

Wear Valley District Council

**Council Plan
2005 - 2008**

DRAFT

Cover design to be finalised

Contents

Chapter 1 1

Foreword by Leader of the Council and
Chief Executive

Chapter 2 2

The Council Plan

Chapter 3 7

Continuous Improvement

Chapter 4 8

Our Vision, Values and Principles

Chapter 5 10

Comprehensive Performance
Assessment

Chapter 6 11

Our Objectives

12

Population

14

Lifelong Learning

16

Economy

18

Environment

22

Crime

25

Health

28

“The Best District Council in England”
- The Capacity to Deliver

Chapter 7 32

Action Plans

34

Population

35

Lifelong Learning

37

Economy

40

Environment

46

Crime

47

Health

50

The Capacity to Deliver our Objectives

Foreword by the Leader and Chief Executive of Wear Valley District Council

This, our second Council Plan, marks another step along the way to achieving our ambition to become the best district council in England.

We started on this journey three years ago and we have travelled some distance towards our goal. We have clear priorities on which we focus, we manage our performance more effectively and we work far more closely with our partners in Wear Valley, County Durham and beyond.

Our progress can already be measured in real improvements to people's lives in the District. Crime is falling across all our communities, more household waste is being recycled and we are working towards ensuring that all tenants in the District live in a decent home. You can read more about the progress we have made in this plan.

However, we still have a long way to go. Government statistics show that Wear Valley is the poorest rural district in England with some pockets of real deprivation. Such problems cannot be mastered overnight, and the Council must continue to work hard and promote the interests of local people, wherever and whenever it can. Wear Valley's

citizens need the highest quality public services that can be afforded if they are to get the opportunities they deserve to share the wealth and prosperity enjoyed elsewhere in Britain.

Our challenge now is to quicken the pace of progress and ensure that everyone in the Council, Members and officers alike, and our partners in the Local Strategic Partnership all share the same ambitions and work well together in achieving them. The actions listed in this Plan will help us along our journey.

Cllr Neil Stonehouse,
Leader of Wear Valley

Iain Phillips
Chief Executive.

The Council Plan

What is it?

The Council Plan sets the Council's strategic objectives for the next three years. It brings together key priorities and actions from other Council plans and strategies and ensures that everything the Council does is focused on its six strategic objectives. It also charts how the Council is improving its capacity to meet its challenges of community leadership, partnership working and service delivery and achieve its vision of becoming the best district council in England. Like all Council plans and strategies it embodies and applies the Council's Vision, Values and Principles.

It is updated annually to take into account changing circumstances and priorities and also to review our achievements. In this year's plan you can read about some of the highlights over the past year including the opening of the Wear Valley Innovation House and the benefits take up campaign.

The achievements and actions contained in this plan will also help us to improve the quality of people's lives in Wear Valley by creating safe, strong and sustainable communities. We are also determined that everyone must share these improved outcomes and opportunities and we will work to remove barriers to success based on racial discrimination and prejudice.

How have we prepared this plan?

Member Priorities

Many people have had a hand in shaping these priorities. Local Councillors have agreed these objectives and adopted them as the Council's priorities for the next three years.

Listening to our Customers

Wear Valley District Council takes seriously its role as a community leader. As part of this we consult with local people to find out what are their priorities. We do this for all our major policies like our budget, our activities to reduce crime and the fear of crime and the future of our housing stock and we have included what local people have told us in this plan.

Linking up with the Local Strategic Partnership

These priorities are also shared by the members of Wear Valley's Local Strategic Partnership and have been endorsed by the bodies and groups represented on it including the Police, PCT, local community groups like 2D and local business representatives in the Business Forum.

Delivering National Priorities

Since 1997 central government has been driving forward a programme to reform and improve public services. Central Government also has an ambitious programme to improve the quality of life across the UK, particularly in the most deprived parts of our country. Extending prosperity and opportunity to all parts of our country and all sections of our diverse society must be our aim if we want to build strong cohesive and sustainable communities. Our objectives for Wear Valley will contribute locally to the achievement of the Government's national agenda.

