



Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date Monday 22 April 2024
Time 9.30 am
Venue Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham

Business

Part A

**Items which are open to the Public and Press
Members of the public can ask questions with the Chair's agreement,
and if registered to speak.**

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Substitute Members
- 3 Minutes of the meetings held on 4 March and Special Joint meeting held on 4 March 2024 (Pages 3 - 20)
- 4 Declarations of Interest, if any
- 5 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties, if any
- 6 Selective Licensing Scheme - Update
 - i) Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 21 - 26)
 - ii) Presentation by the Housing Standards Manager (Pages 27 - 44)
- 7 Draft County Durham Housing Strategy
 - i) Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 45 - 100)
 - ii) Presentation by the Housing Delivery Manager (Pages 101 - 124)

- 8 Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
 - i) Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 125 - 196)
 - ii) Presentation by the Head of Planning and Housing (Pages 197 - 210)
- 9 Quarter Three Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 - Joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and the Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth (Pages 211 - 222)
- 10 Quarter Three 2023/24 Performance Management Report - Report of the Chief Executive (Pages 223 - 290)
- 11 Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Helen Bradley
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
12 April 2024

To: The Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Councillor B Moist (Chair)
Councillor A Surtees (Vice-Chair)

Councillors M Abley, A Batey, G Binney, R Crute, M Currah, D Freeman, P Heaviside, G Hutchinson, A Jackson, C Lines, L Maddison, R Manchester, J Miller, R Ormerod, K Robson, K Shaw, M Stead and A Sterling

Co-opted Members:

Mrs R Morris and Mr E Simons

Contact: Jo March

Tel: 03000 269 709

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the **Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Monday 4 March 2024** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor B Moist (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors A Surtees, A Batey, R Crute, D Freeman, P Heaviside, G Hutchinson, C Lines, R Manchester, J Miller, K Robson and K Shaw

Co-opted Members:

Mrs R Morris and Mr E Simons

Also Present:

Councillors E Adam, A Reed and J Rowlandson

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chair referred to the sad passing of Councillor Isabella Roberts and asked Members to stand for a moments silence.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Binney, M Currah, R Ormerod and M Stead.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 18 December 2023 and the Special meeting held on 12 January 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Chair referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2024 with regards to concerns raised at the meeting in relation to the Masterplan Activity report and the Council House Delivery Programme report and presentation. He wrote to the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holders expressing the Committee's concerns and requested a response, which had been circulated to Members of the Committee. It was suggested that the Cabinet Portfolio Holders attend a future

meeting to discuss responses provided. Unfortunately, Councillor Scott, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Economy and Partnerships was unable to attend the meeting, however the Chair thanked Councillor Rowlandson, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investment and Assets for attending to discuss his response in relation to the Council House Delivery Programme.

The Chair sought clarity on whether the target to deliver 500 homes by 2026 remained realistic and achievable and how this would be delivered, either through the provision of new build homes or acquisition of properties by the Council. He questioned how the authority would be able to deliver 500 by 2026 when no new Council homes had been delivered to date and asked whether the target needed to be reviewed or whether the Council House Delivery Programme was no longer a priority. He added that Durham County Council owned 130 properties, however these had been acquired and were separate from the new build properties. He highlighted that some sites were no-longer viable and presumed that as an Authority, the first stage would have been to check viability of sites.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder Resources, Investment and Assets advised that the programme was still a priority, 250 homes would be built in Seaham this year, therefore the target was achievable by 2026. He explained that the programme had not been given the best sites initially and that a re-evaluation of all sites had to be undertaken to determine their viability. He confirmed that since the sites were initially identified there had been global changes which had impacted on the building sector such as the COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine resulting in increased costs and highlighted that the 'landscape' had completely changed and clarified that consultants had been used to assess the suitability of the sites.

The Housing Delivery Manager advised that when Cabinet originally adopted the programme, the sites allocated were in Durham County Council ownership and could principally support housing development. The sites were then assessed looking at technical challenges which identified the viability and constraints of the various sites. In relation to some sites, more work was undertaken which then determined some to be unviable. He reiterated that external factors had impacted the programme including the pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the resulting inflation costs in the construction sector, therefore the initial model had to be revisited. An external consultant was brought in to look at the proposed programme and to suggest how the programme could be remodelled and which areas were still viable. He added that Cabinet had agreed the revised approach to securing a main contractor and once the contractor was in place, work would commence on the first two identified sites and look at the other sites identified within the programme to revise plans if appropriate. It was noted that once the main contractor was in place they would facilitate a rolling programme of delivery.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder added that smaller sites had been identified for the programme to ensure that people could stay in their local their communities.

The Chair asked if the sites identified were able to support programme and why were the sites allocated when they were not viable. The Housing Delivery Manager advised that the standard process would initially identify sites in principle and as the process progressed there would naturally be a number of sites that were not suitable once the more detailed stage of the process was undertaken. Phase one and two sites had been approved and the main contractor, when in place, would then revisit the more challenging site and identify constraints around those sites. They were also working closely with colleagues in Corporate Property and Land (CPaL) to identify additional suitable sites to be included in the programme.

The Chair commented that he had suggested at a previous Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the authority may want to revise the new Council house target, however he was advised this would not be the case. It was noted that the cost per unit had decreased and was between £120,000 - £130,000 and sought clarification as to whether the new Council house programme was included in the Capital Build Programme budget. The Housing Delivery Manager advised there was no direct capital input from Durham County Council and in 2020 there was an assumption that each property would have a grant from the local authority of approximately £25,000 per unit with £4.5 million capital kept to fund any issues which may arise in relation to the various sites when delivering the programme. He confirmed that the programme would be funded via a borrowing mechanism from the Housing Revenue account.

In response to a query from Councillor Robson regarding whether the necessary infrastructure such as Doctor's surgeries and Dental practices had been considered to accommodate the resulting increase in population, the Housing Delivery Manager confirmed that this was considered during the planning application process and various consultation mechanism that were in place.

Councillor Shaw sought clarity with regards to the term used by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder "not given the best sites" and asked for this to be given context as he felt the comment implied that this was the result of the previous administration. The Cabinet Portfolio Holder Resources, Investment and Assets explained that some of the sites were not viable and used the example of one of the sites having Japanese knotweed on the site, therefore had to re-evaluate the viability of the previously determined sites.

With regards to affordable housing units, Councillor Shaw noted that the annual target was 836 units and asked why only 464 affordable units had been delivered within the county which was well under target and noted the lack of progress that had been made since 2021 and was not convinced that 500 new council homes would be delivered by 2026. He further queried the reason why the Portland site at Seaham had been delayed when it was identified in 2021.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder Resources, Investment and Assets advised that he was not responsible for the market and highlighted that the programme would have

to go through due diligence which was time consuming. He reiterated that Karbon Homes were building 250 homes in Seaham and added that the Authority had purchased 130 homes and as new builds come online the programme would grow exponentially when the main contractor was on board to target the best sites and move the programme forward. He added that it would be easy to build 250 houses on one site, however they wanted to create builds in every part of the county.

The Chair clarified that they were discussing the 500 new build delivery, not the 130 homes that had been purchased.

Councillor A Batey was still unclear about the 500 new council homes and did not feel that the questions had been answered. The report considered by the Committee did not provide clarity and she was concerned that the 500 new Council houses would not be delivered by 2026. She acknowledged that due diligence was needed within the process, however, was not convinced that assurance was provided as allocated sites had still not been identified.

The Housing Delivery Manager advised that the sites had been allocated for phase one and two however some of these may have viability issues and may not progress. There were still a number of sites that could be worked on. The main contractor would review the more challenging sites when appointed and provide a better idea whether they could be developed, together with a timeline and build out rates. He advised there was a five-year programme in relation to the removal of the Japanese knotweed and the service were in discussion with CPaL with regards to identifying a range of other possible sites to be assessed.

Councillor A Batey stressed that she was still uncomfortable with the 500 build out target and would feel more comfortable if there was a discussion regarding whether the 500 target was achievable.

Councillor Miller referred to the other possible sites identified and noted that Members would not have visited the sites and the contractor would assess the sites once appointed. He asked if the service had visited the sites and spotted any issues that may delay the process. He added that the planning permission process would have to be undertaken which involves consultation with external bodies and local Councillors and the build itself could experience delays. It was a long process and currently only 42 houses had been allocated therefore a lot of work needed to be done before 2026.

The Housing Delivery Manager advised that the 130 houses were acquisitions that would be purchased by the end of the financial year, and 42 units would be delivered on the first two sites. In relation to phase one sites, specialists were used and pre application discussions were taking place with colleagues in planning to speed up the process. Planning permission may create uncertainty in relation to timescales, however they would be working with the main contractor to determine how many sites could run concurrently.

In response to a query from Councillor Surtees with regards to whether brownfield sites and the Brownfield Land Release Fund had been considered, the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investments and Assets advised that devolution had impacted this, however he confirmed that they were looking at brownfield sites frequently and accessing the Brownfield Land Release Fund.

Councillor Surtees referred to the housing crisis and homelessness agenda and had a concerns about delivery of the programme. She suggested that the programme be looked at and further detail be provided for the Committee to consider. As a local Member, she had not been contacted to discuss any of the identified sites and proposed that the report provide further detail on the delivery, achievement and capacity.

The Chair suggested that Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee discuss the programme further and review the target as the Committee had real concerns. The Cabinet Portfolio Holder, Resources, Investments and Assets agreed to report back to the Committee when the main contractor was in place and further details could be provided.

Responding to a question from Councillor Lines as to whether the Cabinet Portfolio Holder was confident that the target was achievable, the Cabinet Portfolio Holder Resources, Investment and Assets assured the Committee that the delivery programme was heading in the right direction.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

There were no items from Co-opted Members or interested parties.

6 County Durham Skills Development

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth that set out the current progress in supporting skills developments across County Durham in line with the Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) and Delivery Plan. The report highlighted recent policy changes and reflects current funding opportunities presented by the County's UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation in addition to work underway at a regional level as part of the Devolution of the adult skills budget. Members also received a presentation from the Economic Development Manager (for copy of report and presentation slides, see file of minutes).

The Head of Economic Development provided a detailed presentation that focused on the:-

- Baseline Position;
- Emerging Skills Issues;
- Regional Skills Focus;
- Inclusive Economic Strategy (IES) Skills Priorities
- Shared Prosperity Commissions.

With regards to the emerging skills issues at a National Level, the Head of Economic Development highlighted that there was a need to focus on Lifelong Learning and reposition the economy post Covid in terms of skills deficiencies with a particular focus on skills for jobs, boosting apprenticeships, traineeships and basic skills levels in to meet employer needs and individual aspirations.

Focus would continue to develop technical education levels with the move towards the 2nd generation T-level qualification. It was noted that within the County, the Institution of Technology was the largest early adopter of the T-level qualification and was hosted by New College Durham (NCD).

The narrative at a nation level and Overview and Scrutiny discussions highlighted the lack of employer awareness around technical qualification. There were continued discussions with employers to articulate the skills required in terms of technical skills or a mixture of technical skills and soft skills which would be built into the business support programme.

The Head of Economic Development highlighted that green skills was an area of rapid development. Objectives to support a low carbon economy was included in the IES and green jobs were being embedded across a wide range of sectors and job roles. With regards to employability, soft skills such as critical thinking, innovation and collaboration remained an important part of skills development and the green transition and needed to be embedded to develop opportunities. It was noted that 80% of the 2030 workforce were already in employment and the green skills transition would mainly involve upskilling existing workers with a range of education providers in place to support and deliver training. A Green Jobs Delivery Group had been established to set out plans to grow a green workforce and to embed in the Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs).

As part of the Devolution Deal, there was a clear focus on improving the skills system within the North East. The Combined Authority would be responsible for the £64 million skills budget and the priority was to set up processes to ensure that colleges and training providers had funding in place to deliver from the 1 August 2024 and to put in place a skills strategy to ensure that the Devolution ambition was supported by the skills strategy to drive protectivity and support progression of individuals.

Mrs Morris thanked the Economic Development Manager for a comprehensive overview of the skills level. She suggested that a structure was needed, and asked whether Durham would put something together to engage with the relevant parties/groups and how would this be delivered. She asked about the roles of the Local Enterprise Business Partnership and the consultant, adding that this was about individuals obtaining the best role in employment. She advised that the best place to provide future careers advice and support was in schools and asked about engaging schools in the process, as there was a variation in provision within schools. She continued that some schools were better than others with regards to providing careers advice.

The Head of Economic Development advised that this was a national issue and work experience for school aged children had ended. He added that County Durham aimed to build a careers framework as a local resolution to a national issue. He confirmed that developing the framework was ongoing with UKSPF set aside and work was ongoing to identify future skills demands to ensure that colleges and training providers deliver the right training.

Mrs Morris noted in the presentation that some of the FE colleges were the main recipients of the funding and were delivering various skills courses in the county, however other FE colleges in the county were not delivering those courses and therefore not in receipt of the associated funding. She asked how could anyone from North West Durham access courses that were only available at NCD or East Durham College. She added that no part of the county should miss out and that all young people should have access to the courses available or the county would lose out on developing a skilled workforce.

The Economic Development Manager assured the committee that work had been carried out with other colleges and that regular meetings were held with training providers and that there were collaborative projects undertaken with other colleges, although there was independent collaboration too. The County Durham Economic Partnership and its sub-groups involved various colleges within the county, and it was confirmed that the colleges had been involved in the work on the Inclusive Economic Strategy. In addition, Schools and FE Colleges sit on the County Durham Economic Partnership Skills Development Group. He explained that the skills offer was available in all parts of County Durham, however Derwentside College used a different model offer than other colleges with a focus on apprenticeships. In relation to going forward, he confirmed that the service was looking at the provider base and used a postcode mapping to identify where the demands for skills were and what skills providers needed to supply.

Mrs Morris commented that she would like to see an action plan model for the whole of the county.

Councillor Lines referred to Durham County Council using business and enterprise and highlighted that the private sector had an insight into the skills needed in the

short to long term. He asked what was being done to harness this insight. He continued by asking what was being done collectively to inform young people about skills and jobs to inspire them on how skills shape the economy. He then referred to NETPark's Science Live that had input with local schools.

The Head of Economic Development advised that the jobs on offer at NETPark were technical jobs and that it was exciting to engage with young people in all sectors. He confirmed that the UTC at Newton Aycliffe was heavily involved in inspiring young people in relation to various technical jobs. In addition, there was the Catapult and the various outreach programmes, together with the Future Business Magnets Programme, that would attract young people to become involved in business ideas. It was noted that there was a national challenge to obtain involvement from science parks. He acknowledged that more could be done in relation to NETPark and getting local communities engaged in the work being undertaken on the site.

Councillor Adam suggested that employers did not understand the skills offer available with employers upskilling existing employees rather than taking on apprentices and new employees and that they needed to hear more about the opportunities available via the apprenticeship offer. He continued that in relation to the green skills gap with demand outstripping the available workforce, attracting people to this sector was difficult as the green industry currently does not employ in large numbers. He questioned how could you attract to jobs that were currently not on offer. He referred to funding that was available, however this was mainly going to digital areas rather than green jobs.

The Economic Development Manager advised that Durham County Council had done a lot of work in relation to apprentices and had developed and managed an apprenticeship programme with Government funding across the county creating over a thousand apprenticeship opportunities for young people. He confirmed that work was ongoing at a regional level focusing on lifting the number of apprenticeships with discussions taking place with the Department for Education. He continued that Devolution was an important part of the skills offer with businesses invited to become involved in the future ambition for the North East. He added that there was alignment with FE colleges and skills for the future however it was difficult to quantify what they were contracted to deliver. He continued that money drives behaviours and there were issues with attracting people to sign up for training if it was not directly linked to a job opportunity as people were reluctant to fund themselves and highlighted the need for an effective joined up approach.

The Chair suggested that as the council were administering the UKSPF funds, there should be a mechanism to monitor FE colleges performance and see how they were delivering opportunities via a report showing delivery. He continued that he did not want to see the NELSIP distracting from the skill development needs of County Durham residents and concluded by highlighting the need for funding to go to the end user rather than funding the administration costs of the scheme.

Resolved:

- i) That the work undertaken to develop and embed the Local Skills Improvement Plan be noted;
- ii) That the development, commissioning and delivery of skills initiatives in line with the People Theme of the Inclusive Economic Strategy be noted.

7 Minutes from the County Durham Economic Partnership Board

The minutes of the County Durham Economic Partnership Board held on 13 December 2023 were noted for information.

8 Any Other Business

The Chair reminded Members that a Special Joint meeting was scheduled following the meeting to focus on the second draft of the Destination Management Plan for County Durham. He also reminded Members that a further Special Joint Committee scheduled for 12 April 2024 would be focusing on the County Durham Visitor Economy and a workshop on the 17 April 2024 would be focusing on the new Place Brand for County Durham.

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

SPECIAL JOINT ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Special Joint Meeting of the **Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Monday 4 March 2024 at 11.00 am**

Present:

Councillor B Moist (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors B Coult (**Vice Chair**) A Batey, D Freeman, P Heaviside, G Hutchinson, C Lines, R Manchester, K Robson, E Adam, P Atkinson, J Elmer, C Kay, D Nicholls, J Purvis, A Reed, A Simpson and D Sutton-Lloyd

Co-opted Members:

Mrs R Morris

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chair referred to the sad passing of Councillor Isabella Roberts and asked Members to stand for a moments silence.

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Surtees, G Binney, M Currah, R Ormerod and M Stead.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

There were no items from Co-opted Members or interested parties.

5 Overview of County Durham's Visitor Economy

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth and presentation which presented the second draft of the Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2023-2030 asking for feedback and endorsement. Reference was made to the Joint Special Meeting of the Economy and Enterprise, and Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees held on 3 November 2023 where members considered and commented on the first draft of the DMP and requested that they have the opportunity to consider the second draft of the plan prior to the final DMP being considered by Cabinet (for copy of report and presentation slides, see file of minutes).

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy provided a detailed presentation that focused on:-

- Development of the draft plan and consultation undertaken;
- 2016-2020 priorities;
- Five priority pillars used to build the plan;
- Visitor focused outcomes;
- Inclusive Economic Strategy Ambition and detail of how the plan links to the Inclusive Economic Strategy;
- Monitoring and Evaluation of the DMP.

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy highlighted that the draft DMP had been developed with the county's tourism industry and a broad range of stakeholders and partners at national and local level. She confirmed that the county has had a Destination Management Plan since 2006 with major revisions undertaken in 2012 and 2016. She continued that the plan was the equivalent to a strategy and action plan for sustainable tourism development in a destination and was a shared statement of intent to manage the visitor economy in the county for 2023-2030. The plan articulated the roles of the different stakeholders and identified clear actions to take. The plan was a blueprint for the growth and development of the visitor economy in the county.

The policy context and strategic framework for the DMP was set at the national level by Government, VisitEngland, VisitBritain and regionally via the pilot Destination Development Partnership and North East Devolution Deal. At a local level, the plan was aligned with the County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy and County Durham Plan and was monitored by the Visit County Durham Board and reviewed annually and refreshed as needed in collaboration with key stakeholders and partners.

Members were informed that the plan had been developed using the principles of a sustainable tourism development model VERB (Visitor, Environment, Resident and

Business) and in partnership with key partners and stakeholders. It was noted that there had been some challenges and not all of the 2016-2020 priorities had been achieved, therefore they have been incorporated in the 2023-2030 DMP as they were still relevant to County Durham.

In terms of sustainable tourism development, the Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that a similar framework would be developed for a regenerative approach to tourism which would take into account the economy and social impacts. She continued that work had started on the development of a Sustainability Plan and that Visit County Durham were taking part in the northeast destination development partnership pilot with a world leader in sustainable development who would help develop a framework that was unique to County Durham and the rest of the region.

She confirmed that the monitoring and evaluation processes are in place which includes an annual evaluation of the plan to assess the effectiveness and review progress against objectives, ongoing monitoring by the VCD Board in collaboration with key stakeholders and partners. Visit England's Growth Plan process and the development of individual working groups or task groups to progress ideas and projects. She confirmed that the comments made by Overview and Scrutiny members at a Special Joint meeting on the 3 November 2023 focusing on the DMP which was followed by a workshop looking at promoting the tourism offer had been incorporated into the second draft of the DMP. She continued that comments were made in relation to the format and content of the plan and suggestions were made regarding developing the tourism offer and future sustainability of the offer which had been reflected in the revised plan for members further consideration. She confirmed that the plan was still in draft format and that members had a further opportunity to comment on the plan, with those comments used to inform the development of the final DMP for final signoff and consideration by Cabinet.

Mrs Morris commented that the second draft plan captured the comments made by Members at the previous Special meeting. She referred to the action plan and asked how improvement would be measured and suggested that it would be beneficial to articulate improvement using figures which would be more meaningful to the public and would assist when monitoring performance. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy agreed to review the actions within the plan and provide more detail using figures where appropriate to articulate improvement.

Councillor Elmer supported the work undertaken by the Service Grouping in developing the DMP, however he highlighted the need to manage the potential impact of increased tourism with systems of monitoring and evaluation in place to measure increased footfall and the resulting impact which was particularly important at countryside locations and historical sites. He referred to the Lake District and the impact of increased footfall with increased litter and a lack of toilets which had resulted in visitors being deterred from visiting the area. He highlighted that the systems need to be in place to ensure that Durham does not suffer from the

negative impacts of increased tourism footfall and suggested that businesses which benefit from the visitor economy pay into a fund to be used county wide to benefit the tourism sector.

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that the Service worked with landowners and the Landscape Partnership in relation to World Heritage sites and had specific processes in place. She confirmed that through the Sustainability Plan the Service would be able to influence the systems in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of increased tourism. With regards to funding from businesses, the Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy added that Manchester had introduced a hotel tax, where hoteliers had voluntarily agreed to add £1 charge to the cost of a room per night to negate the impact of tourists to the area. The introduction of a tourism tax was under review with a number of local authorities interested in the outcome of this trial. She continued that the outcome of the trial would be monitored.

Councillor Nicholls commented that rail travel was a sustainable method of travel for visitors, however he was concerned that the 60% increase in rail fares had made this mode of transport unaffordable for most families. He asked if lobbying was taking place to address the issue of significantly increased rail fares. He also raised concerns with regards to local transport and the need to ensure that the public transport infrastructure was in place across the county for use by visitors to the county. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy confirmed that she had been lobbying with regards to rail fares and advised that she sits on transport forums where she raises the issue as well as raising the issue at a national level through Visit Britain, Visit England and the Department for Culture and Sport. She agreed that the increase cost of rail fares was a real issue for families and would result in families more likely to visit by car which contradicted the approach to sustainable tourism. In addition, there was the challenge of the 'final mile' to get from a destination to other parts of the county. She added that she had commissioned a transport consultant to review all public transport provision in the county and confirmed that the report was due at the end of March 2024 which would include tangible comprehensive information identifying where there were gaps and challenges in current provision to then build a case to lobby transport providers. She continued that there was also a need to look at creative solutions to transport issues and referred to examples of volunteer bus services for local people and visitors in rural areas and confirmed that the consultant will be looking at this operating model and whether it would be suitable for the county.

Councillor Kay commented that the county has a number of cycling routes to promote to visitors coming to the county, however there was a disconnect in relation to the cycle route that runs along the railway path between Bishop Auckland and Shildon and he felt that this would dissuade users from cycling that particular route. He confirmed that he had raised the issue previously but was unsure who to contact to progress his concerns. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that she would feedback comments to the Public Rights of Way Team. In

addition, she would ask colleagues to raise the issue at the tourism working group meetings which includes representatives from various DCC service areas that focus on product development and she would ask that Councillor Kay was included in future conversations.

Councillor A Batey commented that she had previously mentioned the need to consider the introduction of a ticketing or voucher scheme offering discounts to attractions in the county. She noted that many people visit for the day not knowing what was on offer and suggested that by offering discount vouchers or tickets, this would encourage people to stay in the county longer to visit other attractions in the area. In addition, she suggested that a discounted ticket offer for public transport should be considered for visitors covering transport to various attractions in the county. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that prior to COVID, conversations with providers had started in relation to discounted tickets/vouchers to various attractions in the county. She confirmed that a meeting had been arranged for the following week with strategic partners to discuss joint ticketing and if given the go ahead, the scheme would be introduced at the start of the season.

Councillor Lines noted that Darlington had a frequent rail service, however there was no public transport from Darlington to some of the towns in the south of the county. It was confirmed that the commissioned review looking at public transport across the county would cover public transport provision in the south of the county.

Councillor Robson commented that the bicentenary of the Darlington to Stockton railway provided an opportunity to celebrate the role of the region and County Durham in the birth of railways as an international form of transport. He referred to a recent newspaper article featuring the restoration of the world's first railway station at Heighington and suggested that the restoration be publicised adding to the railway offer in the county. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy confirmed that the Marketing Team would be promoting stories and themed activities as part of the Darlington and Stockton railway bicentennial celebrations in 2025.

Councillor Elmer referred to the need for appropriate public transport provision signposting and other options for sustainable travel within the county. Bespoke information on public transport and other various sustainable options should be easily accessible and easy to use and suggested the introduction of a bespoke App to help visitors navigate across the county. He added that interconnectivity was an issue and had been highlighted by candidates for the Combined Authority and suggested that Durham take advantage of the high level drive created by the Combined Authority.

With regards to Middridge Station, Councillor Sutton-Lloyd agreed that this was a great opportunity to link in with the bicentennial celebrations where investment had already been allocated to develop routes and initiatives. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that Visit England and Visit Britain were sited on the

bicentennial celebrations and were marketing the event to other countries, using the anniversary to package a lot of products in the county and North East region.

Councillor Freeman commented that railways were a big attraction within the county with North Road station, Weardale railway and Locomotion at Shildon. He added that the tourism offer had to be right in Durham City and then the offer could be dispersed to other areas of the county. He highlighted the lack of attractions in Durham City and the poor retail offer and questioned the measures that were in place to improve the current offer. He noted that The Story and the DLI Museum and Art Gallery were current projects in the Durham City area and would be included in the tourism offer in the next 18 months. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy responded that retail was a global challenge with the significant rise in on-line shopping and advised that DCC was looking at how the Durham City offer could be improved and use the coast and countryside to disperse the offer. She acknowledged that there was a lack of a nationally recognised headline visitor attraction for County Durham within the vicinity of Durham City. In addition, there was a need for more hotel accommodation within the city centre however this would require significant investment. She confirmed that details were in the DMP action plan and highlighted that the development of a headline attraction would result in the further hotel development and an improved retail offer would then follow.

Councillor Adam referred to the 2012-2016 management plans and commented that he found it difficult to see the improvement that had been made and questioned the improvement that was expected by 2030. He noted the lack of sufficient attractions to draw visitors to other parts of the county and asked what attractions could be developed or improved to attract visitors to other areas of the county and how we would attract the necessary funding.

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy advised that some elements of the 2012 plan would be included in the draft DMP as they still needed to be resolved. She added that within the next six years there would be development and delivery of The Story, development of the former DLI site, Raby Estates are developing a world class visitor attraction, Auckland Castle attractions will move to the delivery stage, the worlds largest engine shed will be located at Locomotion at Shildon and visitor accommodation will be in the planning process. In addition, she highlighted that the Film and TV industry also drives consumers to visit the county and that the opening of studios at Sunderland would also benefit County Durham. It was noted that the presentation on the County Durham Visitor Economy on the 12 April 2024 would show the improvement in the tourism offer since 2012 in terms of visitor numbers and product.

The Head of Culture, Sport and Tourism added that the Combined Authority and the Devolution Deal had a real commitment to tourism and County Durham was central to the visitor economy in the region. There would be investment opportunities with the Devolution Deal and confirmed that the VCD team are putting together our offer to then sell to the other members of the North East Combined Mayoral Authority.

In response to a query from Councillor Coult regarding engaging smaller stakeholders, the Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy explained that the VCD team take social influencers and tourism operators on visits to various providers. In addition, there was a business support newsletter that was circulated to over 1000 businesses weekly and there was a team that focused on partnership engagement with businesses, hold training sessions, conference events and peer to peer networking. She highlighted that not all tourism businesses want to engage and work with VCD.

Councillor Kay commented that County Durham had the oldest passenger railway line in the country which is a huge opportunity and referenced the Weardale railway. He continued that the development of this line had not progressed since discussions in 1993 to open the line from Bishop Auckland to Stanhope. He referred to Heighington Station and asked whether there had been any progress in relation to the pub which had closed and suggested that this would provide an opportunity for people to break their journey. The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy confirmed that the Weardale railway had been bought by the Auckland project and it provided both a commuter and a heritage offer with events and a regular service offer from Bishop Auckland to Stanhope for both residents and visitors. In relation to the Locomotion 1 pub, the Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy did not have an update, however she would make enquiries after the meeting and could suggest that the site be used for investment activity by the private sector.

Councillor Adam added that he could provide an update in relation to Locomotion 1 pub and commented that there was a bicentenary group currently raising funds to redevelop the ticket office and platforms to bring them back into use, however it would take a lot of work for the pub to be back in operation.

Councillor A Batey added that a former member of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee had kept the committee members updated on the, Stockton and Darlington Railway bicentennial celebrations. She then referred to the new Art Gallery, conference facility and restaurant development on the former DLI site and asked that the Service Grouping identify a different, more appropriate title for the development. Referring to the proposed development as the DLI was confusing as the DLI collection is to be located at The Story.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy for the presentation and found the Overview and Scrutiny meetings focusing on the draft DMP of great value. He would like to see the suggestion from Councillor A Batey in relation to discounted tickets/vouchers being made available to visitors progressed. He then referred to the monitoring and evaluation slide in the presentation and the bullet point referencing the setting up of working groups or task groups to develop future ideas and projects and commented that Members would be happy to be involved and support these groups, if the theme of the group was an area of interest

for that particular member. Alternatively, Members could meet with VCD colleagues and feed into the groups accordingly.

The Strategic Manager, Tourism and Visitor Economy thanked Members for their contributions and valued feedback to help shape the draft DMP.

Resolved:

That the comments made by Members be captured and formulated into an Overview and Scrutiny response, which would be shared with the Service Grouping to further develop the draft Destination Management Plan.

6 Any Other Business

The Chair reminded Members that a further Special Joint Committee scheduled for 12 April 2024 would be focusing on the County Durham Visitor Economy and a workshop on the 17 April 2024 would be focusing on the new Place Brand for County Durham.

Economy & Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22nd April 2024

Selective Licensing Update



Report of Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report provides an update for the members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the Selective Licensing scheme.

Executive summary

- 2 The legal powers to set up a scheme for the licensing of properties is contained in Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004. The scheme lasts for five years. Following a three-month notice period, the scheme went live in April 2022.
- 3 Selective licensing provides a regulatory framework which allows for pro-active monitoring of the private rented sector and the opportunity for enforcement against poor landlords. It facilitates a multi-agency approach making the best use of a range of powers available in addition to selective licensing.
- 4 Civil Penalties can be used as alternative to prosecution for Selective Licensing offences, including for not having a licence, non-compliance with licence conditions, or for improvement notices.
- 5 The teams continue to work proactively in the selective licensing areas to ensure all landlords obtain a license and comply with licence conditions, by making full use of both informal measures as well as robustly pursuing enforcement action.

Recommendation

- 6 The Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members to note the content of the report and presentation and provide feedback accordingly.

Background

- 7 The council's housing functions include:
- Preparing the Housing strategy which sets out the housing needs of the County and how they will be met.
 - Private Sector Housing (Enforcement) working with landlords to ensure any housing provided meets the required standards.
 - Selective Licencing which provides for the regulation of landlords in designated areas of the County.
- 8 Following consultation, and Cabinet approval in September 2020, Durham County Council applied for selective licensing to central government in December 2020. This application was approved on 30 November 2021.
- 9 Selective licensing came into force on 1 April 2022, covering 42% of the private rented homes and 103 of the 324 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in County Durham.
- 10 A landlord must have a licence for their property if they privately rent it in a designated area for selective licensing in County Durham.

Selective Licensing scheme

- 11 The scheme covers 42% of the private rented sector (PRS) in County Durham (approximately 28,500 homes) and is one of the largest schemes in the Country. Where a Selective Licensing scheme covers more than 20% of the Private Rented Sector the specific consent of the Secretary of State is required before a scheme can be introduced.
- 12 The Selective Licensing scheme was approved by the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on 30 November 2021.
- 13 The scheme covers 103 of the 324 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in County Durham and in each of the LSOA, evidence was provided to demonstrate that the area met at least one of the conditions required by legislation, and some areas met the conditions for all three. These relate to:
- Significant and persistent anti-social behaviour
 - Low demand
 - A high level of deprivation.

- 14 The legal powers to set up a scheme for the licensing of properties is contained in Part 3 of the Housing Act 2004. The scheme lasts for five years. Following a three-month notice period, the scheme went live in April 2022.
- 15 The key elements of this scheme in Durham are:
- promotion of good practice in terms of management and maintenance which is capable of being enforced;
 - mandatory licence application for every PRS property within the defined scheme;
 - landlords must pass a 'fit and proper person' test in advance of receiving a licence;
 - appropriate staffing structure in place to support scheme administration, inspection, and enforcement;
 - property inspection regime in place; and
 - support for landlords to comply with licence conditions.
- 16 To date 13,124 Applications have been received, 11,821 Licences issued and £5.72 million in income has been received. Work is progressing on ensuring all landlords operating in the designated area are licensed.
- 17 Selective licensing provides a regulatory framework which allows for pro-active monitoring of the private rented sector and the opportunity for enforcement against poor landlords. It facilitates a multi-agency approach making the best use of a range of powers available in addition to selective licensing.
- 18 It is acknowledged that this is part of the solution, all previous interventions are still needed to, not just stabilise but, enhance our communities moving forward.
- 19 The licensing fee is a maximum of £555 from 1 April 2024, with discount available for each of the following:
- Existing licence holders (on 1 April 2024), receive £110 discount if they apply for a licence for an additional property that has become licensable in the past 12 weeks.
 - All landlords with two or more properties (£35 discount for each licence after the first property).

- 20 Landlords who have complied and are licence holders already will pay just £410 per licence for additional properties, reflecting a reduced fee for tackling enforcement.
- 21 All income is ringfenced for the operation of the selective licensing scheme only. Approximately £12 million may be raised across the five years of the scheme.
- 22 Around 350-400 applications are currently being received monthly and we will continue to endeavour to improve upon this rate going forward.
- 23 Notwithstanding the outstanding work of the team to date, there remains a small risk that we will not meet the projected targets by the time the Selective Licencing Scheme comes to an end in March 2027. We will provide a full update to Cabinet in October 2024 to mark the mid-way point of the scheme. This will enable us the opportunity to set out our plans for the remaining two and a half years of the scheme and provide an early assessment of proposals to extend beyond the initial five years.
- 24 This will be followed by a full review of the scheme that will commence by the middle of 2025 with a view to reporting to Cabinet towards the end of 2025 or early 2026 with recommendations on next steps and whether to pursue an extended scheme.
- 25 We will engage with the Economy & Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of both reporting to Cabinet in October this year and the full review of the scheme in 2025.
- 26 The teams continue to work proactively in the selective licensing areas to ensure all landlords obtain a license and comply with licence conditions, by making full use of both informal measures as well as robustly pursuing enforcement action.

Enforcement

- 27 Over 3,000 inspections have been carried out so far, including 350 follow up formal inspections.
- 28 There have been 81 improvement notices issued, and two prosecutions.
- 29 Civil Penalties can be used as alternative to prosecution for Selective Licensing offences, including for not having a licence, non-compliance with licence conditions, or for improvement notices.
- 30 Forty-one case files are currently being prepared that may progress to prosecution or civil penalty.
- 31 The maximum penalty for each offence is £30,000. Income received from a civil penalty can be retained by DCC, providing it is used to

further the statutory functions in relation to enforcement activities covering the private rented sector.

Next Steps

- 32 The Economic and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a presentation and make any comments and observations they feel appropriate for the scheme.

Background Papers

- Cabinet approval for selective licensing application to central government: [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday 16 September 2020, 9.30 am - Durham County Council](#)

Author(s)

John Kelly john.kelly@durham.gov.uk

Ted Murphy ted.murphy@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Local authorities are required to obtain confirmation from the Secretary of State for any selective licensing scheme which would cover more than 20% of their geographical area or would affect more than 20% of privately rented homes in the local authority area.

Finance

The income from the Selective Licensing scheme is ring-fenced to the scheme.

Consultation

Consultation of the scheme occurred over six months in 2020.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

n/a

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

Selective Licensing can be used effectively to ensure landlords comply with their legal requirements.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

n/a

Selective Licensing in County Durham

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 April 2024

Ted Murphy, Housing Manager



Agenda

1. Background and current position
2. Enforcement
3. Anti-social behaviour
4. Challenges and Next Steps

Objective/Purpose:

- To provide information on the current position of selective licensing within County Durham.
- To respond to queries members may have regarding selective licensing.

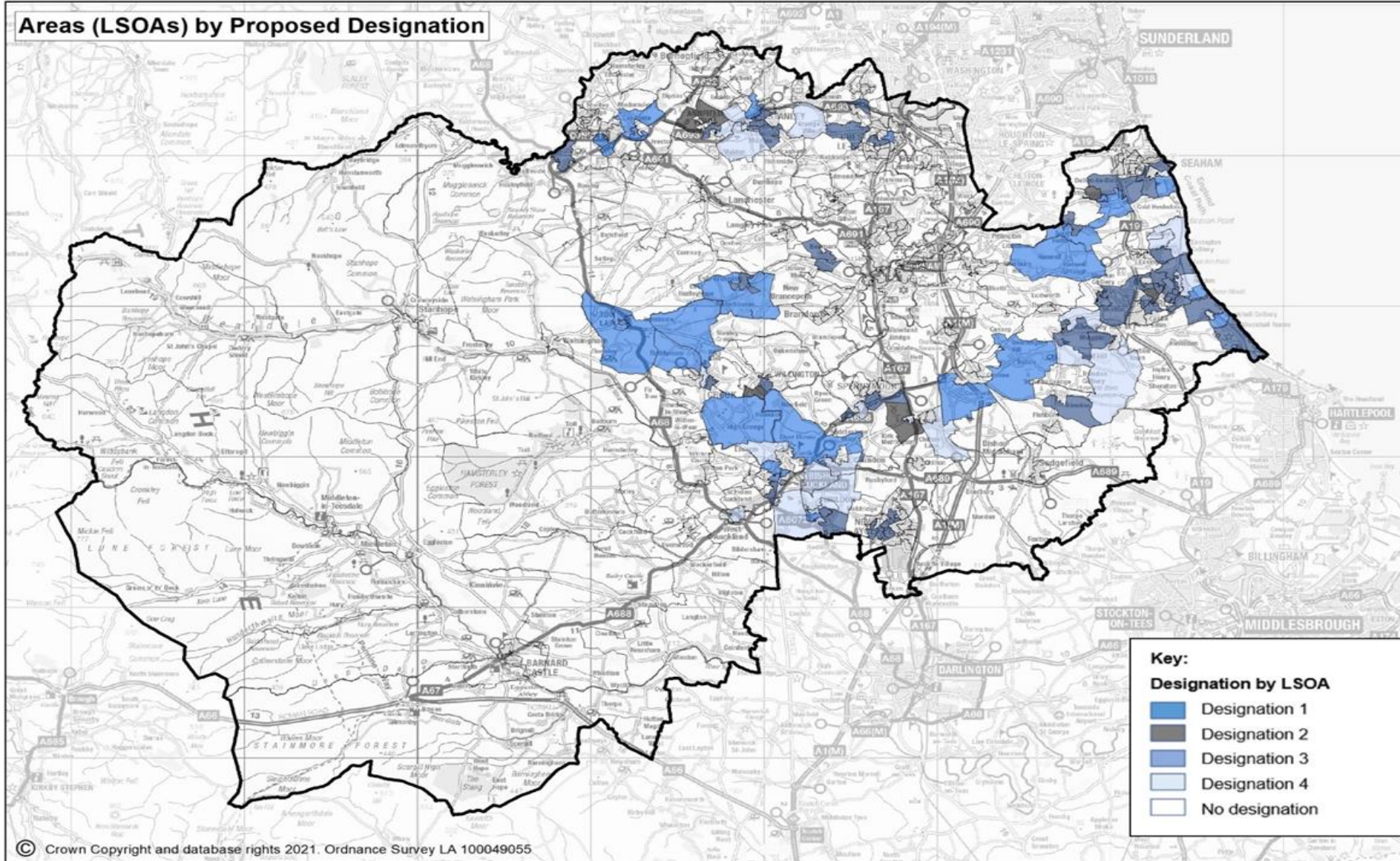
1. Background and current position

Selective licensing gives certain powers to a local authority to regulate landlords and managing agents of private rented property but only in designated areas. These areas must meet certain criteria, set out by legislation, regarding low demand for housing, anti-social behaviour, and/or deprivation.

Key details

- Approved by Secretary of State on 30 November 2021
- In force 1 April 2022 lasts for five years
- Covers 42% of the private rented stock 28,500 properties
- Covers 103 of County Durham's 324 Lower Super Output Areas.
- There are 4 designations:
 - (i) ASB
 - (ii) Deprivation
 - (iii) Low Demand
 - (iv) Areas that satisfy all 3 criteria





Licensing so far (as of 27 March 2024)

- 13,124 Applications received
- 11,821 Licences issued (41% of assumed PRS in designated areas)
- £5.72 million received (with a further £590,000 due in second part payments once the draft licence is sent).
- Ringfenced to selective licensing activities
- 3000+ inspections carried out
- Enforcement Action underway
 - Prosecutions secured
 - Improvement Notices for Disrepair
 - PACE interviews being conducted (no application or non-compliance with Improvement Notices/ Licence Conditions)



2. Enforcement

Enforcement Powers – Durham County Council

Housing Act 2004

Part 1 powers:

- Duty to take action where Category 1 hazards are found
- Discretionary Power to take action where Category 2 Hazards are found
- Formal options include Improvement Notices, Prohibition Orders, Emergency Action (Category 1 Hazards only)
- Always has to be the most appropriate course of action
- Try and work informally with landlords to get disrepair addressed before moving to formal action
- If formal action required must serve Notice of Entry before using formal enforcement options above

Enforcement Powers – Durham County Council

Housing Act 2004

Part 3 powers:

- Section 95 – enforcement when no licence or non-compliance with licence conditions

Housing Action Team in Community Protection have same powers in non-licensing areas and administer the Mandatory HMO licensing scheme (Part 2 of the Act).

Within selective licensing, there are 36 staff working across applications, compliance and enforcement, including Team Leaders and Business Support staff

- 18 Applications
- 18 Enforcement and Compliance

Penalties

- Prosecution (unlimited fine) or a civil penalty of up to £30,000
- Management Order
- Rent Repayment Order
- Banning Order
- Entry on Rogue Landlord Database
- No S21 Notice (no fault eviction)



Selective licensing enforcement so far (as of 27 March 2024)

Page 38

- 3000+ Inspections carried out
- 350+ follow up formal inspections for remedial work which have led to:
 - 81 Improvement Notices
 - 2 Emergency Remedial Actions
 - 2 Prohibition Orders
 - 2 Prosecutions concluded
 - 41 case files prepared, that may progress to prosecution/ civil penalties.
- 1 licence revoked after landlord found to be not “fit and proper”.
- 15% of all compliance inspections to date were found to be unsatisfactory.



3. Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour

- Can ask landlord to formally intervene where there are confirmed cases of ASB **AND** enforcement action is being taken by ASB or Nuisance Action Team Officers.
- We can't ask landlords to intervene if no confirmed cases, as ultimately ends up in court should possession notices be served. Needs to be evidenced.
- Appointed ASB co-ordinator to liaise with and educate tenants and landlords.
- Lead on enforcement of ASB licence conditions.

4. Challenges and Next Steps

Challenges

- Application numbers were lower than anticipated in 2023 but are on the rise in 2024, with approximately 400 applications being received per month.
- All evidence to date (verified tenures) shows the PRS is larger than we modelled, when you consider net empties and movement between owner occupier and PRS.
- No national register of landlords.
- Enforcement cases take time and effort to conclude, so an application from landlord is always preferable.
- A new financial penalty has been brought in as a result of an Upper Tribunal Decision in 2023.
- Renters Reform Bill proposals – property portal and interaction with selective licensing.

Next Steps

- Continuing identification of properties without a licence using various sources of data including Council Tax, Housing Benefit, and Tenancy Deposit data. Recent fire service data will also assist.
- Intensive analysis of the areas with the least applications against modelling, including Esh Winning, Pelton Fell and Trimdon South.
- Landlords written to advise that they need to apply for a licence to avoid enforcement action.
- Delivery Plan - Enforcement and Compliance teams working through all LSOAs in first 3 years of the scheme – targeted and intelligence driven.
- Review data in years 4 and 5 to consider areas that may be included in extension of the scheme

Any Questions?



**Economy and Enterprise
Overview and Scrutiny
Committee**



22 April 2024

**Draft County Durham Housing
Strategy and Delivery Plan**

**Report of Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration
Economy and Growth**

Electoral divisions affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the responses received to the consultation on the Draft Housing Strategy and to set out the latest draft of the County Durham Housing Strategy (please refer to Appendix 2) and a draft Twelve Month Delivery Plan (please refer to Appendix 3).

Executive summary

- 2 The County Durham Housing Strategy is being developed to consider housing issues across County Durham. The Strategy will provide a strategic framework to inform the actions and investment of the council and its partners and has been developed to ensure the council is well positioned to maximise future opportunities for funding support. The new Housing Strategy 2024 will replace the current housing strategy adopted in 2019.
- 3 A consultation was undertaken on the Draft Housing Strategy, between 30 October 2023 and 18 December 2023. The council engaged with residents and interested parties through its partnership structure, online engagement events, tailored surveys and a presentation to Scrutiny Members.
- 4 The consultation determined that there was overwhelming support for the proposed vision, principles and priorities. Amongst other things, the importance of meeting housing needs, issues with concentrations of

private rented sector housing stock and the importance of energy efficient housing and partnership working came through the consultation. A number of changes were made to the Draft Housing Strategy as a result of the consultation, and these can be seen in a tracked changes version of the draft at Appendix 2.

- 5 The draft County Durham Housing Strategy sets out the strategic direction for housing activity in County Durham and a vision to provide good quality housing that meets everyone's needs, is affordable for local people and supports the creation of great places to live. The draft strategy contains seven principles, which establish the foundation and rationale underpinning decisions and five priorities for action.
- 6 A key response to the consultation, including from Overview and Scrutiny, was the need for a Delivery Plan to be included in this version of the Housing Strategy. It was always the intention to prepare a Delivery Plan following adoption of the Strategy but to address this response a twelve-month delivery plan has been prepared and attached to the Housing Strategy (Appendix 4). A more long-term Delivery Plan will still be prepared following adoption.
- 7 The Housing Strategy will be presented to Cabinet and Full Council for adoption in July 2024.

Recommendation

- 8 Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note and comment on the draft County Durham Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Background

- 9 The County Durham Housing Strategy is being developed to consider housing issues across County Durham. The housing strategy will be delivered in partnership through the Housing Forum and in discussion with the county's residents, the private sector and other agencies as appropriate. It will also provide a strategic framework to inform the actions and investment of the council and its partners.
- 10 The Housing Strategy will ensure Durham County Council is well positioned to maximise future opportunities for funding support. In this context, the Housing Strategy provides the evidence to identify issues within a housing context and a clear approach to address these issues.
- 11 The Housing Strategy will be a comprehensive document that aligns with existing or emerging strategies including the County Durham Vision, County Durham Plan and the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. It will also support the council's Climate Emergency Response Plan and Inclusive Economic Strategy.

Consultation Overview

- 12 The Principles and Priorities paper was the first stage in the preparation of the Housing Strategy in June to August 2023. The responses to this consultation were used to inform a draft Housing Strategy which was subsequently consulted on from 30 October 2023 and 18 December 2023. The consultation included:
 - a) presentations to 13 Area Action Partnerships;
 - b) attendance at a number of County Durham Partnership groups including the County Durham Together Partnership, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Place and the Health and Communities Board;
 - c) a presentation and discussion at Overview and Scrutiny;
 - d) presentations to the County Durham Association of Local Councils;
 - e) online consultation events; and
 - a) the consultation was also supported by a social media and communications campaign which included a dedicated webpage, a Facebook advert and a number of Facebook posts, Instagram stories and a number of tweets on X/Twitter.
- 13 Whilst a range of views came through the consultation and those detailed points have informed the revision of the draft Housing Strategy,

the main messages from the consultation can be summarised as follows:

- a) overwhelming support for the vision, principles and priorities;
- b) strong emphasis on the importance of partnership working with partners keen to be involved in the development of the strategy and the delivery plan;
- c) new development should be focused on brownfield sites to stop building on greenfield sites or in the countryside;
- d) ensure appropriate infrastructure is built alongside new housing to support new housing development;
- e) support for strong focus on affordable housing. Affordable housing should be recognised as a product of choice, with affordable rental a tenure of choice;
- f) better access to affordable housing, including social housing and private rented, in particular for single people, younger people and larger families;
- g) support for the links between housing on health and well being, more emphasis needed on impact of poor housing on health;
- h) continue to improve partnership working with RPs to enable further regeneration of communities and high quality placemaking;
- i) more focus needed on provision of suitable affordable housing for students;
- j) concerns about the impact of student housing in and around the city centre;
- k) explore the need for additional licensing in Durham;
- l) concerns about the cost of living and poverty and affordability of housing;
- m) energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions should continue to be a focus in the delivery of the Housing Strategy;
- n) need more emphasis regarding the impact of poor housing on health;
- o) housing standards in the private, social and student rental sector was a concern, particularly regarding damp, mould and condensation;

- p) need for more meaningful engagement with members of the community and harder to reach groups in decision making; and
- q) more clarity needed on how priorities will be achieved and timescales.

14 A presentation to Members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee was held on 18 December 2023. The comments made have fed into the revised draft of the Housing Strategy and a summary of points raised and how they have been addressed is included in the presentation accompanying this report.

Draft County Durham Housing Strategy

15 The draft County Durham Housing Strategy sets out the strategic direction for housing activity in County Durham and a vision to provide good quality housing that meets everyone's needs, is affordable for local people and supports the creation of great places to live. The proposed vision is as follows:

'By 2035 County Durham will be a place that has good quality homes that meet the needs of existing and future residents that they can afford. The provision and quality of housing will support economic growth, contribute to improved health, community safety and create and maintain sustainable, mixed and balanced communities. People will live long and independent lives within connected and safer communities.'

16 The draft County Durham Housing Strategy contains seven principles. The principles establish the foundation and rationale underpinning decisions and actions to deliver the vision. The principles are as follows:

- principle 1: everyone has a right to a warm, safe and decent home;
- principle 2: everyone should have access to a home that is affordable to them;
- principle 3: housing is the cornerstone of communities and should support improved health, community safety, educational attainment, and the local economy;
- principle 4: the strategy will be for the county, not the council, and will promote local solutions underpinned by community engagement;
- principle 5: all new homes should be accessible, tenure blind and provide flexible living for different stages in a person's life, always aiming to allow people to be independent, including remaining in their home for as long as they desire;

- principle 6: existing and new communities should be physically, digitally, culturally and economically connected to support the creation of sustainable, safe, mixed and balanced communities including bringing empty homes back into use; and
 - principle 7: the strategy will support energy efficiency and carbon reduction in existing and new housing and contribute towards the council's Climate Emergency Response Plan.
- 17 The purpose of the County Durham Housing Strategy is to set the context as to how the council and its partners will meet the housing challenges faced. The draft County Durham Housing Strategy includes the following priorities for action that are not in order of importance:
- priority 1: increase the delivery of new homes including secure, affordable housing to meet housing needs together with the infrastructure required;
 - priority 2: ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, safe and secure housing that support health and wellbeing;
 - priority 3: ensure high quality, energy efficient homes and effective landlord services;
 - priority 4: ensure a comprehensive range of housing options for older and vulnerable people, disabled people and children and young people including specialist accommodation and support; and
 - priority 5: ensure high quality placemaking, creating safe, accessible, prosperous and sustainable places to live.
- 18 The draft County Durham Housing Strategy recognises the importance of placemaking and how housing needs to complement and integrate with the spaces around it so that people feel part of a community and can easily access the services and amenities they need. Providing the right infrastructure is of vital importance to good placemaking. The strategy recognises the importance of increasing the delivery of new homes including secure, affordable housing and new council owned housing.
- 19 The strategy sets out that everyone in County Durham should have fair and equal access to safe and secure housing that meets their needs. This includes addressing the specific needs of groups including children in care, children leaving care, people with disabilities, those with complex health issues and older people.
- 20 The strategy seeks to support people to prevent them becoming homeless and enable them to secure and maintain and sustain living in

good quality, permanent accommodation with support in place where it is needed. It also seeks ensure that a comprehensive range of supported and specialist housing is available for those who need it.

- 21 The Strategy reflects a commitment to providing high quality homes and to work with local communities and put them at the heart of the decision-making process in a way that meets their needs and priorities. The strategy seeks to strive to drive up standards in the private rented sector.
- 22 The delivery of the County Durham Housing Strategy will complement activities in the following plans and strategies:
 - a) the County Durham Plan, the council's Local Plan (2021- 2035);
 - b) the County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy;
 - c) the County Durham Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2020-25); and
 - d) the Climate Emergency Response Plan 2 (2022-24).

Delivery Plan

- 23 A key response to the consultation, including from Overview and Scrutiny, was the need for a Delivery Plan to be included in this version of the Housing Strategy. It was always the intention to prepare a Delivery Plan following adoption of the Strategy but to address this response a twelve-month delivery plan has been prepared and attached to the Housing Strategy (Appendix 3). A more long-term Delivery Plan will still be prepared following adoption.

Timescales and Next Steps

- 24 Following the Overview and Scrutiny meeting the Housing Strategy and the Delivery Plan will be finalised and presented to Cabinet and Full Council for adoption in Spring/Summer 2024.
- 25 Following the adoption of the County Durham Housing Strategy, the council will work with partners to develop the detailed Delivery Plan and associated monitoring framework to deliver the Strategy.

Background Papers

- None

Other useful documents

- None.

Authors

Mike Allum

Tel: 03000 261906

Graeme Smith

Tel: 03000 263610

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 requires local housing authorities to consider housing conditions in their area and the needs of the area with respect to the provision of further housing accommodation.

Finance

The housing strategy is not associated with a specific budget. The final housing strategy will identify a series of actions. Each action will be associated with a project that may require a funding bid once the scope of the project is determined. The housing strategy does not guarantee funding for projects listed.

Consultation and Engagement

The Housing Strategy Principles and Priorities Paper was subject to public consultation for eight weeks between 26 June 2023 to 18 August 2023. Consultation was also undertaken on the draft housing strategy between 30 October 2023 and 18 December 2023.

Consultation was undertaken with residents of County Durham and other stakeholders with a potential interest in the content of the document. Through the consultation the council made use of its partnership structure to assist in disseminating information about the housing strategy.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

A full equalities impact assessment is being undertaken for the draft housing strategy alongside the current consultation process.

Climate Change

Addressing the cause of climate change is a key thread through the draft housing strategy including Principle 7 and Priority 3 which states that the strategy will support energy efficiency and carbon reduction in existing and new housing.

Human Rights

Protocol 1 Article 1: Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions, including their property. The housing strategy will provide a framework to deliver housing to meet housing needs. Article 8: provides a right to respect for private and family life. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic

society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. The council will ensure the housing strategy will be consistent with the council's human rights obligations.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

Resource is required to progress the production, monitoring, review and implementation of the housing strategy.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

Detailed risk assessments will be undertaken at the project level and as part of delivering against the housing strategy.

Procurement

None.

Appendix 2: Draft Tracked Changes County Durham Housing Strategy

Please refer to the attached draft Tracked Changes County Durham Housing Strategy.

Appendix 3: Draft Twelve Month Delivery Plan

Please refer to the attached Draft Twelve Month Delivery Plan.

Draft County Durham Housing Strategy 2024

Foreword

We believe that housing is more than just bricks and mortar. It is at the heart of families, communities and our local economy. Whether renting or buying, there is clear evidence that having access to good quality, suitable, secure and well-maintained housing has a profound impact on health and wellbeing and, therefore, quality of life. A sufficient supply of housing, including affordable housing, is a key component of achieving inclusive economic growth, and the role it plays in supporting good health and wellbeing and supporting people into work is recognised by Public Health England¹.

For many years, the number of new affordable houses built in County Durham has fallen below the number needed, whilst the quality of much of our older stock needs significant investment to bring it up to modern standards.

The Housing Strategy aims to support people, to live independently with support where required, and remain in their home for as long as they desire by ensuring homes are flexible to differing needs over a lifetime, including supporting family living and adaptability for older age.

To achieve this aim, we need to see a step change in the number of affordable houses being built in all parts of the county, including the rural west. We also need to do much more to drive up the quality and standard of homes, whether newly built houses coming through the planning system or existing houses in the private rented, market or affordable sectors, so that everyone has access to a warm, safe and decent home that they can afford. Bringing back into use empty homes, wherever possible, is a key aim of the strategy as this both helps deliver much needed housing and tackles what can otherwise be a blight on the community.

The Housing Strategy is a strategy for County Durham and reflects the diversity of communities across County Durham and differing issues and opportunities. We believe that all stakeholders – residents, developers, investors, builders, housing associations and the local authority – have a part to play in delivering it and support sustainable, mixed, and balanced and connected communities. We also believe that the best solutions are delivered locally, which is why we will encourage local solutions to local problems by engaging with local people, recognising that what is needed in one part of the county might be different to what is needed elsewhere.

Finally, the strategy will support energy efficiency and carbon reduction in existing and new housing and contribute towards achieving the Council's Climate Emergency Response Plan. We will also maximise the opportunities available to address fuel poverty through combining advice schemes and heating improvements and targeting interventions at those most in need, whilst new homes will be designed in line with current energy efficiency standards.

¹ Public Health England was subsequently replaced by UK Health Security Agency and Office for Health Improvement and Disparities

We are confident that with effective partnership working, determination, creativity and innovation, we can deliver this new approach to housing in a way that makes a real difference in our communities.



Councillor James Rowlandson

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources, Investment and Assets

Executive Summary

The County Durham Housing Strategy sets out the strategic direction for housing activity in County Durham and a vision to provide good quality housing that meets everyone's needs, is affordable for local people and supports the creation of great places to live. Its purpose is to set the context as to how we will meet the housing challenges we face, setting out the following priorities for action, which are not in order of importance:

- **Priority 1:** Increase the delivery of new homes, including secure, affordable housing to meet housing needs together with the infrastructure required.
- **Priority 2:** Ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, safe and secure housing that support health and wellbeing.
- **Priority 3:** Ensure high quality, energy efficient homes and effective landlord services.
- **Priority 4:** Ensure a comprehensive range of housing options for older and vulnerable people, disabled people and children and young people, including specialist accommodation and support.
- **Priority 5:** Ensure high quality placemaking, creating safe, accessible, prosperous and sustainable places to live.

The strategy recognises the importance of placemaking and how housing needs to complement and integrate with the spaces around it so that people feel part of a community and can easily access the services and amenities they need. Providing the right infrastructure is of vital importance to good placemaking. We must increase the delivery of new homes, including secure, affordable housing and new council owned housing.

Everyone in County Durham should have fair and equal access to safe and secure housing that meets their needs. This includes addressing the specific needs of groups including children in care, children leaving care, people with disabilities, those with complex health issues and older people.

We will help and support people to prevent them becoming homeless and enable them to secure and maintain, and sustain living in, good quality, permanent accommodation, with support in place where it is needed. We must also ensure that a comprehensive range of supported and specialist housing is available for those who need it.

We are committed to providing high quality homes and will work with local communities and put them at the heart of the decision-making process in a way that meets their needs and priorities. We will also strive to drive up standards in the private rented sector.

1. Introduction

1.1. This Strategy identifies the key housing opportunities and challenges facing County Durham in the next five years. Our vision is:

‘By 2035 County Durham will be a place that has good quality homes that meet the needs of existing and future residents that they can afford. The provision and quality of housing will support economic growth, contribute to improved health, community safety and create and maintain sustainable, mixed and balanced communities. People will live long and independent lives within connected and safer communities.’

1.2. The Housing Strategy provides the strategic framework to deliver our housing priorities and supports the delivery of the Council Plan and the County Durham Vision.

- The Council Plan sets out the council’s vision and overall priorities and programme of work for the period 2019-2035.
- The County Durham Vision 2035, which was developed together with partner organisations and the public, sets out what we would want the county to look like in 15 years’ time. This vision is structured around three ambitions which are:
 - More and better jobs;
 - People live long and independent lives; and
 - Connected communities.

The Housing Strategy is a strategy for the county not just the council, therefore, throughout the document any reference to ‘we’ or ‘our’ refers to Durham County Council, its partners and relevant agencies such as, registered providers, NHS, Durham Police, Durham Fire and safety services.

2. National Context

- 2.1. The UK has some of the oldest housing stock in Europe and a history of failing to meet the number of new homes, and new affordable social housing, to meet demand. The combination of housing stock in need of regeneration and a lack of supply of new homes, and new affordable homes, has resulted in a long-term increase in house prices, as well as increasing rents in the private rented sector. This means that owning a home is beyond the reach of many in the UK and private rented accommodation is becoming increasingly expensive for households as demand increases. When people are unable to access suitable housing it can result in overcrowding, more young people living with their parents for longer, impaired labour mobility, which makes it harder for businesses to recruit staff, and increased levels of homelessness.
- 2.2. Older housing stock can also bring with it issues around energy efficiency, adaptability, maintenance, repair and general suitability for housing demands and needs today, and in the future, as some housing stock reaches the end of its useable life.
- 2.3. The average home in England in June 2023 was £286,000 an increase of 5% from November 2022. The 2021 Census record 61.3% of people owning their own homes in England, a decrease from 63.6% in 2011, it also shows an increase in those in private rented accommodation since 2011, at 20.5% and a decrease for those in social rented housing, at 17.1 %.
- 2.4. The National Housing Federation estimates that around 340,000 new homes need to be supplied in England each year, of which 145,000 should be affordable. The legacy of Covid and the present cost of living crisis have also had real impact on people being able to afford a home, to live in their homes and a stall on the delivery of new houses to meet demand and need.
- 2.5. The government has set a national target for 300,000 new homes to be built each year to tackle the acute shortage of housing across the country. To help meet this target it has also introduced a new, larger, £11.5bn Affordable Homes Programme between 2021-2026 to deliver 180,000 affordable new homes. The government identifies the provision of affordable housing as key to ending the housing crisis, tackle homelessness and provide aspiring homeowners with a step onto the housing ladder.
- 2.6. The government has recently passed new legislation and has published white papers and reports that will impact the housing market. The Housing Strategy will be delivered in the context of the following:
 - **Social Housing Act 2023** forms a new era of regulation for the social housing sector and will enact the reforms outlines in the Social Housing White Paper, which are aimed at improving the regulation of social housing, strengthening tenants' rights, and ensuring better quality and safer homes for residents. This will be done through stronger powers for the Regulator of Social Housing to carry out inspections, additional Housing Ombudsman powers to publish landlord best practice, 'Awaab's Law' which sets strict time limits for social landlords to address hazards such as damp and mould, new qualification requirements for registered providers.
 - **Renters Reform Bill**, introduced to Parliament (17 May 2023), plans to abolish Section 21 'no fault' evictions (following reforms to the court system) which will empower

renters to challenge poor landlords without fear of losing their home. It will become illegal for landlords and agents to have blanket bans on renting properties to people who receive benefits or have children. A national landlord register will be created through a new digital property portal, giving renters all of the information they need to make an informed choice before entering into a tenancy agreement. New grounds for possession will support landlords who genuinely want to sell their properties, or need to regain possession in some prescribed circumstances (e.g. student landlords, landlords who want to move back in). Notice periods will also be reduced where tenants have been irresponsible – for example breaching their tenancy agreement or causing damage to the property. Lastly, the Bill will require all landlords to join the new Ombudsman scheme and a Decent Homes standard will be introduced for the private rented sector to bring about higher quality homes. The Bill will be monitored as it progresses towards being enacted and, after implementation, the impact of the reforms will be monitored (e.g. supply of housing). We will engage with different stakeholders affected by the reforms to understand the wider impacts on local authority policy and strategy. We will also support both renters and landlords to understand the reforms and their new responsibilities.

- **Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill**- sets out a policy regime to tackle geographical disparities across the UK based on the government setting medium term missions, with a 2030 timeframe, to boost productivity and living standards, spread opportunities and improve opportunities, restore a sense of community and local pride and belonging and empower local leaders and communities. Housing is a key component of this. The Levelling Up paper seeks to work with places in a more joined up way to tackle housing and regeneration issues.
- **Homes England Strategic Plan 2023-2028**- has been developed collaboratively with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The strategy sets out how Homes England will play its part in delivering the government’s Levelling up and housing agendas. Its mission is to “drive regeneration and housing delivery to create high-quality homes and thriving places. This will support greater social justice, the levelling up of communities across England and the creation of places people are proud to call home”. The strategy has five interconnected objectives to deliver on the mission: create vibrant and successful places, build a housing and regeneration sector that works for everyone, enable sustainable homes and places, promote creation of high-quality homes in well designed places, facilitate the creation of homes people need.

2.7. Homes England pledge to use the strategy to work closely with local authorities, registered providers, government departments and the private sector as partners to deliver change, and intervene directly, exercising the use of their statutory powers to champion both national and local interests.

3. Local context

3.1. All the following data and much more can be found on the Durham insights webpage² and are up to date at time of publication. County Durham is a largely rural county with almost half the

² <https://www.durhaminsight.info/#/view-report/5f6e69673588409bae5d58e537a1c5bf/E06000047>

population living in rural areas. In 2021 the County contained 249,520 dwellings, projected to rise to 258,374 by 2043.

Dwelling Stock

3.2. In County Durham 62.5% of properties are owner-occupied, 20% are social rented and 17.1% are private rented. Most dwellings in the county are terraced houses, which at 36% of the stock, is higher than for the Northeast region and for England. The mix of dwelling types in the county is changing with the proportion of bungalows in the county rising to 14%, higher than the region and England percentages. Detached dwellings have risen to 15%, again above the Northeast region of 12%. Of all dwellings, 5.9% have one bedroom/bedsit, 35.2% have two bedrooms, 44.9% have three bedrooms and 16.7% have four or more bedrooms.

Housing Market context

3.3. Median prices in County Durham have consistently been slightly lower than median prices for the North East, which are well below those for England as a whole. Overall, prices have increased from £100,000 in 2015 to £123,000 in 2022. Prices peaked at £128,000 in between April 2020 – March 2021 but have since fallen slightly.

Social Context

3.4. Indicators of deprivation have seen improvements in some areas, but not all have experienced the same benefits. The county is ranked 48th for deprivation out of 151 Upper Tier Local Authorities, with 1 being the most deprived authority. Child poverty in the county is 27.3% which is slightly lower than the Northeast as a region but still higher than England which is 22.5%. As a county it is also ranked 148th out of 151 Upper Tier Local Authorities for living environment. This rank considers the quality of the local environment including the quality of housing and outdoor environment.

3.5. The delivery of the Housing Strategy will complement activities in the following plans and strategies.

- The County Durham Plan is the Council's Local Plan. It sets out our growth ambitions between now and 2035 and the level of new homes, jobs and infrastructure needed to support this. The plan presents a vision for potential housing, jobs and the environment until 2035.
- The County Durham Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2020-25) places our community at the heart of our wish to improve health and wellbeing, and to reduce health inequalities. It recognises the impact that housing quality can have on people's physical and mental health and sets out priorities to tackle the number of rough sleepers and the rise of households in temporary accommodation and reduce low quality housing.
- The Climate Emergency Response Plan 2 (2022-24) sets out the long-term vision for County Durham, Durham County Council to reach net zero in its emissions by 2030, with the target for the County to become carbon neutral being brought forward to 2045 It sets out green energy aims including all new developments to have green energy generation schemes, and energy efficient, carbon passive technology to be used on new and existing buildings.
- The County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy sets a clear, long-term vision for the area's economy up to 2035, with an overarching aim to create more and better jobs in

an inclusive, green economy. It seeks to overcome barriers in order to transform levels of growth and harness the county's potential. It recognises that housing is a major enabler to achieving economic growth and better social outcomes for our communities.

Devolution

- 3.6. On 28 December 2022 the Government announced a devolution deal with the seven councils across the North East, including Durham. To implement the deal, a new Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) will be established. The new Mayor, when elected, will have significant powers including relating to housing. We therefore recognise that the Housing Strategy and Delivery Plan are being developed in the context of emerging devolution work, including place partnerships and potential mayoral strategies.

4. Principles

4.1. The following principles establish the foundation and rationale underpinning our vision.

Principle 1: Everyone has a right to a warm, safe and decent home.

4.2. Homes should be well maintained, free of damp and mould. People should feel safe in their homes from domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour. A home should support positive health outcomes.

Principle 2: Everyone should have access to a home that is affordable to them.

4.3. We will support the delivery of a range and choice of homes to meet housing need and demand, including market housing for those who can afford it, affordable housing products for those who cannot afford to have their needs met through the market. Alongside the provision of new homes, we will work to bring regenerate our existing housing stock and bring empty homes back in to use, where appropriate, to meet housing needs. By ensuring a sufficient supply of all types of housing we can help prevent homelessness and reduce reliance on temporary accommodation. We will also seek to make sure there is sufficient homes for everyone.

Principle 3: Housing is the cornerstone of communities and should support improved health, community safety, educational attainment, and the local economy.

4.4. Health and wellbeing and life opportunities should be the same for all residents of County Durham. Housing plays a vital role in creating and sustaining strong communities, from providing a safe and secure place to live, to providing outdoor space to play and socialise. The blend of good quality homes, outdoor space, good infrastructure, with access to services, good schools and employment opportunities are key to thriving communities.

4.5. The Housing Strategy will align with a number of other strategies and plans to ensure that communities are safer, healthier and more prosperous. These include the Inclusive Economic Strategy, the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Growing Up in County Durham Strategy and the principles of the Anti-Social Behaviour pledge in supporting safe neighbourhoods.

Principle 4: The strategy will be for the county, not the council, and will promote local solutions underpinned by community engagement.

4.6. The Housing Strategy will be a strategy for County Durham that will be developed and delivered in partnership across the county and for the benefit of all of our residents. We will make use of the County Durham Partnership, its sub-groups including the Housing Forum, and other relevant groups in developing and delivering the Strategy.

4.7. The Housing Strategy will promote consultation and engagement with all members of the community as part of the delivery of its priorities. It will also jointly develop local solutions with partners, residents and relevant agencies.

Principle 5: All new homes should be accessible, tenure blind and provide flexible living for different stages in a person's life, always aiming to allow people to be independent, including remaining in their home for as long as they desire.

4.8. It is important that the homes that are delivered to meet needs are accessible and flexible. We will support people to live independently and remain in their home for as long as they desire by ensuring homes are flexible and can adapt to differing accommodation needs over a

lifetime, including supporting family living and adaptability for older age. The tenure of an affordable new build should not be distinguishable from market housing in the quality of its external finishings.

Principle 6: Existing and new communities should be physically, digitally, culturally and economically connected to support the creation of sustainable, safe, mixed and balanced communities, including bringing empty homes back into use.

4.9. The Housing Strategy recognises the diversity of communities across County Durham and the differing issues and opportunities they face. It has a role to coordinate activity of the council, its partners and wider investment opportunities to support sustainable, safe, mixed, and balanced and connected communities. We will pursue regeneration and renewal in our communities, including improving access to outdoor greenspace, bringing empty homes back into use, remodelling the existing stock or using demolition where appropriate.

Principle 7: The strategy will support energy efficiency and carbon reduction in existing and new housing and contribute towards the council's Climate Emergency Response Plan

4.10. In line with the council's Climate Emergency Response Plan, we will maximise the opportunities available to address fuel poverty through combining advice schemes and heating improvements and targeting interventions at those most in need to improve the energy efficiency of housing and reduce bills. We recognise the importance of the contribution of housing to energy efficiency targets and will actively explore new technologies as they emerge. As a minimum new homes will be designed in line with current and future energy efficiency standards. In addition, we will continue to explore opportunities to deliver measures above and beyond standards including, utilising new and emerging technologies.

5. Priorities.

- 5.1. These priorities take forward the strategic direction of the Housing Strategy to deliver the vision. They set out the key areas where we will focus activity and how we will meet the housing challenges of the county.

Priority 1: Increase the delivery of new homes, including secure, affordable housing to meet housing needs together with the infrastructure required.

- 5.2. An additional 24,852 new homes are needed in the county between 2016 and 2035 to meet housing need with a significant proportion of these already committed either on sites under construction or sites not started with planning permission.
- 5.3. We recognise the different housing needs of households and groups across the county. The Housing Strategy supports a range and choice of housing which is accessible and well designed to meet future needs and contribute to the sustainability of our communities.
- 5.4. Housing can shape and influence health and wellbeing of occupants, educational outcomes for children, economic opportunities as well as providing a feeling of security for occupants. Access to physical, social and green infrastructure, such as health services, employment, education, transport and outdoor greenspace, can play a positive role in creating and maintaining connected, mixed, balanced and sustainable communities and improving social mobility. Therefore, we will seek to ensure that new housing is delivered in locations in proximity to existing services and facilities, however recognising that in some rural areas there is not the existing infrastructure, but these communities would benefit from development for local people so that they can continue to live in rural areas and contribute to the sustainability of rural communities. New housing should also utilise brownfield land wherever possible.
- 5.5. Whilst meeting the housing needs of all groups is important, there are some specific needs which require intervention.
 - In order to meet existing and emerging housing need, 836 affordable houses are required every year for the County Durham Plan period. This is for people who lack their own housing or who live in unsuitable housing and cannot afford to meet their housing needs in the market, but historically delivery has fallen short of this. Registered providers will play a role in the delivery of affordable housing products;
 - The population of the county is ageing and over the next few decades, there will be a 'demographic shift' with the number (and proportion) of older people increasing. 2014 based population projections for County Durham indicate that from 2016 to 2035 the number of people aged over 65 will increase from 105,200 to 146,300 (a 39% increase) and those aged 75 and over will increase from 45,700 to 75,700 (a 65.6% increase). As most older people usually live in small households, usually as couples and single people, a minimum of 90% of household growth over the 19-year County Durham Plan period will be in households aged over 65; and

- There is an increase in the number of people presenting as homeless or at risk of homelessness in County Durham, with pregnant women particularly vulnerable to homelessness, which includes a rise in the complexity of cases that are being presented. The Homelessness Strategy sets out its vision to eradicate homelessness and ensure everyone has a safe place to live and supports the Housing Strategy.
- The student accommodation market is a uniquely functioning part of the private rented sector within County Durham³ and therefore requires specific action to deliver on the priorities and principles set out in the Housing Strategy to ensure the needs of students are met and the impact on residents is minimised.
- Families who are pregnant, who have babies and children will also have specific needs that will change as their families grow. Housing that will accommodate growing families and adapt to their changing needs will be required across all tenures.

What we will do

5.6. We are committed to supporting the ambitions as set out in the County Durham Plan, by ensuring enough new homes are provided that are energy efficient and meet the needs and affordability levels of local residents.

We will:

- Increase the supply of affordable homes, including new council housing;
- Ensure that affordable housing products are affordable for local people;
- Work with partners, including Durham University, to produce a safe, healthy, affordable, secure and good quality student housing stock; and
- Deliver infrastructure as set out in the County Durham Plan Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and via s106 contributions.

We will do this by:

5.7. Continuing to shape and direct investment through the County Durham Plan to ensure housing needs are met. This includes:

- Allocate sites for housing – the current County Durham Plan allocates sites for the delivery of homes to meet the housing need of 1,308 dwellings per annum over the plan period up to 2035. Further allocations will be considered as part of the next County Durham Plan;
- Support the delivery of strategic housing sites within the County Durham Plan to ensure sufficient and suitable housing land is available to support economic growth and provide quality housing for the residents of the county;
- Work with partners to identify and manage a pipeline of development sites with an emphasis on brownfield land where available;
- Deliver affordable housing, including the following products: discount market sale, First Homes, shared ownership, rent-to-buy, affordable rent, help to buy, starter homes,

³ There are up to 2,250 private rented properties within the DH1 postcode where students live, mostly in Houses in Multiple Occupation with 3 or more bedrooms.

council homes new build programme, and supporting registered providers with their development– the County Durham Plan requires that on eligible sites, a portion of housing is delivered as affordable housing to meet affordable needs;

- Enable housing in rural areas, including through the use of rural exception sites, to meet identified local needs for affordable or specialist housing;
- Deliver homes to meet the needs of older people – the County Durham Plan requires that homes are required of a standard, design and type to meet the needs of older people; and
- Deliver student accommodation – the County Durham Plan allocates sites for purpose-built student accommodation and supports the delivery of non-allocated purpose-built student accommodation where it can be demonstrated that there is an identified need, alongside other considerations. The County Durham Plan enables homes in multiple occupation to be permitted in line with a policy approach, recognising the concerns of some residents, and promoting, creating and preserving inclusive, mixed and balanced communities.

5.8. Deliver affordable housing by:

- Delivering 500 council houses as part of the Council Housing Delivery Programme. This includes both new build schemes and a programme of targeted acquisitions. The original intention was to deliver these 500 houses by 2026, however, the impact of covid 19 and wider economic conditions including inflationary pressures and rising interest rates have presented delivery challenges for the programme. As a result, we are intending to roll the programme forward commencing from the approval of the cabinet report in July 2023 with a six year delivery plan.
- Registered providers will continue to play a significant role in the delivery of affordable housing products in County Durham through their investment plans.

5.9. Secure additional inward investment in the provision of new homes, including s106 delivery, to meet the target of the provision of an 836 of affordable homes per year between 2016-2035, by working closely with Homes England and registered providers (registered social landlords) to enable the provision of homes that meet needs.

5.10. Provide support for alternative delivery models including Community Led Housing. Community Led Housing is a valuable route of supply for affordable homes and other forms of specialist accommodation to meet localised needs.

5.11. Work with landlords to bring empty properties back into use, where appropriate, in order to meet local needs, by working with landlords, acquiring properties and delivering Targeted Delivery Plans (TDPs).

5.12. Commission a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment to identify housing demand and need to support a future review of the CDP.

5.13. Secure contributions for infrastructure, including through s106 agreements. The IDP has been developed in partnership with providers to identify infrastructure needs. It highlights some of the key development aspirations of the County Durham Plan including where future housing and jobs will be located and identifies those places where additional infrastructure or capacity is needed in the future.

Priority 2: Ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, safe and secure housing that support health and wellbeing.

- 5.14. Even though house prices in County Durham are below the national average, so are wages. New builds are still unaffordable for many on lower wages, particularly in areas that are considered high viability areas. Housing stock in the second hand market may not be available in some areas, for example in the city centre, and in parts of the county where there is stock available, it may be unsuitable for people's housing needs or not in a suitable location.
- 5.15. Whilst the NPPF definition of affordable housing is recognised, we are committed to delivering affordable housing products that are available in a variety of tenures and types and linked to local income. Homes should be affordable for local people with a choice of products and tenures that households can afford without falling into debt. Home ownership should be accessible to all. Those on lower wages should also be able to afford to rent their home or aspire to home ownership with a range of options available to assist them.
- 5.16. There has been an increase in homelessness in County Durham. This can be attributed to several factors including:
- The implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which placed a legal duty upon local authorities to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need;
 - The impact of policy approaches introduced in response to Covid 19, which have since been rescinded, and have led to an increase in the number of evictions;
 - That homelessness cases presenting are becoming more complex with a range of acute housing needs; and
 - The cost-of-living crisis, which puts additional financial pressures on households and their ability to sustain a tenancy.
- 5.17. The 2017 Act introduced a requirement to both prevent and relieve homelessness through the provision of interim or short-term temporary accommodation where necessary. As a result, the council has faced increasing costs for the provision of temporary accommodation, with households living in temporary accommodation longer.
- 5.18. We are working hard to reduce the number of households being placed in temporary accommodation and to minimise the impact that homelessness has on individuals and families.
- 5.19. Housing quality has a significant and material impact on health and wellbeing. A decent home gives us a foundation for living a healthy life. Ensuring people have good and secure housing can help to delay or reduce a person's need for health and care services in the future and help them retain their independence, health and wellbeing for longer.

5.20.

What we will do

- 5.21. We want to ensure that everyone has fair and equitable access to housing that is safe, secure, affordable and meets their needs.

We will:

- Help and support people onto the housing ladder and own their own home through a variety of products;
- Help and support people in gaining secure rented accommodation they can afford;
- Help and support people to prevent themselves becoming homeless; and
- Enable people to secure and maintain good quality, permanent accommodation.

We will do this by:

- 5.22. Work together to maximise the delivery of affordable housing through the housing enabling function including accessing Homes England grant.
- 5.23. Focus on homelessness prevention by developing a new Homelessness Strategy aligned to the Homelessness Reduction Act, setting out how we and our partners will help people address their housing needs to avoid homelessness.
- 5.24. Prepare a Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document, including a First Homes cap, which will enable people to get on the housing market ladder. Continue to deliver affordable housing products including Social Rent, Affordable Rent, First Homes, Discount Market Sale, Shared Ownership, Rent-To-Buy.
- 5.25. Prepare and implement a Temporary Accommodation Strategy.
- 5.26. Review the choice based letting system, Durham Key Options (DKO) and work collaboratively with partners to deliver homes through DKO, to ensure that those who need housing, including those who have complex needs, have fair and equal access to it.

Priority 3: Ensure high quality, energy efficient homes and effective landlord services.

- 5.27. County Durham has seen a significant rise in the size of the privately rented sector (PRS) stock, with growth of nearly 78% to over 28,000 dwellings (12.6% of all occupied dwellings) between 2001 and 2011. The census of 2021 and modelled data suggest that this has increased again. Much of the private rented housing stock is older terraced housing and is often in poor condition.
- 5.28. Housing is an important determinant of health. Condensation and damp in homes can lead to mould growth, and inhaling mould spores can cause allergic type reactions, the development or worsening of asthma, respiratory infections, coughs, wheezing and shortness of breath. Living in a cold home can worsen asthma and other respiratory illnesses and increase the risk of other diseases and worsen other health conditions. Cold or damp conditions can have a significant impact on mental health, with depression and anxiety more common among people living in these conditions.
- 5.29. Housing is particularly important in ensuring a healthy start in life and is a key factor causing health inequalities. Some groups are more vulnerable to these housing conditions, such as children and young people, the elderly or people with pre-existing illness, are at a greater risk of ill health associated with cold or damp homes.
- 5.30. Some groups of people are more likely to live in poor quality cold and damp housing conditions, including households with an older person living in them, households with a lone parent, households with children, low-income households and households with people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

- 5.31. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) takes into account housing safety hazards in order to assist the council in identifying and protecting against potential risks from deficiencies identified in dwellings. This research has shown that 12% of PRS properties have at least one category 1 hazard as determined by HHSRS as opposed to 10% in owner occupied homes and 5% in the social rented sector.
- 5.32. As the largest social landlords in the county, registered providers will continue to improve their stock including as part of their decarbonisation programmes. In addition, the recent Social Housing Act (2023) includes stronger powers for the regulator of Social Housing, social housing reform such as 'Awaab's Law', changes to the Decent Homes Standards, more rights for tenants and new qualifications and training standards for registered providers.
- 5.33. County Durham has many areas and communities that are experiencing a mix of housing and wider residential environment issues. This includes issues such as: improving standards in the private rented sector; long-term empty homes; the provision of sufficient affordable housing; meeting the housing needs of older people; and addressing fuel poverty. We are committed to working with local communities and landlords to ensure that regeneration is shaped and delivered in a way that meets their needs.
- 5.34. The council approved a selective licensing scheme for County Durham on 16 September 2020 which was subsequently agreed by the Secretary of State on 30 November 2021. The scheme runs until 2027 and aims to improve management standards increasing compliance rates, provide safe and healthy homes by reducing housing hazards and disrepair and reduce anti-social behaviour by 10% from baseline figures. Enforcement action will also be carried out where appropriate to do so.

What we will do

- 5.35. We are committed to ensuring that all homes are of high quality and that landlords that do not meet this quality are held to account.

We will:

- Ensure continuing and improved housing standards and conditions; and
- Deliver our new stock to the highest standards, with a focus on sustainability and energy efficiency.

We will do this by:

- 5.36. Continuously reviewing housing conditions in the private sector, identifying any action, including further licensing, that needs to be taken to improve conditions.
- 5.37. Continuing to build and maintain positive relationships with private rented sector providers and make the new Private Landlords Accreditation Scheme, The Durham Rental Standard, an effective mechanism for engaging with the sector and a catalyst for change.
- 5.38. **Improving the quality of the housing stock with the aim of ensuring that housing is free from damp and mould.**
- 5.39. **Working with partners to ensure robust processes are in place including a reporting mechanism for frontline staff.**

- 5.40. Working with partners to ensure that residents are informed of hazards, and how to prevent them e.g. damp and mould which are a specific risk to their health and inform residents about how they can be supported to have identified hazards rectified.
- 5.41. Implement the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) to improve the standards of accommodation and support provided by non-commissioned supported housing providers.
- 5.42. Continuing to effectively implement our Selective Licensing Scheme and explore extending licencing arrangements to improve standards where appropriate.
- 5.43. Inspecting properties as part of ongoing projects such as the Supported Housing Improvement Programme, Asylum Widening Dispersal Scheme and Homes for Ukraine, to ensure these properties offer safe accommodation.
- 5.44. Working to identify new HMOs that require a licence and take robust action against landlords who fail to comply with legislative requirements and HMO management regulations.
- 5.45. Continuing partnership working through our formal partnership arrangements, including the Housing Forum, and as part of the council's wider housing enabling role.
- 5.46. Regenerating our estates and communities by working with residents to develop and deliver solutions that meet local needs and priorities, generate new investment, create safe, mixed, balanced, and sustainable communities, and provide homes that are affordable.

Priority 4: Ensure a comprehensive range of housing options for older and vulnerable people, disabled people and children and young people, including specialist accommodation and support.

