for free. DCC is acting as the funding recipient and distributor with Modeshift being responsible for managing and delivering the project.

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