Wear Valley has responded enthusiastically to Government initiatives to improve the quality of public services and engage and involve local people in decision making. Our Best Value Reviews have improved services that matter most to local people like housing repairs, community safety and planning. We have involved local people in decision making by setting up tenants panels and consulting and working with local people and community groups to decide and deliver policies that meet their needs.

Central government has also set a number of cross-cutting objectives for local government to deliver through all its work.

Wear Valley must ensure that in everything we do we do all we can to promote community safety, sustainable development and equality and respect for everyone. We are putting in place plans and processes to meet these challenges.

Central government is now quickening the pace of public sector reform. All public bodies are expected to become more efficient and deliver the same or better for less. The health service, local authorities and other public bodies have to work more closely with each other and involve the private sector where there are benefits to doing so. Public services will have to change the way they are organised and the way they work to better meet the needs of specific groups of people like children and young people, older people or people from black and minority ethnic communities. Through the Local Vision programme for local government, central government wants local authorities to involve public service users as citizens in deciding what services are delivered and how they are provided. Giving people 'choice and voice' will be a fundamental challenge for this authority as all local authorities in the next few years.

The links between national, Local Strategic Partnership and Council objectives are shown in the table overleaf.

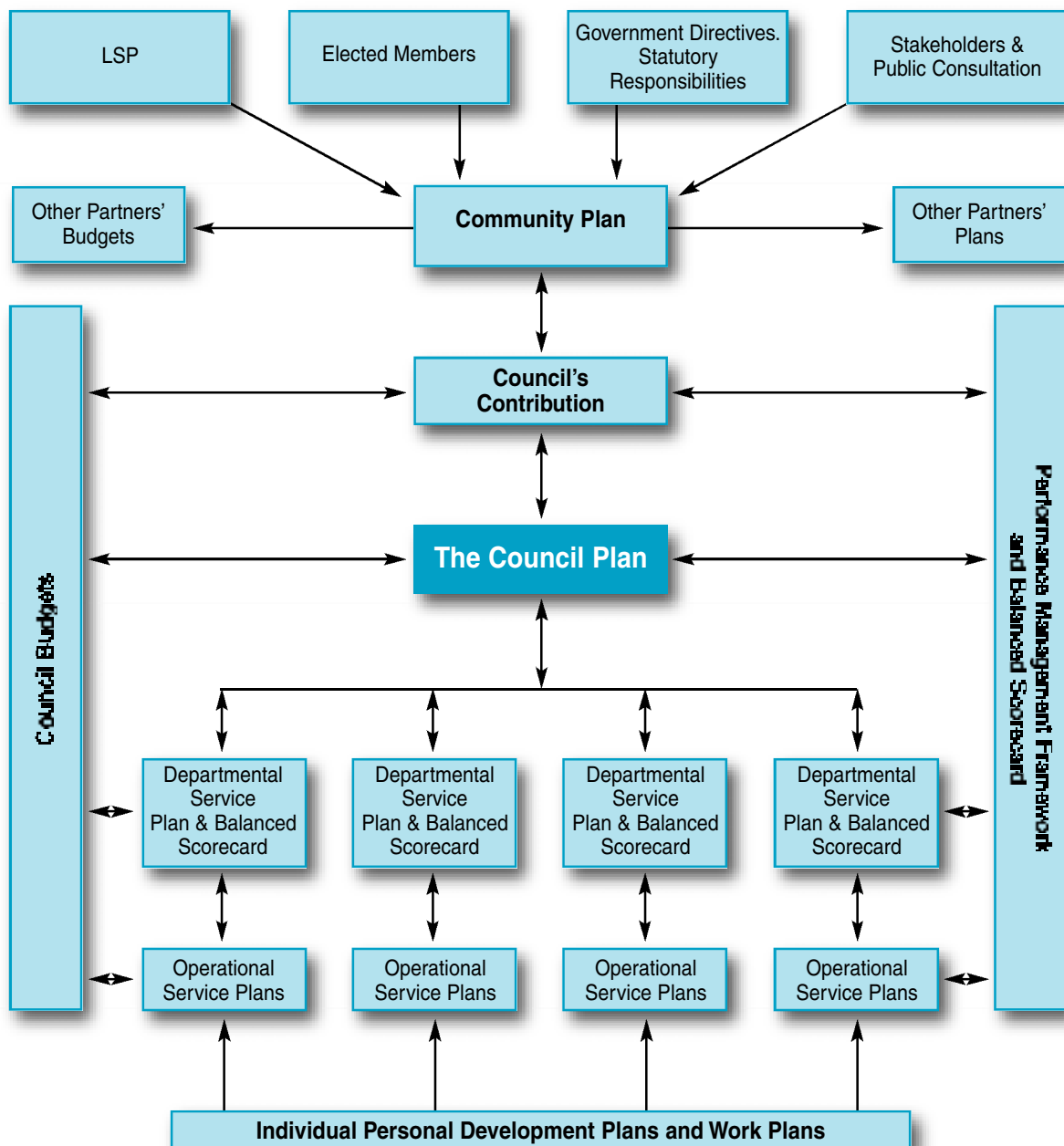
National, LSP and Council Objectives

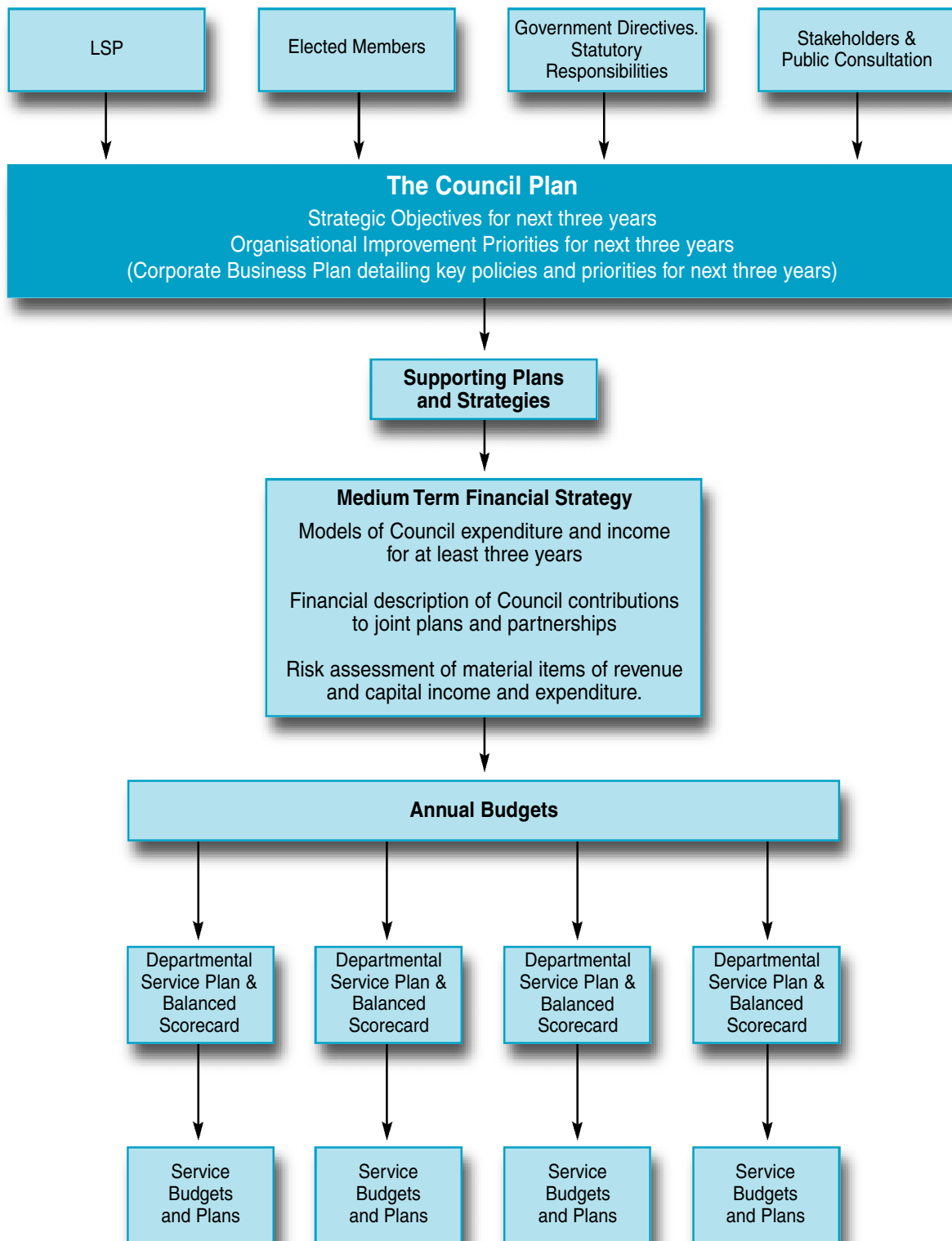
Shared Priorities / LGA Priorities	Local Strategic Partnership	Wear Valley District Council
	Vision: "A confident community motivated by self worth, in which each individual is able to achieve a collective improvement in Wear Valley"	Vision: "to be the best district council in England"
Creating sustainable communities	To work for a slowly growing and demographically balanced population	Create a balanced, vibrant and growing population across the whole district
Raising standards across our schools	To work for improvements in lifelong learning to exceed the national average	Encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley
Promoting the economic vitality of localities	To work for a significant increase in employment and business activity	Enable the development of continuously improving economic infrastructure
Cleaner and greener neighbourhoods	To work for a significant improvement in the build environment	Aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the build and natural environment
Safer and Stronger Communities	To work for a significant reduction in crime and the fear of crime	Design services to increase community safety and crime prevention and work closely with key partners to reduce crime
Promoting healthier communities and narrowing health inequalities	To reduce health inequalities and improve the quality of life for the residents of Wear Valley	Improve the health and well-being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles

How is the Council Plan linked to the Community Plan and other plans?

The Council Plan details the Council's contribution to the achievement of the priorities in the Community Plan. It also brings together the priorities and actions set out in other Council plans and strategies whether departmental service plans, service plans like its Housing Strategy or corporate plans like the Council's Communication Strategy. All these plans can only be

implemented if our employees understand how their work contributes to the Council's objectives so individual personal development plans and work plans for each employee are aligned with service plans and the Council Plan. In this way the Council Plan sets the direction for the Council as a whole as shown in the diagram below. The priorities in this plan also drive how we allocate resources in our medium term financial strategy and annual budgets. This is shown in the following diagram.





Continuous Improvement

How we will make this plan better

Wear Valley District Council is constantly looking to improve the quality of life in the District. To do this we need to continuously improve the way we work how we plan our activities, how we use our resources and how we work in partnership in others. This plan covers three years but is updated annually in the light of changing circumstances, new priorities and new statutory requirements. Each year we try to link our actions more closely and more clearly to real improvements that people can see in their communities and neighbourhoods.

The Council Plan must add value to the Council's work. It can do this in two ways. Firstly, the actions included in it must contribute **effectively** to the fulfilment of our objectives for Wear Valley and the Council. The Council Plan focuses the attention of everyone within the Council, Members and employees alike so that our decisions, policies and resources are directed at our goals. Secondly, the Council Plan, together with other key Council documents like the Performance Management Framework, must ensure that we work **efficiently** to derive maximum benefit from our limited resources for the people of Wear Valley.

Our Vision, Values and Principles

Our Vision

“To be the best district council in England “

Underlying this plan and all its other plans and strategies are the Council's Vision, values and principles. Everything we do within the Council is directed towards achieving our Vision. Wear Valley District Council is committed to do all it can to improve the quality of people's lives in Wear Valley. It can do this in two ways.

Firstly, it can itself provide services to the highest standard possible and we have a programme to continuously improve our services. You can read more about this in our Best Value Performance Plan which is published every year in June. Our efforts to improve our services are bearing fruit. For example our activities to reduce crime and the fear of crime have been rated as good with promising prospects for improvement by the Audit Commission.