- 5.47. As our population of older people continues to grow, sometimes with complex health conditions, the demand for appropriate housing and support is increasing. Meeting the needs of older people is a key issue which will be addressed, including through new provision, accessible and adaptable homes, specialist accommodation and bungalows in the right locations with the infrastructure and amenities to support them.
- 5.48. People with additional needs require safe, secure and affordable homes with the support required to remain independent and have a good quality of life. The join up between housing and social care is really important to assist many residents live independently and to plan for future housing stock provision. For many people the care and support required can be delivered in general needs housing, but independent living and supported housing models are required where people need additional safety and security and/or a substantial level of support. This includes through a Housing First Approach which prioritises getting people quickly into stable homes. Others that may need support are, pregnant women and women with babies, victims of crime, including non-domestic crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse and people involved in the Criminal Justice System and prison releases.

What we will do

- 5.49. We want to ensure that everyone has fair and equal access to the supported and specialist housing that meets their specific needs.

We will:

- Support a range of housing options that enable people to live safely and independently for as long as possible;

- Develop a Housing First programme that focuses on first giving someone immediate access to a settled and secure home, with access to appropriate support, where requested by the client, including services to cater for those who may be alcohol or drug dependant; and
- Continue joint working between housing, health, social care services and external providers and partners.

We will do this by:

- 5.50. Promote and sustain independent living, by planning for the provision of specialist and supported housing and housing related support for a variety of client groups, such as people with physical and mental health needs and those with learning disabilities in line with Adults and Childrens Services commissioning strategies.
- 5.51. Provide temporary accommodation which gives tenancy support to tenants who are excluded from the Housing Register for various reasons or present with complex needs.
- 5.52. Ensure the provision of adaptations together with flexible, personalised care and support to enable people to live independently for as long as possible as their care needs develop with age.
- 5.53. Undertake a Needs Led Accommodation Review (NLAR) to consider longer term specialist accommodation needs – the NLAR is considering the longer term needs of specific groups including pregnant women, children and young people, older people, people with mental health or learning difficulties and homelessness. The join up between housing and social care is important to assist many residents live independently and to plan for future housing stock provision.
- 5.54. **Assessing the need for single occupancy homes with social space and community facilities, particularly for vulnerable men and women..**
- 5.55. Implement the polices of the County Durham Plan including:
 - Ensure that new housing meets the Nationally Described Space Standards;
 - build 66% of new housing to M4(2) accessible and adaptable standards on developments of 5 units or more;
 - Require 100% of specialist housing for older people will meet M4(2) accessible and adaptable standards, and a minimum of 25% of accommodation to meet M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings); and
 - Require new development to provide an attractive range of housing options for older people with a minimum of 10% of dwellings to be of a design and type that will increase the housing options of older people, such as bungalows.
- 5.56. Continue engagement and joint working with HMPPS and other Criminal Justice Agencies to prioritise and maintain housing pathways in the Justice System.
- 5.57. As part of the review of DKO we will ensure the housing needs of our care leavers are prioritised, securing accommodation that mirrors the options available for young people who have not been in care.

- 5.58. Including the importance of social support from family and friends and the need for people to have a choice of where to live so that they can sustain their social and family support networks.

Priority 5: Ensure high quality placemaking, creating safe, accessible, prosperous and sustainable places to live.

- 5.59. The quality of the environment in which homes are built is as important to our health, wellbeing and prosperity as the buildings themselves. We are committed to ensuring that in future it will be of a high standard in terms of architecture, urban design, sustainability, and innovation. This ensures that new development enhances and complements existing high-quality areas and raises the design standards and quality of areas in need of regeneration.
- 5.60. Where a need for regeneration has been identified, we will use a variety of housing regeneration activities such as acquisition and demolition, group repair schemes, environmental improvements or the facilitation of new development depending on the needs of the area and community. Where appropriate we will also collaborate at a strategic level with our partners, such as Registered Providers, including joint ventures and other suitable mechanisms.
- 5.61. New development should provide local people with civic pride, make them feel safe and secure and help improve the overall image of the county and reflect local distinctiveness. Development needs to be carefully planned to ensure important features and characteristics are protected and enhanced.
- 5.62. Creating accessible and permeable public realm through connecting places and spaces, will help to ensure that many daily needs can be met using walking, cycling or public transport. A high-quality built environment should consider the amenity of both existing and future residents and consideration should be given to matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, as well as local climatic conditions. Indoor and outdoor space, including private and communal gardens, should be provided as appropriate to support a reduction in health inequality and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Spaces should be designed to be accessible to all users, including people with sensory and cognitive issues as well as reduced physical mobility. They must also seek to minimise opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour and make people feel that they can use them safely.
- 5.63. High-quality digital infrastructure is now essential for inclusivity, enabling residents to access training and employment. Recent trends toward home and hybrid working also require stable and fast connections. There is currently a lack of fast and reliable broadband in parts of the county, particularly in rural areas, which can cause digital exclusion. Whilst we recognise that living in good quality housing which is free from hazards will improve the health and wellbeing of residents, addressing only the physical aspects of housing in County Durham will not in itself entirely improve the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of our communities, or reduce inequalities. Poverty in the form of material deprivation (inability to afford basic resources and services such as sufficient food and heating) is a persistent issue within certain localities and communities. If we wish to address this, then the location of our housing must take into account easy access to health and social care, education, employment, transport and healthy food. It must also support the viability and vitality of our communities including those in rural areas.

What we will do

- 5.64. We want to ensure our communities are places where people want to live.

We will:

- Aim to ensure that all housing, in particular affordable housing, is developed alongside the provision of sustainable infrastructure and community-based services; and
- Ensure that the wider environment of communities is of a high quality, including raising the quality of the wider environment in communities in need of regeneration.

We will do this by:

- 5.65. Continue to develop and implement a programme of Targeted Delivery Plans (TDPs) to improve the quality of the existing housing stock and the wider residential environment to focus regeneration activities for communities most in need and support the creation and maintenance of mixed and balanced communities.
- 5.66. Ensure that new housing is accompanied by the delivery of the infrastructure, both physical and digital, that is needed to support it.
- 5.67. Create sustainable communities by locating new development in areas which offer the best opportunity for sustainable development patterns or support the vitality and viability of our towns and villages.
- 5.68. Create digitally enabled towns and villages to increase technology uptake, encourage innovation, and improve access to digital services.
- 5.69. Create safer living environments through careful neighbourhood design, proactively tackling anti-social behaviour in our communities.
- 5.70. Create healthier places to live which are fully accessible to people with disabilities, by supporting the design and layout of open and amenity spaces that are flexible and explore opportunities for community food growing space where appropriate to support the creation of healthy communities and improve wellbeing.
- 5.71. Promote well designed places and buildings that reflect local distinctiveness, promote sustainability and support the transition to a low carbon future.
- 5.72. Support the housing related element of the development and delivery of a new employment support offer which provides key worker support to vulnerable groups, those excluded from the labour market and those in insecure and low paid employment.

6. Delivery and Monitoring

- 6.1. The Housing Strategy sets out an ambitious set of priorities which can be achieved through the collective commitment of the council and its key partners and stakeholders. It is recognised there is a whole range of activities currently being undertaken across the county. Will also be preparing a Delivery Plan to accompany the Housing Strategy, in conjunction with internal and external partners, which will identify further activity and actions that will ensure delivery.
- 6.2. Through delivering the Strategy, we will respond to the specific needs of localities and address local issues. This will be recognised in developing the Delivery Plan, which will reflect the geography of the area.
- 6.3. It is important that progress against this Strategy and the subsequent Delivery Plan is monitored robustly and transparently, we will therefore:

- Monitor progress annually against a monitoring framework so that we are responsive to emerging needs, policy, and legislative changes; and
 - Report progress against the strategic priorities and actions in the Delivery Plan annually and publish details of our progress on the council's website.
- 6.4. The delivery of the Housing Strategy will be supported by a number of other policies and strategies including: The Towns and Villages Investment Plan, Climate Emergency Response Plan (CERP) 2, Inclusive Economic Strategy, Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, County Durham Plan, Homelessness Strategy, Poverty Action Plan, Growing up in County Durham Strategy, Tenancy Strategy, Affordable Warmth Strategy, Allocations Policy.

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County Durham Housing Strategy

Delivery Plan 2024 – 2025

INTRODUCTION

PRIORITY 1: INCREASE THE DELIVERY OF NEW HOMES, INCLUDING SECURE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MEET HOUSING NEEDS TOGETHER WITH THE INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED.

| Ambitions | No. | Actions | Timescale | Lead Partner | Links to other Priorities |
|--|-------|--|----------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Deliver the Council House New Build Programme | 1.1.1 | Conclude the procurement process with the appointment of a main contractor to build council homes. | April 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Delivery Team | TBC |
| | 1.1.2 | Obtain planning permission for Greenwood Avenue and Portland Avenue sites and start on site | October 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Development Team and Delivery Partner | |
| | 1.1.3 | Confirm detailed pipeline for development of phase 1 and phase 2 sites. | June 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Delivery Team | |
| Deliver the Registered Providers affordable homes pipeline | 1.2.1 | Delivery on Seaham Garden Village and Roseberry Comprehensive School | Registered Providers | Registered Providers | |
| Identify additional resources from planning fee income | 1.3.1 | Identify additional resources, including staff, to support the development management function | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Planning Development Team | |

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| Council and partners to work together to feed into the North East Housing Partnership. | 1.4.1 | | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Development Team and Delivery Partner-North East Housing Partnership | |
| Deliver the vision of the County Durham Plan | 1.5.1 | Delivery of market and affordable housing and housing infrastructure in line with County Durham Plan (CDP) policy | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 1.5.2 | Determine timeline for delivery of council owned housing allocations | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team / DCC Corporate Property and Land | |
| Identify sufficient, suitable housing land to support economic growth and provide quality housing for the residents of the county | 1.6.1 | Identification and management of brownfield sites programme. Including bids into NEMCA Brownfield Housing Fund | December 2025 | Durham County Council, Registered Housing Providers and Homes England | |
| Develop a housing delivery pipeline | 1.7.1 | Develop a single housing delivery pipeline to include council and Registered Provider delivery priorities. | July 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Delivery Team / Registered providers | |
| Deliver homes to meet housing needs in rural areas | 1.8.1 | Delivering homes to meet housing needs in rural areas, through the Council House New Build Programme and in partnership with the Rural Working Group | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Delivery Team | |

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| Work with Durham University and developers to deliver allocations in the County Durham Plan | 1.9.1 | Work to bring forward the six allocations in the County Durham Plan identified for Purpose Built Student Accommodation | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Delivery Team- Durham University | |
| Deliver community led housing | 1.10.1 | Delivering community led housing schemes in line with the Towns and Villages Programme Investment Plan | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Delivery Team | |
| Work with NEMCA regarding empty homes | 1.11.1 | Once NEMCA devolved powers established investigate local/regional approach towards empty homes action and enforcement powers (EDMOs) | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Delivery Team- NEMCA | |

PRIORITY 2: ENSURE THAT EVERYONE HAS ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE, SAFE AND SECURE HOUSING THAT SUPPORT HEALTH AND WELLBEING.

| Ambitions | No. | Actions | Timescale | Lead Partner | Links to other Priorities |
|--|-------|--|----------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Review the current allocations and lettings policy | 2.1.1 | Review existing Partnership agreement | March 2025 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |
| | 2.1.2 | Review four areas of the policy in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the housing register • Homelessness prevention • Medical assessment • Applicants with no housing need | March 2025 | DCC – Housing Delivery Team | |
| Deliver the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) | 2.2.2 | Work with all non-commissioned supported housing providers to ensure they are meeting minimum property and support standards | March 2025 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |
| | 2.2.3 | Develop a charter for non-commissioned supported housing providers. | September 2025 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |
| | 2.2.4 | Develop a Quality Assessment Framework for non-commissioned supported housing providers. | September 2024 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |
| Prepare a temporary accommodation placement strategy | 2.3.1 | Prepare temporary accommodation strategy to highlight how Durham place TA clients within own stock | April 2024 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |

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| Prepare temporary accommodation placement strategy | 2.4.1 | Prepare temporary accommodation strategy to highlight where Durham place TA clients within own stock | | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |
| Work with health colleagues to understand needs | 2.5.1 | Warm and Healthy Homes campaign offering free boiler repair and service to individuals with health conditions that are exacerbated by the cold | | DCC –Housing Delivery Team- Public Health | |
| Deliver the Housing Poverty Group Actions | 2.6.1 | Identify the affordability gaps and barriers in accessing housing in the social and private rented sector and work across services to implement solutions where possible. | March 2025 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |
| | 2.6.2 | Respond to the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy review, working with Revenues and Benefits. | March 2025 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |
| | 2.6.3 | Initiate a housing and employment pilot to assist those cohorts struggling to access affordable housing whilst entering employment. | March 2025 | DCC –Housing Delivery Team | |

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| Adopt Housing Needs SPD and IPS First Homes | 2.7.1 | Undertake consultation on second stage of Housing Needs SPD and IPS for First Homes. Consider representations and update document accordingly. Progress document to adoption (via delegated powers, cabinet tbc) | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Development Team | |
| Work with the University to develop student hub that highlights council services | 2.8.1 | Information Advice and Guidance stands at freshers weeks. | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing – Durham University | |
| | 2.8.2 | Promote council services through communications systems in family hubs/GPs regarding housing information | | DCC- Housing Delivery Team | |

PRIORITY 3: ENSURE HIGH QUALITY, ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES AND EFFECTIVE LANDLORD SERVICES.

| Ambitions | No. | Actions | Timescale | Lead Partner | Links to other Priorities |
|--|-------|---|---------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Explore need for additional licensing in Durham City | 3.1.1 | Consult with Durham University, Durham Student Union, Durham City Council to gain understanding of issues and extent of any problems. | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 3.1.2 | Consider commissioning external consultants as per last assessment of additional licensing need (BRE used in 2012) | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| Prevent fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions in domestic households. | 3.2.1 | Complete the Home Upgrade Grant scheme to retrofit private properties that are off the gas grid. | Spring 2025 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 3.3.1 | Assist residents regarding eligibility checks for central heating grants through ECO4 including; Verifying household eligibility for ECO Flex route including low income and medical criteria on behalf of OFGEM. | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |

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| | 3.4.1 | Co-ordinated programme of Energy efficiency advice across the Combined Authority and specifically in County Durham | April 2024 onwards | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| Prepare guidance on keeping homes free from damp and mould | 3.5.1 | Issue new guidance for landlords and tenants in line with the new expectations from government on damp and mould action, in line with the new ombudsman code of guidance. | July 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| Registered Providers to ensure compliance with the Safety and Quality Standard (Consumer standards 1 April 2024) | 3.6.1 | Registered providers will have an accurate, up to date evidenced understanding of their stock quality that reliably informs their provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for tenants. | | Registered Providers | |
| | 3.6.2 | Registered providers must ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard unless exempted by the regulator. | | Registered Providers | |
| | 3.6.3 | When acting as landlords, registered providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of tenants in their homes and associated communal areas. | | Registered Providers | |

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| | 3.6.4 | Registered providers must provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible | | Registered Providers | |
| | 3.6.5 | Registered providers must assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services | | Registered Providers | |
| Property inspections | 3.7.1 | Undertake a programme of formal inspections of empty homes that will target the worst properties contributing to community blight. | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 3.7.2 | Implement an inspection regime that targets occupied properties with lower EPCs as strong correlation to poor standards (RSL and private) | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 3.7.3 | Continue reactive and proactive inspections of privately rented properties in both SL and non-SL areas | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 3.7.4 | Carry out inspections of all properties belonging to landlords signed up to the voluntary accreditation scheme – The Durham Rental Standard | December 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |

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| Respond to the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 consultation | 3.8.1 | Prepare a response to the Government Consultation on the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 | March 2025 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| Prepare guidance on preparing for Ofsted inspections relating to supported housing particularly for children and young people | 3.9.1 | | | | |

PRIORITY 4: ENSURE A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS FOR OLDER AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE, DISABLED PEOPLE AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, INCLUDING SPECIALIST ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT.

| Ambitions | No. | Actions | Timescale | Lead Partner | Links to other Priorities |
|---|------------|---|------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Work jointly with commissioning to consider housing for specialist groups including older people, children and young people, homeless and people with Learning Disability and Mental Health | 4.1.1 | Undertake a Needs Led Accommodation Review | March 2025 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Public Health | |
| Ensure effective delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants to enable people to stay in their own homes | 4.2.1 | Prepare report on future DFG delivery. | March 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 4.2.2 | Create an improved assessment tool for disabled facility grants. | June 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| Acquire properties to meet housing needs | 4.3.1 | Deliver a programme of acquisitions of properties to meet housing needs, including the needs of specific groups | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 4.3.2 | Acquire the remaining 25 properties for temporary accommodation (from the 40 originally approved). | July 2024 | DCC- Housing Development Team | |

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| | 4.3.3 | Deliver 10 dispersed SHAP properties. | December 2024 | DCC – Housing Development Team | |
| | 4.3.4 | Develop bids for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 additional TA properties • 20 properties for larger families | July 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| Acquisitions including specialist accommodation | 4.4.1 | Work with Registered Providers to develop a strategic approach in relation to the acquisition of accommodation for specialist groups for example older persons accommodation, care leavers, accommodation for victims of domestic abuse, ex-offenders and homeless. | | DCC - Registered Providers | |

PRIORITY 5: ENSURE HIGH QUALITY PLACEMAKING, CREATING SAFE, ACCESSIBLE, PROSPEROUS AND SUSTAINABLE PLACES TO LIVE.

| Ambitions | No. | Actions | Timescale | Lead Partner | Links to other Priorities |
|---|-------|--|-------------|---|---------------------------|
| Develop and implement a programme of Targeted delivery plans (TDPs) | 5.1.1 | Explore opportunities for further resources for regeneration projects such as TDPs. | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Development Team | |
| Feed into regional infrastructure Plan | 5.2.1 | Create a strategic funding plan to co-commission affordable housing in the region. | | NEMCA – Housing and Land Steering Group – | |
| Adoption of design code SPD | 5.3.1 | Adoption and implementation of the design code SPD | Summer 2024 | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| | 5.3.2 | Prepare Settlement Character Studies for settlements across the County in support of the Design Code SPD | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – | |
| Delivery of Horden Masterplan | 5.4.1 | Continuation of acquisition of 3 rd street in line with the Horden Masterplan | | DCC Housing Development Team | |
| | 5.4.2 | Provide support to owners and occupiers of Third Street as part of the delivery of the Horden Masterplan | | DCC Housing Development Team | |

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| | 5.4.3 | Submit Business Case to NEMCA for Brownfield Housing Fund | May 2024 | DCC – Housing and Delivery Team | |
| Create digitally enabled towns and villages to increase technology uptake, encourage innovation, and improve access to digital services | 5.6.1 | | | | |
| Identify pipeline of estate regeneration | 5.7.1 | Identify a pipeline of opportunities for estate regeneration | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team – Housing Development Team, Registered Providers | |
| Review of Durham County Council Durham University Memorandum of Understanding | 5.8.1 | Undertake a review of the MoU and explore whether more emphasis on housing and accommodation is required | | | |
| Explore ways to improve engagement with communities, including students and tenants in relations to placemaking and how they access services | 5.9.1 | | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team- Consultation Officers Group | |

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| Consider role of housing regeneration supporting Town Centres | 5.10.1 | Explore opportunities for health on the high street/one public estate interventions | | DCC – Strategy and Delivery team- Public Health | |
| Establish a collaborative approach between social housing providers to support local place making | 5.11.1 | Establish a new place-making group which will join-up delivery | 2024 | Livin | |
| | 5.11.2 | Pilot home working initiatives | 2024 | | |
| Reduce digital exclusion of those living in social housing and in rural communities | 5.12.1 | Develop a digital and data collaboration model with social housing providers – connect suppliers, share understanding of needs, improve delivery, and deliver social tariffs, social value | | Digital Durham County Council Social Housing Providers | |

Housing Strategy

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 April 2024



Contents



Content

Housing Strategy

- Background
- Consultation Feedback
- OSC Workshop Comments and Responses
- Draft Delivery Plan

Background



Background

- 2nd consultation on the Draft Strategy took place between October 30 to 18 December 2023
- Following consultation, Draft Strategy modified as necessary, including development of delivery plan for first 6-12 months—workshop held with partners on 13th March
- Cabinet in Summer 2024 to be adopted
- Preparation of longer-term delivery plan and monitoring framework following adoption

Consultation Feedback



Main messages from consultation

- Continued strong support for the vision, principles and priorities
- Strong emphasis on the importance of partnership working with partners keen to be involved in the development of the strategy and the delivery plan
- New development should be focused on brownfield sites to stop building on greenfield sites or in the countryside
- Ensure appropriate infrastructure is built alongside new housing to support new housing development
- Support for strong focus on affordable housing. Affordable housing should be recognised as a product of choice, with affordable rental a tenure of choice.

Main messages continued...

- Better access to affordable housing, including social housing and private rented, in particular for single people, younger people and larger families
- Support for the links between housing on health and well being
- More emphasis needed on impact of poor housing on health
- Continue to improve partnership working with RPs to enable further regeneration of communities and high quality placemaking
- More focus needed on provision of suitable affordable housing for students
- Concerns about the impact of student housing in and around the city centre
- Explore the need for additional licensing in Durham

Main messages continued...

- Concerns about the cost of living and poverty and affordability of housing
- Energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions should continue to be a focus in the delivery of the Housing Strategy
- Housing standards in the private, social and student rental sector was a concern, particularly regarding damp, mould and condensation
- Need for more meaningful engagement with members of the community and harder to reach groups in decision making
- More clarity needed on how priorities will be achieved and timescales

OSC Workshop Comments and Responses

OSC Workshop Comments and Responses

Priority 1 – Increase the delivery of new homes, including secure, affordable housing to meet housing needs together with the infrastructure required

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concern that Registered Social Housing Providers are building new market cost housing, using land which had been transferred from local authority control as part of LSVTs and which was to be used for Social Housing. There is a need to look at whether potential restrictions were applied at the time of transfer. | <p>The team will look into this issue but is not something that is within the scope of the housing strategy.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to review areas of land held by DCC, that could be released for development, if there is local demand for housing in that particular area. | <p>When CPAL are bringing together their housing site disposal list they contact relevant services to obtain an understanding of housing needs in the areas where the potential sites are located.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognised that there is a significant need for housing for the elderly and that this demand will continue to grow in the county. There was concern that current and future demand is so great that the actions identified within the strategy and the delivery plan will not be able to meet the identified need across the county because of increases in the aging population demographic. | <p>No strategy can guarantee addressing this issue in full but the importance of meeting the need for older persons is now clearly stated in the supporting text under Priority 4.</p> |

OSC Workshop Comments and Responses

- Concern that in relation to Durham City, family homes are being transferred into Homes of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) for use as student accommodation which reduces the ability for local residents to access family housing. There is a need to establish future demand for student accommodation within Durham City and to monitor the impact on the mix of housing available within the City by working closely with the University, particularly identifying the potential for bespoke student accommodation developments on land in the University's ownership.
- Need to monitor the increase in charities purchasing multiple properties within a particular location for use by clients with complex needs and support requirements. This is having a significant impact on the local community in relation to house prices in that area and the ability to sell homes.

Additional text under Priority 1 now recognises that the student accommodation market is a uniquely functioning part of the private rented sector and that we need to work with partners, including Durham University, to produce a safe, healthy, affordable, secure and good quality student housing stock to ensure the needs of students are met and the impact on residents is minimised.

The Housing Strategy now includes reference to Implementing the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) to improve the standards of accommodation and support provided by non-commissioned supported housing providers.

OSC Workshop Comments and Responses

Priority 2 – Ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, safe and secure housing that support health and wellbeing

- Members made no comments that fall to this priority.

Priority 3 – Ensure high quality, energy efficient homes and effective landlord services

- Concern that Durham County Council is not represented on the Boards of the various Registered Social Housing Providers in the county which results in the County Council having no influence in the standard and management of housing provided to local residents by these providers. It was felt that this needs to be addressed in the strategy including the development of a process to monitor RSP performance and enable Councillors to feed in constituent concerns to the providers.

This is not a matter for the Housing Strategy or the council as Registered Providers are independent organisations and able to determine their own rules of governance within their legal and regulatory framework.

OSC Workshop Comments and Responses

Priority 4 – Ensure a comprehensive range of housing options for older and vulnerable people, disabled people and children and young people, including specialist accommodation and support

- Previously Planning Policy stated 10% of homes built needed to be for the elderly and disabled with the figure of 10% being the starting point. However, this figure has not been delivered and it was felt that the Housing Strategy needs to identify a higher figure to be delivered within the county that matches the emerging need for these developments.

A housing strategy cannot set planning policy, this must be in the local plan where it will be tested by independent examination. When we come to revise the Plan we may be able to potentially increase the requirement if this can be supported by robust evidence and shown to be viable.

Latest figures in the recently publish Annual Monitoring Report show that in last year 16% of new approved housing were suitable for older persons, exceeding the 10% target.

- Need to consider the Council New Homes Building Programme including the delivery of bungalows.

The Council New Homes Building Programme will deliver bungalows, but this will be subject to site viability. Bungalows tend to be land hungry and expensive comparative to houses and flats, which impacts on viability. If a site can incorporate bungalows and remain viable – and the site is suitable for bungalows in terms of topography, proximity to local services and transport routes etc – we will provide bungalows.

OSC Workshop Comments and Responses

Priority 5 – Ensure high quality placemaking, creating safe, accessible, prosperous and sustainable places to live

- Need to ensure that the strategy and the resulting delivery plan highlight digital connectivity as a requirement with the targeting of hard to reach and rural areas within the county.

A paragraph has been added under Priority 5 recognising that high-quality digital infrastructure, including in rural areas is now essential for inclusivity, including accessing training and employment.

General comments

- There is a need to include a delivery plan within the draft strategy, to avoid any resulting delays in the delivery of actions identified within the strategy.

The strategy is a long-term document and many external factors can (and likely will) impact on delivery over time. As a consequence, delivery plans will be developed over time to allow us to address emerging issues. In recognition that delivery plans do take time to develop, a delivery plan covering the first six to 12 months has been included in the strategy.

- It is important that the strategy is flexible and can respond to change at a national, regional and local level.

This is why the delivery plan will be developed over time and regularly updated.

- Concern that the strategy is referred to as a county wide strategy and not a DCC strategy, there needs to be accountability for the delivery of actions identified within the strategy and resulting delivery plan.

Accountability will be clearly shown within the delivery plan, including where DCC is the lead but also where partners will be responsible for delivery.

- Accountability needs to be clearly identified with the delivery plan together with timescales for delivery of actions. Examples include accountability for bringing empty homes back into use and the delivery of affordable homes within the county together with targets and deadlines for delivery.

Accountability and timescales will be included in the delivery plan.

- There is a need for empathy to be clearly visible within the strategy.

Agreed. The document is aimed as much at professionals (e.g. RPs, Developers, Homes England etc) as it is local residents, so we hope it strikes the right balance and tone.

Draft Delivery Plan

Priority 1: Increase the delivery of new homes, including secure, affordable housing to meet housing needs together with the infrastructure required

- Deliver the Council House New Build Programme
- Deliver the Registered Providers affordable homes pipeline
- Identify additional resources from planning fee income
- Council and partners to work together to feed into the North East Housing Partnership
- Deliver the vision of the County Durham Plan
- Identify sufficient, suitable housing land to support economic growth and provide quality housing for the residents of the county
- Develop a housing delivery pipeline
- Deliver homes to meet housing needs in rural areas
- Work with Durham University and developers to deliver allocations in the County Durham Plan
- Deliver community led housing
- Work with NEMCA regarding empty homes

Priority 2: Ensure that everyone has access to appropriate, safe and secure housing that support health and wellbeing

- Review the current allocations and lettings policy
- Deliver the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)
- Prepare a temporary accommodation placement strategy
- Work with health colleagues to understand needs
- Deliver the Housing Poverty Group Actions
- Adopt Housing Needs SPD and IPS First Homes
- Work with the University to develop student hub that highlights council services

Priority 3: Ensure high quality, energy efficient homes and effective landlord services

- Explore need for additional licensing in Durham City
- Prevent fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions in domestic households
- Prepare guidance on keeping homes free from damp and mould
- Registered Providers to ensure compliance with the Safety and Quality Standard (Consumer standards 1 April 2024)
- Ensure effective processes for property inspections
- Respond to the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 consultation
- Prepare guidance on preparing for Ofsted inspections relating to supported housing particularly for children and young people

Priority 4: Ensure a comprehensive range of housing options for older and vulnerable people, disabled people and children and young people, including specialist accommodation and support

- Work jointly with commissioning to consider housing for specialist groups including older people, children and young people, homeless and people with Learning Disability and Mental Health
- Ensure effective delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants to enable people to stay in their own homes
- Acquire properties to meet housing needs
- Deliver the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)

Priority 5: Ensure high quality placemaking, creating safe, accessible, prosperous and sustainable places to live

- Develop and implement a programme of Targeted delivery plans (TDPs)
- Feed into regional infrastructure Plan
- Adoption of design code SPD
- Delivery of Horden Masterplan
- Create digitally enabled towns and villages to increase technology uptake, encourage innovation, and improve access to digital services
- Identify pipeline of estate regeneration
- Review of Durham County Council Durham University Memorandum of Understanding
- Explore ways to improve engagement with communities, including students and tenants in relations to placemaking and how they access services
- Consider role of housing regeneration supporting Town Centres
- Establish a collaborative approach between social housing providers to support local place making
- Reduce digital exclusion of those living in social housing and in rural communities

Next steps

Next steps

Approval of Housing Strategy including Twelve Month Delivery Plan

- REG MT – 16 May 2024
 - CMT – 12 June 2024
 - Cabinet – 10th July 2024
 - Full Council – July 2024
-
- Development of a five-year delivery plan

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Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 April 2024

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 - 2029



Report of Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth

Electoral divisions affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024-2029) (as set out in Appendix 2). The report includes feedback from the second phase of the consultation and takes into consideration comments made by members of the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 18th December 2023.

Executive summary

- 2 The Homelessness Act 2002 brought about a more strategic approach to tackling and preventing homelessness, in particular, the requirement for the development and publication of a homelessness strategy for every housing authority every five years. The new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024-2029) will replace the current strategy adopted by Cabinet in July 2019.
- 3 The revised strategy has been developed following a detailed review of homelessness and rough sleeping. It establishes four priorities to tackle homelessness between 2024 to 2029; these are:
 - a) priority 1: prevent people from becoming homeless;
 - b) priority 2: improve access to and supply of accommodation;
 - c) priority 3: ensure the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless (work with partners to build resilience in people); and
 - d) priority 4: reduce rough sleeping.

- 4 This draft strategy will address the varying housing and support needs across the 10 main cohorts of people who present to housing as homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- 5 Some of the key findings from the review include:
 - a) a large increase in the number of people requiring early advice;
 - b) the number of people being able to remain in their existing home has considerably reduced;
 - c) an increase in the numbers of people with a support need, in particular those with complex needs;
 - d) access to accommodation for certain cohorts is difficult;
 - e) a reduction in affordable accommodation; and
 - f) there is insufficient supported accommodation for rough sleepers.
- 6 The scope of the strategy recognises all types of homelessness needs for people who are:
 - a) considering their housing options and require advice;
 - b) at risk of homelessness;
 - c) statutory and non-statutory homeless;
 - d) street homeless and are rough sleeping;
 - e) children who experience homeless; and
 - f) people who are moving on from homelessness (moving from temporary or supported accommodation and require longer term accommodation).
- 7 Following feedback from the second phase of the consultation, which took place from October to December 2023, a one-year delivery plan has been developed. A Homelessness Forum will be established in the coming months and will take responsibility for the development and implementation of the delivery plan.
- 8 A light touch review will be carried out annually to address any policy or funding changes as well as taking into consideration any significant

differences in demand to the service. The delivery plan will be updated accordingly following the annual review.

Recommendation

- 9 It is recommended that the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report and provide any further feedback to inform the final strategy to be approved by Cabinet in July 2024.

Background

- 10 The County Durham Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed in line with the Government's Code of Guidance for reviewing homelessness and formulating a strategy. An in-depth review of homelessness and rough sleeping was carried out, analysing data from April 2019 through to October 2022, to determine current and future trends of people presenting to housing solutions as homeless or at risk of homelessness including rough sleepers. It should be noted that this period included the years of the Covid Pandemic during which many Government initiatives were introduced to support households and prevent homelessness, including the Everyone In programme, ban on evictions and increased benefits payments. It is possible therefore that some of the figures are not truly reflective of the levels of homelessness.

- 11 This draft strategy is very different from previous strategies. It will address the varying housing and support needs across the 10 main cohorts of people who present to the council as homeless or threatened with homelessness. These cohorts are:
 - a) general homeless (with no support need);
 - b) complex needs;
 - c) young people;
 - d) domestic abuse;
 - e) offenders;
 - f) larger families;
 - g) rough sleepers;
 - h) care leavers;
 - i) hospital discharge; and
 - j) veterans.

- 12 Informal consultation was carried out between December 2022 to March 2023 on the proposed four priorities with the draft priorities amended to reflect the feedback. The priorities set out the key areas where the council will focus activity to deliver the vision 'Durham is a county where we all work together to eradicate homelessness and rough sleeping and where everyone has a safe place to call home'. The four priorities are:

- a) priority 1: prevent people from becoming homeless;
 - b) priority 2: improve access to and supply of accommodation;
 - c) priority 3: ensure the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless (work with partners to build resilience in people); and
 - d) priority 4: reduce rough sleeping.
- 13 Under each priority there are a number of high-level actions, which are in response to current and future pressures around homelessness in County Durham. Since the development of the last strategy the housing market and economic climate has changed therefore this strategy includes a range of new actions, for example:
- a) introduction of specialist officers within housing solutions including drug and alcohol support workers, social workers and trauma informed specialists;
 - b) utilise the council house delivery programme for new build and acquisition;
 - c) co-ordinate all existing support pathways and services; and
 - d) develop a housing first model for rough sleepers.
- 14 The strategy will be delivered in partnership via a newly established multi-agency homelessness forum. It will also provide a strategic framework to ensure that Durham County Council is well positioned to maximise future funding opportunities. The review document and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy provides the evidence to identify issues surrounding homelessness and rough sleeping and a clear approach to address these issues.
- 15 Current and future levels of homelessness will be continually monitored, including main reasons why people present as homeless. A light touch review will be carried out annually to address any policy or funding changes as well as taking into consideration any significant differences in demand to the service. The delivery plan will be updated accordingly following the annual review.
- 16 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy aligns with existing or emerging strategies including the County Durham Plan and the Housing Strategy for County Durham. It will also support delivery of the Inclusive Economic Strategy by seeking to ensure that a lack of access to good quality housing is not a barrier to economic growth.

- 17 An equalities impact assessment and wellbeing assessment have been produced alongside the development of the strategy, which will ensure that the document reflects and takes account of differing needs of our communities.
- 18 Consultation was undertaken on the document for a period of seven weeks from 30 October 2023 to 18 December 2023. This consultation ran alongside the consultation on the draft housing strategy and was joined up where appropriate. Consultation was carried out with residents of County Durham and other key partners and stakeholders including:
- a) presentations to Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) and County Durham Partnership thematic groups including the Housing Forum, Health and Wellbeing Board and Economic Partnership etc.;
 - b) a survey for residents and the opportunity to e-mail feedback;
 - c) workshop for all Members of Scrutiny;
 - d) conversations with key partners and stakeholders including one-on-one sessions with our housing association partners and a presentation to the Housing Forum;
 - e) briefings for elected Members; and
 - f) discussions at a regional level with North East Mayoral Combined Authority (NEMCA) colleagues.
- 19 The main messages from the consultation are: -
- a) Overwhelming support for the vision and the four priorities
 - b) Strong emphasis on the importance of partnership working to successfully deliver the strategy and achieve the vision and priorities
 - c) Prevention of homelessness was prevalent in the feedback, particularly working with families and young people to mediate and prevent them from being asked to leave the family home and prevention of evictions.
 - d) Ensure joint working with specialist support services to meet the needs of people with complex issues, for example mental health, finance, drug and alcohol addiction.
 - e) A joined up approach to assist those people living in poverty and prevent homelessness.

- f) Better access to affordable housing, including social housing and private rented, in particular for single people, younger people and larger families.
 - g) Review of the Durham Key Options policy to allow fair access and outcomes for people.
 - h) Strong links to health, housing and homelessness.
 - i) Improved partnership working to reduce rough sleeping, in particular a focus on mental health support, including addiction and supported housing for people who require long-term support.
 - j) Registered Providers of social housing are keen to work in partnership to support the vision and the priorities of the strategy, in particular the involvement in the Homelessness Forum.
- 20 All comments from the consultation have been taken on board and work has been carried out to ensure that the strategy, including the one-year delivery plan takes account of the feedback. Appendix 3 provides a detailed account of the consultation responses, along with a reply from the Council and what changes (if any) have made to the strategy and delivery plan.
- 21 Members from the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee provided feedback on the strategy following the meeting on the 18 December (included in Appendix 3). A summary of the feedback, including responses: -

General comments

- a) A need to include a short-term delivery plan with the draft strategy to avoid any resulting delays in the delivery of actions
 - (i) Response – A one-year delivery plan has been developed to ensure implementation of the strategy can commence once it is adopted in July 2024, this is attached at Appendix 4. A longer-term delivery plan will be developed with key partners through the establishment of a Homelessness Forum.
- b) The strategy should be flexible and be able to respond to change at a national, regional and local level
 - (i) Response – A light touch review will be carried out annually to address any policy or funding changes as well as taking into consideration any significant differences in demand to the service. The delivery plan will be updated accordingly following the annual review.

- c) The need for accountability for the delivery of actions identified within the strategy and delivery plan.
 - (i) Response - The delivery of the strategy will be overseen by an internal housing project group, with accountability to the Homelessness Forum.

Priority 1

- a) The current front-line approach for customer contact is very much digital based with a lack of face-to-face contact and there was concern about clients having access to the necessary technology to then be able to access the required support. It was suggested that there is a need to identify more opportunities for support to be provided via face-to-face contact with clients, particularly in view of the recent review of DCC Customer Access Point provision.
 - (i) Response - The front-line teams will make an appointment to see clients in Customer Access Points (CAP) should they be unable to communicate via telephone or e-mail. Home visits will be arranged for those clients who have vulnerabilities and are unable to communicate digitally or come into a CAP. Two visiting officers have recently been established to carry out home visits with families and younger people to prevent evictions where possible.
- b) Need to continually promote the support available and it was suggested the information in relation to available support should be available in community venues throughout the county.
 - (i) Response - The one-year delivery plan includes an action to update the webpages and to include relevant links to partner agencies. This work also includes working with key partners, including the family hubs to promote the services that the homeless team offers.
- c) Need to ensure that young people are aware of the support available both from a perspective that they may need to access the support but also so that they can promote what support is available within their local communities. It was suggested that information on available support be provided in schools and colleges throughout the county and that colleagues within the Housing Solutions Service may want to visit both schools and colleges to provide detail of available support.
 - (i) Response - Priority 1 in the strategy highlights the need to 'Develop creative approaches to working earlier with young people in schools, youth groups and young people within the

care system to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place'. The 12-month delivery plan includes an action to work with Childrens and Young People's Services (CYPS) and other council services to; share information about homelessness with young people in the care system and in schools/colleges, roll out a communications plan with Family Hubs, as well as fully understanding the potential demands to the service as young people progress to adulthood.

d) Concerning reasons for presenting as homeless, it was suggested that we need to monitor and record the numbers presenting because of the 'Cost of Living Crisis', with the increase in the mortgage rate and general rise in living costs. It was felt by members that more homeless presentations in the county would be attributed to this reason in the future.

(i) Response - Data dashboards track the numbers of people that present as homeless or at risk of homeless due to loss of their property in the private rented sector. This data is broken down into the reasons including landlord selling their property, rent arrears or the landlord re letting the property. Mortgage repossession is also monitored. Interventions are put in place according to the data. The private rented sector operates a 'stop before you serve' initiative, where they will mediate and negotiate with the landlord to prevent evictions and the client with financial and debt management advice. Two key workers work alongside the private sector team to identify cases at an early point in time that could lead to an eviction. This is reflected within the strategy and the one-year delivery plan to work with private and social landlords and supported housing providers to prevent evictions where possible.

Priority 2

a) Suggested to work with Social Housing Providers in the county on pilot schemes to provide the opportunity for ex-offenders to be housed by these providers rather than the current situation where the available housing is provided by the private sector.

(i) Response - The one-year delivery plan includes an action to work with providers to explore potential initiatives that could support ex-offenders to access social housing, where they would otherwise be excluded from DKO.

- 22 Any final feedback from the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee will inform the final iteration of the strategy that will be presented to Cabinet in July 2024 for approval.

Background papers

- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping review (data from 2019 to 2022)
- Housing Strategy Principle and Priorities Paper 2023

Other useful documents

- None.

Author

Emma Regan

emma.regan@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Compliance with legislation.

Finance

None.

Consultation and Engagement

Consultation on the draft strategy will be carried out in October 2023 through to December 2023 with the public and key partners/stakeholders.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

An equality impact assessment has been developed alongside the strategy around the protected characteristics. The main three where action is required are:

- a) age: work with children's services and registered providers to work with care leavers and older people as early as possible to prevent homelessness;
- b) disability: work with adult social care to provide accessible accommodation and dedicated support, specialist social workers and mental health support workers embedded in the services; and
- c) race: dedicated humanitarian support team; staff trained in equality and diversity.

Information from the review on the key priorities is being fed into this.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

The Probation Service is an identified key partner who will work with the housing team to help achieve the priorities identified and meet the needs of people being released from prison and those living in the community.

Staffing

The strategy will be delivered utilising existing staffing resource.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

Procurement guidelines and regulations will be met when procuring any additional services.

Appendix 2: Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024-2029)

Please refer to the attached draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2024-2029).

Appendix 3: Consultation responses

Please refer to the attached document for a full account of the consultations responses

**Appendix 4: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Delivery Plan
July 2024 – July 2025**

Please refer to the attached Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Delivery Plan
July 2024 – July 2025

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Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024 to 2029

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Foreword



By Councillor Alan Shield
Portfolio Holder for Equality and Inclusion

“I am proud to introduce this proactive strategy which sets out our vision, priorities and actions to address and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping across all areas of County Durham.”

Being at risk of, or losing a home, can be the result of many different structural or personal factors. Unless these factors are addressed, the ability of an individual or family to become resilient and improve their chance of a positive future is greatly reduced, placing them at risk of becoming trapped in a cycle of homelessness.

Homelessness can lead individuals and their families and friends into a cycle that can have a profound effect on all aspects of life. It is not just a lack of accommodation; homelessness can affect our physical and mental health and wellbeing, educational achievement, ability to gain and sustain employment and puts pressure on personal and family relationships. The impact of homelessness devastates lives, and it is often a long journey for an individual to build their life up again.

We need to work together with our partners and stakeholders to address homelessness and prevent people from living in precarious housing circumstances, including temporary accommodation, hostels and B&B's.

This strategy shows the current and future trends in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping across County Durham, as well as the challenges that we face as a housing authority. It also highlights how we will tackle the complex causes of homelessness by focusing on prevention and early intervention.

Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 brought about a more strategic approach to tackling and preventing homelessness, in particular the requirement for the development and publication of a homelessness strategy for every housing authority every 5 years.