Secondly, as we are not the only public service provider in Wear Valley, we must work with other bodies such as the County Council and Government Office North East to influence their priorities and get the best possible deal for Wear Valley. One of the challenges for the year ahead will be to work with Durham County Council and the other districts in the County to produce a Local Area Agreement that improves outcomes for local people on issues that matter most to them.

In order to become the best district council in England and be responsive to our customers we have adopted a set of values and standards.

Our Values and Standards

To assist us in achieving our long-term aims and the day to day expectations of our residents, we identified four values, which we consider are important in delivering the necessary changes they are:

Our Values

Community Led	Recognising the right of the local community in all its different forms and interests to come together to manage its own affairs. We also recognise that we must work with other public and private sector organisations working within Wear Valley.
Customer Centred	Consulting our customers about the design and delivery of services, and ask them for their views of the quality of our services and success of our initiatives.
Citizen Focussed	Understanding and responding to the individual rights, needs and responsibilities of the local population.
Excellence in Management and Organisation	Being an innovative council and a centre of management excellence, empowering and communicating with our staff. Focusing our finances on our priorities and manage them prudently.

Our Corporate Baselines

We must also embed the highest standards into our activities if we are to become the best district council in England. To this end we have adopted a set of corporate baselines. To deliver this we are:

Our Corporate Baselines	
Empowerment	Empowering employees at the lowest sensible level to deliver effective and continuously improving services to our customers.
Communication	Putting in place effective resources, structures and systems to ensure that internal and external communications are established and maintained as a corporate priority.
Consultation	Putting in place effective resources, structures and systems to ensure that formal methods for consultation with all of our stakeholders are established and maintained as a corporate priority.
Priorities	Putting in place effective systems to ensure that corporate and service priorities are properly planned, agreed, regularly reviewed and communicated with our staff, service delivery partners and customers and embedded in our arrangements for justifying performance.
Financial Management	Putting in place financial management systems and training support to ensure that financial resources are deployed as effectively as possible to support improved service delivery, and that these comply with modern accounting practices and controls.
Corporate Governance	Putting in place arrangements to ensure that our activities comply with the guidance on corporate governance and develop a culture of openness and transparency, high standards and a willingness to identify and recognise where things need to be improved upon within the public gaze.
Performance Management	Putting in place a performance management framework that will allow staff to understand how their efforts at every level will contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives and encourage the development of a culture of continuous improvement in service delivery.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

The Audit Commission undertook a CPA of the Council in November 2003 and identified a number of areas where the Council needs to improve and these are summarised in the table below. We have responded to these issues in setting our priorities. The Audit

Commission reviewed the Council's progress in a 'Direction of Travel Assessment' in December 2004 and found that the Council had made progress against most of its objectives and was developing the foundations to improve in the areas identified in the CPA.

CPA and where we need to improve

Ambition	Be clear about what "being the best" means and how we will get there	We have prepared a Council Plan which sets out clearly our aspirations and plans for improvement
Priorities	Set clear, achievable priorities and set out what success will look like	The Council Plan sets clear priorities and measures to rate our success
Future plans	Make sure all our plans are clear about the direction the Council wants to go in for ourselves and our partners	We are aligning our service plans and other strategic plans with the priorities in the Council Plan and the LSP's Community Plan
Achieving improvement	Keep up the good work on worst performing PIs but broaden out the focus to reflect our objectives and all our services Improve our processes and capacity to challenge ourselves.	We have had two positive Best Value Reviews on Community Safety and Planning
Capacity	Increase member capacity and develop a Human Resources strategy to improve officer capacity Stabilise the Housing Revenue Account.	We are developing policies to develop our Members and officers. We have stabilised our Housing Revenue Account
Performance Management	Our Performance Management Framework is good but we need to make sure it focuses on addressing the Council's objectives	We are revising our Performance Management Framework in line with the Council's priorities.
Service quality	Improve service quality as measured by BVPIs (still below average overall)	55.5% of BVPIs have improved over the last 12 months with 6.5% reaching optimum performance
Learning	Improve the way we share learning across the Council	We are developing channels to identify and share best practice within the Council

Our Objectives

The Council has adopted six strategic objectives. These are:

Our Objectives	
1. Population	The Council will use its statutory powers, resources and influence to help create a balanced, vibrant and growing population across the whole of the whole of Wear Valley District.
2. Lifelong Learning	The Council will encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley.
3. Environment	The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.
4. Economy	The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.
5. Crime	The Council will design its services to increase community safety and crime prevention and work closely with key partners to improve crime reduction.
6. Health	The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being.

The Capacity to Deliver: Becoming the Best

As well as our 6 objectives for Wear Valley we must also work to improve our capacity as an organisation if we are to deliver our objectives. We therefore have a programme of actions to become an excellent service deliverer and community leader and become:

“The Best District Council in England”

In this plan we detail the following for each objective:

- Background facts
- Progress on priority actions included in the last Council Plan
- One major success in each priority area in greater detail
- Actions for the next three years in an annex to this plan.

Population

Objective 1

The Council will use its statutory powers, resources and influence to help create a balanced, vibrant and growing population across the whole of the whole of Wear Valley District.

Background and Key Issues

Wear Valley's population fell by 1,700 between 1991 and 2001. Latest population projections indicate that the population will continue to decrease and there will be 1,000 fewer people living in Wear Valley by 2011. However, this trend may be reversing as Wear Valley's population grew by 300 over the past 12 months – a very welcome increase.

Older people are an increasing proportion of our population. If present trends continue the number of people over 60 will rise by 2,000 by 2011 and the proportion of people over the age of 85 will also rise.

Wear Valley is also very sparsely populated making the provision of some public services like libraries or leisure centres more expensive and ensuring that residents face long journeys to other amenities like cinemas or shopping centres.


A declining and ageing population will have big implications for the housing and

employment markets in Wear Valley. Falling numbers of children and young people will affect the viability of village schools and rising numbers of older people will increase the demand for health and social care.

A stable or rising population will support a stable housing market and provide the local workforce needed to attract and retain employers into the District.

A stable or rising population will also be the outcome of our success in making Wear Valley an attractive place to live. We can use our planning powers to provide good quality homes at all price levels. We can invest in the local economy to create modern high quality business accommodation to create and retain local employment. We can find new ways to provide leisure and other services to every part of the District and we can, through our own activities and by working with others create the safe, clean and well-connected communities where people want to live.

Progress on Priority Actions from last Council Plan

Priority Action	On Target?	Comments	Lead
1a) Review the determinants of population change in the District in the light of the emerging data and the Regional Spatial Strategy and assess the impact of this on future Council policy		This research has been completed and its findings will be fed into future Council policy	Head of Management Support

Delivering for Wear Valley – Fresh Start Initiative

Wear Valley is working with the London Borough of Lewisham to find new homes for tenants who want to move out of London.

The Fresh Start Initiative matches tenants in Lewisham with empty Council properties in Wear Valley. So far 17 tenants have moved from Lewisham to Wear Valley and Lewisham is now compiling a register of people who would like to consider moving to Wear Valley.

As part of this scheme, the council helped a 73-year-old woman from London move out of her Lewisham property into a one bedroom bungalow in Crook.

She attended an event that was held by Lewisham's 'Fresh Start' Scheme which is aimed at helping people move out of London.

She says: "I love my bungalow and the council staff at Crook have been really kind and helpful."

Lifelong Learning

Objective 2

The Council will encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley.

Background and Key Issues

The number of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE in Wear Valley is almost 10 percentage points below the average in England.

40% of adults in Wear Valley have no qualifications, the same figure for the North East is 35% and the national average is 29%.

It is estimated that 30% of adults in Wear Valley have poor literacy and numeracy skills.

Only around 13 percent of adults in Wear Valley are educated to degree level or equivalent, the national figure is almost 20%.

Durham County has the lowest rate of participation in post 16 education in England.

Low skills are a barrier to employment and career progression for too many people in Wear Valley.