This strategy has been developed following a detailed review of homelessness and rough sleeping. The review highlighted the demands on the council and the gaps that need addressing to ensure that homelessness is prevented and addressed as effectively as possible. The four priorities within this strategy have been developed to ensure that the needs of people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, are achieved over the next 5 years, covering the period 2024 – 2029.

We will carry out a light touch review annually to address any policy or funding changes, as well as taking into consideration any significant differences in demand for the service.

The evidence base that has been used to inform this strategy has analysed data from April 2019 through to October 2022, looking at the current and future trends in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping and the challenges that we face as a housing authority. The data has shaped the four priorities of the strategy, which were consulted upon with the public, key partners and stakeholders, from December 2022 to March 2023.

The scope of the strategy recognises all types of homelessness needs:

- Those who are considering their housing options and require advice,
- Those at risk of homelessness,
- Those who are statutory and non-statutory homeless,
- Those who are street homeless and are rough sleeping,
- Children who experience being homeless,
- Those who are moving on from homelessness (moving from temporary or supported accommodation and require longer term accommodation).

Strategic Context

The vision and priorities of this strategy are set within the context of national strategies and plans. There are two main national policy drivers that apply to homelessness and rough sleeping; the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Government's 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good' Strategy 2022.

The Homeless Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 extended the responsibilities of local authorities towards people that are homeless, or those at risk of becoming homeless. In particular, the duty to prevent homelessness, as well as the requirement to assess and provide more meaningful assistance to all people who are eligible and homeless, or threatened with homelessness, irrespective of their priority need status.

Between 2010/11 and 2018/19 there was a 12% increase in the number of homeless people nationally, this increased again by a further 19% up to 2021/22.

'Ending rough sleeping for good' is a cross-government strategy setting out how the government and its partners will work together to deliver on their commitment to end rough sleeping, by laying the foundations for a long-term system change to end rough sleeping sustainably and for good. The strategy has four key themes; Prevention, Recovery, Intervention and a Transparent and Joined up System. The strategy sets out for the first time a clear definition of what the government means by ending rough sleeping, which is that it is prevented wherever possible, and where it does occur it is rare, brief and non-recurrent.

There has been a new national focus on rough sleeping since the Covid-19 pandemic with the government's 'Everyone In' policy. This ensured all rough sleepers were housed in temporary accommodation to keep them safe during the pandemic. 37,000 people were helped through this scheme. This policy enabled councils to build relationships and reach homeless people who had been either unknown to, or ineligible for, local housing services previously. In addition, the temporary eviction bans during the pandemic also kept people in their homes who may have otherwise become homeless. These policies have since ended, but we want to build on this momentum to tackle homelessness and end rough sleeping.

The number of people estimated to be sleeping rough across England on a single night in autumn 2022 was 3,069, this is an increase of 26% from 2020 and a 74% increase since 2010, when the average number sleeping rough on a single night was 1,768. The numbers did peak in 2017, with an estimated figure of 4,751.

To assist with the delivery of the government's Rough Sleeping Strategy, £2 billion will be invested over a three-year period from 2022 to 2025, including an expanded £500m Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) and £200m Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP).

£20m was made available by the government as part of the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP), to help address poor quality supported housing and improve standards of support.

Homelessness can happen to anyone at any time, generally associated with a period of crisis or trauma. Homelessness permeates all aspects of a person's life including housing, health and employment and can lead to people falling into extreme poverty.

Our other strategic partnerships and their strategies and plans, focus on things such as poverty, employment, education, safety of our neighbourhoods, the quality of our homes and the environment we live in. Each of these will play a key role in helping us deliver the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. These strategies and plans include, but are not limited to:

- Council Plan 2019 - 2035
- County Durham Vision 2035
- County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy
- County Durham Plan
- County Durham Housing Strategy
- County Durham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2025
- Growing up in County Durham Strategy 2023 – 2025
- Sufficiency and commissioning strategy for children looked after and care leavers 2022 – 2024
- Safe Durham Partnership Plan

Local context and challenges in County Durham

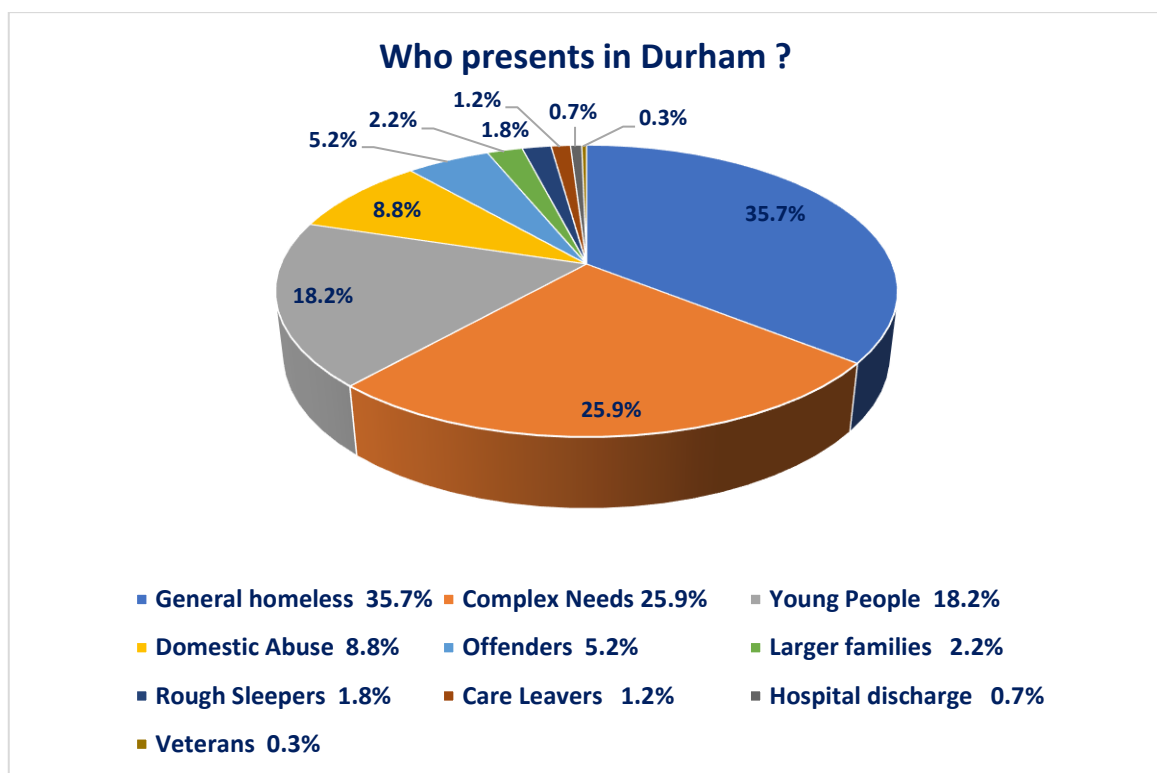
In Durham, the number of people that approach the council when they require housing advice, are homeless, or at risk of being homeless, has remained broadly consistent over the last three years, with 7,846 people presenting in 2021/22 compared to 7,497 in 2019/20. Between April 2019 and September 2022, the number of people requiring housing advice increased by 96%. The number of people who were assessed in line with homeless legislation and owed a homeless duty reduced by 19%.

Single households remain the largest group presenting as homeless, making up around 58% of the total, 31% are households with children and 11% couples with no children.

The main reasons why people present to the housing service have remained consistent over the past three years:

- private rented tenancy is ending (30% in 2021/22),
- family no longer willing to accommodate them (23% in 2021/22), and
- victims of domestic abuse (11% in 2021/22).

As well as considering why people present as homeless, we have identified the groups of people who are most likely to become homeless.



This diagram shows the percentage of each group presenting as homeless, or potentially homeless in County Durham. The percentages are as follows: General homeless 35.7%, Complex Needs 25.9%, Young People 18.2%, Domestic Abuse 8.8%, Offenders 5.2%, Larger families 2.2%, Rough Sleepers 1.8%, Care Leavers 1.2%, Hospital discharge 0.7%, Veterans 0.3%.

There is a shortage of affordable housing across all sectors. The annual target for the delivery of affordable housing is 836, however only 464 affordable units per year have been delivered on average over the last seven years. This means that since 2016, 2,601 fewer affordable houses have been delivered across County Durham than required to meet identified housing need. The County Durham Housing Strategy sets plans to meet this shortfall in future years.

The availability of accommodation is reducing in the private rented sector. Recent increases in interest rates are having an impact on landlords, forcing them to sell properties or increase their rents, which is resulting in people being evicted or making the sector less affordable for those on lower incomes. People leaving the private rented sector is the main reason why people are homeless, or are at risk of becoming homeless; this number has increased by 6%.

Younger people under the age of 35 are experiencing increasing difficulties to secure affordable, independent accommodation, particularly when on a low-income, this can be seen across both the private rented and social housing sectors.

The number of people presenting with complex needs has increased by 13%. This is the largest increase across all groups, making up 26% of all presentations. There is a lack of appropriate housing options for people with complex or additional support needs, including those with poor mental health, substance misuse and a history of homelessness and rough sleeping. There is a clear correlation between complex support needs and those people repeatedly presenting as homeless. It is therefore important to secure appropriate accommodation for this group with the right level of support to prevent evictions and repeat presentations.

Domestic abuse is a significant reason why people present as homeless in County Durham. The number of people that moved to suitable alternative accommodation when fleeing domestic abuse has reduced by 16% between 2019/20 and 2022/23. This is due to a lack of readily available affordable housing, resulting in placements into temporary accommodation, which is often not an ideal solution for families.

There are increasing pressures in utilising temporary accommodation due to the lack of council owned stock. This has been exacerbated by the number of people requiring placements increasing by 47%, resulting in increased costs to the council. On average in 2023 there are between 80 and 90 households in temporary accommodation at any one time, in comparison to around 48 households in temporary accommodation at any one time during 2018/19.

During 2022/23, around 126 people were found rough sleeping, an average of 11 on a single night. Around 42% were new to rough sleeping, the remaining had previous experiences of sleeping on the street. One of the main reasons why people end up rough sleeping, is due to them being evicted from supported accommodation. Most of our rough sleepers are found in Durham City, although we do respond to reports in outlying towns including Seaham, Peterlee and Consett.

Vision, approach and priorities

Our vision

“Durham is a county where we all work together to eradicate homelessness and rough sleeping and where everyone has a safe place to call home.”

This strategy and its vision will support the delivery of the County Durham Housing Strategy, which identifies the key housing opportunities and challenges facing County Durham.

It is recognised that a partnership approach is required to successfully achieve our vision and deliver on the priorities set out in this strategy. This will tackle issues that increase the likelihood of someone becoming homeless, including the shortage of affordable housing and rising household poverty.

The priorities were agreed following consultation with a range of partners and members of the public, including people with lived experience of homelessness and rough sleeping.



Priority 1: Prevent people from becoming homeless

Preventing someone from becoming homeless is far more effective than intervening afterwards. The best way to do this is to support a household to remain in their current home, providing it is suitable, or proactively support a move to alternative suitable long-term accommodation.

Issues that can lead to someone becoming homeless, or being threatened with homelessness, are multi-faceted and we recognise that working with people to overcome and resolve these at the earliest opportunity is the best way of preventing homelessness. In recent years this has become increasingly more challenging due to a reduction in the availability of affordable accommodation across the private rented sector and social housing, and increasing numbers of people with complex support needs.

It is recognised that the principle of 'invest to save' must be rooted across our prevention offer. By providing financial incentives and support to help people remain in their existing home, not only prevents homelessness, but also prevents the need, and cost, of having to source alternative accommodation or avoid utilising temporary accommodation.

It is important to understand the early causes of homelessness, to ensure that the right intervention can be made. Some of these include domestic abuse, substance misuse, poor mental health, financial difficulties and criminal activity. We need to address the inequalities that exist in people accessing employment, education, training and health services, all of which are negatively impacted if someone is homeless, threatened with homelessness or otherwise living in unsuitable conditions.

There has been a significant increase of 34% in the number of people who have been unable to remain in their existing home which has resulted in them becoming homeless. This is seen mainly where private rented tenancies are ending due to landlords selling, or where the tenant has fallen into rent arrears and where people are suffering from domestic abuse. We must therefore ensure that a more proactive and preventative approach is taken to avoid people being in a homeless crisis situation.

To prevent people from becoming homeless we will:

- Review our allocations scheme to prioritise prevention over homelessness, ending the use of homelessness as a housing option.
- Ensure people receive appropriate and relevant advice and support as early as possible, including improved information and signposting and the development of an online self-help tool.
- Ensure early intervention is targeted towards people who are most likely or identified to be at risk of homelessness, through the introduction of specialist teams and dedicated support.
- Ensure front line staff are equipped with the tools and techniques to help them prevent households from becoming homeless, e.g. negotiating with private landlords and mediating between family members.
- Work with the private rented sector, registered providers and supported accommodation providers to establish new approaches to reduce evictions and assist people to remain at home.

- Work with people with lived experience to involve them in designing services to make sure they are accessible.
- Intervention through “trauma informed practice”, which seeks to understand and respond to the impact that trauma has had on somebody’s life, which can include physical, psychological and emotional, and how it may lead to homelessness.
- Develop creative approaches to working earlier with young people in schools, youth groups and young people within the care system to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place.
- Work with our partner registered providers to review the lettings policy to ensure that the housing register is accessible and assists homeless households.
- Establish a multi-agency Homelessness Partnership with a focus on developing, designing and implementing solutions to help reduce homelessness.

Priority 2: Improve access to and supply of accommodation

This priority is focused on improving how people who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness, can better access the most appropriate type of accommodation to meet their needs. In the longer term, addressing the supply of accommodation to ensure that Durham has the right type and mix of accommodation in the required locations. The housing options available are:

- Private rented sector
- Social housing
- Supported accommodation
- Low cost home ownership

Whilst we recognise the necessity of a more proactive, preventative approach, we must also ensure there is an effective response for those who present as homeless in an emergency or crisis situation. Groups that are recognised as predominantly affected in this area are private rented sector tenants, people experiencing domestic abuse, young people experiencing parental exclusion, people with multiple and complex needs, people with drug and or alcohol addiction, and street homeless people.

Housing options for people on low incomes or in receipt of welfare benefits is becoming limited. Average rents in the private rented sector are increasing, making this option less accessible for many households. However, the private rented sector is helping to accommodate those homeless households in a crisis situation across all cohorts. This comes at an increased cost as landlords price the risk.

The turnover of stock amongst registered providers is reducing, making the social rented sector less reachable for many households. The number of people who were homeless and in a crisis situation and accommodated in this sector has reduced by around 11%. The main two groups being accommodated are those people with no support needs and victims of domestic abuse. This means that many people who are homeless and in housing need are unable to access the social housing sector.

Supported housing is accommodating the majority of people who face homelessness in a crisis situation, mainly where family are no longer willing to accommodate. This sector accommodates the majority of people with complex support needs and those under the age of 25 including care leavers. In line with the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023, local authorities must ensure that the standard of accommodation and support provided is sufficient to meet housing needs. The Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) will assist with the delivery of the Act and ensure that the supported accommodation offer for homeless people is fair and consistent.

The number of people placed into temporary accommodation has seen a significant increase. The main reasons why people require temporary accommodation is due to domestic abuse, family no longer willing to accommodate or because their assured shorthold tenancy has ended. The council is often forced to use holiday lets and bed and breakfast due to the lack of availability of appropriate temporary accommodation in County Durham. These are both costly and unsustainable in the longer term.

To improve access to and supply of accommodation we will:

- Utilise the Council House Delivery Programme to provide additional affordable housing and move on options.
- Work with registered providers and developers to increase the supply of accommodation for:
 - vulnerable households including; victims of domestic abuse, people with complex support needs, ex-offenders, rough sleepers (specialist 24/7 provision) and people included within the humanitarian support programme,
 - households on low incomes, in particular younger people,
 - larger families.
- Expand the Private Sector Leasing (PSL) scheme, working with property owners to bring empty and dilapidated homes back into use in return for medium to long term leases to use for temporary and permanent housing.
- Increase the supply of council owned and commissioned temporary accommodation, rather than rely on B&B and hotels.
- Work with commissioning teams to ensure appropriate accommodation is available, in particular additional dispersed properties for victims of domestic abuse and additional supported accommodation for those with complex needs.
- Work with supported accommodation providers to deliver the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP).
- Develop clear housing pathways for the most vulnerable people, including; those leaving prison, hospital, rough sleepers, those experiencing domestic abuse and those leaving the care system.
- Make information readily available setting out the various housing options available, how people can access those options and how they can help themselves.

Priority 3: Ensure the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless (work with partners to build resilience in people)

This priority is focussed on providing people with the most appropriate type of support to meet their needs and to enable them to access and maintain sustainable accommodation.

It is vital that a person, or household who becomes homeless, or is at risk of homelessness, is provided with the most appropriate support at the earliest opportunity. Durham has a range of support services available, provided via a combination of commissioned services and in house support, provided by staff working in the housing solutions team. These services need to be made as accessible as possible for all clients to assist with homeless prevention, as well as supporting people through their homeless journey.

The review of homeless and rough sleeping identified that the number of homeless people with two or more support needs has increased significantly, with almost 40% of people with a support need suffering from a history of mental health problems. There is clear correlation between the number of support needs and the number of times a person presents as homeless. The main household type with multiple support needs is amongst single people.

People with complex and multiple support needs can end up being inappropriately housed in accommodation that doesn't provide the right type of support, which can result in tenancies failing and people re-presenting back to housing solutions as homeless. It is important to prevent this happening by ensuring that the support needs are being met, as well as their housing needs.

To ensure the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless, we will: -

- Map all available support services to determine their effectiveness for homeless people using this to improve and target provision where required.
- Ensure that support needs are identified when developing personalised housing plans and the necessary referrals are made to the most appropriate support and accommodation to meet the needs of the individual.
- Work with partner agencies to ensure referral pathways are in place and are effective to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness.
- Increase specialisms within housing solutions including social workers, trauma informed, dual diagnosis and drug and alcohol workers, who may form a central service accessible to all teams.
- Ensure the existing range of health initiatives are co-ordinated and fully utilised.
- Review support needs and ensure that support services are available to cater for them.

Priority 4: Reduce rough sleeping

This priority is focused on reducing the number of people that sleep rough across County Durham. In alignment with the government's Ending Rough Sleeping for Good Strategy, we aim to prevent rough sleeping wherever possible and where it does occur, ensure that it is rare, brief, and non-recurrent.

Across County Durham there is a flow of people who are street homeless. During 2022/23, around 126 people were found rough sleeping, an average of 11 on a single night. Around 42% were new to rough sleeping, the remaining had previous experiences of sleeping on the street.

The majority of people within this group have multiple complex needs, including mental health and substance misuse problems, which is often the reason why their previous housing situation has failed.

We know that the main reasons why people find themselves sleeping rough is because their family will no longer accommodate them, they have been evicted from supported accommodation, or their private rented tenancy has ended.

Around 60% of those sleeping rough are accommodated in supported accommodation, less than 5% are accommodated with a registered provider or in the private rented sector.

There is a dedicated rough sleeper team that operate within County Durham, consisting of a co-ordinator, two navigators and two outreach staff that focus on those with drug and alcohol support requirements. The team has access to accommodation dedicated for rough sleepers, which includes:

- Nine short term commissioned bedspaces to enable further assessment to be carried out and longer-term accommodation to be sourced.
- Seven (24/7) supported housing bed spaces for complex rough sleepers and two individual properties with support which helps individuals to live independently. The dispersed properties are used as step down accommodation for those people that are ready to move onwards from the intensive supported housing project.
- Individual properties with support provided by the council to live independently for rough sleepers requiring low level supported accommodation.

Despite having access to commissioned and in house provision, it can still be difficult to find accommodation for the most chaotic and complex rough sleepers, particularly if they have a high-risk offending history, or require support with drug and alcohol misuse and have complex mental health.

There is a night shelter that operates in Durham City during the winter months, however as it relies upon volunteers the hours are not 24 hours, seven days a week, which makes it difficult to accommodate rough sleepers during periods of severe winter weather emergencies.

To reduce rough sleeping and the themes set out in the governments Rough Sleeping Strategy, we will:-

- Work with health and social care professionals to understand the underlying factors that result in people sleeping rough and formulate strategies to deal with these.
- Work with supported housing providers to establish new approaches to reduce evictions and prevent rough sleeping.
- Develop awareness around rough sleeping and begging through the introduction of a communications campaign and co-ordinate the reduction of cash donations to rough sleepers by establishing an alternative method, working with local charitable groups.
- Work with partners to improve access and supply to accommodation for those most complex and hard to house rough sleepers, including the provision of specialist support where requested.
- Liaise with local stakeholders, particularly Durham University and Durham Business Improvement District in relation to rough sleeping in Durham City.
- Establish a night shelter that can be accessed all year round.
- Develop a pathway to independent living designed around the needs of rough sleepers.
- Develop a “Housing First programme” which focuses on first giving someone immediate access to a settled and secure home with access to appropriate support where requested by the client, including services to cater for those who may be alcohol or drug dependant.

Delivering the Strategy

As part of the delivery of the strategy, a one-year delivery plan has been developed to ensure that implementation can commence immediately after adoption of the document. We will develop a more detailed delivery plan with our partners, this will be in line with each of the four strategic priorities, as outlined in this strategy. This will clearly show how we will tackle and address homelessness and rough sleeping in the next five years.

This delivery plan will cover a range of more detailed actions and will include timescales, funding and clear milestones. This will be developed in line with our existing partnerships as part of the County Durham Partnership Structure, a range of other partnerships linked to homelessness, regional and national colleagues and with people with lived experience.

It is proposed to set up a Homelessness Forum with all relevant partners. This Forum will meet quarterly and will take responsibility to oversee the implementation and monitoring of the delivery plan. This will include a range of partners from other public bodies, landlords, charities and others.

The monitoring of the strategy will be reported annually to a range of forums as part of the County Durham Partnership including the Safer Durham Partnership, Health and Wellbeing Board, The Housing Forum and others.

An annual refresh of the evidence base and a review of the delivery plan will take place to analyse updated data, address any policy or funding changes as well as taking into consideration any significant differences in demand on the service. This will be overseen by an internal housing project group, the Homelessness Forum and will be reported to Cabinet annually.

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| Vision/general comments | | Council response | Schedule of changes |
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| Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee | There is a need to include a delivery plan within the draft strategy, to avoid any resulting delays in the delivery of actions identified within the strategy. | A 12-month delivery plan has been developed based on feedback from the consultation. A longer-term delivery plan will be developed with key partners as part of the Homelessness Forum. | Delivery Plan will be included as an appendix to the strategy when taken for approval to Management Teams, CMT, Cabinet and Full Council |
| | It is important that the strategy is flexible and can respond to change at a national, regional and local level. | An annual refresh of the evidence base and a review of the delivery plan will take place to analyse updated data, address any policy or funding changes as well as taking into consideration any significant differences in demand on the service. | Referenced in the Strategy under 'Delivery of the strategy' |
| | There needs to be accountability for the delivery of actions identified within the strategy and resulting delivery plan. There is a need for empathy to be clearly visible within the strategy. | The delivery of the strategy will be overseen by an internal housing project group and the Homelessness Forum. | Referenced in the Strategy under 'Delivery of the strategy' |

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| Public Health | Public Health welcome a review of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2023 and endorses the 4 key priorities for the new strategy, building on the original work conducted in 2019. | Comments noted | None required |
| Karbon | Overall, we welcome the positive feedback that was received as part of the consultation on the priority areas. We believe this demonstrates that the draft strategy is focussing on the right themes, and it is a strategy that we are happy to endorse. | Comments noted | None required |
| Livin | Welcome the vision | Comments noted | None required |
| Durham Police & Crime Commissioner's Office | Agree with the vision | Comments noted | None required |
| County Durham Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service | Strategy is thorough and aspirational. | Comments noted | None required |
| East Durham AAP - Maintaining the Social Fabric of our | It is important that the homelessness strategy includes details of the expected service homeless people will need to access. Improvements are needed in this area. | Comments noted | Priority 1 takes account of the prevention work that will be improved to assist those accessing the service as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. |

| Communities Sub-Group | | | |
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| Online survey – summary of responses | <p>Good ideal but need to engage more with all partners to ensure that it can be implemented and is not just another tick box exercise.</p> <p>The number of homeless is many under reported, with many staying short-term with friends and family.</p> <p>No one should be without a place to sleep ever. There should be no need for anyone to be homeless in 2023.</p> <p>The council should improve the information it makes available to the public on their rights as tenants.</p> | Comments noted | Priority 1 takes account of the prevention work that will be improved to assist those accessing the service as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This includes updating webpages and links which are accessed by the public. |

| Priority 1: Prevent people from becoming homeless | | Council response | Schedule of changes |
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| Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee | It was commented that the current approach to providing support is very much digital based with a lack of face-to-face contact and there was concern about clients having access to the necessary technology to then be able to access the required support. It was suggested that there is a need to identify more opportunities for support to be provided via face-to-face contact with clients, particularly in view of the recent review of DCC Customer Access Point provision. | The front-line teams will make an appointment to see clients in Customer Access Points should they be unable to communicate via telephone or e-mail. Home visits will be arranged for those clients who have vulnerabilities and are unable to communicate digitally or come into a CAP. Two visiting officers have been established to carry out home visits with families and younger people to prevent evictions where possible. | These procedures are in place now, therefore no changes are required within the strategy or delivery plan. |
| | Need to continually promote the support available and it was suggested the information in relation to available support should be available in community venues throughout the county. | Priority 1 highlights that people should receive appropriate and relevant advice, including signposting as early as possible. | The 12-month delivery plan includes an action to update the webpages and to include relevant links to partner agencies. This comms work also includes working with key partners, including the family hubs to promote the services that the homeless team offers. |
| | Need to ensure that young people are aware of the support available both from a perspective that they may need to access the support but also so that they can promote what support is available | Priority 1 highlights the need to 'Develop creative approaches to working earlier with young people | The 12-month delivery plan includes an action to work with Childrens and Young People's Services (CYPS) and other council services to: - |

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| | <p>within their local communities. It was suggested that information on available support be provided in schools and colleges throughout the county and that colleagues within the Housing Solutions Service may want to visit both schools and colleagues to provide detail of available support.</p> | <p>in schools, youth groups and young people within the care system to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place’</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share information about homelessness with young people in the care system and in schools/colleges • Roll out communications plan with Family Hubs • Fully understand the potential demands to the service as young people progress to adulthood |
| | <p>Concerning reasons for presenting as homeless, it was suggested that we need to monitor and record the numbers presenting because of the ‘Cost of Living Crisis’, with the increase in the mortgage rate and general rise in living costs. It was felt by members that more homeless presentations in the county would be attributed to this reason in the future.</p> | <p>Data dashboards track the numbers of people that present as homeless or at risk of homeless due to loss of their property in the private rented sector. This data is broken down into the reasons including; landlord selling their property, rent arrears or the landlord re letting the property. Mortgage repossession is also monitored. Interventions are put in place according the data.</p> | <p>The private rented sector operates a ‘stop before you serve’ initiative, where they will mediate and negotiate with landlord to prevent evictions and the client with financial and debt management advice. Two key workers work alongside the private sector team to identify cases at an early point in time that could lead to an eviction. This is reflected within the strategy and the one-year delivery plan to work with private and social landlords and supported housing providers to prevent evictions where possible.</p> |
| Public Health | <p>Ensure housing and homelessness continue to be featured within the Poverty Reduction Strategy for the county. Including links to financial advice and</p> | <p>There is a Housing Poverty Group which sits beneath the Council’s Poverty Action Steering Group.</p> | <p>The delivery plan includes action to ensure that front line are fully trained to be able to provide the most appropriate</p> |

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| | <p>support and promoting opportunities for bolstering the financial resilience of local residents. Ensure gambling and problematic gambling is considered within the financial assessments of residents accessing housing support. Promoting Making Every Contact Count training to increase the effectiveness of the housing support workforce in engaging tenants and homeowners in effective conversations about their own, and their families' health and wellbeing.</p> | <p>The group works with providers to tackle issues surrounding poverty aligned to housing and homelessness. The front-line homelessness teams work with people living in poverty who present as homeless or at risk of homelessness, to provide support, advice and assistance and signpost to other agencies.</p> | <p>advice and know where to signpost people to for additional support, e.g. for debt advice, maximisation of benefits or commissioned services for support with gambling, substance misuse, smoking etc.</p> |
| | <p>Ensure that the Remain Safe Scheme is utilised to support victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes, where it is safe to do so and work with specialist agencies to provide ongoing wrap around support.</p> | <p>Remain Safe has continued funding for 24/25 to ensure the initiative continues to support victims of domestic abuse.</p> | <p>The one-year delivery plan includes an action under priority 1 to review the domestic abuse officers role and the impact it makes in the customer journey. Under Priority 3 there is an action to ensure support pathways are understood by all staff to ensure clients are signposted to the most appropriate support.</p> |
| Believe Housing | <p>Agree with the priority. Partnership working needed to ensure supply matches need. Suggest prevention is given an increased priority to support earlier intervention rather than at the later stages of homelessness risk</p> | <p>It is recognised that the lettings policy will be reviewed and how homeless cases are prioritised will be included as part of the overall review.</p> | <p>Within Priority 1, the review of the lettings policy will take into account the prioritisation for those who are homeless.</p> |

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| City of Durham Trust | The County Council cannot alone solve this problem, but can significantly help via mental health services, family support services, and supported housing projects. | Agreed. | The strategy highlights the importance of partnership working across all four priorities to improve support to all cohorts that are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. |
| Durham Police & Crime Commissioner's Office | Tenancy support work to maintain tenancies. More support required for victims of crime, beyond the statutory duty. | The strategy highlights the requirement to work with all landlords and providers of accommodation to reduce evictions where possible. Partnership working is vital to ensure homelessness is reduced, including victims of crime. | The one year delivery plan includes an action to develop protocols with Registered Providers and supported housing providers. The Homelessness Forum will be established to work with partners to explore initiatives that could help victims of crime outside of the statutory requirements. |
| Karbon | Believe that Durham Key Options (DKO) remains the best approach. DKO balances the needs of those on the register while maintaining a degree of choice which we think is important. | Agree that partnership working is crucial to ensure DKO continues to work as effectively as possible. | Priority 1 includes a review of the lettings policy. |
| Livin | Strategically, this reflects our own vision of improving lives through sustainable homes and places. We recognise the complexity of personal circumstances and vulnerabilities that may underpin homelessness and agree that DCC should focus attention on reviewing the DKO scheme to ensure equitable access and outcomes for all users. ensuring early intervention is targeted towards people who are most likely or identified to be at risk of homelessness is key to | As part of the Homelessness Forum, we would welcome our key partners to work with DCC to ensure a joined up approach in delivering the strategy. | Partnership working is key to prevent homelessness and focus on early intervention, the key focus of priority 1. It is important that pathways are in place to ensure smooth transitions for people moving from supported accommodation to independent living to prevent evictions or failed tenancies. |

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| | prevention. We regularly see new tenants moving from supported accommodation or the care sector, coming into independent living with little or no ongoing support. The challenge of setting up and sustaining a tenancy without their structured support framework is daunting and we would be very interested in any supporting interventions that could overcome this issue to set up tenancies to succeed. | | |
| East Durham Rural Corridor AAP | A County Cllr highlighted that landlords were selling their properties due to tenant's anti-social behaviour to be rid of the problem and help the neighbourhood. She knew of 4/5 sizable families that had been made homeless because of this. | One of the main reasons why people present as homeless is due to their private rented tenancy ending. Data shows that this could be due to rent arrears or because the landlord is choosing to sell their property. | Priority 1 of the strategy highlights the importance of working with private landlords at an early stage to prevent evictions and work with families to facilitate a planned move. |
| DASVEG | Members asked whether the strategy reflected the need for DA victims and children to remain in the home. | The strategy highlights that targeted early intervention is required for those most at risk of homelessness. | The one-year delivery plan includes an action to work with partners to explore options to assist victims of DA to remain in the home. |
| Weardale AAP | Transitional work from living at home with parents, to independent living ? – was this taken into consideration. | One of the main reasons for homelessness is where family have asked a younger person to leave the family home. The strategy highlights that targeted early intervention is required for this cohort. Visiting Officers have | The one-year delivery plan highlights a review of the visiting officer posts to evaluate the effectiveness and allow for improvements. |

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| | | recently been established to mediate with families in this situation and support a planned and smooth transition to independent living. | |
| Online survey – summary of responses | <p>We should encourage and put an emphasis on sign posting from all areas not just council workers, but private landlords should have an easy way of reporting tenants with complex needs that doesn't require much work from them just submitting a report and getting someone in who is better at dealing with people who have complex needs. It could be really encouraged as an alternative to serving notice and potentially going through the courts which most landlords would want to avoid.</p> <p>I think there needs to be a wider approach to prevention, relationship breakdown, rent / debt issues are miles away from homelessness linked to poor mental health and or addiction. Also, the way people who have a history getting themselves into situations that leave them homeless needs looking at.</p> | <p>Priority 1 highlights that those most likely to be at risk of homelessness should receive appropriate and relevant advice, including signposting and targeted early intervention.</p> <p>The priority also highlights the need to 'Develop creative approaches to working earlier with young people in schools, youth groups and young people within the care system to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place'</p> | <p>The 12-month delivery plan includes an action under priority 1 to update the DCC webpages with homelessness information, adding appropriate links to partner websites, e.g. Shelter, Crisis and also to work with communications/media teams to improve communications and promote self-help tools on the website.</p> <p>Within the strategy and the one-year delivery plan it is prioritised to work with private and social landlords and supported housing providers to prevent evictions where possible, by contacting the housing service for support.</p> <p>The private rented sector operates a 'stop before you serve' initiative, where they will mediate and negotiate with a landlord to prevent eviction and provide the client with financial and debt management advice. Two key workers work alongside</p> |

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| | <p>Work with families to prevent youngsters being asked to leave. Accommodation to be found for those leaving prison before they leave.</p> <p>Engage with partner agencies and the person/family at risk of homelessness earlier in the process. Offering support to change behaviour prior to tenants being evicted. Maybe getting involved at notice stage or as soon as possession is granted via the courts and not leaving the duty till the final hour of an eviction. Prevention is key the current process is not prevention.</p> | | <p>the private sector team to identify cases at an early point in time that could lead to an eviction.</p> <p>The 12-month delivery plan includes an action to work with Childrens and Young People's Services (CYPS) and other council services to share information about homelessness with young people in the care system and in schools/colleges in creative ways.</p> |
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Priority 2

| Priority 2: Improve access to and supply of accommodation | | Council response | |
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| Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee | Suggested that we work with Social Housing Providers in the county on pilot schemes to provide the opportunity for ex-offenders to be housed by these providers rather than the current situation where the available housing is provided by the private sector. | The strategy recognises the need to work with partners to increase the supply of accommodation for vulnerable groups. | The one-year delivery plan includes an action to work with Registered Providers to explore potential initiatives that could support ex-offenders to access social housing, where they would otherwise be excluded from DKO. |

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| Public Health | <p>Refer to the Safe Accommodation Strategy for those seeking support as a victim of domestic abuse and their children. Also, ensure perpetrators are housed separately and within appropriate safeguards. This needs to be a key focus when referring to the draft strategy which highlights number of people who moved to suitable alternative accommodation when fleeing domestic abuse has reduced by 16% between 2019/20 and 2022/23 due to a lack of readily available affordable housing. When victims are unable to remain in their own homes, continue to work with commissioning teams to ensure appropriate accommodation is available for victims of domestic abuse, in particular, explore additional dispersed properties commissioned by the council and access to additional dispersed properties managed by external partners. Continue to develop robust pathways between housing services, refuge provision, and the Domestic Abuse Navigator Service to ensure those with complex, unmet needs can be successfully accommodated in Safe accommodation. Ensure robust links are made with criminal justice pathways, to ensure prison leavers are accommodated and provided with adequate</p> | <p>The strategy highlights the requirement to work jointly with commissioning teams to develop a strategic approach to providing housing for specialist groups, including partnership working with Registered Providers (RP's) and supported housing providers.</p> | <p>The one year delivery plan includes actions to work with key partners to review current housing pathways for rough sleepers, victims of domestic abuse, migrants and asylum seekers, those leaving prison, hospital or the children's care system.</p> |
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| | <p>support within their temporary accommodation providers.</p> <p>Work in partnership with adult and social care for those with complex needs, including care leavers, those with long-term conditions and disability requiring adaptations.</p> <p>Ensuring pathways into temporary accommodation and buy-to-lease property schemes are understood by health and social care partners are understood by health and social care partners to help increase access.</p> <p>Consider the support given to people included in the humanitarian support programme. Does this include all migrants and asylum seekers in County Durham who require support from housing, and those whose tenancies are at risk.</p> | | |
| Believe Housing | <p>Encourage partnership discussion on access to housing. Welcome a trauma informed approach. Would like to actively engage in the multi-agency homelessness partnership.</p> | Comments noted. | Partnership working is key to the delivery of the strategy and DCC would welcome all key partners to be involved in the Homelessness Forum. |
| Durham City Trust | <p>To ensure a comprehensive range of housing options for older and vulnerable people, disabled people and children and young people by proposing a multi-agency compact.</p> | The strategy reflects the need to increase the supply of accommodation for vulnerable and specialist groups. | The Homelessness Forum will enable the delivery of the strategy and through partnership working can explore joint initiatives and projects. |

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| Durham Police & Crime Commissioner's Office | More demand for females safe supported accommodation, specifically looking at location. Support stopping the use of B&B's and hotels especially for victims of crime. | It is recognised that there is a requirement to increase the supply of accommodation for vulnerable and specialist groups, this includes victims of DA and safe accommodation for females. | An action in the delivery plan includes joint working commissioning teams to develop a strategic approach to providing housing for specialist groups, including partnership working with Registered Providers (RP's) and supported housing providers. |
| Karbon | We believe that there needs to be strong leadership to ensure that homes are built and urge the council to ensure that planning is appropriately resourced and able to efficiently process applications, provide prompt feedback where required and to develop a strong Local Plan. An increased regulatory pressure to invest in the quality of our existing stock, and so we need to balance any plans to increase supply with our other investment priorities. We believe that it is vital to have information on housing options readily available to residents and we are happy to support the council with their work on this. | The strategy has cross cutting themes with the housing strategy in terms of increasing the supply of accommodation. We would welcome a partnership approach to achieving this priority. | Both the strategy and the one-year delivery plan reflect the requirement of working with key partners to ensure this priority can be achieved. |

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| Livin | Demand for new build development is extremely high and this creates unintended allocations consequences in terms of creating sustainable communities without the use of Local Lettings Plans. If we utilised the DKO process, as a needs-based preference lettings platform, this would result in the concentration of applicants with high need into one estate. | Comments noted. | The strategy recognises the need to review the lettings policy to ensure it is fair, accessible and supports balanced and sustainable communities. |
| Place, Health and Communities Board | There is a need for both larger housing stock, and also smaller for young single people, we need more varied available housing stock in the county, especially young adults leaving the care system. Transitional support is needed and leads the Accommodation Review, and it also has to be in the appropriate areas required. | Comments noted. The Strategy highlights the requirement of additional accommodation for specialist groups including larger families, single people and care leavers. | The one-year delivery plan includes an action to work jointly with commissioning teams to develop a strategic approach to providing housing for specialist groups, including partnership working with Registered Providers (RP's) and supported housing providers |
| Online survey – summary of responses | <p>Rental properties are far too expensive for many people to afford and there is too little social housing being built now and over many years past.</p> <p>Many people who become homeless have animals which also need temporary rehoming. These animals are often a vital part of a person's mental health and well-being. Temporary accommodation options do not include places for</p> | Priority 2 highlights the Councils ambition to 'Utilise Council House Delivery Programme to provide affordable accommodation' as part of the one-year delivery plan and beyond. | <p>Under priority 2 there are several actions which will improve access to and supply of accommodation across the County for all those who need it.</p> <p>Through the Council House Delivery Programme the Council will increase their own stock of temporary and longer-term accommodation.</p> |

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| | <p>animals to stay with their owners which has a devastating impact on individuals.</p> <p>Utilise more accommodation options and work with other services such as probation, social services and charities to support people into accommodation.</p> <p>There needs to be more one bed accommodation. Lots of single people or childless couples who only need one room and get penalised for having a second room they don't need, but there isn't an alternative.</p> | | <p>The implementation of the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP) will provide additional supported accommodation resource for single people.</p> <p>Following intensive data analysis, the Council will develop a strategic approach to the provision and utilisation of temporary accommodation for homeless people.</p> <p>The one-year delivery plan sets out the proposals to work with key partners and to review current housing pathways for vulnerable clients including rough sleepers, victims of domestic abuse, those leaving prison, hospital or the children's care system.</p> |
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| Priority 3: Ensure the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless (work with partners to build resilience in people) | | Council Response | Schedule of changes |
|---|--|---|--|
| Believe Housing | Inclusion of a holistic specialist support team into the current housing options team will lead to positive outcomes for customers. Support a review of existing support provision and demand across the County, this would allow for gap analysis to identify any root causes of re-occurring homelessness. | Comments noted and welcome the involvement of partners with the delivery of the strategy. | Actions in the one-year delivery plan include a review of existing specialist support posts and identify gaps in provision. |
| Durham Police & Crime Commissioner's Office | Trauma informed approach to homelessness, and focussing on wider vulnerabilities to ensure appropriate support, signposting and safeguarding. | Comments noted. | Trauma informed training to be rolled out across front line staff. |
| Karbon | We know that the council and other registered providers do the same, therefore a more coordinated approach to this, mapping out all the current services and potential gaps, would be very welcome. | Comments noted. | Actions are included in the one-year delivery plan to map out all support services and ensure information is shared across partners. |