Good quality lifelong learning opportunities, from nursery places and Sure Start to further, higher and vocational education, help local people and the community as a whole. We can work with others to boost facilities for learning from Sure Start to adult learning where they are most needed and make learning accessible for people of all ages through new initiatives like Full Service Schools and Building Schools for the Future. We can provide more learning places within the Council through schemes like modern apprenticeships. We can work with local community and voluntary groups to equip people with the skills and confidence to get involved in their neighbourhoods

Progress on Priority Actions from last Council Plan

Priority Action	On Target?	Comments	Lead
6a) Build community capacity by engaging the community and voluntary sector in the work of the Council	✓	A lot of groundwork has been completed but much work is required to develop this area further.	Chief Executive
6b) Modern Apprenticeships	✓	Work is progressing on this priority. It is now the intention to expand the programme beyond craft apprenticeships and into other areas.	Director Central Resources
6c) Surestarts	✓	The LSP works closely with the Surestarts as part of the Every Child Matters Agenda. The Council chairs the local task group for the Children's Centres	Director Community Services

Delivering for Wear Valley – Wear Valley Customer Panel

Wear Valley District Council encourages tenants and residents to get involved in managing their own communities. A Customer Panel made up of local tenant representatives has been set up and we support the creation of residents associations where local people want this.

Some people are unfamiliar with how to organise meetings, take minutes, use a computer or keep records and accounts and we have worked with the Customer Panel,

Bishop Auckland College and Auckland Youth and Community Centre to put on training courses for local people. These deal with practical matters like bookkeeping and fundraising. In 2004, 32 courses were held across the district so that training would be accessible to all and 131 people took part. In 2005 training courses have been focussed on committee management. We are now working with volunteers among local tenants who will be trained in how to be 'mystery shoppers' to test the quality of Council services. Lifelong learning is empowering people to take charge of their own lives.

Economy

Objective 3

The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.

Background and Key Issues

The proportion of people in Wear Valley who are not in work or looking for a job was almost 4 points higher in 2004 than in the North East (29.7% against 26%).

1350 businesses registered for VAT in 2004, no higher than in 1997. However, the number of new registered businesses per 10,000 adult population has risen from 25.3 in 2001 to 31.3

in 2003 and is higher than the North East average although it is still much lower than the average for England.

Low rates of employment and enterprise lead to considerable deprivation in Wear Valley. In 2004 a quarter of Wear Valley's Super Output Areas (geographical areas used to measure census information) were within the most deprived 10% in England and almost two fifths were in the most deprived 20%.

Progress on Priority Actions from last Council Plan

Priority Action	On Target?	Comments	Lead
3a) Economic (futures) strategy	✓	We have investigated the possibility of a joint South Durham approach with Sedgefield and Teesdale and a consultant has been appointed.	Director Regeneration
3b) Community based economic activity	✓	Promoting community based enterprise is one element of the rural pathfinder for West Durham.	Director Community Services
3c) Land assembly		Work is due to commence on this priority objective during 2006/07.	Director Central Resources
3d) Attractiveness survey	✓	This has now been incorporated into (3a) Economic Futures Strategy.	Head MSU
3e) Infrastructure development	✓	The Innovation House extension is on track. Work is planned for Wolsingham and Willington.	Director Regeneration
3f) Business development	✓	The North East Business Support Network is now live with two account managers operating from Wear Valley Development Agency. A financial incentives scheme is fully committed.	Director Regeneration

Delivering For Wear Valley – Innovation House

A new economic future is being made in Wear Valley as new state of the art business premises attract high tech companies to locate and grow in the District. Innovation House, a new business centre with broadband internet access and room for 16 businesses was opened by the Prime Minister, Tony Blair in May 2004 and an extension to this centre should be completed by November 2005. Funding for Innovation House came from the European Regional Development Fund, the regional development agency, One NorthEast, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and Wear Valley District Council.

Business centres like Innovation House depend on fast, reliable access to the internet.

BT, DurhamNET and WeardaleNET have worked to provide broadband connections within Wear Valley and to develop community access to broadband internet connections. Wear Valley is wired for business.