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| <p>Public Health</p> | <p>On assessment for housing support, all individuals are reviewed to ensure they have a GP. This will enable them to be supported into primary care services and gain access into a Health Check, screening and immunisation, sexual health services, support with their long term condition e.g. respiratory conditions, health disease and stroke, diabetes and cancer.</p> <p>Addressing presenting needs linked to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and accessing support with links to trauma-informed care via social care, mental health services, and the DARS. Refer residents on an ongoing basis into wider health and wellbeing services including Relate, Cruse, Wellbeing for Life, Stop Smoking Services, DARS, VCSE as their case progresses. Liaise with the Health Squad to promote health and wellbeing visits linked to the SHIP team whilst inspecting and supporting supported accommodation providers.</p> <p>Link up services within criminal justice pathways, to ensure prison leavers are accommodated and provided with adequate support within their temporary accommodation providers.</p> | <p>All comments noted. Priority 3 highlights the importance of ensuring that people can access the most appropriate support to meet their needs at the earliest opportunity. To ensure this happens partnership working is key to ensure pathways for referrals are clear and easy to access for front line housing staff.</p> | <p>The one-year delivery plan includes actions to; -</p> <p>Work with commissioning teams and members of the Supported Housing Steering Group to map out all support services and ensure all information is readily available for front line staff and they are fully aware of the differences in provision.</p> <p>Training with front line staff to ensure they identify support needs and embed them within personalised housing plans, as well as being able to refer, signpost and provide advice around support.</p> <p>Continue to work with health services including the health squad and Humankind to promote health and well-being with SHIP providers.</p> <p>Work with Public Health to review existing posts, e.g., drug and alcohol co-ordinators, social workers and identify gaps of specialist officers within the housing service and work with Public Health and other key</p> |
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| | <p>Maintain links with Harbour and Durham Constabulary, to address the needs of victims and their children to address issues relating to domestic abuse and sexual violence.</p> <p>Work in partnership with adult and social care for those with complex needs, including long-term conditions and disability.</p> <p>Liaise with the council's support services to house and address the support needs of asylum seekers and refugees.</p> <p>Maintain support to the GRT community within the GRT sites. This will include liaison with the 0-25 service provider by Harrogate FT , to engage and support GRT families via the dedicated health visitor and peer supporters. Maintain links to the Humanitarian Support Programme (or wider asylum seeker/migrant population) to ensure their needs are met.</p> | | <p>partners to secure any potential funding opportunities.</p> <p>Work with commissioning teams to identify support pathways for those homeless people who have complex support needs, but don't have a 'care need'.</p> |
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| Livin | We agree that appropriate, effective, and personalised support can overcome barriers to tenancy sustainment and enable independence. We welcome the delivery action to map all available support services to determine their effectiveness for homeless people using this to improve and target provision where required and suggest that Advice in County Durham as an umbrella for the third sector could be asked to support this. This ties in with the Advice Review currently underway within DCC. | Comments noted. | Actions are included in the one-year delivery plan to map out all support services, working with key partners and ensure information is shared. |
| Housing Forum | Homeless and private rented sector – Gov have pushed back on both and there is no additional money for homeless | Comments noted | None required |
| Online survey – summary of responses | <p>Support can not be for the hour or the day, it required long term aid. It cannot mean someone in rehab loses their home or is not also found accommodation ready for their discharge.</p> <p>More to be done in school and prison to give people the education and skills needed to hold down a job, look after their property, reduce addiction and crime.</p> | Priority 3 highlights the Council’s plan to work with commissioning and other strategic partners to map out the support services available to people and to share the information with frontline officers. | <p>The 12-month delivery plan includes an action to increase specialisms within the housing services to meet the needs of individuals with complex support needs. This includes a review of the current specialist support roles embedded in the service to assess the effectiveness of the roles.</p> <p>Through additional specialist training and information sharing with frontline staff the</p> |

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| | <p>Work closer with partnership agencies working with homeless people such as probation, charities etc, to support those that are homeless access what they need.</p> <p>It seems as though the processes in place are very prescriptive and if a person (who is likely to be chaotic and highly likely that they would find the process too hard I.e. educationally challenged</p> | | <p>personalised housing plans will focus on the support needs of individuals, with referrals made to the support services most appropriate to meet their needs.</p> |
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| Priority 4: Reduce Rough Sleeping | | Council response | Schedule of changes |
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| Public Health | <p>Utilise the Health Squad to provide support for both the physical and mental health needs of Rough Sleepers. This will include opportunities to assess need and help individuals navigate through health and social care services e.g to gain flu vaccinations, cancer screening, CVD screening, BBVs, sexual health services.</p> <p>Work with Public Health to link with the County Durham Care Partnership Board to allocate a GP to become a clinical specialist in dealing with the population of rough sleepers.</p> <p>Maintain and bolster links with the DARS to deliver on the pathways for housing support, integrating health and wellbeing into housing assessments funded by Dame Carol Black as part of the 10-year drug strategy From Harm to Hope.</p> <p>Maintain and bolster links to the Adverse Weather and Protecting Health Plan to regularly review and revise pathways and action cards (Notification and escalation processes) to protect all rough sleepers.</p> | <p>The priority highlights the aim to work closely with social care and health professionals to identify the root cause of homelessness and to also meet any unmet health needs.</p> | <p>Under priority 4 the importance of working closely with key partners to address the underlying causes of rough sleeping and repeat rough sleeping is addressed. It is recognised that rough sleepers often have complex needs which require a trauma informed multi-agency response.</p> <p>Through funding opportunities such as the Dame Carol Black Funding the housing service have been able to introduce specialist roles into the service to provide a tailored approach. These posts will be reviewed, and any gaps identified to further develop the service offer.</p> <p>The 12-month delivery plan includes an action that the Council will work with key partners to establish a night shelter facility which will meet the needs of rough sleeper. As the new night shelter will have access all year round it will be available</p> |

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| | | | during adverse weather periods and will protect rough sleepers. |
| Durham Police & Crime Commissioner's Office | Liaison with local stakeholders. Support safe spaces for women in night shelters. Consider women who use "sex for rent" rather than rough sleeping | The priority includes an action to establish a night shelter facility which can be accessed all year round | Under priority 4 the Council will work with key partners to establish a night shelter facility which will meet the needs of rough sleepers, including safe spaces for women. The housing service comms will include support for women who are at risk of rough sleeping and through frontline training there will be support available for them. |
| Karbon | We believe that reducing rough sleeping is an important goal and one which, due to its complexity, requires a multi-agency approach. We do not provide specialist accommodation for rough sleepers and as a result, we think it is best for the council to coordinate this with other housing providers, charities, and other delivery partners. | Priority 4 highlights the aim to review the current accommodation and support pathways for rough sleepers and introduce new tenancy sustainment officers and expand the current temporary accommodation offer. Housing providers may be able to offer housing with support provided by the housing service and other agencies. | The priority and delivery plan recognise that the Council cannot work in isolation to reduce rough sleeping and that a multi-agency approach is required. A social work post within the rough sleeper team was successful in taking a trauma informed approach to rough sleepers and linking in with health and social care professionals, this is to be re-introduced as good practice. |

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| Livin | Believe that awareness raising amongst RPs on the actions you would like us to take if we identify a rough sleeper will improve the consistency of service that service user receives and improve coordination between partners. | The priority includes working with key partners to improve awareness of rough sleeping via improved comms and attendance at monthly multi-agency problem solving (MAPS) meetings and Durham City Operational Group | The 12-month delivery plan includes actions to develop comms and campaigns around rough sleepers and begging, including encouraging volunteers in this area and detailing the role of the rough sleeper team. These comms will be available for housing partners and other agencies to ensure a consistent message and response. |
| Housing Forum | It was mentioned that in Teesside Asylum Seekers are being pushed through the system and more money is coming through for rough sleepers which is good. | Comments noted | None required |
| Stanley AAP | Darren asked what the Council defined as rough sleepers. There needs to be a quicker response from the Council so that homelessness is not a choice. It takes far too long to get support and people are left fending for themselves; it needs a smoother transition. | Under priority 4 the introduction of a night shelter which can be accessed all year, will provide safe overnight accommodation and the opportunity for the housing service to link with rough sleepers and provide support and create personalised housing pathways | The 12-month delivery plan includes an action to review the current pathways for rough sleepers and the available accommodation. As part of the review there will be a gap analysis carried out to identify how the current process can be streamlined and that rough sleepers receive the most appropriate accommodation and support at the appropriate time and are not left fending for themselves. |

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| <p>Online survey – summary of responses</p> | <p>I love the housing first concept it 100% is the only way to stop homelessness completely but there must be a time limit on the person voluntarily signing up to help with their complex needs, if within 6 months they have not engaged with any help and are causing issue in the area and property they must be moved to a non-voluntary style of supported accommodation.</p> <p>Most people do not sleep rough voluntarily. There is not enough support for those who do sleep rough.</p> <p>Reducing existing homelessness and rough sleeping should be tackled first, then once that's in progress prevention of more potential rough sleeping and homelessness should be addressed.</p> <p>Fund grass roots organisations to identify people and support them BEFORE they become rough sleepers.</p> | <p>Priority 4 highlights the Councils partnership work to reduce rough sleeping across the County and to educate the local community around rough sleeping and begging through pro-active communications.</p> | <p>The 12-month delivery plan priority 4 actions link to both priority 1 and priority 3 to implement a trauma informed approach and to deal with the root causes of homelessness, and to work with partners to reduce rough sleeping. These actions include the co-production, with accommodation providers, of a pre- eviction protocol to enable early intervention work to be carried out by the housing service with individuals to, wherever possible, avoid evictions.</p> <p>The implementation of a housing first model will be supported by tenancy sustainment officers providing floating support and a multi-agency approach providing holistic support, reducing the risk of the tenancy failing, leading to homelessness and rough sleeping.</p> <p>An action under the delivery plan is to work with key partners to introduce a night shelter for rough sleepers which is available all year round. This would give rough sleepers a safe environment to be accommodated and the opportunity for</p> |
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| | | | the rough sleeper team to engage with the rough sleeper and discuss longer term accommodation options. |
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County Durham Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
Delivery Plan 2024 – 2025

| Priority 1: Prevent people from becoming homeless | | | | | |
|---|------------|--|------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Ambition | No. | Actions | Timescale | Lead Partner | Links to other Priorities |
| Review of County Durham lettings policy | | <p>Review four areas of the policy in relation to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the housing register • Homelessness prevention • Medical assessment • Applicants with no housing need <p>Review current access to housing for those applications requiring specialist accommodation, e.g. with adaptations</p> | 12 months + | Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager | |
| Improved access to quality homelessness and housing information | | <p>Update webpage with homelessness information, adding appropriate links to partner websites, e.g. Shelter, Crisis.</p> <p>Work with Customer Services to direct people to webpages for self-help information (following update).</p> <p>Work with communications/media teams to improved comms and promote self-help tools on the website.</p> | 12 months | <p>Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager</p> <p>Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager</p> | |

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| Targeted early intervention to those most likely to be at risk of homelessness | | Carry out a review of specialist officer posts, including Visiting Officers (working with families), Domestic Abuse Officers and Housing Key Workers (working in the PRS) | 6-12 months | Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager | |
| | | Work with partners to explore options to assist victims of Domestic Abuse to remain in the home. | 6-12 months | Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager | |
| Front line staff are fully equipped with the tools, techniques and skill set to prevent homelessness where possible | | Develop and implement a bespoke training programme for front line staff, including mediation techniques, trauma informed approach, mental health. | 3 months | Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager | |
| An improved approach across all tenures to reduce evictions and assist people to remain at home | | Work with Registered Provider's, Private Landlords and Supported Housing Providers to develop pre-eviction protocols. | 12 months | Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager | |
| | | Review the 'Stop before you serve' project within the Private Rental Sector. | | Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager | |
| Co-design services with people with lived experience to ensure they are accessible and fit for purpose | | Develop a tenant engagement panel to assist with co-production of policies, best practice etc. | 12 months | Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager | |
| | | | | Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager | |

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| Develop creative approaches to working with young people to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place | | <p>Work with Childrens and Young People's Services (CYPS) and other council services to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share information about homelessness with young people in the care system and in schools/colleges • Roll out communications plan with Family Hubs • Fully understand the potential demands to the service as young people progress to adulthood | 12 months | <p>Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager</p> <p>Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager</p> | |
| Establishment of a multi-agency Homelessness Forum | | <p>Collaborate with Homeless Link to understand best practice.</p> <p>Establish and implement a Homelessness Forum with key partners.</p> | 3 months | Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager | |

Priority 2: Improve access to and supply of accommodation

| Ambitions | No. | Actions | Timescale | Lead Partner | Links to other Priorities |
|--|-----|---|-----------|---|---------------------------|
| Utilise Council House Delivery Programme to provide affordable accommodation | | <p>Increase the Council's own stock of temporary and longer-term accommodation, with a provision for larger families.</p> <p>Develop a strategic approach to the provision and utilisation of temporary accommodation for homeless people.</p> <p>Implement the Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme (SHAP).</p> <p>Work with CYPS to acquire accommodation for children within the care system.</p> | 12 months | <p>Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager</p> <p>Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager</p> | |

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| Increase the supply of accommodation for vulnerable and specialist groups | | <p>Work jointly with commissioning teams to develop a strategic approach to providing housing for specialist groups, including partnership working with Registered Providers (RP's) and supported housing providers</p> <p>Develop a programme of inspections of empty properties to identify any that may be suitable to be brought back into use.</p> <p>Carry out a review of purchasing properties at auction.</p> <p>Work with Registered Providers to extend New Start for those excluded from DKO.</p> <p>Work with Registered Providers to explore initiatives that could support ex-offenders to access social housing.</p> | 12 months | <p>Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager</p> <p>Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager</p> | |
| Delivery of the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) | | <p>Develop a gateway approach with non-commissioned supported housing providers to ensure expansion of accommodation is of the right type in the right locations.</p> <p>Implement an improved referral pathway via a specialist software portal</p> | <p>12 months</p> <p>6 months</p> | Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager | |

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| Development of clear housing pathways for the most vulnerable groups. | | Work with key partners to review current housing pathways for rough sleepers, victims of domestic abuse, migrants and asylum seekers and those leaving prison, hospital or the children's care system | 12 months | Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager | |
| Make information readily available, setting out the various housing options available, how people can access those options and how they can help themselves | | Update current webpages with links to relevant sites including accessing social, private and supported accommodation. Work with the corporate data team to improve snapshot information available via Durham Insight. | 12 months | Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager | Priority 1 |

| Priority 3: Ensure the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless (work with partners to build resilience in people) | | | | | |
|---|------------|--|------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Ambitions | No. | Actions | Timescale | Lead Partner | Links to other Priorities |
| Identification of all available support services for homeless people | | <p>Work with commissioning teams and members of the Supported Housing Steering Group to map out all support services.</p> <p>Ensure all information is readily available for front line staff and they are fully aware of the differences in provision</p> | 9 months | <p>Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager</p> <p>Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager</p> | |
| Develop and implement a Charter with SHIP providers | | <p>Work with SHIP providers and people with lived experience to develop and implement a clearly defined charter setting out expectations in relation to support standards and property conditions in non-commissioned housing.</p> <p>Work with health services including the health squad and Humankind to promote health and well-being with SHIP providers.</p> | 6 months | Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager | |

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| Ensure support needs are identified at the earliest opportunity | | Ensure front line staff embed support needs into the personalised housing plans and the necessary referrals are made to meet the needs of the individual (build into training plan) | 3 months | Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager | Priority 1 |
| Increase specialisms with the housing service to ensure a targeted approach for individuals with complex support needs | | Work with Public Health to review existing posts, e.g., drug and alcohol co-ordinators, social workers Identify gaps of specialist officers within the housing service and work with Public Health and other key partners to secure any potential funding opportunities. | 12 months | Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager | |
| Develop clear pathways of support for homeless people | | Work with commissioning teams to identify support pathways for those homeless people who have complex support needs, but don't have a 'care need'. | 12 months | Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager | |

| Priority 4: Reduce Rough Sleeping | | | | | |
|--|------------|--|------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Ambitions | No. | Actions | Timescale | Lead Partner | Links to other Priorities |
| Joint working with health and social care professionals to deal with the root causes of homelessness | | Re-establish a social work post within the Rough Sleeper Team, to work with all clients and provide a tailored approach and improve access to health and adult care services | 6mths | Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager | Priority 3 |
| Work with partners to reduce rough sleeping and prevent evictions | | Work with supported housing providers to establish new approaches to reduce evictions and prevent rough sleeping (SHIP). | 6mths | Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager Strategy and Delivery Strategic Manager | Priority 1 |

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| Develop awareness around rough sleeping and begging | | <p>Implement a 'give wisely' campaign to reduce cash given to rough sleepers and channel funds towards established rough sleeping charities that operate within the City Centre or to encourage volunteering opportunities within this cohort</p> <p>Develop communications to raise awareness of the rough sleeping service and differentiation of begging in the City Centre</p> <p>Work with key partners to improve awareness of rough sleeping via attendance at monthly multi-agency problem solving (MAPS) meetings and Durham City Operational Group .</p> | 6/9 mths | Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager | |
| Review existing accommodation and support pathways for rough sleepers | | <p>Implement a Tenancy Sustainment Officer to provide floating support to rough sleepers in tenancies without support.</p> <p>Improved access to temporary accommodation for rough sleepers out of hours.</p> | 6mths | Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager | |
| Establish a night shelter that can be accessed all year round. | | Work with key partners to establish an appropriate approach to develop a night shelter that is available all year round with provision for males and females. | 12mths | Housing Access and Independent Living Strategic Manager | |

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Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 April 2024



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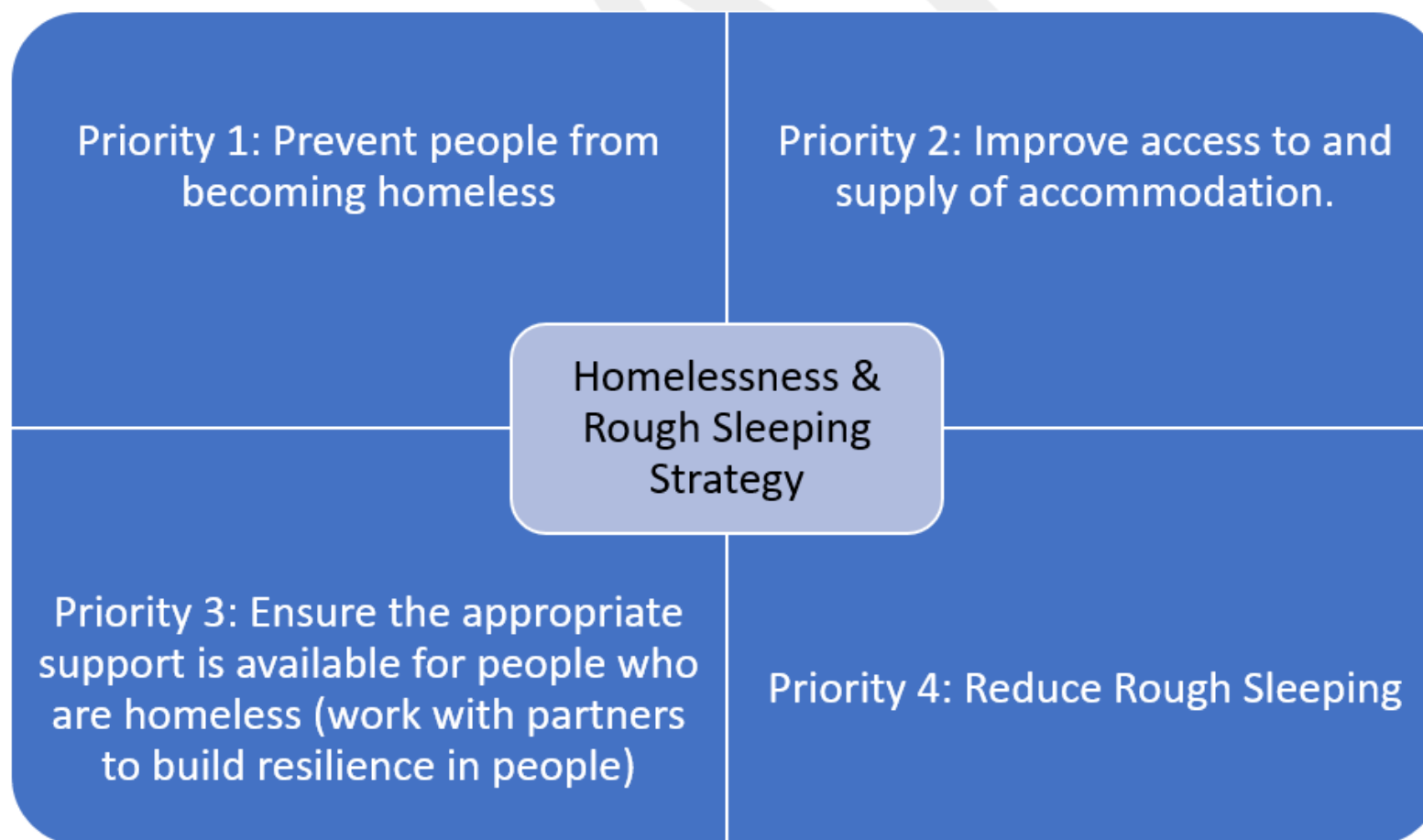
Background

Background

- Statutory requirement to have a strategy in place
- In depth review of homelessness and rough sleeping carried out over a 3 year period
- Informal consultation on proposed priorities carried out December 2022 to March 2023 with a range of partners and members of the public
- Consultation on the draft strategy carried out between October and December 2023 with key partners, stakeholders and residents

Consultation Feedback

Priorities of the strategy



Consultation Summary

- Joint consultation with the Housing Strategy for seven weeks from 30 October 2023 to 18 December 2023
- Consultation was carried out with residents of County Durham and other key partners and stakeholders including;
 - 8 AAP's,
 - 24 Partnerships engaged with
 - 2 Online Events
 - Youth Council
 - 4 Registered Housing Provider meetings
- 52 respondents to the online survey
- 7 email responses from stakeholders and other DCC services including Public Health
- Use of social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter/X) to promote

Main messages from consultation

- Overwhelming support for the vision and the four priorities
- Strong emphasis on the importance of partnership working to successfully deliver the strategy and achieve the vision and priorities
- Prevention and early intervention of homelessness was prevalent in the feedback, particularly working with families and young people to mediate and prevent them from being asked to leave the family home and prevention of evictions.
- Ensure joint working with specialist support services to meet the needs of people with complex issues, for example mental health, finance, drug and alcohol addiction.
- A joined-up approach to assist those people living in poverty and prevent homelessness.
- Better access to affordable housing, including social housing and private rented, in particular for single people, younger people and larger families.
- Review of the Durham Key Options policy to allow fair access and outcomes for people.
- Strong links to health, housing and homelessness.
- Improved partnership working to reduce rough sleeping, in particular a focus on mental health support, including addiction and supported housing for people who require long-term support.

Response to OSC Feedback

General Comments

- A one-year delivery plan has been developed to ensure implementation of the strategy can commence once it is adopted in July 2024
- A light touch review will be carried out annually to address any policy or funding changes as well as taking into consideration any significant differences in demand to the service. The delivery plan will be updated accordingly following the annual review.
- The delivery of the strategy will be overseen by an internal housing project group, with accountability to the Homelessness Forum.

Response to OSC Feedback

Priority 1

- **Face to face contact** - The front-line teams will make an appointment to see clients in Customer Access Points (CAP) should they be unable to communicate via telephone or e-mail. Home visits will be arranged for those clients who have vulnerabilities and are unable to communicate digitally or come into a CAP.
- **Promotion of the support available** - The one-year delivery plan includes an action to update the webpages and to include relevant links to partner agencies. This work also includes working with key partners, including the family hubs to promote the services that the homeless team offers.
- **Support for young people** - Priority 1 in the strategy highlights the need to ‘Develop creative approaches to working earlier with young people in schools, youth groups and young people within the care system to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place’. Delivery Plan includes actions to address this.

Response to OSC Feedback

Priority 1

Monitoring of people presenting because of the 'cost of living crisis'

- Data dashboards track the numbers of people that present as homeless or at risk of homeless due to loss of their property in the private rented sector.
- The Stop before you serve initiative supports tenants where a notice of eviction has been served and mediates with the landlord to prevent evictions.
- Two key workers work alongside the private sector team to identify cases at an early point in time that could lead to an eviction.

Priority 2

Work with RP's to provide accommodation for ex-offenders

- The one-year delivery plan includes an action to work with providers to explore potential initiatives that could support ex-offenders to access social housing, where they would otherwise be excluded from DKO.

Next steps



Next steps

Approval of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy including Twelve Month Delivery Plan

- REG MT – 16 May 2024
 - CMT – 12 June 2024
 - Cabinet – 10th July 2024
 - Full Council – July 2024
-
- Establishment of a Homelessness Forum with partners and stakeholders
 - Development of a five-year delivery plan

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 April 2024



Regeneration, Economy and Growth – Quarter 3: Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24

Report of Corporate Directors

Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration, Economy and Growth

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide details of the forecast outturn position for quarter 3 revenue and capital for Regeneration, Economy and Growth (REG) as at 31 December 2023.

Executive summary

- 2 This report provides an overview of the forecast of outturn, based on the position at quarter 3, 2023/24. It provides an analysis of the budgets and forecast outturn for the service areas falling under the remit of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee and complements the reports considered and agreed by Cabinet on a quarterly basis.
- 3 The position is that there is a forecast overspend of £90,000, against a revised budget of £57.322 million after taking account of the forecast use of reserves and items outside the cash limit, including redundancy costs which are met from the corporate reserve, capital accounting entries and use of / contributions to earmarked reserves. The quarter two forecast estimated a cash limit overspend of £0.725 million in year.
- 4 Savings in energy budgets of £1.675 million, along with the 2023/24 pay award linked to vacancies of £0.245 million have been excluded from the cash limit forecast outturn position. Also excluded is £1.808 million in respect of Leisure Centre income shortfalls that are being covered corporately and £0.433 million which has been covered from central

contingencies (£95,000 Radon Monitoring, £0.388 million Milburngate legal and professional fees and £50,000 relating to running costs at the Story and Plot C).

- 5 The revised service capital budget is £134.507 million with expenditure of £84.730 million as at 31 December 2023.
- 6 Details of the reasons for under and overspending against relevant budget heads are disclosed in the report.

Recommendation(s)

- 7 Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.

Background

8 County Council approved the Revenue and Capital budgets for 2023/24 at its meeting on 22 February 2023. These budgets have since been revised to account for grant additions/reductions, budget transfers, and budget re-profiling between years (in terms of capital) as well as corporately recognised budget pressures. This report covers the financial position for the following budgets of the services within the scope of this committee;

- (a) Revenue Budget - £57.322 million (original £56.363 million)
- (b) Capital Programme – £134.507 million (original £131.502 million)

9 The original service revenue budget has been revised in year to incorporate various budget adjustments. These are shown in the table below:

| Description | Change (£m) |
|--|--------------|
| Comms & Marketing – from REG to CEO | (1.935) |
| Design & Conservation – from NCC to REG (P&H) | 0.262 |
| Post Transfer to Care Connect – RES to REG (P&H) | 0.030 |
| Post Transfer from B&FM – REG (CPaL) to RES | (0.028) |
| Post Transfer from H&S – REG (CPaL) to RES | (0.011) |
| Post Transfer from T&CS – REG to RES | (0.038) |
| LTP Income from NCC to REG (T&CS) | (0.017) |
| EV Charging Infrastructure – from REG (T&CS) to NCC | (0.011) |
| Transfer of restructure budget – REG (Central) to Corporate | (0.101) |
| Self-Financing Capital Charges: House Building/CDLA – REG (P&H) to Corporate | (0.048) |
| 2023/24 Pay Award | 2.857 |
| Total Change | 0.959 |

10 The summary financial statements contained in the report cover the financial year 2023/24 and show: -

- (a) The approved annual budget;
- (b) The forecast income and expenditure as recorded in the Council's financial management system;
- (c) The variance between the annual budget and the forecast outturn;
- (d) For the revenue budget, adjustments for items outside of the cash limit (outside of the Service's control) to take into account such items

as capital charges and use of / or contributions to earmarked reserves.

Forecast Revenue Outturn 2023/24

- 11 The service is reporting a cash limit overspend of **£90,000** against a revised budget of **£57.322 million** (0.16%).
- 12 The table below compares the forecast outturn with the budget by Head of Service. A further table is shown at **Appendix 2** analysing the position by Subjective Analysis (i.e. type of expense).

Service Budget - Analysis by Head of Service £'000

| | Revised Annual Budget | Forecast Outturn | Variance | Items Outside Cash Limit | Earmarked Reserves | Net Inflation Adjustment | Cash Limit Variance |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Head of Service | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| Economic Development | 258 | 1,186 | 928 | 0 | (894) | 0 | 34 |
| Corporate Property & Land | 2,125 | 2,630 | 505 | (433) | (656) | 0 | (584) |
| Culture Sport & Tourism | 18,258 | 22,671 | 4,413 | (1,807) | (2,278) | 0 | 328 |
| Planning & Housing | 8,015 | 7,480 | (535) | 0 | 299 | 0 | (236) |
| Transport & Contracted Servs | 3,126 | (89) | (3,215) | 0 | 3,486 | 0 | 271 |
| REG - Central Costs | 25,540 | 23,897 | (1,643) | 245 | 0 | 1,675 | 277 |
| Total | 57,322 | 57,775 | 453 | (1,995) | (42) | 1,675 | 90 |

- 13 The cash limit overspend of £90,000 takes into account adjustments for sums outside the cash limit such as redundancy costs that are met from corporate reserves and use of / contributions to earmarked reserves.

Cash Limit Outturn – Explanation of Over and Under Spending

- 14 The main reasons accounting for the outturn position are as follows:
- 15 Culture, Sport and Tourism is forecast to overspend by £0.328 million against budget. The main reasons are an unrealised MTFP saving of £75,000, a capital contribution of £86,000 for leisure transformation, a £0.259 million overspend at the two completed leisure transformation sites linked to increased operating costs and reduced income and an anticipated loss of income of £0.258 million at Killhope Museum. These overspends were partially offset by short term equipment underspends whilst new gym equipment is awaited at seven of our leisure centres.
- 16 Transport and Contract Services is forecast to overspend by £0.271 million against budget. The main reasons are an under-recovery of departure charge income at Durham bus station of £0.130 million, on-going costs for a new database system of £30,000, an anticipated under-achievement of income for park and ride of £0.233 million, unbudgeted spending of £72,000 for enforcement cameras, increased business rate charges on multistorey car parks of £0.135 million, an overspend on routine electrical testing of car park street lighting of £66,000, under-recovery of bus shelter advertising income of £0.143 million and an overspend on bus shelter repairs and maintenance of £66,000. These were partially offset by an underspend of £0.149 million against Durham bus station for its closure in year, £0.241 million overachievement of parking income, an £80,000 underspend on park and ride contracts and £95,000 of underspends mainly relating to road safety employee costs and school crossing patrols. The 2024/25 budget includes an adjustment to rebase the park and ride income, which will then be unwound over the following four years.
- 17 Planning and Housing is forecast to underspend by £0.236 million against budget. This is largely due to an anticipated underachievement of income of £0.217 million with regard to planning fee income and an overspend of £0.175 million in relation to planning appeals. These overspends are partially offset by anticipated staffing underspends of £0.543 million across the service and a £53,000 underspend on care connect equipment contracts.
- 18 Economic Development is forecast to overspend by £34,000 against budget, which is predominantly attributed to under-recovery of training income in the Employment and Skills service.
- 19 Corporate Property and Land is forecast to underspend by £0.584 million against budget. Within Buildings & Facilities Management, there is a forecast overspend of £0.204 million, mainly relating to the catering

service, which includes a shortfall in income as a result of hybrid working and reduced footfall in the internal staff facilities such as County Hall and Green Lane. Strategy and Property Management is forecast to underspend by £0.584 million due primarily to additional budget growth of £0.600 million included in the base budget from 2022/23 for a staffing restructure that is not now expected to be in place until 2024/25. The underspend is partially offset by expenditure relating to interim support (consultants and professional fees) pending the implementation of the restructure. There are also minor underspends elsewhere within the service, including additional unbudgeted income in Business Development of £53,000, staffing underspends of £79,000 as well as underspends on supplies and services of £85,000.

- 20 In summary, the service grouping is not managing to maintain spending within its cash limit and as a result needs to draw £90,000 million from the Regeneration Cash Limit Reserve.

Capital Programme

- 21 The capital programme makes a significant contribution to the regeneration ambitions of County Durham. The programme is relatively large and diverse and is managed by project delivery officers throughout the service.
- 22 The Regeneration, Economy and Growth Services capital programme was revised at year-end for budget re-profiled from 2022/23. Since then, reports to the MOWG have detailed further revisions, for grant additions/reductions, budget transfers and budget re-profiling into later years. The revised budget now stands at £134.507 million.
- 23 Summary financial performance for 2023/24 is shown below.

| Service | Revised Annual Budget 2023/24 £000 | Actual Spend to 31 December £000 | Remaining Budget 2023/24 £000 |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Economic Development | 30,756 | 16,240 | 14,516 |
| Corporate Property & Land | 21,276 | 17,515 | 3,761 |
| Culture Sport & Tourism | 24,706 | 18,312 | 6,395 |
| Strategic Programmes | 90 | - | 90 |
| Planning & Housing | 17,289 | 11,427 | 5,862 |
| Transport & Contracted Services | 40,390 | 21,237 | 19,153 |
| Total | 134,507 | 84,730 | 49,776 |

- 24 Officers continue to carefully monitor capital expenditure on a monthly basis. Actual spend for the first 9 months amounts to £84.730 million. **Appendix 3** provides a more detailed breakdown of spend across the major projects contained within the capital programme.

Background papers

- County Council Report (22 February 2023) - [Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24](#)
- [Cabinet Report \(13 September 2023\) – Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 – Period to 30 June 2023.](#)
- [Cabinet Report \(15 November 2023\) – Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 – Period to 30 September 2023.](#)
- [Cabinet Report \(13 March 2024\) – Forecast of Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24 – Period to 31 December 2023.](#)

Contact: Ed Thompson

Tel: 03000 263481

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The consideration of regular budgetary control reports is a key component of the Council's Corporate and Financial Governance arrangements. This report shows the forecast spend against budgets agreed by the Council in February 2023 in relation to the 2023/24 financial year.

Finance

Financial implications are detailed throughout the report which provides an analysis of the revenue and capital outturn position alongside details of balance sheet items such as earmarked reserves held by the service grouping to support its priorities.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

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

Procurement

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

Appendix 2: Regeneration, Economy & Growth Forecast Outturn at Q3 – Subjective Analysis

| REG Subjective Analysis | Revised Annual Budget | Forecast Outturn | Variance | Items Outside Cash Limit | Earmarked Reserves | Net Inflation Adjustment | Cash Limit Variance |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| Employees | 78,476 | 73,586 | (4,890) | 245 | 0 | 0 | (4,645) |
| Premises | 23,367 | 24,279 | 912 | 0 | 0 | 1,675 | 2,587 |
| Transport | 1,635 | 1,802 | 167 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 166 |
| Supplies & Services | 19,023 | 28,543 | 9,520 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9,521 |
| Third Party Payments | 45,597 | 52,583 | 6,986 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6,986 |
| Transfer Payments | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Capital | 13,592 | 13,592 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Central Costs | 11,996 | 12,750 | 754 | (432) | (42) | 0 | 278 |
| DRF | 0 | 159 | 159 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 159 |
| Gross Expenditure | 193,686 | 207,295 | 13,609 | (187) | (42) | 1,675 | 15,053 |
| Grant | (9,436) | (15,049) | (5,613) | 0 | 0 | 0 | (5,613) |
| Contributions | (19,943) | (21,682) | (1,739) | 0 | 0 | 0 | (1,739) |
| Sales | (2,519) | (2,043) | 476 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 476 |
| Charges | (30,073) | (30,779) | (706) | (1,808) | 0 | 0 | (2,514) |
| Rents | (10,543) | (12,449) | (1,906) | 0 | 0 | 0 | (1,906) |
| Recharges | (62,981) | (65,615) | (2,634) | 0 | 0 | 0 | (2,634) |
| Other Income | (869) | (1,902) | (1,033) | 0 | 0 | 0 | (1,033) |
| Gross Income | (136,364) | (149,519) | (13,155) | (1,808) | 0 | 0 | (14,963) |
| Total | 57,322 | 57,775 | 454 | (1,995) | (42) | 1,675 | 90 |

Appendix 3: Regeneration, Economy and Growth Capital 2023/24

| General Fund | Revised Annual Budget £000 | Actual Spend to 31 Dec £000 | Remaining Budget £000 |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| Economic Development | | | |
| Industrial Estates | 18,022 | 11,606 | 6,417 |
| Minor Schemes | 150 | 112 | 37 |
| North Dock Seaham | 25 | 25 | 0 |
| Beamish Capital Project | 1,879 | 0 | 1,879 |
| Town & Village Environmental Maint. | 4,025 | 1,954 | 2,071 |
| <u>Town Centres:</u> | | | |
| Barnard Castle | 76 | 60 | 16 |
| Bishop Auckland | 3,985 | 1,292 | 2,693 |
| Consett | 516 | 355 | 162 |
| Durham | 300 | 0 | 300 |
| Peterlee | 284 | 40 | 244 |
| Seaham | 936 | 451 | 485 |
| Spennymoor | 327 | 297 | 30 |
| Other | 232 | 49 | 182 |
| | 30,756 | 16,240 | 14,516 |
| Planning & Housing | | | |
| Housing Renewal | 9,149 | 3,851 | 5,298 |
| Housing Development | 195 | 40 | 155 |
| Disabled Facility Grants/Financial Assist | 7,176 | 7,099 | 76 |
| Care Connect Digital Upgrade | 769 | 437 | 332 |
| | 17,289 | 11,427 | 5,862 |
| Corporate Property and Land | | | |
| Office Accommodation | 17,015 | 15,020 | 1,995 |
| Structural Capitalised Maint. | 3,858 | 2,335 | 1,523 |
| Milburngate | 403 | 160 | 243 |
| | 21,276 | 17,515 | 3,761 |
| Transport & Contracted Services | | | |
| Local Transport Plan | 1,789 | 951 | 838 |
| Transport Major Schemes | 37,853 | 20,071 | 17,781 |
| Traffic & Community Engagement | 748 | 215 | 533 |
| | 40,390 | 21,237 | 19,153 |
| Culture, Sport and Tourism | | | |
| <u>Culture and Museums:</u> | | | |
| The Story | 4,472 | 3,991 | 481 |
| Sildon Coal Drops | 513 | 73 | 440 |

| | Revised Annual Budget £000 | Actual Spend to 31 Dec £000 | Remaining Budget £000 |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| General Fund | | | |
| Redhills Refurbishment | 815 | 605 | 210 |
| Locomotion New Building | 2,976 | 2,056 | 920 |
| Weardale Railway | 977 | 569 | 408 |
| Killhope Museum | 602 | 525 | 77 |
| DLIMAG | 1,434 | 718 | 716 |
| Other | 18 | 17 | 1 |
| <u>Leisure Centres:</u> | | | |
| Teesdale LC | 361 | 21 | 340 |
| Spennymoor LC | 2,015 | 1,287 | 728 |
| Woodhouse Close LC | 950 | 395 | 555 |
| Peterlee LC | 4,645 | 4,837 | (192) |
| Abbey LC | 2,330 | 2,237 | 92 |
| Louisa LC | 2,164 | 709 | 1,455 |
| Other | 372 | 239 | 133 |
| Outdoor S&L Facilities | 63 | 34 | 29 |
| | 24,706 | 18,312 | 6,394 |
| Strategic Programmes | | | |
| Minor SPP | 90 | 0 | 90 |
| | 90 | 0 | 90 |
| | | | |
| REG Total | 134,507 | 84,730 | 49,776 |

Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 April 2024

Quarter Three, 2023/24 Performance Management Report



John Hewitt, Chief Executive

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present an overview of progress towards delivery of the key priorities within the Council Plan 2023-27 in line with the council's corporate performance framework.
- 2 The report covers performance in and to the end of quarter three, 2023/24, October to December 2023.

Executive Summary

- 3 The County Council is a key partner within the County Durham Together Partnership. Collectively partners work towards delivering a shared plan - the [County Durham Vision 2035](#). The vision document was developed with partner organisations and the public. It sets out what we would like the county to be like over the next decade and beyond. The vision is for:

a place where there are more and better jobs, people live long, and independent lives and our communities are well connected and supportive.

- 4 We have set out how the council will effectively deliver its services and its contribution to achieving this vision in our [Council Plan](#). The Council Plan is structured around five thematic areas: our economy, our environment, our people, our communities, and our council. We monitor our success through a suite of Key Performance Indicators (our corporate performance framework), which forms the basis of this report.
- 5 The [Council Plan](#) is undergoing its annual refresh and the plan for 2024-28 will be considered by Council on 28 February 2024. Subject to Council approval, it will continue to be structured around five thematic areas which, along with the objectives they contain, will remain unchanged. Our priorities, key programmes of work and associated performance management arrangements for the forthcoming four years are set out within the refreshed plan and our performance framework is now being adjusted accordingly. The new framework will form the structure of this performance report from quarter one, 2024/25.

- 6 We are a well-functioning council in relation to performance, and continue to set our performance against characteristics of well-functioning councils as set out by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)¹ Best Value Standards and Intervention Draft Guidance. We will continue to develop the following through our performance management processes and the wider Corporate Business Intelligence Review:
- (a) An organisational-wide approach to continuous improvement, with frequent monitoring, performance reporting and updating of the corporate and improvement plans.
 - (b) A corporate plan which is evidence based, current, realistic and enables the whole organisation's performance to be measured and held to account.
 - (c) Clear and effective mechanisms for scrutinising performance across all service areas. Performance is regularly reported to the public to ensure that citizens are informed of the quality of services being delivered.
- 7 In July 2023, the Office for Local Government (Oflog) was established as a new performance body for local government. Its purpose is to provide authoritative and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government, and support its improvement.
- 8 Oflog's initial focus is to bring together existing data in an informative way through the [Local Authority Data Explorer](#). The first tranche of metrics, uploaded to the Data Explorer in July 2023 and incorporated within this performance report, is being expanded to cover a wider range of local government responsibilities. A second tranche of metrics is now being released and a third tranche will follow in the spring of 2024. These metrics will be incorporated into future reports as and when appropriate.

Context

- 9 The council is a large organisation providing a broad range of services, and our operating environment can at times be challenging, due largely to inflationary and demand pressures.
- (a) We are showing strong economic performance in the county with a range of measures such as the employment rate and unemployment being favourable compared to previous years. Cultural events are well attended with local businesses enjoying their economic impact. A current challenge for the council is transitioning from European funding to national schemes such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for employment initiatives.
 - (b) Key measures around waste collection and disposal show that we are diverting a smaller proportion of waste to landfill, and contamination of our household recycling continues to come down. Carbon emissions from council operations is falling but we need to accelerate our

¹ [Best Value standards and intervention](#)

programme if we are to meet our targets. Bus patronage for our park and ride scheme and for public bus services has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Work is going on at national, regional and local levels to help mitigate against these losses.

- (c) Demand for children's social care remains high. Processing times and re-referral rates demonstrate the effectiveness of social care provision. Care Acts assessment timeliness for adult social care clients is improving and remains an area of strong focus for us. We have experienced a substantial increase in requests for education, health and care plans for children with special educational needs and disabilities since 2019 leading to backlogs for educational psychologist advice. No applications have been processed within the government's 20-week timescale. This remains a concern. The proportion of people accessing homeless services where we have accepted the statutory duty of homelessness has increased.
- (d) The overall crime rate in County Durham has fallen and compares favourably with many council areas in the region. However, there has been a steady increase in referrals of domestic abuse to our support services. Fly-tipping reports to the council remain at an all-time low due to the proactive approach. The number of eligible private sector rented properties which are fully licensed under the selective licensing scheme is now at 43%. Timeliness of repairing all categories of highway defects are better than target. Fatalities from road traffic accidents is worse than comparators. Retail vacancies are higher than national levels although there is a varied picture across our centres.
- (e) The employee sickness absence rate is falling and is now at 11.15 days per full-time equivalent. The council continues to experience recruitment difficulties in certain occupational categories with some positions being advertised multiple times.

Recommendation

- 10 Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
 - (a) note the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter three performance, and the actions being taken to address areas of challenge.

Background papers

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

Other useful documents

- Council Plan 2023 to 2027 (current plan)
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s168768/Council%20Plan%20Refresh%20Appendix%203.pdf>
- Quarter Two, 2023/24 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s183015/Q2%202023-24%20Corporate%20Performance%20Report.pdf>
- Quarter One, 2023/24 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s178933/Q1%202023-24%20Corporate%20Performance%20Report%20-%20Cabinet%2013.09.23.pdf>
- Quarter Four, 2022/23 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s174900/Item%204%20Q4%202022-23%202%201.pdf>
- Quarter Three, 2022/23 Performance Management Report
<https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s166398/Corporate%20Performance%20Report%20Q2%202022-23%20v2.1.pdf>

Author

Steve Evans

Contact: steve.evans@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable.

Finance

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

Consultation

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Climate Change

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

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

A number of performance indicators and key actions relating to crime and disorder are continually monitored in partnership with the Safe Durham Partnership and its sub-groups.

Staffing

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

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

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

Procurement

Not applicable.



Corporate Performance Report

Quarter Three, 2023/24



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| Our Council | ➤ Our Council Performance Report | |
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Executive Summary

- 1 This performance report covers the third quarter of the 2023/24 financial year (October to December 2023). It sets out our progress towards delivering the key priorities set out within our [Council Plan 2023-27](#).
- 2 Performance is reported on an exception basis with key messages structured around the five thematic areas of, our economy, our environment, our people, our communities, and our council.

Our economy

- 3 The aim of this priority is to create an inclusive economy with more and better jobs, major employment sites which cement our position as a premier place in the region to do business, a good tourism base and cultural offer, and employability support programmes which help people back into jobs or to start their own business. Our children and young people will receive the education and training required to access opportunities.

Going Well

- 4 Employments levels are within the highest levels for 20 years and unemployment remains low.
- 5 There is a growing demand for jobs and the balance within the labour market is starting to shift with more people achieving higher levels of education and training. Average wages for residents within the county are growing.
- 6 Processing times for major planning applications are now better than target following a dip last quarter.
- 7 The proportion of planning applications overturned on appeal remain well within the government's criteria.
- 8 Both the amount of investment secured for companies and the number of inward investments attracted to the county are on track to achieve their annual targets.
- 9 We have recorded increased attendances at all our cultural events strengthening our position as the culture county and contributing significantly to the local economy.

Issues we are addressing

- 10 Non-major planning applications are slightly worse than target, but work is ongoing to address this, for example, by utilising the extension of time agreements where needed.
- 11 Occupancy rates for council owned business floorspace are worse than target. This is due to new units being established but not yet let. Demand remains high and we expect the units to be occupied soon and performance to achieve target.
- 12 The transition from European Regional Development Fund to UK Shared Prosperity Fund Productivity and Growth Programme has resulted in fewer businesses being engaged as funded schemes come to an end.

Our environment

- 13 The aim of this priority is to protect our natural environment, including biodiversity and healthy ecosystems. In 2019, the council declared a climate emergency with a commitment to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 and contribute towards a carbon neutral county by 2045. In April 2022, the council declared an ecological emergency and committed to address ecological decline wherever possible. Our county is of significant landscape value and supports unique combinations of plant and animal species.

Issues we are addressing

- 14 Park and ride patronage remains worse than pre-pandemic levels following the systemic change in working patterns after lockdown restrictions were lifted, and people returned to work on a hybrid working pattern. A scheme to extend Sniperley Park and Ride is being progressed which will safeguard increased demand from future development in the city and help to reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emission within the historic centre itself.

Our people

- 15 This priority aims to help our residents live long and independent lives and remain in good health for as long as possible. We will protect and improve health by tackling the leading causes of illness and early death, inequalities and the challenges around mental health. We will ensure a sustainable high-quality care market and invest in a multi-million pound programme to transform our leisure centre venues.

Issues we are addressing

- 16 The proportion of homelessness cases where statutory homelessness duty has been accepted has increased this quarter due to the housing team significantly reducing the number of lost contact cases. We have secured government funding to acquire support and additional temporary accommodation and bedspaces.

Our communities

- 17 The aim of this priority is to ensure our communities are well connected and supportive of each other, with vibrant and accessible towns and villages which are well-used, clean, attractive and safe. We will support our most vulnerable residents, particularly those isolated or financially vulnerable. We will maintain a strong focus on tackling poverty throughout the cost-of-living crisis.

Going Well

- 18 The time to repair highways maintenance defects across all categories are better than or near target.

Issues we are addressing

- 19 Forty-three percent of private rented sector properties covered by the selective licensing scheme are now licensed. Our enforcement team continues to target properties not yet licensed.

- 20 On average 16% of town centre retail units in the county are vacant, compared to 13.9% nationally. Vacancy rates are significantly higher in Bishop Auckland, Newton Aycliffe and Peterlee. We continue to offer support through council led initiatives such as the Towns and Villages Programme, the Targeted Business Improvement Scheme and town centre masterplans. Additionally, the government identified Bishop Auckland as eligible for funding from their £3.6 billion Towns Fund.
- 21 Public bus patronage remains lower than pre-Covid levels and is not likely to return in the medium-term. The government extended its £2 bus fare cap and we continue to work in partnership with other regional councils to implement the North East Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- 22 Fatalities from road traffic accidents have increased. We continue to support a reduction in road traffic casualties through a range of education programmes and campaigns.

Risk Management

- 23 The government's statutory guidance for best value authorities sets out the characteristics of a well-functioning authority. This details the arrangements that councils should have in place for robust governance and scrutiny including how risk awareness and management should inform decision making. The latest [Strategic Risk Management Progress Report](#) provides an insight into the work carried out by the Corporate Risk Management Group between June and September 2023.

Our Economy

Priority Aims:

County Durham has a thriving and inclusive economy with more and better jobs and fewer people suffering from the hardships of poverty and deprivation. We are continuing to,

- deliver a range of employment sites across the county
- deliver a strong, competitive economy where County Durham is a premier place in the North East to live and do business
- ensure a broader experience for residents and visitors to the county
- ensure young people will have access to good quality education, training and employment
- help all people into rewarding work
- ensure fewer people will be affected by poverty and deprivation within the county
- improve employment opportunities for disabled people

National, Regional and Local Picture

- 24 Although there is strong economic performance across a range of performance measures, there is variation within the county and across the region compared to national levels.
- 25 There has been strong demand for development land as well as industrial and office premises of all sizes - jobs have increased 3.7% in the county since 2010. Employment is significantly higher (70.8%) than 20 years ago and unemployment is low (3.5%), which reflects national trends (75.9% and 3.9% respectively).
- 26 Our manufacturing sector, which has remained strong during the last few challenging years, is innovating, driving green growth and supporting a range of other sectors such as logistics and business services. With rising energy costs, businesses have invested to reduce energy usage, costs and carbon emissions. However, the last few years have been particularly challenging for the retail, hospitality and public sector.
- 27 There is a growing demand for workers in the county and the balance of jobs is starting to shift with more people achieving higher levels of education and training, and moving into better paid jobs. We continue to lose many people to urban areas which offer higher wages and a greater choice of private sector jobs.
- 28 Although average wages in the county are growing (£29,537, 2023), they remain low compared to the national level (£35,106) and the cost-of-living is a long-term problem, especially for the large numbers of people with health conditions, disabilities, and caring responsibilities.

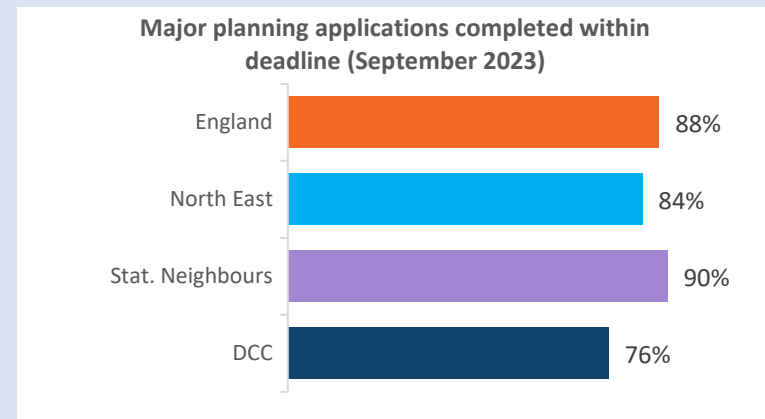
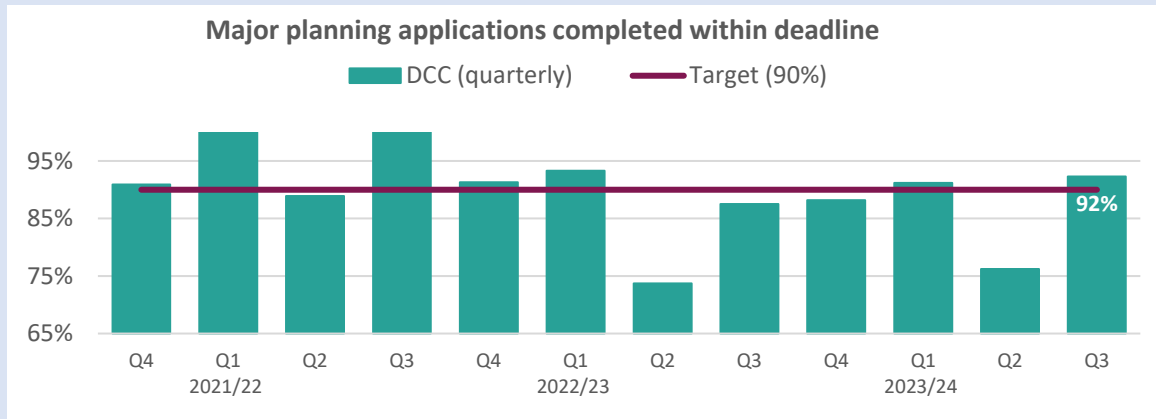
Economic Growth Dashboard: Planning Applications

(Oflog measures)

(discrete quarterly data / benchmarking data 30 September 2023)

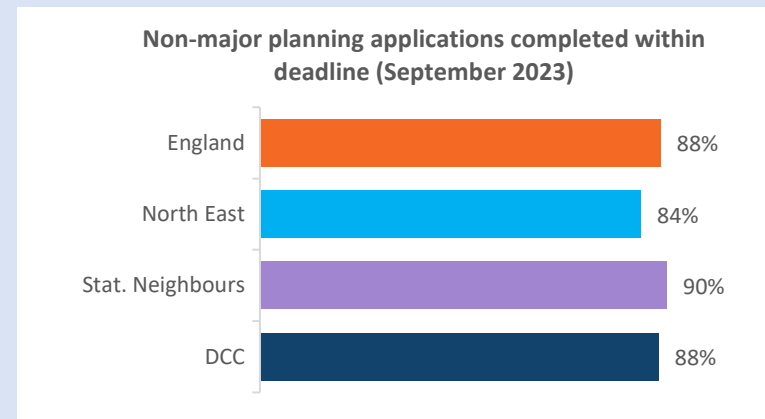
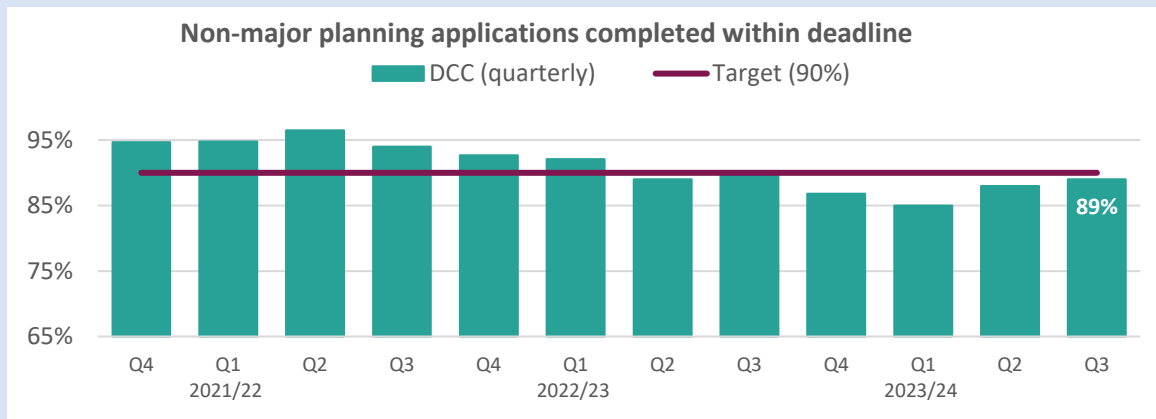
Major Planning Applications

- 92.3% (25 out of 27) determined in deadline.
- Processes now embedded to ensure Extension of Time agreements are in place where it is not possible to complete a consideration within the deadline.



Non-major Planning Applications

- 89% (431 out of 482) determined in deadline.
- We will continue to utilise the Extension of Time agreements process to ensure decisions are in deadline.



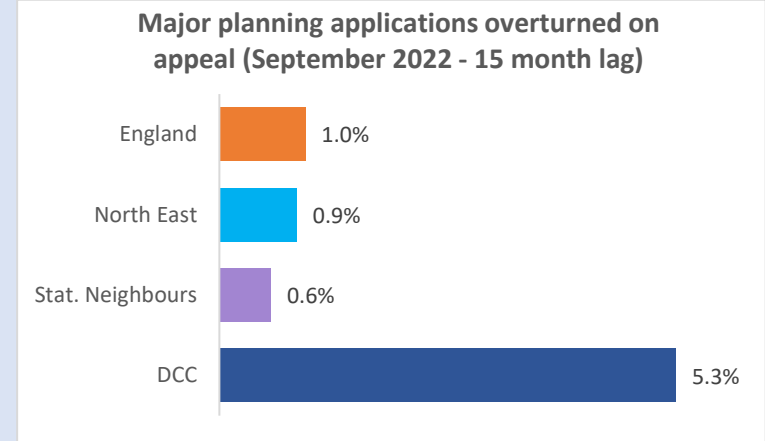
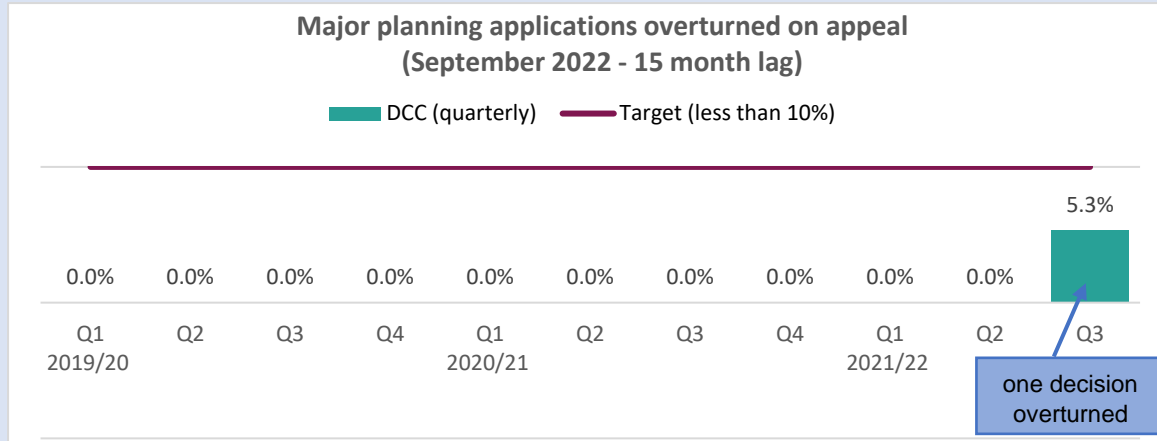
Economic Growth Dashboard: Planning Application Appeals

(Oflog measures)

(discrete quarterly data / benchmarking data 30 September 2022)

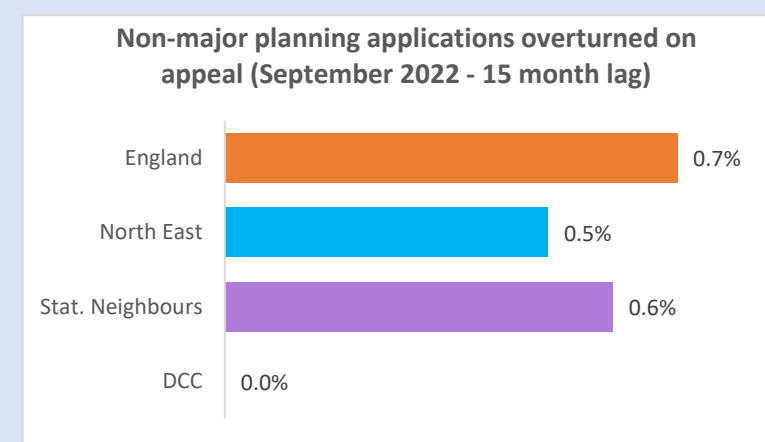
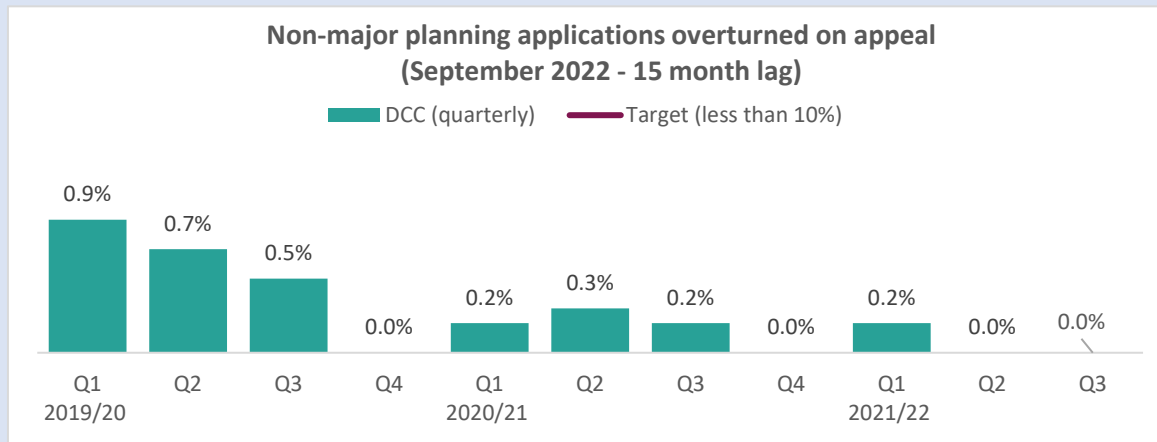
Major planning applications overturned on appeal

- One of 19 decisions was overturned (5.3%).



Non-major planning applications overturned on appeal

- Of the 464 decisions none were overturned.



Planning Applications

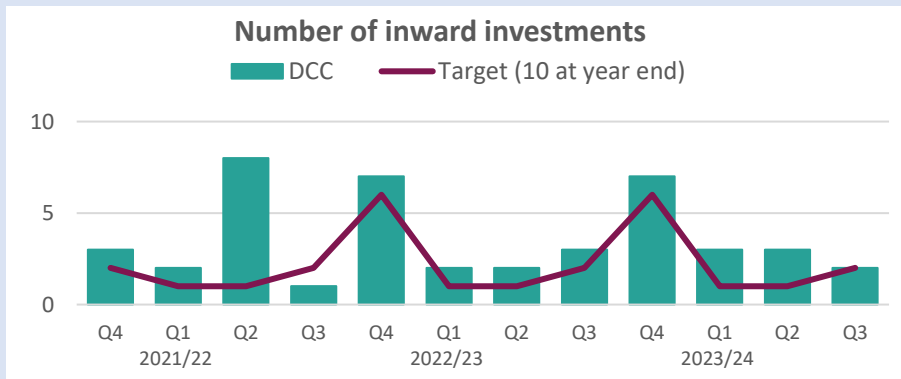
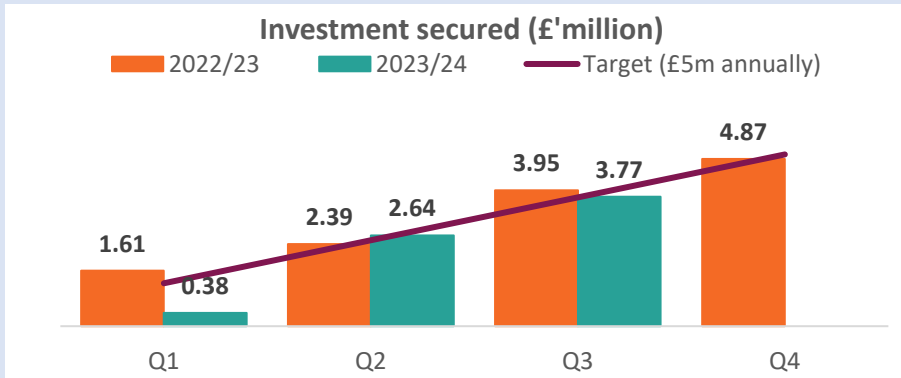
- 29 Various measures relating to planning (processing of applications, appeals and the date our local plan was adopted) are now included in Oflog's [Local Authority Data Explorer](#).
- 30 During quarter three, 92% of major planning applications were determined within 13 weeks (25 of 26 applications). Although performance is better than quarter two and the 90% target, the most recent benchmarking data (September 2023) shows our performance is worse than the national average, North East average and our statistical neighbours. To further improve performance, we are ensuring officers request Extension of Time Agreements where it is not possible to complete a consideration within the deadline.
- 31 During the same period, 89% of non-major applications were determined within deadline (431 of 482). Performance was marginally worse than the 90% target and although the most recent benchmarking data (September 2023) shows our performance to be worse than the national average and our statistical neighbours, it is better than the North East average. We continue to monitor officer workloads to ensure decisions are made in deadline as well as utilising the Extension of Time agreements process.
- 32 There is a significant data lag on planning applications overturned on appeal. This is because applicants are allowed nine months following a decision to submit an appeal, and the Planning Inspectorate has six months to make a decision. Latest data (July 2022 to September 2022) shows our performance, for both major and non-major applications, is better than the government's designation criteria of less than 10%.
- 33 The most recent benchmarking data (September 2022) shows our performance for major planning applications overturned on appeal was worse than all our benchmarking groups (North East, nationally and statistical neighbours). However, this relates to only one appeal being overturned out of 19 decisions made (5.3%).
- 34 Over the same time period, none of the 465 decisions for non-major applications were overturned and we performed better than all our benchmarking groups.

Economic Growth Dashboard: business investments and portfolio

(year to date ending 31 December 2023 / discrete quarterly data)

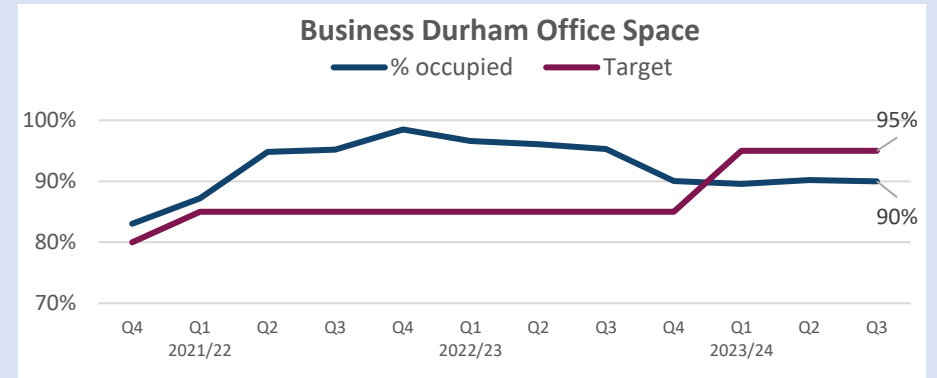
Investment in County Durham

Based on delivery in the year to date (Oct-Dec 23) both the amount of investment secured for companies and the number of inward investments attracted are on track to achieve annual targets.



Business Portfolio

We continue to invest and expand our business space portfolio and additional floorspace added to the portfolio last year has reduced the occupancy rate.



Investments

- 35 Business Durham secured £750,000 of investment for companies during quarter three, bringing the year-to-date figure to £3.7 million. Although quarter three performance was worse than the profiled target of £1.25 million, performance remains on track to achieve the annual target of £5 million.
- 36 Investment included Finance Durham Fund investment of £500,000 for one company, along with grants paid out through the County Durham Growth Fund.
- 37 Business Durham supported two inward investments during quarter three (Oracle Drive Systems Ltd and Landmark Power Holdings Ltd). This is in line with the projected target (two), meaning we remain on track to achieve the annual target (10).

Business Durham floor space

- 38 Floorspace of Business Durham's office and industrial portfolio has increased with new units at Station Place and two new offices at the Durham Dales Centre. The additional floorspace has reduced the occupancy rate to 90%, worse than the target of 95%. However, demand remains high and we expect these to be occupied soon.

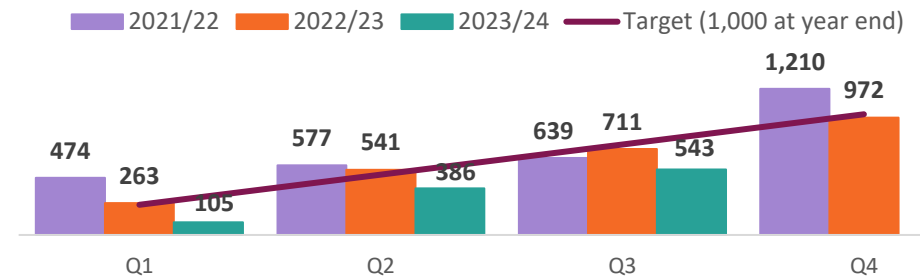
Business Support and Job Creation Dashboard

(year to date ending 31 December 2023)

Business support through Business Durham

- In quarter one, fewer businesses were supported as most ERDF funded schemes ended and there was a transition period to the new UKSPF Productivity and Growth Programme.
- Engagement in the third quarter was delivered through networking events, conferences, direct one to one and support through funded programmes.

Businesses supported by Business Durham (cumulative)

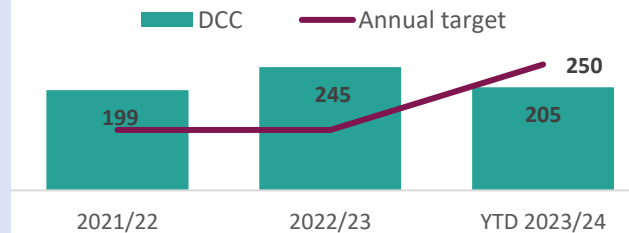


Business support through regeneration

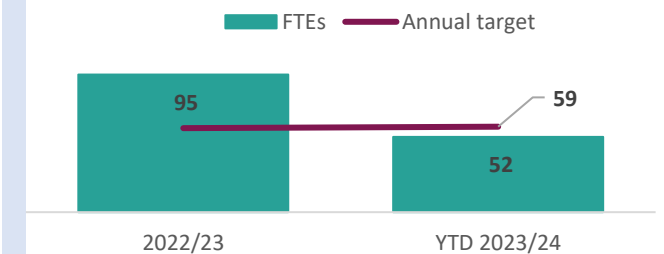
On track to achieve annual targets for businesses supported in 2023/24 through our regeneration projects and the Community Economic Team (CED). During quarter two we supported:

- 68 new retail businesses via CED Team.
- 20 businesses via regeneration scheme.
- A further four schemes currently on site.

Businesses supported by CED Team (cumulative)



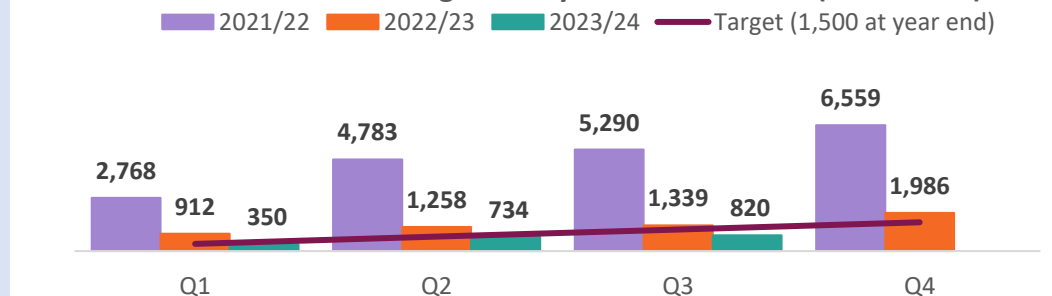
Businesses supported by regeneration projects (cumulative)



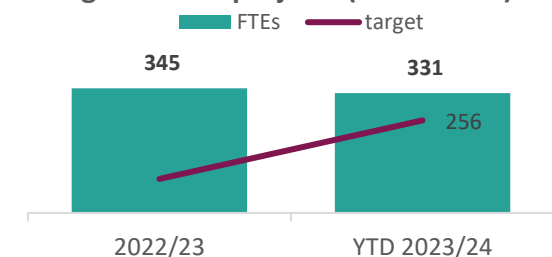
Jobs created/safeguarded

It is anticipated the annual target will be achieved by year-end. Target has already been achieved for regeneration projects.

Jobs created or safeguarded by Business Durham (cumulative)



FTEs created / safeguarded via regeneration projects (cumulative)



Businesses supported and jobs created/safeguarded

- 39 Between April and December 2023, we recorded 543 engagements, delivered using a range of methods including networking events, conferences and direct one-to-one support through funded programmes. Performance is worse than the target of 750 engagements due to schemes funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) coming to an end and the transition to the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Productivity and Growth Programme.
- 40 During quarter three, 157 businesses were engaged (including 26 intensively assisted), worse than the profiled target of 250. Although 86 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs were created or safeguarded as a result (86 created and 0 safeguarded) this was worse than the period target of 375.
- 41 We also engaged with 68 new retail businesses, and through our regeneration schemes supported 20 businesses² creating or safeguarding 161 FTE jobs. All schemes are progressing as expected, with the year to date position on track to achieve annual targets for businesses supported. 311 jobs have been created or safeguarded so far this year, already better than the annual target of 256.

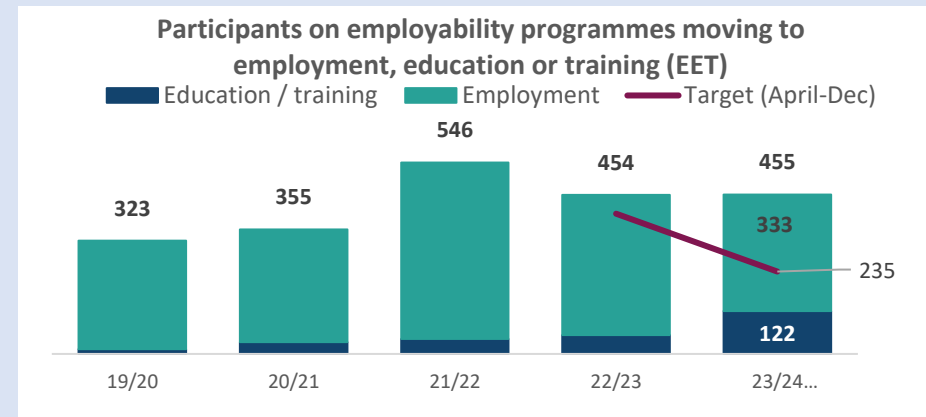
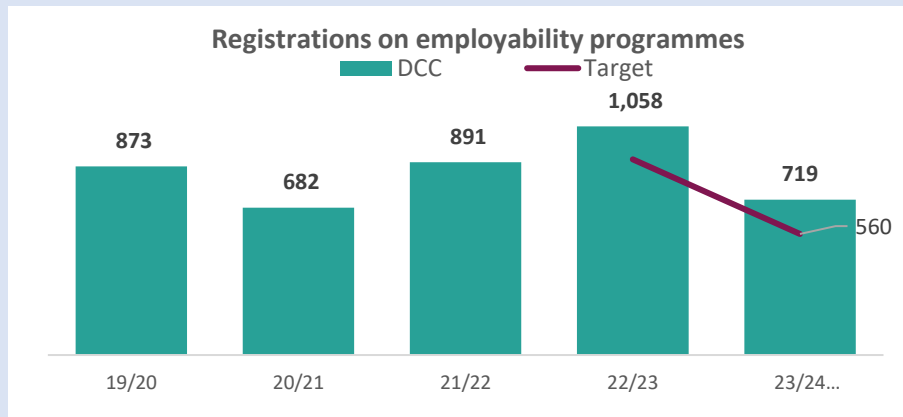
² two via Targeted Business Improvement Schemes; 12 via Towns & Villages Programme; three via Seaham Townscape Heritage Programme (with a further four currently on site); two via Conservation Area Grant Scheme; one via Property Re-use Scheme

Employability and Skills Dashboard

(year to date ending 31 December 2023)

Employability programmes

- European funding ended December 2023 with outputs for the final year (April-December 2023) exceeding annual targets.
- Employability team and delivery partners worked closely with clients in the final quarter to secure positive outcomes before funding ended.
- UK Shared Prosperity funding in place to deliver programmes from January 2024 to March 2025 and arrangements in place to report outputs from quarter four.



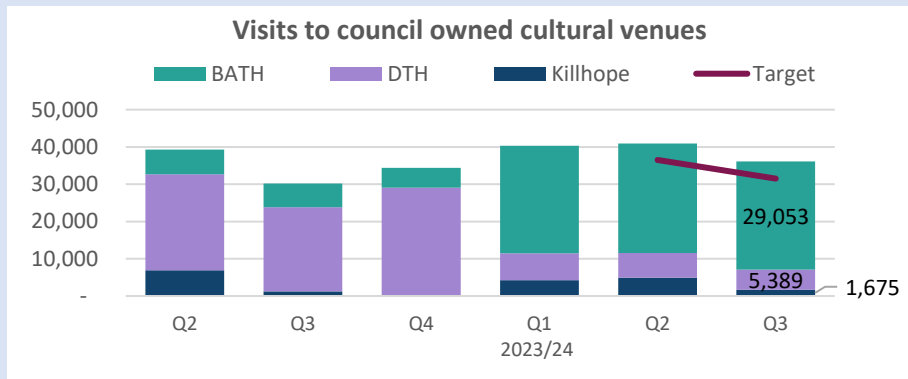
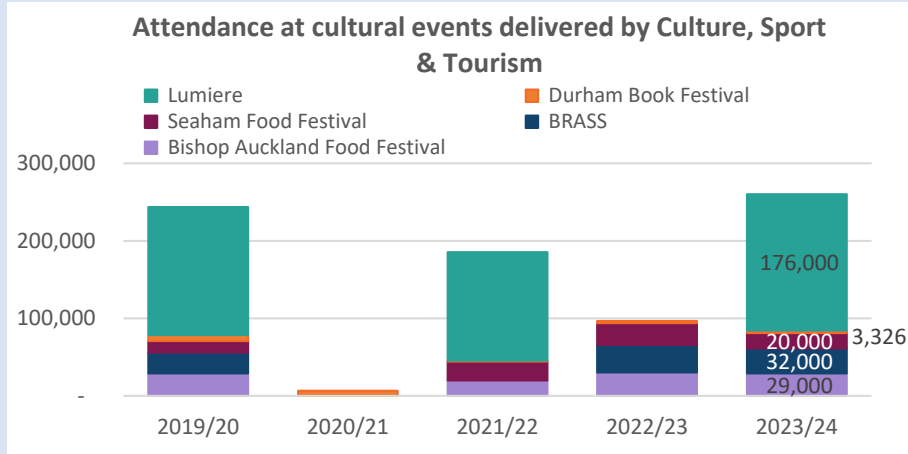
Employability programmes

- 42 European funding to deliver employability programmes ended 31 December 2023. Performance (April-December 23) exceeded targets, with 719 registrations (against a target of 560) and 455 clients moving into employment (against a target of 235). The employability team and delivery partners worked closely with clients in the final quarter to secure positive outcomes before funding ended.
- 43 Within these programmes, Durham Advance and L!NKCD initiatives were five-year programmes and over this time successfully supported 2,172 individuals and 1,486 individuals respectively to overcome the barriers that prevented them from re-entering the labour market. Of those supported through Durham Advance, 1,016 moved into employment, better than programme target of 992, and 556 moved into employment via the L!NKCD programme, also better than target of 337.
- 44 Recent funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has extended delivery of employability programmes beyond December 2023 to March 2025; delivery of the new programme commenced in January 2024. The main focus of the UKSPF is to support economically inactive clients to move closer to the labour market and transition them into employment.

Cultural Offer Dashboard: cultural events, venues and libraries

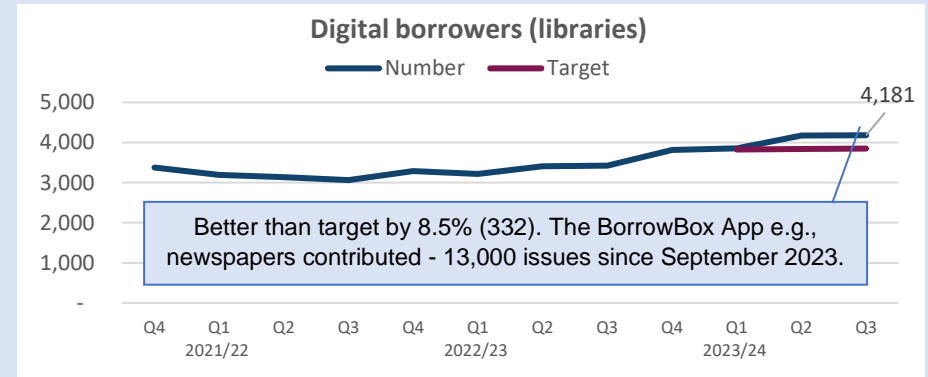
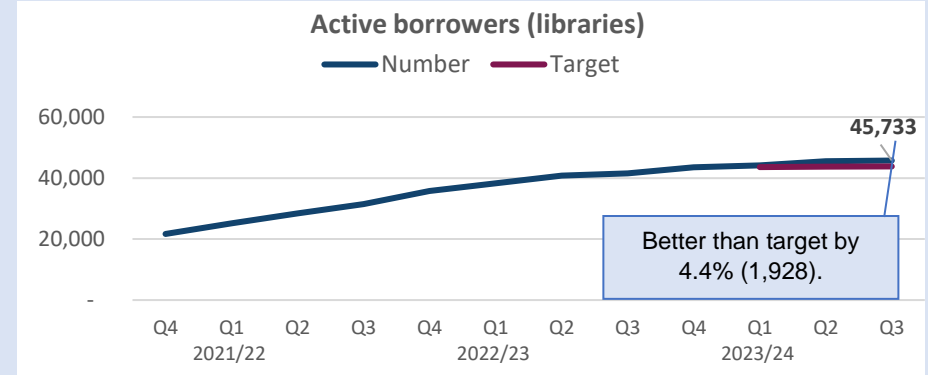
(year to date ending 31 December 2023 / discrete quarterly data)

Cultural events and venues



- Fewer cinema screenings at Bishop Auckland Town Hall (BATH) due to broken projector and scheduled closures at Durham Town Hall (DTH) contributed to reduced visitor figures.
- Killhope better than target for 2023 season (April-October) by 9% (911), with 10,911 visits. Killhope opened for an extra week during half term, with extra events and good weather increasing visitors.
- Capital works are ongoing to improve access to Killhope.

Libraries



Reporting dates of official figures:

| Quarter two | Quarter three |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bishop Auckland Food Festival | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BRASS Festival Seaham Food Festival Durham Book Festival Lumiere (biennial) |

Note - Durham Town Hall was under-reported in 2022/23, issues now rectified.

Cultural events

- 45 Our continued investment in our cultural events programme strengthens Durham's position as the 'culture' county and demonstrates the council's ongoing commitment to culture-led regeneration.
- 46 Our 2023 festivals and events programme was attended by 260,236 people, 41% more than 2021 (75,014). However, there was no BRASS festival in 2021 due to Covid so if we adjust the figures to account for the 32,000 attendees to BRASS in 2023, a more accurate comparison would be an increase of 23% (43,014).
- 32,000 people attended the week-long BRASS festival in July 2023. This is more than last year (24,202) despite unfavourable weather conditions affecting some of the outdoor events.

| Direct economic impact when held in 2022 | Direct economic impact when held in 2023 | Council investment |
|--|--|--------------------|
| £257,179 | £602,427 | £120,000 |

As part of the education programme for the festival, BRASS engaged with around 15,000 children and young people across 63 schools.

100% of artists and 97% of visitors rated the whole experience positively, and 98% of visitors felt the festival was a worthwhile event for the council to support. Visitors to the festival thought the quality of performances was a standout strength, and the performing artists themselves valued the opportunity to play alongside other brass musicians.

- 20,000 people attended the two-day Seaham Food Festival in August 2023. Impacted by heavy rainfall, attendance was worse than last year (28,120).

| Direct economic impact when held in 2022 | Direct economic impact when held in 2023 | Council investment |
|--|--|--------------------|
| £347,831 | £253,642 | £75,000 |

100% of visitors and traders rated the whole experience positively and 96% felt it was a worthwhile event for the council to support. Event staff and volunteers, and the overall quality of the festival were both identified as standout features of the festival.

- 3,326 people attended the two-day Durham Book Festival in October 2023. The festival offered 35 events and more than 40 authors. A full evaluation will be available in quarter four.
- 176,000 visitors attended Lumiere, the County's biennial light art festival, in November 2023. This is 36,000 more than 2021 when Lumiere was last held. The programme was the biggest yet, featuring more than 40 light installations and extending beyond the city to Bishop Auckland. A full evaluation will be provided at quarter four.

Visits to council owned cultural venues (BATH, Durham Town Hall, Killhope)

- 47 During quarter three, 36,117 people visited our cultural venues. This is slightly worse than target (-1.6%, -583) but better than the same period last year (+13.4%, +4,260).
- 48 During quarter three, visits were affected by a broken projector at Bishop Auckland Town Hall which reduced cinema screenings, and planned temporary closures at Durham Town Hall for refurbishment works (no bookings accepted during this period). However, works were postponed due to resource issues and are being rescheduled. The planned works were not considered when setting targets as they had not yet been scheduled into the work programme.
- 49 Killhope lost 31 trading days to inclement weather during the 2023 season (April-October). However, visits were better than target, mainly due to the site remaining open for an extra week at the end of the season to take advantage of half term. Although the site is now closed until 29 March, when the 2024 season commences, works are ongoing to improve access to the site.

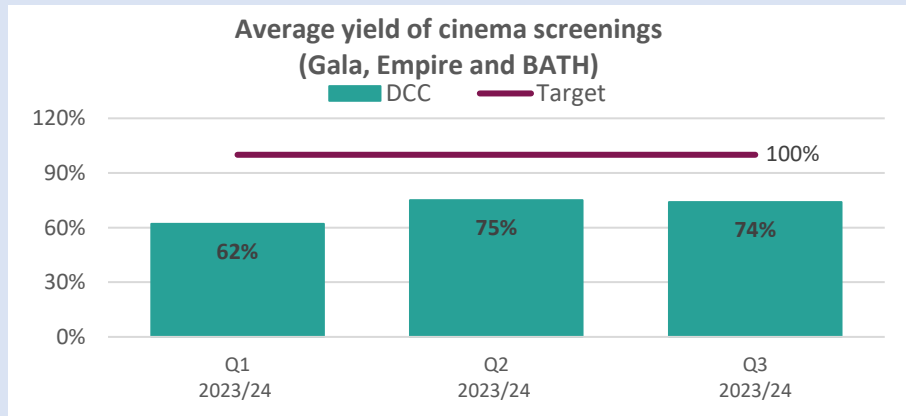
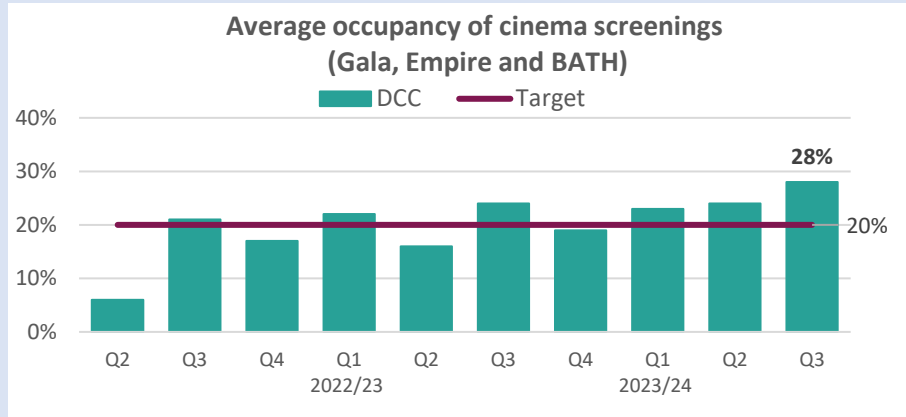
Libraries

- 50 Both active borrowers and digital borrowers performed better than target again this quarter, with 45,733 (+4.4%, 1,928) and 4,181 (+8.6%, 332) borrowers, respectively.
- 51 Active borrower numbers are still not back to pre-Covid levels but continue to follow an upward trend quarter on quarter.
- 52 The increase in digital borrowers is mainly due to an increased digital offer, which includes the addition of newspapers to the BorrowBox App which has driven over 13,000 issues since September 2023.

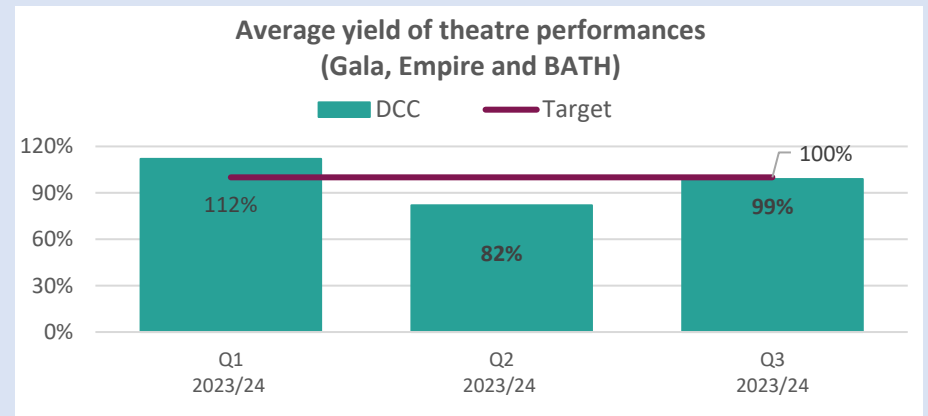
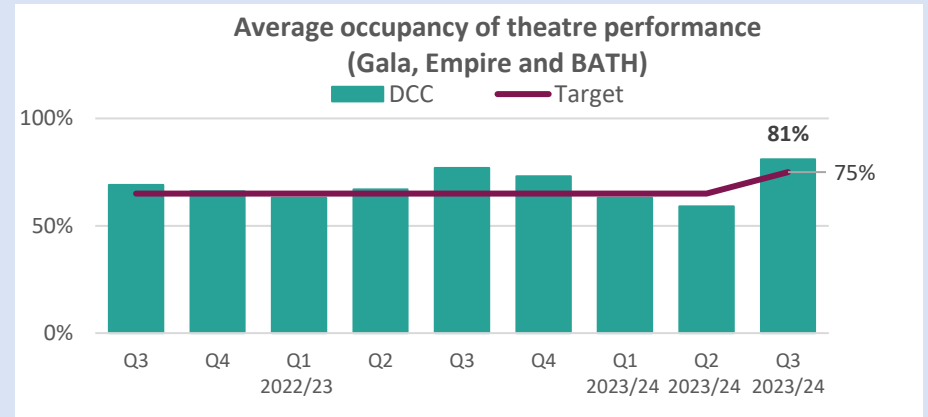
Cultural Offer Dashboard: cinemas and theatres

(discrete quarterly data)

Cinemas



Theatres



* yield = proportion of potential income achieved

Cinemas: Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire

- 53 Although special cinema screenings at the Gala and Empire for Christmas resulted in average occupancy rates being better than target during quarter three, average yield is worse than target.
- 54 Although we continued to develop event cinema (supported by our new marketing strategy) at the Gala and Empire, a broken projector at Bishop Auckland Town Hall (BATH) reduced cinema screenings (and impacted ticket sales). Promotion of the BATH cinema offer will resume once the issue with the projector is resolved.

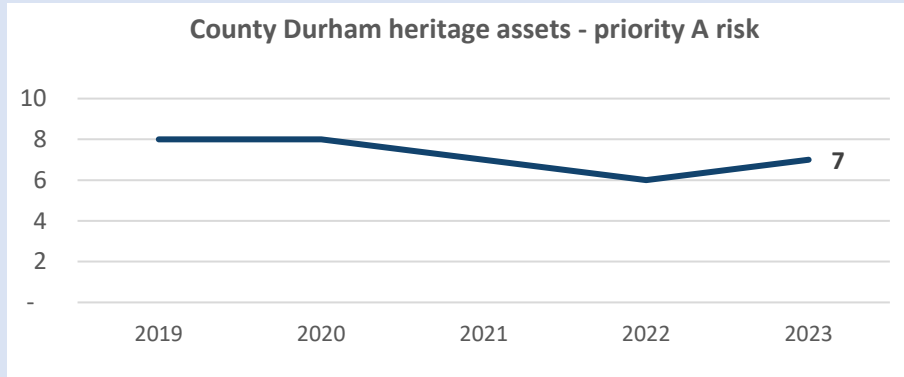
Theatres: Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire

- 55 During quarter three, the average occupancy rate across all theatre performances was 81%, better than target (75%) and better than the same period last year. A successful Christmas season at both the Gala and Empire contributed to the increase with two pantomimes at 80% and 85% capacity and a children's Christmas show at 96% capacity.
- 56 Average yield across all theatre performances was strong, with 99% of tickets sold (slightly worse than the 100% target) and ticket sales better than the same period last year. The ongoing development of the programme at BATH impacted overall ticket sales this quarter, however, we continue to work with the new Audience Development Manager to better understand our customer base and develop more focused programming.

Cultural Offer Dashboard: Heritage Assets

(annual data as at October 2023)

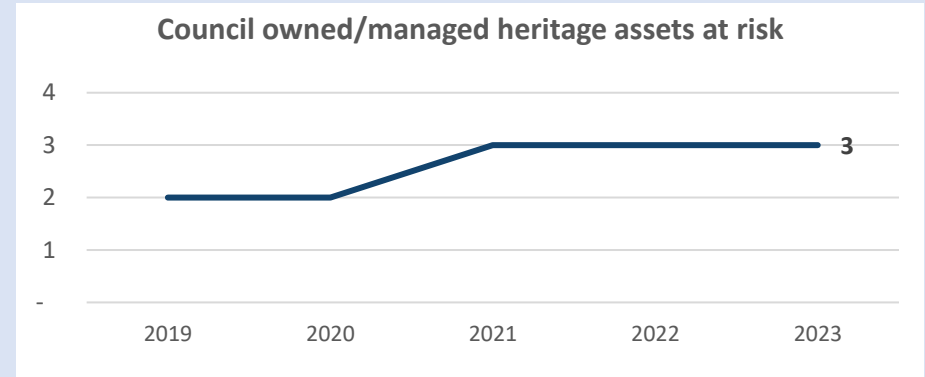
County Durham Heritage Assets



- 51 heritage assets on the 2023 Heritage at Risk register
- Seven are identified as Priority A

A site that has been identified as Priority A is at immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric and there is no solution agreed.

Heritage Assets owned or managed by the council



- Three heritage assets are listed on the Heritage at Risk register:
 - The coal drops at Shildon
 - The grange and chapel at Bearpark
 - The park level lead mine at Killhope Burn

Historic England produce The Heritage at Risk Register annually, it includes historic buildings and sites that are at risk of loss through neglect, decay or development, or are vulnerable to becoming so

Heritage Assets

- 57 Fifty-one heritage assets within County Durham are included on the heritage at risk register, three more than the previous year. One asset was removed and four added - all connected to sections of the Stockton to Darlington railway.
- 58 Of these assets, seven are priority A – one more than the previous year. The addition is the church of St Anne in Bishop Auckland market place.
- 59 Of the 51 identified assets, the Council owns or manages three. These are:
- [Shildon Coal Drops](#) which has improved from poor to fair condition,
 - [The Grange and Chapel, Bearpark](#) which is generally satisfactory with significant localised problems and vandalism but is declining.
 - [Park Level lead mine with ore works on Killhope Burn](#) which is also generally satisfactory with significant localised problems and is declining.

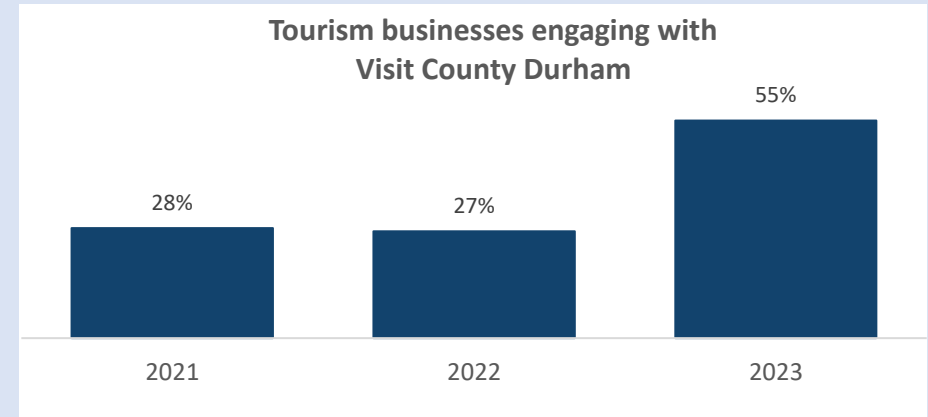
Visitor Economy Dashboard

(annual data as at 31 December 2023)

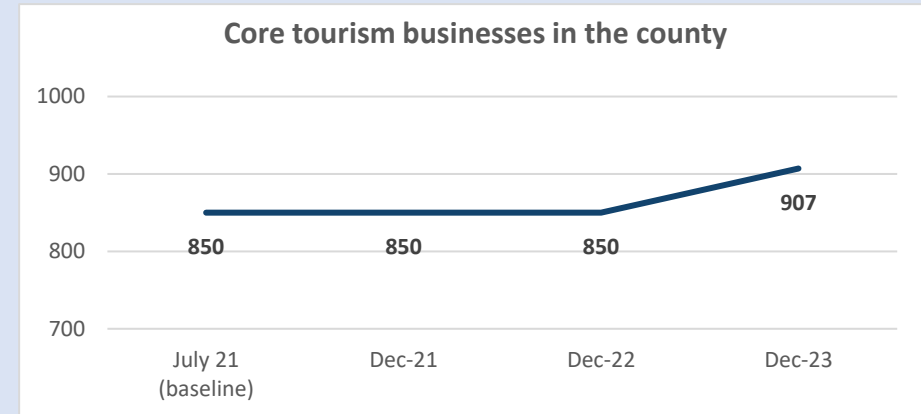
Tourism Businesses

- Visit County Durham (VCD) actively engages with 55% (498) tourism businesses via our paid for partnership scheme.
- 2023 is not comparable to previous years due to re-calculation of self-catering engagement through self-catering agencies and attractions and their relationship with VCD.
- Broader engagement extends to 90% out tourism businesses through local business support programmes and national initiatives targeted at the visitor economy.
- VCD also works with 42 supplier partners who provide B2B* products and services to our tourism businesses.

* B2B (business to business) refers to selling products and services directly between two businesses as opposed to between businesses and customers



Note: Previous years' engagement not comparable due to re-calculation of self-catering engagement with VCD in 2023.



Tourism Business Engagement

- 60 As at 31 December 2023, there were 907 core tourism businesses across the county, compared to 850 in 2022. The increase is due to more self-catering establishments being identified or opening.
- 61 Through our paid for partnership, 498 (55%) tourism businesses are actively engaged with Visit County Durham (VCD). Although this is an increase of 268 on the previous year, the increase is mainly due to a recalculation of self-catering engagement through Self-Catering Agencies and Attractions and their relationship with VCD and therefore not comparable. The new calculation counts individual businesses in the VCD Partnership engaged through a Self-Catering Agency as we work with and promote each business separately.
- 62 Broader active engagement extends to over 90% of tourism businesses through local business support programmes and national initiatives targeted at the visitor economy. VCD also works with 42 supplier partners who provide B2B products and services to our tourism businesses. B2B refers to selling products and services directly between two businesses as opposed to between businesses and customers.

Our Environment

Priority Aims:

County Durham has taken action to tackle the climate emergency, reduce the impact of pollution and waste on our county and protect, restore and sustain our natural environment. We are continuing to,

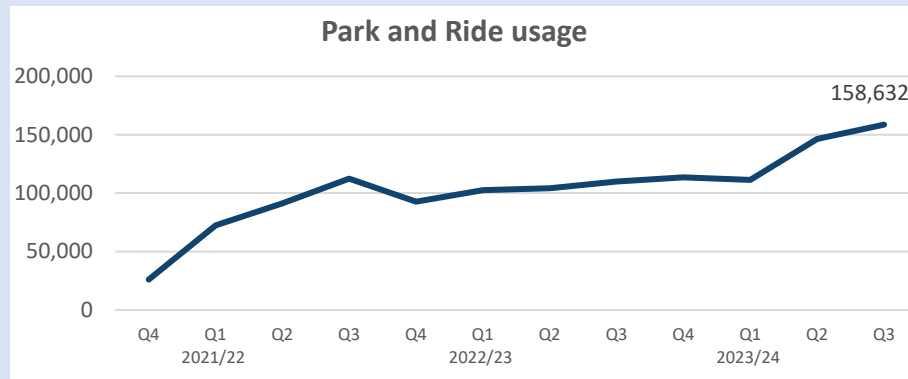
- create a physical environment which will contribute to good health
- work with others to achieve a carbon neutral county by 2045
- reduce the impact of waste and pollution on our environment
- protect, restore and sustain our natural environment for the benefit of future generations

Sustainable Transport and Active Travel Dashboard

(discrete quarterly data)

Park and Ride Usage

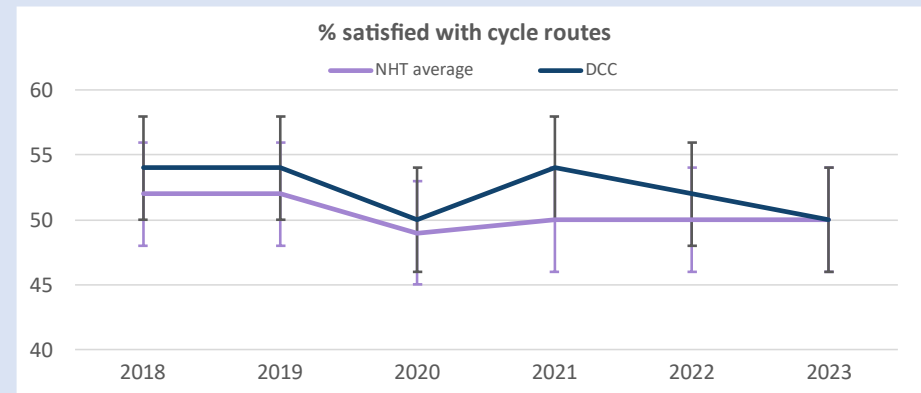
- Following the removal of free after 2pm on-street parking in April 2023, usage of park and ride increased.
- Off-street free after 2pm parking was removed from 1 January 2024. It is envisaged that this will encourage usage of park and ride and public transport.
- Quarter three usage increased with events such as Lumiere and Christmas Markets, and the return of students for the new academic year.



Satisfaction with cycle routes

National Highways and Transport Survey (NHT Survey)

- Latest data shows satisfaction with cycle routes and facilities is in line with both last year and the national average (within confidence intervals +/- 4 percentage points).
- We continue to improve cycling and walking routes to make them more usable and safer for people, including new or improved cycle routes, space for pedestrians, quality surfaces, better crossing and junctions and direct and connected routes.



Park and Ride Usage

- 63 Park and ride usage improved during quarter three (158,632 passengers) due to Lumiere, Christmas Markets, the return of students for the new academic year and the removal of free after 2pm on-street parking.
- 64 Although quarter three performance is better than the same period last year (109,898 passengers), it remains worse than pre-Covid levels mainly due to commuters (the main users of the service) moving to hybrid working following the pandemic.
- 65 The temporary 'free after 2pm' off-street parking in Council car parks across the county (including Durham City, Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland and Chester-le-Street) implemented following the removal of COVID restrictions to encourage a return to the high street, was removed on the 1 January 2024. It is envisaged that this will encourage greater usage of park and ride and public transport.
- 66 Following approval at Highways Committee in February 2024, we will be implementing park and ride provision on Sundays at Belmont and Sniperley from the 7 April 2024. A scheme is also being progressed to extend the number of parking bays at Sniperley. This will provide more parking availability to safeguard increased demand from future development in the city; reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions within the historic city centre itself, and also along a key road leading into the city.

Satisfaction with cycle routes

- 67 To improve cycle routes, Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) have been adopted in Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Crook, Durham City, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee, Seaham, Spennymoor, Shildon and Stanley.
- 68 LCWIP scheme designs are being prepared for priority routes and schemes are being delivered in Bishop Auckland and Durham City.
- 69 We are also planning and implementing walking, wheeling and cycling across the county through funded programmes such as Transforming Cities, Stronger Towns and Towns and Villages.
- 70 Active Travel Schemes completed with accessible facilities and wide, high quality surfaces for pedestrians, cyclists, and wheelchair and pushchair users include:
- Newton Hall to Rivergreen - a shared pedestrian/cycle route
 - National Cycle Network 1 (Dawdon to Haswell and Haswell to Wynyard) - two multi-user routes,
 - Waskerley Way - a multi-user route,
 - Sedgefield to Hardwick Park: pedestrian link,
 - Pity Me Carrs – Old Tub Line: pedestrian/cycle link.

Durham Bus Station

- 71 The new bus station in Durham City opened to the public on 7 January 2024. It is a modern transport hub offering a welcome and safe space, promoting more sustainable travel and attracting more people into the city.
- 72 The improved facilities include a Changing Places toilet, improved information displays and upgraded seating in the waiting area. More space for buses to reverse and the exit on to North Road has improved visibility for pedestrians and buses.

Our People

Priority Aims:

County Durham is a place where people will enjoy fulfilling, long and independent lives. We aim to,

- ensure children and young people will enjoy the best start in life, good health and emotional wellbeing
- ensure children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities will achieve the best possible outcomes
- ensure all children and young people will have a safe childhood
- promote positive behaviours
- better integrate health and social care services
- tackle the stigma and discrimination of poor mental health and build resilient communities
- people will be supported to live independently for as long as possible by delivering more home to meet the needs of older and disabled people
- support people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and protect adults with care and support needs from harm
- protect and improve the health of the local population, tackling leading causes of illness and death

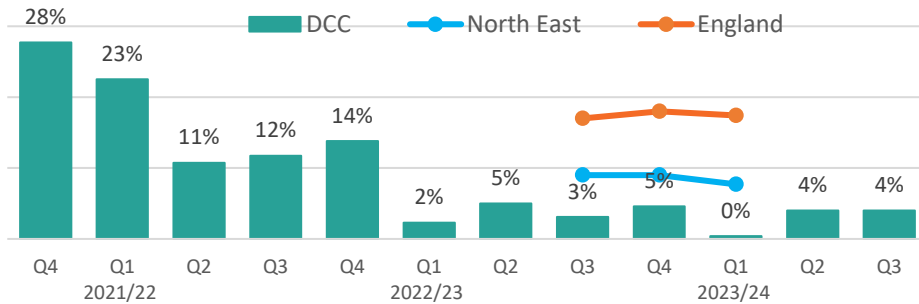
Housing Vulnerable People Dashboard - Homelessness

(quarterly data as at 31 December 2023)

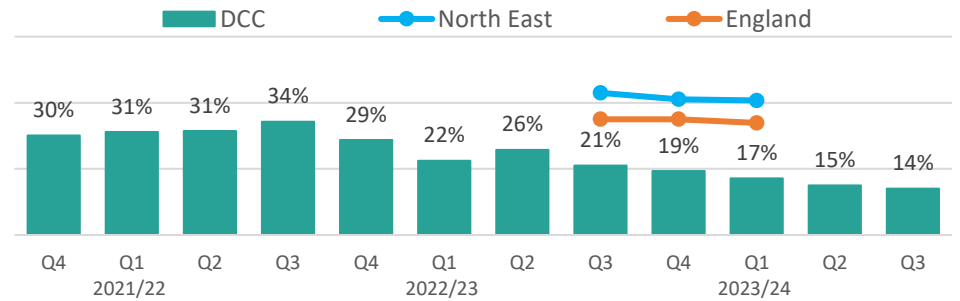
Homelessness

- Households helped to stay in their home this quarter is on par with quarter two due to continued proactive preventative work by two new Visiting Officers.
- Less households moved into alternative accommodation this quarter, -1pp compared to quarter two. The team are working on a Private Landlord Insurance initiative to increase access to private rented sector properties.
- 232 homeless cases were resolved at relief stage, a 1pp increase (+8 households) compared to quarter two.
- Increase in acceptances of the main homelessness duty compared to quarter two due to the team significantly reducing lost contacted cases which has resulted in a higher number of cases requiring a main duty decision in quarter three.
- Latest benchmarking data (June 2023) shows that we performed worse than the national and regional average for prevention and relief outcomes and worse than the regional average for main duty acceptances, but significantly better than the national average.

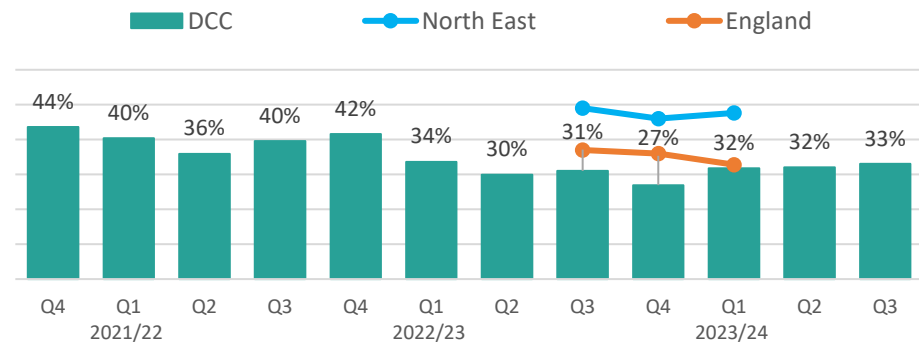
Homelessness prevention: people helped to stay in their home



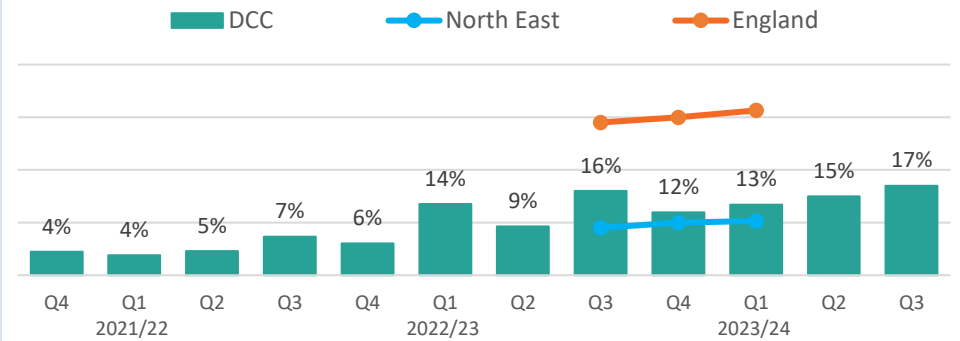
Homelessness prevention: people helped to move to alternative accommodation



Homelessness relief



Acceptance of the main homeless duty



Homelessness

- 73 The proportion of households prevented from homelessness and helped to remain in their current home is on par with quarter two, with 4% assisted (11 households). Positive outcomes are set to continue following the appointment of two full-time visiting officers to assist with preventative work into existing accommodation.
- 74 The proportion of households where homelessness was prevented and the households helped to move to alternative accommodation has decreased by 1pp, with 14% securing alternative accommodation (35 households). Out of the 35 households assisted, 43% (15) households moved into social rented supported housing, 31% (11) into private rented sector accommodation, 20% (7) into social housing with the remaining households moving in with family and friends/other.
- 75 To increase access to the private rented sector we have completed a tender process for a Private Landlord Insurance policy which will mitigate risks to private landlords of damage and arrears.
- 76 The proportion of households where homelessness has been relieved (where homelessness was not prevented within 56 days or the household was already homeless) has increased by 1pp (+8 households) in quarter two to 33% (232) in quarter three.
- 77 Latest benchmarking data (June 23) shows that we are performing worse than the national and regional averages for these three homelessness prevention measures.
- 78 The proportion of cases where there has been an acceptance of the main homeless duty (where relief duty has ended, and the client is not intentionally homeless and in priority need) has increased this quarter, with 17% (120) of households requiring a main duty decision, 2pp higher than quarter two (+12 households). The team have significantly reduced lost contacted cases since quarter two which has resulted in this higher number of cases requiring a main duty decision in quarter three.
- 79 Latest benchmarking data (June 2023) shows that we are performing significantly better than the national average for main duty acceptances, but slightly worse than the regional average.
- 80 We continue to secure suitable accommodation for our most vulnerable clients and have been successful in securing £4.42m from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to deliver the Single Homeless Accommodation Programme (SHAP). Funding will be used to purchase 32 bedspaces for rough sleepers or people at risk of sleeping rough and procure 24/7 wrap around support. The objective of SHAP is to increase supply of high-quality accommodation with accompanying support for adults and younger people aged 18 to 25 years who are either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.
- 81 We have also been awarded £675,000 from Homes England to secure 15 temporary accommodation properties for clients owed a homeless duty, with a further bid for £1.5m submitted January 2024 to secure funding for a further 25 properties. Thirteen properties have already been purchased, with a further 10 projected for completion in quarter four. The remaining properties are projected for delivery in quarter one 2024/25.

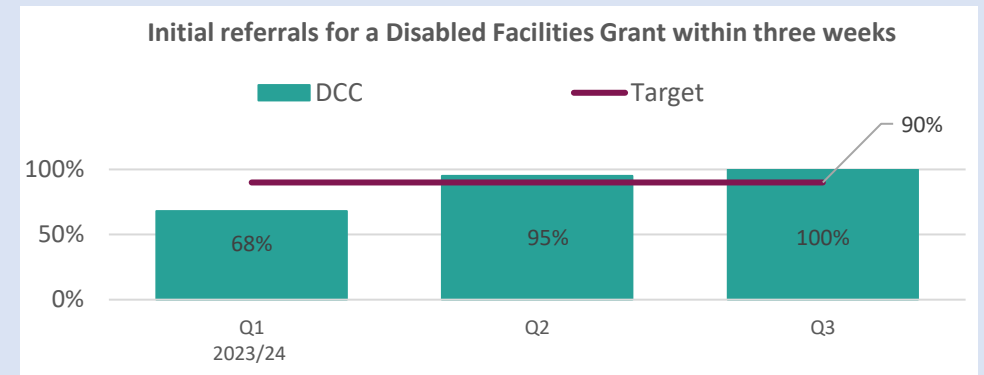
82 We are in the second year of our three years of Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding. This money continues to fund our Somewhere Safe to Stay provision, rough sleeper team and our complex needs accommodation project, Jigsaw. In November we were allocated an additional £26,841 of RSI funding. This money will go towards creating an 'arrears clearance fund' to help those whose primary reason for homelessness is financial hardship. It will also help fund a tenancy sustainment service for those going into accommodation which does not provide support, and moving in packs to help clients settle in their new properties.

Housing Vulnerable People Dashboard –Disabled Facilities Grants

(quarterly data at 31 December 2023)

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

New processes implemented during quarter two, including allocating responsibility to dedicated team members for first contact, continue to increase performance.



Disabled Facilities Grants

- 83 During quarter three, 100% of potential clients were contacted within three weeks of their initial referral for a Disabled Facilities Grant, which is 10 percentage points better than target and a five percentage points increase compared to quarter two. New processes implemented during the quarter, including allocating responsibility to dedicated team members for first contact, continues to increase performance.

Our Communities

Priority Aims:

Durham is a great county in which to live, with flourishing communities which are connected and supportive of each other. We aim to,

- ensure standards will be maintained or improved across County Durham's housing stock
- have towns and villages which are vibrant, well-used, clean, attractive and safe
- ensure people will have good access to workplaces, services, retail and leisure opportunities
- ensure communities will be able to come together and support each other
- deliver new high-quality housing which is accessible and meets the needs of our residents
- ensure our rural communities will be sustainable whilst maintaining those characteristics which make them distinctive
- narrow the inequality gap between our communities
- build inclusive communities

National, Regional and Local Picture

84 Of the approximate 250,000 dwellings³ across the county, 63% are owner-occupied, 20% are social rented and 17% private rented.

85 Median house prices across the county (£125,000 between April 2022 and March 2023) are consistently lower than those across the North East (£152,000) and the England (£290,000)⁴. Although median house prices across the county have increased by 166% since 2000, from £47,000 to £125,000, there is significant variation.

86 County Durham is a large and diverse county with some of the lowest population densities in the country: of 300 recognised settlements, only 23 have a population of 5,000 or more.

| Land Type ⁵ | % of the county | % of the population | People per hectare ⁶ |
|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Rural | 57% | 7% | 0.3 |
| Rural town and Fringe | 32% | 37% | 2.7 |
| Urban | 11% | 56% | 12.1 |

87 Accessing opportunities across the county continues to be priority. The county has good North-South connectivity both by road and rail, and the improved A66 connects east to west. However, some areas have limited public transport or major roads, especially in more rural areas. Our large, rural geography means residents are often reliant on cars for commuting. 80% of those surveyed for the [Inclusive Economic Strategy](#) said they travel to work by car, compared to 5% who use public transport.

³ [Durham Insight - Housing](#)

⁴ [Median House Prices](#)

⁵ [Rural Urban Classification for LSOAs 2011](#)

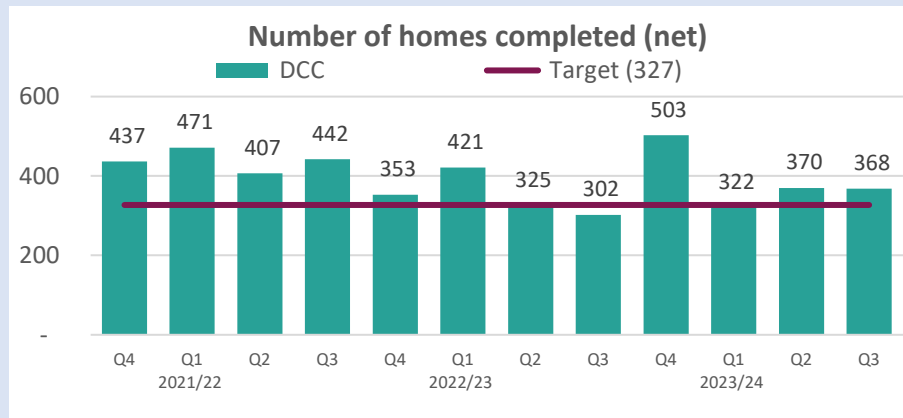
⁶ [Durham Insight - Rural](#)

Housing Delivery Dashboard

(quarterly data as at 31 December 2023)

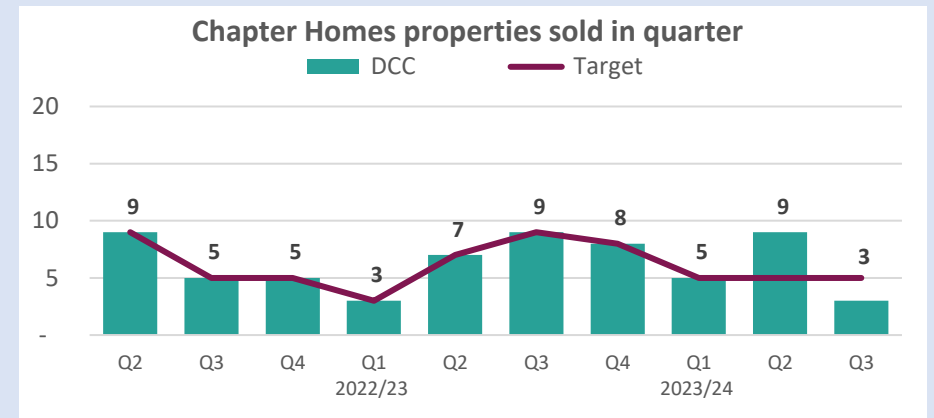
Net homes completed

- The County Durham Plan policies support the delivery of housing to meet identified need and ensure the right type of housing.
- With 1,038 completions year-to-date, we expect to meet the annual target of 1,308.
- Several large sites across the county continue to see high completion rates.



Chapter Homes

- Despite wider increases in both the cost-of-living and interest rates, 17 sales have been achieved year to date,
- Performing better than the projection of 15.



Net homes completed

- 88 The County Durham Plan policies support the delivery of housing to meet identified need and ensure the right type of housing.
- 89 During quarter three, 368 homes were completed, 41 better than the profiled target, due to high completion rates at several larger sites across the county. This brings year to date completions to 1,060 which is on track to meet the annual target of 1,308.

Chapter Homes

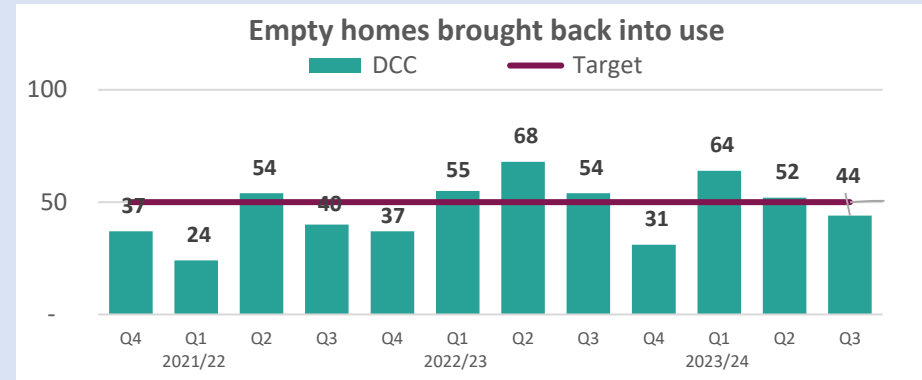
- 90 Three sales were completed during quarter three bringing year to date sales to 17. A further six sales are expected by the end of March 2024 which will increase sales for this financial year to 23, three better than target. Despite wider economic issues of both cost-of-living and mortgage interest rates, sales are expected to exceed target due to the provision of well-designed homes and a focus on ensuring advertising is fully maximised.

Housing Standards Dashboard

(discrete quarterly data)

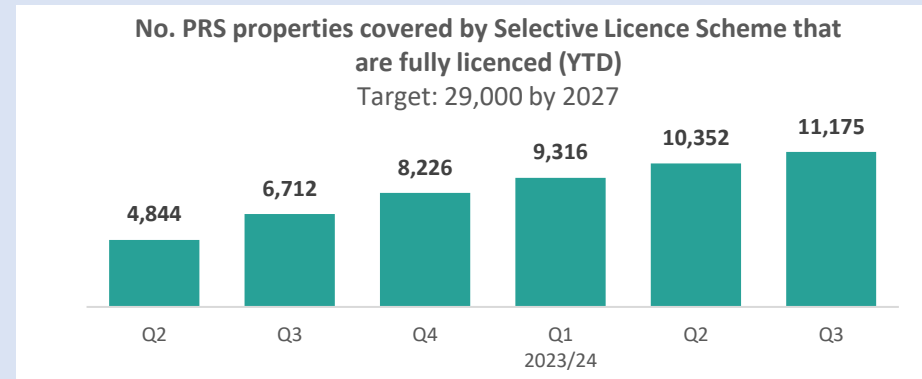
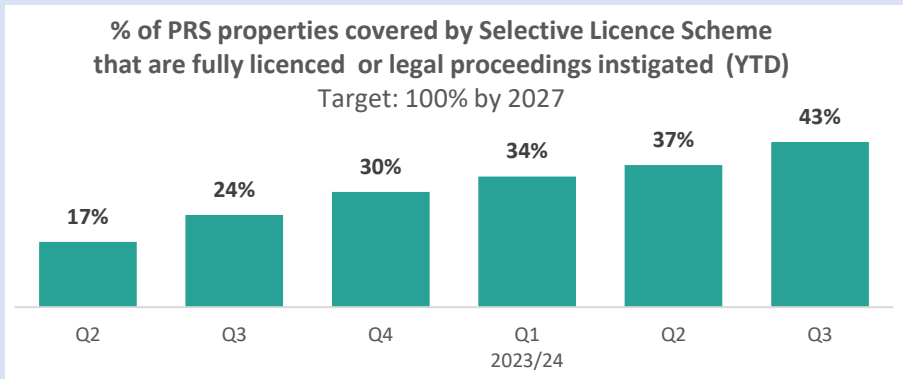
Empty Homes

- We continue to address empty homes through negotiation, advice, financial assistance, working with registered social landlords and interventions through Local Lettings Agency and Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme.
- Quarter three performance was slightly below target due to staff absence. But we remain on track to bring 200 empty homes back into use by the end of the financial year.



Selective Licensing (Private Rented Sector properties - PRS)

- 11,175 properties are fully licenced. A further 1,108 applications are being processed.
- 289 exemptions in place.
- 142 enforcement cases have either started or in process of being actioned. One has led to a successful prosecution.
- A new Financial Penalty policy is now in place (as an alternative to prosecution) to encourage landlords with any unlicensed properties to apply for licences.



Empty Homes

- 91 In the year to date, 160 properties have been brought back into use putting us on track to achieve the annual target of 200 properties. Within the quarter, 44 empty homes have been brought back into use.
- 92 During quarter three, various methods were used to bring Empty Homes back into use: negotiation, advice and support (33); empty homes loans (three); Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (eight).

Selective Licensing

- 93 Of the estimated 29,000 private sector properties covered by the selective licensing scheme, 11,175 are now fully licenced (39%) and, as at 31 December, a further 1,108 applications were being processed. Twelve live temporary exemptions and 277 family exemptions are in place.
- 94 A further 122 properties are under investigation for not having a licence. Four prosecution files, relating to 14 properties, are being progressed. During quarter three, there was one successful prosecution, one retrial arranged for quarter four, and six civil penalties issued. 12,470 of private rented sector properties covered by the licence scheme that are either fully licenced or legal proceedings instigated (43%).
- 95 The enforcement team continue to target all private rented properties not yet licenced and a new Financial Penalty Policy is now in place (as an alternative to prosecution) to encourage landlords with unlicenced properties to apply for licences.

ASB in Selective Licensing Areas

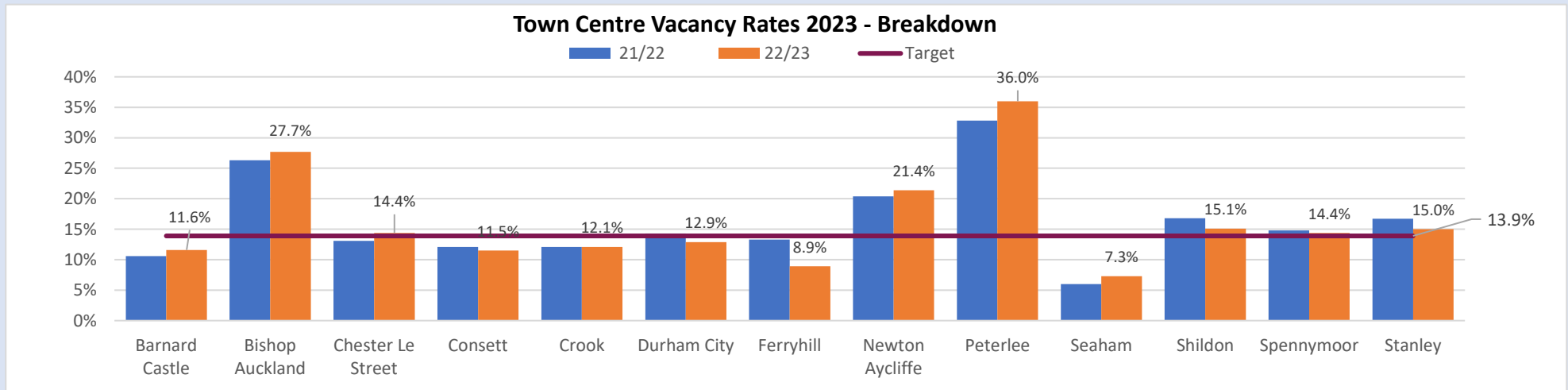
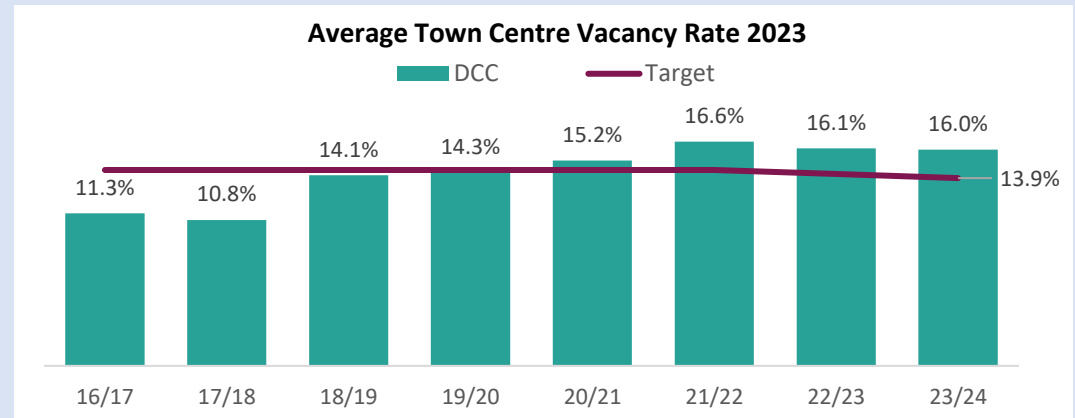
- 96 We are continuing to experience issues with our ASB recording system so are unable to provide an update in relation to this indicator. We are working to resolve the issue.

Vibrant Communities Dashboard

(12 months ending 31 December 2023 / quarterly data / as at 31 December 2023)

Town Centre Vacancy Rates

- An average of 16% of retail units in our town centres are vacant which is worse than the national average of 13.9%.
- Seven town centres have vacancy rates worse than the national average and six better.
- Six town centres show signs of improvement since 2022 and one remains unchanged. However, six town centres show an increase in vacancy rates since last year.



- Peterlee has the highest vacancy rate due to a limited non-retail offer.
- Bishop Auckland has the second highest vacancy rate but is undergoing significant investment through the Stronger Towns Fund and Future High Street Fund that is expected to increase new retail and hospitality opportunities in the town.

Town Centre Vacancy Rates

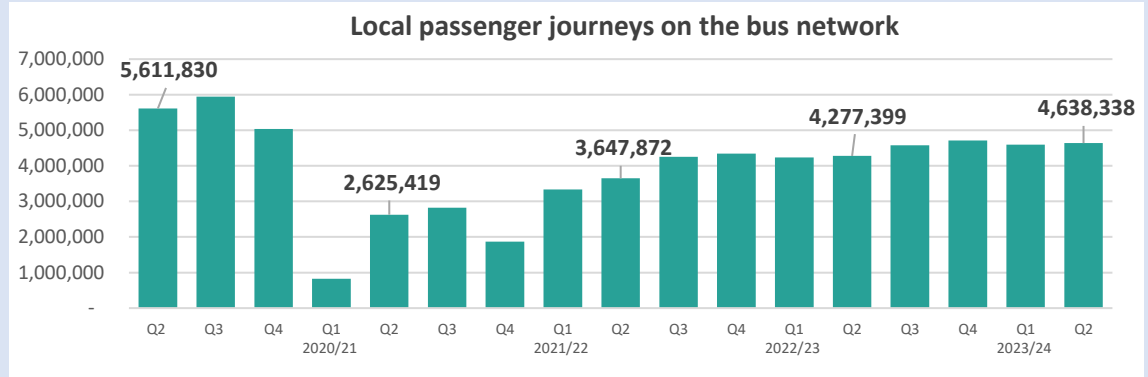
- 97 Town centres are key drivers of our economy, and it is important they remain viable. Surveys are carried out each year to identify vacancy levels of retail units in our town centres. The latest survey (July 2023) shows the average vacancy rate for retail units across all our town centres is 16%. This is worse than the national average (13.9%) but on par with 2022 (16.1%).
- 98 Of the 13 town centres surveyed, seven have vacancy rates worse than the national average whilst six are better than the national average. Six have vacancy rates worse than last year whilst six show signs of improvement and one remains unchanged.
- 99 Of the seven worse than the national average,
- Peterlee has the highest vacancy rate. At 36% it is worse than both the national average (13.9%) and the rate recorded last year (32.8%). Despite being anchored by national food retailer Asda and other retailers such as M&M and Boots, the non-retail offer within the town is limited resulting in high vacancy rates.
 - Bishop Auckland has the second highest vacancy. At 27.7%, it is worse than both the national average (13.9%) and the rate recorded last year (26.3%). However, the town is undergoing change and is receiving significant investment (Stronger Towns Fund and Future High Street Fund) that is expected to create new opportunities for the retail and hospitality sectors in the town.
 - Newton Aycliffe has the third highest vacancy rate. At 21.4%, it worse than both the national average (13.9%) and the rate recorded last year (20.4%). Despite the town being anchored by national food retailers Tesco and Adli, the limited non-retail offer within the town means vacancy rates remain high.
 - Shildon (15.1%), Stanley (15%) and Spennymoor (14.4%) are all better than the vacancy rate recorded last year, but are worse than the national average (13.9%).
 - Chester-le-Street (14.4%) is worse than both the vacancy rate recorded last year (13.1%) and the national average (13.9%).
- 100 Of the six towns centres with vacancy rates better than the national average (13.9%):
- Seaham had the fewest unoccupied retail units (7.3%) although the vacancy rate is worse than last year (6.0%). The town is anchored by Asda, and also home to other national retailers in Byron Place shopping centre, as well as many independent cafes, bars and restaurants resulting in low vacancy rates.
 - Ferryhill had the second lowest vacancy rate (8.9%). Unlike the other town centres, Ferryhill is not anchored by a large food store but serves a local function and is home to a co-op store and other independent retailers.
 - Three town centres are either on par with last year or better. They are Consett (11.5%), Crook (12.1%) and Durham City (12.9%)
 - Barnard Castle (11.6%) is worse than last year (10.6%).
- 101 We continue to support our town centres through various initiatives, including the Towns and Villages Programme, Targeted Business Improvement Scheme and our town centre masterplans that provide a blueprint for future investment and development in town centres.

Transport Connectivity Dashboard

(discrete quarterly data)

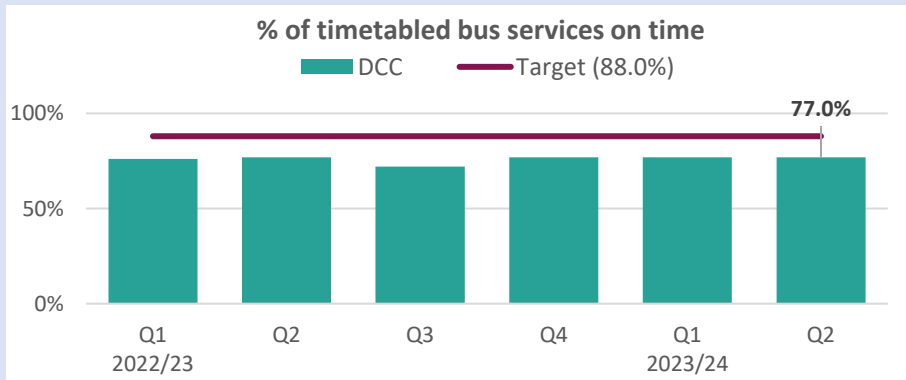
Public Transport Patronage

- Bus patronage remains lower than pre-Covid levels.
- We continue to work in partnership at a regional level with bus operators and other councils to implement the North East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).
- In November, more affordable day ticket were introduced.



Bus punctuality

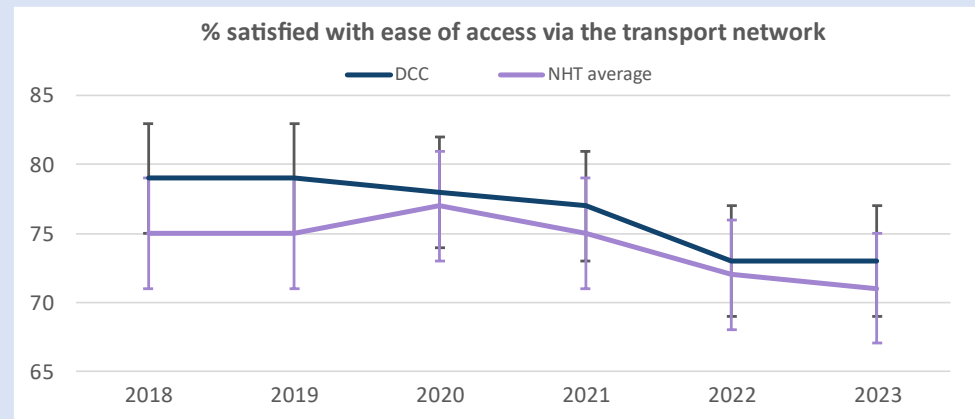
- BSIP initiatives to be developed include bus service improvements, bus priority measures to improve bus punctuality and journey times and updating bus stops and stations that have safety or accessibility issues.
- Operators continue work to recruit and retain driving staff to improve reliability, alongside analysis of route and network performance.



Satisfaction with ease of access by any form of transport

(National Highways and Transport Survey)

satisfaction relating to the ease of travelling to work, school/college or local services remains within the confidence intervals (+/- 4pp) of the survey so performance remains in line with the national average and previous years.



Public Transport Patronage

- 102 Bus patronage continues to be worse than pre-Covid levels and is not likely to return to those levels in the medium term. However, we continue to work in partnership at a regional level with bus operators and other councils to implement the North East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to encourage patronage growth.
- 103 From 5 November 2023, new more affordable day tickets were made available for adults across the region, with many tickets offering a major cost-saving when compared to the existing product.
- 104 This builds on a range of improvements launched across the region using North East BSIP funding, including a flat £1 bus fare for young people aged 21 and under and a region-wide multi-modal day ticket introduced in September.

Bus punctuality

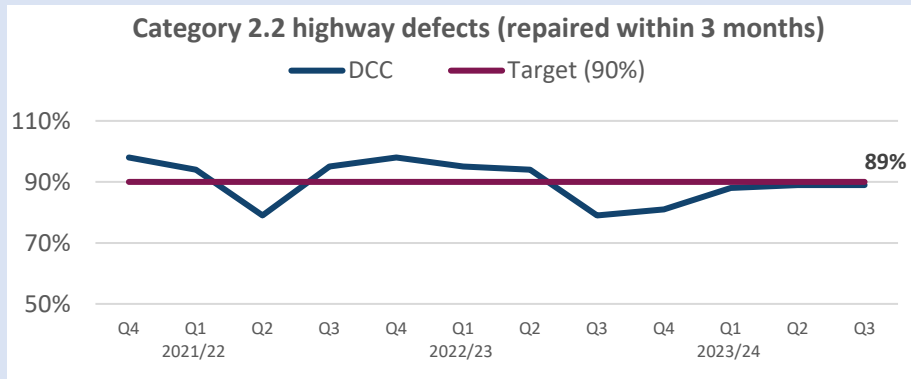
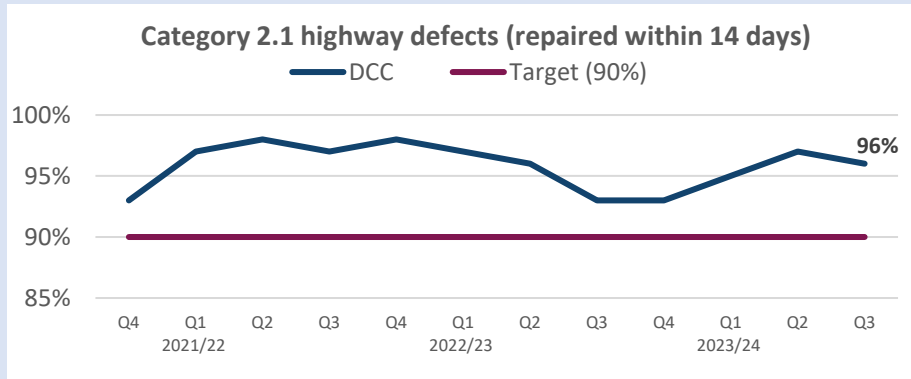
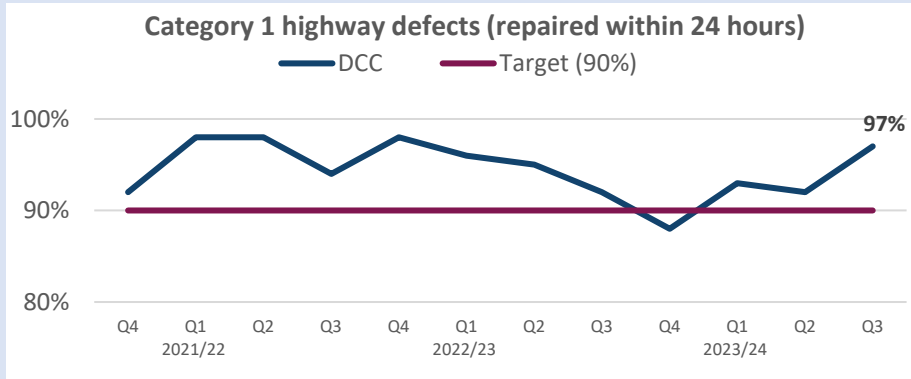
- 105 Other initiatives within the BSIP yet to be developed include bus service improvements, bus priority measures to improve bus punctuality and journey times and updating bus stops and stations that have safety or accessibility issues.
- 106 Work is also being undertaken by operators to recruit and retain driving staff to improve reliability, alongside ongoing operator analysis of route and network performance.

Highway Maintenance Dashboard

(discrete quarterly data)

Highway Maintenance

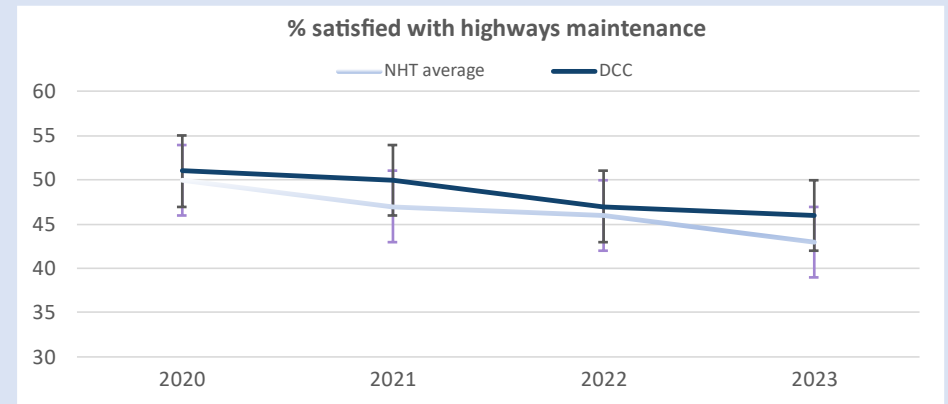
Defects across all risk categories are either above or have almost met target.



Satisfaction highways maintenance

(National Highways and Transport Survey)

Satisfaction relating to highways maintenance remains within the confidence intervals (+/- 4pp) of the survey so performance remains in line with the national average and previous years.



Highways Maintenance

- 107 Highway defects are categorised on a risk basis and where there is a high number of defects over all categories, resources must be targeted at those safety defects likely to pose the greatest risk of harm. Category 2.2 highway defects pose the lowest level of risk to the public due to their hierarchy within the network based on footfall and location.
- 108 Following a downward trend last year, Category 2.2 highway defects (within 3 months) continues to improve, quarter three (89%) is close to target (90%).
- 109 Performance for maintenance of Category 1 (within 24 hours) (97%) and Category 2.1 highway defects (within 14 days) (96%) continue to be better than target (90%).

Highways Asset Management Plan

- 110 We are currently updating the Highways Asset Maintenance Plan using the most up to date condition data and treatment costs. This will enable an accurate highways maintenance backlog to be reported in quarter four. Early indications are that the backlog will have increased significantly driven by inflation which is outside of our control. However, it is anticipated that highway conditions will have shown an improvement due to targeted investment.

Our Council

Priority Aims:

Durham County Council has a reputation for listening to its residents, being well-managed and getting things done. We are continuing to,

- manage our resources effectively
- create a workforce for the future
- design our services with service users
- use data and technology more effectively
- build an inclusive and welcoming employee culture

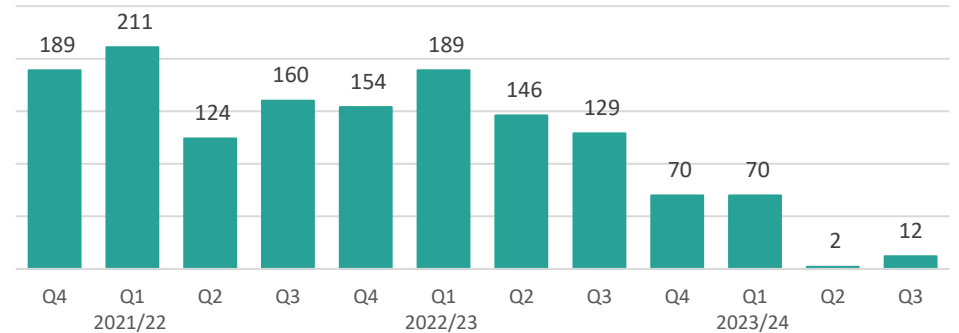
Managing Money Better (MMB) Dashboard

(October to December 2023)

Households receiving energy advice from MMB

- 12 households received energy advice, better than quarter two (+10), but fewer than the same period last year (-117).
- Recent staffing issues have been resolved, with recruitment finalised and specialist training provided. Staff are now able to carry out home visits and provide advice to customers by telephone.

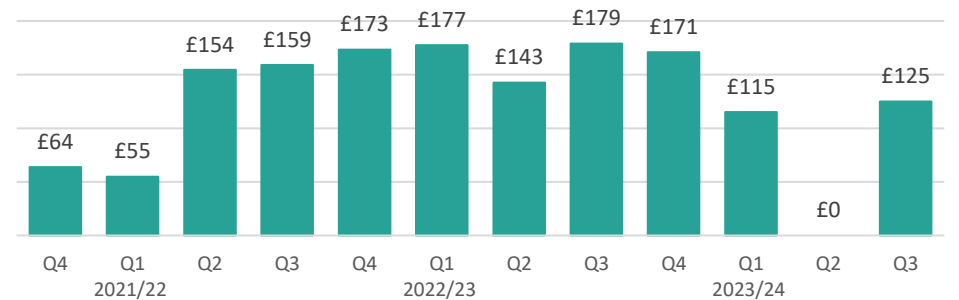
Households receiving energy advice from MMB



Money saved as a result of energy advice from MMB

- £125 saved per household this quarter, better than quarter two, but lower than last year (-£54).
- General advice was provided to households, there were no tariff switching opportunities available and no referrals due to issues with fuel debt.
- To further raise awareness of the scheme, and to drive-up referrals, social media communications and a Warm Homes newsletter were published.

Money saved by households receiving energy advice from MMB



111 Our financial support schemes continued to help residents:

- **Managing Money Better (MMB)**

During quarter three, 12 households received energy advice from MMB, better than quarter two (+10), but fewer than last year (-117). Energy advice provided saved households an estimated £125, better than quarter two (£0), but lower than the same period last year (-£54). General advice was provided to households, there were no tariff switching opportunities available and no referrals due to issues with fuel debt.

More households received advice this quarter, however, referrals into the service remain low. The recent staffing issues have been resolved, with recruitment finalised and specialist training provided. Staff are now able to carry out home visits and provide advice to customers by telephone. To further raise awareness of the scheme, and to drive-up referrals, social media communications and a Warm Homes newsletter were published.

Data Tables

| D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|--------|------|-----|------|--|-----------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|---------------------|-------|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| Yellow | Grey | Red | Grey | Household waste re-used, recycled or composted | Oct 22 – Sep 23 | 36.5% | Tracker | 37.7% | April 21 – March 22 | 38.1% | 42.5% | 33.5% | Yes | Yes |

| D = Direction of Travel | T = compared to target | C = compared to England average | G = Gap between our performance and England average |
|---|------------------------------------|--|---|
| meeting or exceeding the previous year | better than target | Better than the England average | The gap is improving |
| worse than the previous year but is within 2% | Worse than but within 2% of target | Worse than the England average but within 2% | The gap remains the same |
| more than 2% worse than the previous year | more than 2% behind target | Worse than the England average | The gap is deteriorating |

This is the overall performance assessment. Its calculation is dependent upon whether the indicator has an agreed target.

| Key Target Indicator | Key Tracker Indicator |
|--|---|
| targets are set as improvements, can be measured regularly and can be actively influenced by the council and its partners. When setting a target, the D, C and G have already been taken into account. | no targets are set as they are long-term and / or can only be partially influenced by the council and its partners. Therefore, D, T, C and G are used to assess overall performance |
| better than target | Direction of Travel (D) is meeting or exceeding the previous year AND the gap with England (G) is improving |
| worse than but within 2% of target | Direction of Travel (D) is worse than the previous year OR the gap with England (G) is deteriorating |
| more than 2% behind target | Direction of Travel (D) is worse than the previous year AND the gap with England (G) is deteriorating |

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

Our Economy: summary data tables

Economic Growth KPIs

| | D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|---------|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | | Major planning applications determined within 13 weeks | Oct-Dec 23 | 92.3% | 90% | 87.5% | Jul-Sep 23 | 76% | 88% | 84% | Yes | Yes |
| | | | | | Non-major planning applications determined in deadline | Oct-Dec 23 | 89% | 90% | 90% | Jul-Sep 23 | 87.8% | 88.2% | 84.1% | Yes | Yes |
| | | | | | Major planning applications overturned on appeal | Jul-Sep 22 | 5.3% | 10% | 0% | Jul-Sep 22 | 5.3% | 1% | 0.9% | Yes | Yes |
| | | | | | Non-major planning applications overturned on appeal | Jul-Sep 22 | 0% | 10% | 0.2% | Jul-Sep 22 | 0% | 0.7% | 0.5% | Yes | Yes |
| | | | | | Inward investments secured | Oct-Dec 23 | 2 | 2 | 3 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Investment secured for companies | Oct-Dec 23 | £750,000 | £1.25 million | £3.95 million | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Occupancy of Business Durham floor space | Oct-Dec 23 | 90% | 95% | 95.3% | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Private sector employments per 10,000 population | 2022 | 2,827 | Tracker | 2,795 | 2022 | 2,827 | 4,133 | 3,212 | No | No |
| | | | | | Private sector businesses per 10,000 population | 2023 | 272 | Tracker | 274 | 2023 | 272 | 417 | 269 | No | No |
| | | | | | GVA per filled job | 2021 | £47,046 | Tracker | £45,361 | 2021 | £47,046 | £61,310 | £48,828 | No | No |
| | | | | | Employment land approved and delivered | 2022/23 | 13.32Ha | 28.46Ha | 5.51Ha | | | | | No | No |

Business Support KPIs

| | D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | | Businesses engaged by Business Durham | Oct-Dec 23 | 157 | 250 | 170 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Businesses supported by regeneration projects | Oct-Dec 23 | 20 | Tracker | 40 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | New businesses supported by CED Team | Oct-Dec 23 | 68 | 250 (annual target) | 40 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Organisations involved in the Better Health at Work Award | Dec 2023 | 131 | Tracker | 76 | | | | | Yes | No |

Employability and Skills KPIs

| | D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|------------|---------|-------|----|
| | | | | | Jobs created or safeguarded due to Business Durham activity | Oct-Dec 23 | 86 | 375 | 81 | | | | | Yes | No | |
| | | | | | Jobs created or safeguarded through regeneration schemes | Jul-Sep 23 | 161 | Tracker | 95 | | | | | Yes | No | |
| | | | | | Registrations to employability programmes | Apr-Dec 23 | 719 | 560 | N/A | | | | | Yes | No | |
| | | | | | Participants on employability programmes who progressed to employment / education or training | Apr-Dec 23 | 455 | 235 | N.A | | | | | Yes | No | |
| | | | | | Employment rate for 16-64 year olds <i>Confidence intervals +/-3.2pp</i> | Oct 22-Sep 23 | 70.8% | Tracker | 74.3% | | Oct 22-Sep 23 | 70.8% | 75.9% | 71.6% | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Disability employment rate <i>Confidence intervals +/-6.9pp</i> | Oct 22-Sep 23 | 42.4% | Tracker | 45.7% | | Oct 22-Sep 23 | 42.4% | 57.2% | 47.6% | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Residents with higher level skills <i>Confidence intervals +/-5pp</i> | 2022 | 59.1% | Tracker | 52.5% | | 2022 | 59.1% | 66.4% | 60.4% | No | No |
| | | | | | 16-17-year-olds in an apprenticeship | Apr-Jun 23 | 7.3% | Tracker | 8.5% | | Apr-Jun 23 | 7.3% | 4.8% | 7% | No | No |

Cultural Offer KPIs

| 278 | D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|-----|---|---|---|---|--|------------|-------------|---------|--------------------------------|------------------|-----|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | | People attending cultural events ran and commissioned by CS&T | Apr-Dec 23 | 260,326 | Tracker | 185,312 (2021 Lumiere year) | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | People attending council owned cultural venues (Killhope & town halls) | Oct-Dec 23 | 36,117 | Tracker | 31,857 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Average % occupancy of cinema screenings (Gala, Empire & BATH) | Oct-Dec 23 | 28% | 20% | 24% | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Average % yield of cinema screenings (BATH, Gala and Empire) | Oct-Dec 23 | 74% | 100% | 63% | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Average % yield of theatre performances (BATH, Gala and Empire) | Oct-Dec 23 | 99% | 100% | 81% | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Average % occupancy of theatre performances (Gala, Empire & BATH) | Oct-Dec 23 | 81% | 75% | 77% | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Council owned/managed heritage assets classed as 'at risk' | 2023 | 3 | Tracker | 3 | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | Heritage assets 'at risk' categorised as 'Priority A' and/or in 'very bad condition' | 2023 | 7 | Tracker | 6 | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | Active borrowers (libraries) | Oct-Dec 23 | 45,733 | 43,805 | 41,481 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Digital borrowers (libraries) | Oct-Dec 23 | 4,181 | 3,849 | 3,423 | | | | | Yes | No |

Visitor Economy KPIs

| | D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|--------|-------------|---------|-------------------|------------------|-----|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | | Visitors to the county | 2022 | 17.91m | 17.085m | 15.77m | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | Money generated by the visitor economy | 2022 | £1.04b | £760.5m | £826.68m | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | Jobs supported by the visitor economy | 2022 | 11,724 | 10,191 | 10,063 | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | Visitor attractions served by public transport | 2022 | 67% | Tracker | new | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | Tourism businesses actively engaged with Visit County Durham | 2023 | 55% | Tracker | 27.8% | | | | | Yes | No |

Managing Money Better (MMB) KPIs

| | D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|------------------|-----|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | | Households receiving energy advice from MMB Initiative | Oct-Dec 23 | 12 | Tracker | 129 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | £s saved per household as a result of energy efficiency advice provided by MMB initiative | Oct-Dec 23 | £125 | Tracker | £179 | | | | | Yes | No |

Our Environment: summary data tables

Sustainable Transport and Active Travel KPIs

| | D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|------------------|-------|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | | Cycling and walking levels | 2022 | 65.6% | Tracker | 67.7% | 2022 | 65.6% | 70.6% | 67.5% | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Satisfaction with cycle routes & facilities (<i>confidence intervals +/-4pp</i>) | 2023 | 50% | Tracker | 52% | 2023 | 50% | 50% | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Linear kilometres of appropriate design standards for Active Mode Routes | | new | | new | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | Park and Ride passenger journeys | Oct-Dec 23 | 158,632 | Tracker | 109,898 | | | | | Yes | No |

Our People: summary data tables

Housing Vulnerable People KPIs

| | D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|------------------|------|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | | Care Connect customers | Oct-Dec 23 | 10,903 | Tracker | 11,059 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Care Connect calls answered within 3 minutes | Oct-Dec 23 | 100% | 99% | 100% | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Care Connect calls arriving at the property within 45 minutes | Oct-Dec 23 | 89% | 90% | 92.4% | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Potential clients contacted within 3 weeks of initial referral for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) | Oct-Dec 23 | 100% | 90% | new | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Households prevented from homelessness and helped to stay in their home | Oct-Dec 23 | 4% | Tracker | 3% | Apr-Jun 23 | 0.4% | 17.4% | 8% | Yes | No |

| | D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|------------------|-----|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | | Households prevented from homelessness and helped to move to alternative accommodation | Oct-Dec 23 | 14% | Tracker | 21% | Apr-Jun 23 | 17% | 34% | 41% | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Households where homelessness has been relieved, and the client moved into alternative accommodation | Oct-Dec 23 | 33% | Tracker | 31% | Apr-Jun 23 | 32% | 33% | 48% | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Households where there has been an acceptance of the main homeless duty | Oct-Dec 23 | 17% | Tracker | 16% | Apr-Jun 23 | 13% | 31% | 10% | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Successful move-ons from Local Lettings Agency accommodation at the end of their licence agreement | 2022/23 | 80% | 90% | new | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | People aged 65+ with aids and assistive technologies in their homes | | new | | new | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | Approvals on new housing sites of 10 units or more, a minimum of 66% of the total number of dwellings meet accessible and adaptable standards (building Regulations requirements M4(2)). | 2022/23 | 71% | 66% | new | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | Approvals on new housing sites of 10 units or more, a minimum of 10% of the total number of dwellings meet a design and type for older persons | 2022/23 | 16% | 10% | new | | | | | No | No |

Physical Activity KPIs

| Page 282 | D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---------------------------|------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|------------------|-----|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | | Visits to Leisure Centres | Oct-Dec 23 | 758,564 | 904,640 | 680,737 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Leisure memberships | Oct-Dec 23 | 18,551 | 19,061 | 19,229 | | | | | No | No |

Our Communities: summary data tables

Housing Delivery KPIs

| D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|---|---|---|---|-------------------------------|------------|-------------|--------|-------------------|------------------|-----|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | Net affordable homes | 2022/23 | 282 | 836 | 536 | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | Net delivery of new housing | Oct-Dec 23 | 368 | 327 | 302 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | Chapter Homes properties sold | Oct-Dec 23 | 3 | 5 | 9 | | | | | Yes | No |

Housing Standards KPIs

| D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|-----|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | Empty homes brought back into use as a result of local authority intervention | Oct-Dec 23 | 44 | 50 | 54 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | Properties covered by Selective Licence Scheme that are licensed, or legal proceedings instigated | Oct-Dec 23 | 43% | 100% (by 2025) | 24% | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | ASB incidents per 10,000 population within the Selective Licensing Scheme | Jul 22-Jun 23 | 212.97 | 224.28 | 287.7 | | | | | No | No |

Transport Connectivity KPIs

| | D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|------------------|-----|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | | Satisfaction with ease of access (confidence intervals +/-4pp) | 2023 | 73% | Tracker | 73% | 2023 | 73% | 71% | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Satisfaction with bus operators (confidence intervals +/-4pp) | 2019 | 92% | 92% | 92% | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | Households which can access key service locations using public transport | | new | | new | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | Residents who can access employment sites by public transport | | new | | new | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | Timetabled bus services no more than 5 min late or 1 min early | Jul-Sep 23 | 77.0% | 88.0% | 72.2% | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Local passenger journeys on public transport | Jul-Sep 23 | 4,638,338 | Tracker | 4,277,399 | | | | | Yes | No |

Highways and Footways Maintenance KPIs

| | D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|------------------|-------|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | | A roads where maintenance is recommended | 2022/23 | 2.6% | Tracker | 3.7% | 2022/23 | 2.6% | 3 | 1 | Yes | Yes |
| | | | | | B & C roads where maintenance is recommended | 2022/23 | 2.65% | Tracker | 3.4% | 2022/23 | 2.65% | 4 | 3 | Yes | Yes |
| | | | | | Unclassified roads where maintenance is recommended | 2022/23 | 23% | Tracker | 25% | 2022/23 | 23% | 16 | 20 | Yes | No |
| | | | | | 'Footways' structurally unsound | 2022 | 30.9% | Tracker | 31.3% | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Bridge condition: principal roads | 2020 | 82.0% | Tracker | 81.1% | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | Bridge condition: non-principal roads | 2020 | 81.0% | Tracker | 80.1% | | | | | No | No |
| | | | | | Category 1 highway defects repaired within 24 hours | Oct-Dec 23 | 97% | 90% | 92% | | | | | Yes | No |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|---------------|-----|-----|---------|---------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Page 284 | | | | Category 2.1 highway defects repaired within 14 days | Oct-Dec 23 | 96% | 90% | 93% | | | | | Yes | No | |
| | | | | Category 2.2 highway defects repaired within 3 months | Oct-Dec 23 | 89% | 90% | 79% | | | | | Yes | No | |
| | | | | Highways Maintenance Backlog | Awaiting data | | | Tracker | | | | | No | No | |
| | | | | Satisfaction with highways maintenance. <i>(confidence intervals +/-4pp)</i> | 2023 | 46% | | Tracker | 47% | 2023 | 46% | 43% | | Yes | No |
| | | | | Footway maintained and repaired over and above the core programme | | | new | | Tracker | | | | | No | No |

Road Safety KPIs

| | D | T | C | G | Performance Indicator | Period | Performance | Target | 12 months earlier | Benchmark period | DCC | National average | NE average | updated | Oflog |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|------------------|--------|------------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | | | | Road traffic accidents: fatalities | Oct-Dec 23 | 6 | Tracker | 4 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Road traffic accidents: seriously injured | Oct-Dec 23 | 44 | Tracker | 55 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Road traffic accidents: fatalities (children) | Oct-Dec 23 | 0 | Tracker | 0 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Road traffic accidents: seriously injured (children) | Oct-Dec 23 | 3 | Tracker | 2 | | | | | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Road traffic collisions per billion vehicle miles – all | 2022 | 186.86 | Tracker | 204.5 | 2022 | 186.86 | 352.07 | 255.65 | Yes | No |
| | | | | | Road traffic collisions per billion vehicle miles – fatal | 2022 | 5.90 | Tracker | 4.42 | 2022 | 5.90 | 4.86 | 4.36 | Yes | No |

Glossary

| Term | Definition |
|--------------|---|
| ACD | <p>Automatic Call Distribution</p> <p>Telephone calls are received either through our Automatic Call Distribution system, which routes calls to groups of agents based on a first-in-first-answered criteria, or directly to a telephone extension (non-ACD). Only calls received via our ACD system are included in our telephone statistics.</p> |
| AQMA | <p>Air Quality Management Area</p> <p>A geographical area where air pollution levels are, or are likely to, exceed national air quality objectives at relevant locations (where the public may be exposed to harmful air pollution over a period of time e.g., residential homes, schools etc.).</p> |
| ASB | Anti-social behaviour |
| ASCOF | <p>Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework</p> <p>measures how well care and support services achieve the outcomes that matter most to people (link)</p> |
| BATH | <p>Bishop Auckland Town Hall</p> <p>A multi-purpose cultural venue situated in Bishop Auckland market place. It offers regular art exhibitions, live music, cinema screenings and theatre performances, as well as a library service.</p> |
| BCF | <p>Better Care Fund</p> <p>A national programme that supports local systems to successfully deliver the integration of health and social care.</p> |
| B2B | <p>Business to Business</p> <p>B2B refers to selling products and services directly between two businesses as opposed to between businesses and customers.</p> |
| CAP | <p>Customer Access Point</p> <p>A location where residents can get face-to-face help and information about council services. There are eight CAPs across County Durham.</p> |
| CAT | <p>Community Action Team</p> <p>A project team which includes members of our community protection service, planning, neighbourhood wardens and housing teams, who work alongside police and community support officers and fire and rescue teams and residents to tackle housing and environmental issues in a specific area by identifying local priorities and making best use of resources.</p> |
| CDP | <p>County Durham Plan</p> <p>Sets out the council's vision for housing, jobs and the environment until 2035, as well as the transport, schools and healthcare to support it (link)</p> |
| CED | Community Economic Development |

| Term | Definition |
|-------------------------------|---|
| CERP | <p>Climate Emergency Response Plan</p> <p>A community-wide call to action to help align all sectors on the actions required to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve our resilience to the impacts of climate change.</p> |
| Changing Places toilet | <p>Toilets meet the needs of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as people with other physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis. These toilets provide the right equipment including a height adjustable adult-sized changing table, a tracking hoist system, adequate space for a disabled person and carer, a peninsular WC with room either side and a safe and clean environment including tear off paper to cover the bench, a large waste bin and a non-slip floor.</p> |
| CLD | <p>Client Level Dataset</p> <p>A national mandatory person-level data collection (to be introduced) that will replace the existing annual Short and Long Term (SALT) Support data collected by councils. CLD will be added to the single data list and will become mandatory for all local authorities.</p> |
| CNIS | <p>Child Not In School</p> |
| CPN | <p>Community Protection Notice</p> <p>Can be issued to anyone over the age of 16 to deal with a wide range of ongoing anti-social behaviour issues or nuisances which have a detrimental effect on the local community. There are three stages: the first stage is a written warning (CPW), the second a notice (CPN) the third is an FPN or further prosecution for failure to comply with the previous stages</p> |
| CRM | <p>Customer Relationship Management system</p> |
| CS&T | <p>Culture, Sport and Tourism</p> |
| CTR | <p>Council Tax Reduction</p> <p>Reduces council tax bills for those on low incomes</p> |
| DCC | <p>Durham County Council</p> |
| DEFRA | <p>Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs</p> <p>A ministerial department, supported by 34 agencies and public bodies responsible for improving and protecting the environment. It aims to grow a green economy and sustain thriving rural communities. It also supports our world-leading food, farming and fishing industries (link)</p> |
| DHP | <p>Discretionary Housing Payments</p> <p>Short term payments which can be made to tenants in receipt of the housing benefit element of Universal Credit, to help sort out housing and money problems in the longer term.</p> |
| DHSC | <p>Department of Health and Social Care</p> <p>The DHSC supports the government in leading the nation's health and care system.</p> |

| Term | Definition |
|-------------|--|
| DLE | <p>Daily Living Expenses</p> <p>Available for those whose circumstances have changed unexpectedly. Payments can be made for up to seven days to help with food, travel and some clothing (restrictions apply).</p> |
| DoLS | <p>Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards</p> <p>A set of checks that are part of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which applies in England and Wales. The DoLS procedure protects a person receiving care whose liberty has been limited by checking that this is appropriate and is in their best interests.</p> |
| EAP | <p>Employee Assistance Programme</p> <p>A confidential employee benefit designed to help staff deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting their home or work life, health, and general wellbeing.</p> |
| EET | <p>Employment, Education or Training</p> <p>Most often used in relation to young people aged 16 to 24, it measures the number employed, in education or in training.</p> |
| EHCP | <p>Education, Health Care Plan</p> <p>A legal document which describes a child or young person's (aged up to 25) special educational needs, the support they need, and the outcomes they would like to achieve.</p> |
| ERDF | <p>European Regional Development Fund</p> <p>Funding that helps to create economic development and growth; it gives support to businesses, encourages new ideas and supports regeneration. Although the United Kingdom has now left the European Union, under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, EU programmes will continue to operate in the UK until their closure in 2023-24.</p> |
| EHE | <p>Elective Home Education</p> <p>A term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home or in some other way they desire, instead of sending them to school full-time.</p> |
| ETA | <p>Extension of Time Agreement</p> <p>An agreement between the council and the customer submitting a planning application to extend the usual deadline beyond 13 weeks due to the complex nature of the application.</p> |
| FPN | <p>Fixed Penalty Notice</p> <p>Is a conditional offer to an alleged offender for them to have the matter dealt with in a set way without resorting to going to court.</p> |
| FTE | <p>Full Time Equivalent</p> <p>Total number of full-time employees working across the organisation. It is a way of adding up the hours of full-time, part-time and various other types of employees and converting into measurable 'full-time' units.</p> |

| Term | Definition |
|---------------|--|
| GVA | Gross Value Added <i>The measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.</i> |
| HSF | Household Support Fund Payments support low income households struggling with energy and food costs, or who need essential household items. |
| ICO | Information Commissioner's Office The UK's independent body's role is to uphold information rights in the public interest (link) |
| IES | Inclusive Economic Strategy Sets a clear, long-term vision for the area's economy up to 2035, with an overarching aim to create more and better jobs in an inclusive, green economy (link) |
| JLHWS | Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy The Strategy (2023-28) supports the vision that County Durham is a healthy place where people live well for longer (link) |
| KS2 | Key Stage 2 The national curriculum is organised into blocks of years called 'key stages'. At the end of each key stage, the teacher will formally assess each child's performance. KS2 refers to children in year 3, 4, 5 and 6 when pupils are aged between 7 and 11. |
| KS3 | Key Stage 3 The national curriculum is organised into blocks of years called 'key stages'. At the end of each key stage, the teacher will formally assess each child's performance. KS3 refers to children in year 7, 8 and 9 when pupils are aged between 11 and 14. |
| LGA | Local Government Association The national membership body for councils which works on behalf of its member councils to support, promote and improve local government (link). |
| L!NKCD | A programme that brings together a number of delivery partners to support people with multiple barriers to address these underlying issues and to move them closer to or into the labour market or re-engage with education or training. |
| LNRS | Local Nature Recovery Strategies Propose how and where to recover nature and improve the wider environment across England. |
| MMB | Managing Money Better A service offered by the council which involves visiting residents' homes to carry out a free home energy assessment. In addition to providing advice on energy bills, the service can provide financial advice through referrals to benefits advice or help with a benefits appeal and other services for advice on benefit entitlements. |

| Term | Definition |
|---------------|---|
| MTFP | Medium Term Financial Plan A document that sets out the council's financial strategy over a four year period |
| MW | MegaWatt is one million watts of electricity |
| NESWA | North East Social Work Alliance A social work teaching partnership made up of 12 North East councils and six Higher Education Institutes. The Alliance is one of several teaching partnerships across the country which were created to improve the quality of practice, learning and continuous professional development amongst trainee and practicing social workers. |
| NQSW | Newly Qualified Social Workers a social worker who is registered with Social Work England and is in their first year of post qualifying practice. |
| NVQ | National Vocational Qualification The NVQ is a work-based qualification that recognises the skills and knowledge a person needs to do a job. |
| Oflog | Office For Local Government The vision for Oflog is for it to provide authoritative and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government, and support its improvement. Oflog is part of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities . |
| PDR | Performance and Development Review Is an annual process which provides all staff with the valuable opportunity to reflect on their performance, potential and development needs. |
| PRS | Private Rented Sector This classification of housing relates to property owned by a landlord and leased to a tenant. The landlord could be an individual, a property company or an institutional investor. The tenants would either deal directly with an individual landlord, or alternatively with a management company or estate agency caring for the property on behalf of the landlord. |
| PSPO | Public Space Protection Order Are intended to deal with a nuisance or problem in a particular area that is detrimental to the local community. |
| QoL | Quality of Life |
| RIDDOR | Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations A RIDDOR report is required for work-related accidents which result in a reportable injury. The definition of a reportable injury can be found here |
| RQF | Regulated Qualifications Framework The RQF helps people understand all the qualifications regulated by the government and how they relate to each other. It covers general and vocational in England, and vocational in Northern Ireland. Link |

| Term | Definition |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| SALT | <p>Short and Long Term</p> <p>Relates to the annual Short and Long Term (SALT) Support data collected by councils. It is to be replaced by a national mandatory person-level data collection (Client Level Data).</p> |
| SEN | <p>Special Educational Needs</p> <p>The term is used to describe learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for children to learn than most children of the same age. Children with SEN are likely to need extra or different help from that given to other children their age.</p> |
| SEND | <p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities</p> <p>SEND can affect a child or young person's ability to learn and can affect their;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ behaviour or ability to socialise (e.g., they struggle to make friends) ▪ reading and writing (e.g., because they have dyslexia), ▪ ability to understand things, ▪ concentration levels (e.g., because they have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) ▪ physical ability |
| SG | <p>Settlement Grants</p> <p>Help people stay in their home, or move back into housing after living in supported or unsettled accommodation (such as leaving care or being homeless). They provide help towards furniture, white goods, flooring, curtains, bedding, kitchen equipment, removal costs etc.</p> |
| SME | <p>Small to Medium Sized Enterprise</p> <p>A company with no more than 500 employees.</p> |
| Statistical nearest neighbours | <p>A group of councils that are similar across a wide range of socio-economic.</p> <p>Durham County Council uses the CIPFA nearest neighbours model which compares us to Northumberland, North Tyneside, Barnsley, Rotherham, Wakefield, Doncaster, Redcar and Cleveland, Wigan, St Helens, Cornwall, Sefton, Sunderland, Wirral, Plymouth and Calderdale</p> |
| UASC | <p>Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children</p> <p>Children and young people who are seeking asylum in the UK but who have been separated from their parents or carers. While their claim is processed, they are cared for by a council.</p> |
| UKSPF | <p>UK Shared Prosperity Fund</p> <p>Part of the government's Levelling Up agenda that provides funding for local investment to March 2025. All areas of the UK receive an allocation from the Fund to enable local decision making and better target the priorities of places within the UK that will lead to tangible improvements to the places where people work and live.</p> |
| WEEE | <p>Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment</p> <p>Any electrical or electronic waste, whether whole or broken, that is destined for disposal. The definition includes household appliances such as washing machines and cookers, IT and telecommunications equipment, electrical and electronic tools, toys and leisure equipment and certain medical devices.</p> |
| Yield | <p>Proportion of potential income achieved</p> |