Future developments will put Wear Valley at the cutting edge of the new energy economy. Research has shown that the former Eastgate cement works is a potential site to generate geothermal energy. Combined with biomass, solar energy and wind turbines the disused cement works could be an ideal location for a renewable energy village with homes, businesses, a hot springs spa and holiday resort and tourist attractions all powered by renewable sources of energy. It is expected that an outline planning application for the site will be submitted by early 2006.



Environment

Objective 4

The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.



Background and Key Issues

Wear Valley is a mainly rural district with outstanding scenery and wildlife. Half the district is designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and there are 16 sites of Special Scientific Interest, 21 County Geological Sites and 1 Local Nature Reserve. There are numerous walks and cycle routes throughout the District for people to discover and enjoy Wear Valley's countryside.

The urban environment picture is more mixed. Wear Valley has 20 conservation areas and 579 listed buildings but there are also urban areas which display the same problems of decline and decay seen in larger towns and cities.






In 2003, 41% of the homes managed by the local authority did not meet the Decent Homes

Standard. Securing the investment needed to bring local authority owned housing to the Decent Homes Standard will be a major strategic challenge for the Council.






The private housing market in Wear Valley also poses strategic challenges for the Council. Two thirds of homes are in the lowest band for Council tax purposes though there is a shortage of affordable homes in some parts of Weardale. Ensuring that housing growth drives the regeneration of the district and provides housing affordable for all will be a challenge for the Council's planning and economic development functions.

Transport in a sparsely populated district can be an issue for many families particularly as 32% of Wear Valley's residents do not have access to a car.

Progress on Priority Actions from last Council Plan

Priority Action	On Target?	Comments	Lead
<p>2a Produce a Development Strategy (prior to work on Local Development Framework)</p>		<p>The work undertaken to date will enable Wear Valley District Council to develop an approach that will enable Housing to be used as a regeneration tool. This is an ongoing project that will become an integral part of the Local Development Framework.</p>	<p>Director Regeneration</p>
<p>2b Review Town Centre Strategy</p>		<p>We have installed CCTV cameras in Town Centre locations and implemented a number of anti-social behaviour measures. New development opportunities, planning policies and environmental enhancements are being pursued. Consultation exercises are being undertaken.</p>	<p>Director Housing</p>
<p>2c Deliver Weardale Strategy</p>		<p>Substantial work to develop attractions like Harperley Prisoner of War camp, broadband access within Weardale and market towns like Stanhope have already taken place. An outline planning application for the renewable energy village at the Eastgate site should be submitted in early 2006.</p>	<p>Director Regeneration</p>
<p>2d Livability strategy</p>		<p>Open Spaces strategy is being developed An action plan to improve recycling rates is being prepared.</p>	<p>Director Community Services</p>
<p>2e Design standards</p>		<p>Advice and guidance is being sought from GONE to produce robust design standards. Joint working with DCC and other district council is also being pursued.</p>	<p>Director Regeneration</p>

Progress on Priority Actions from last Council Plan (continued)

Priority Action	On Target?	Comments	Lead
2f Map transport issues		This remains a priority objective and much work has been undertaken. Transport in rural areas has been given an even greater profile through the Community Plan and Local Public Service Agreement 2 strategy.	Director Central Resources
2g Local Development Framework		The Local Development Scheme was formally approved by ODPM in April 2005 and has been adopted by the Council. A draft Statement of Community Involvement has been produced and is scheduled for public consultation during August and September 2005.	Director Regeneration
2h Coalfields Housing Study		The masterplan brief for Coundon has been approved and consultants have been appointed to complete this work.	Director Housing
2i Decent Homes Standard		This will be picked up through the implementation of the ALMO and has also been placed on the agenda for Local Public Service Agreement 2 strategy	Director Housing
2j Input to local Transport Plan review		A Local Transport Plan for County Durham was submitted to ODPM in July 2005.	Director Regeneration
2k Contaminated Land Strategy		A Contaminated Land Officer has been appointed. The Government have produced 3 new BVPI's to monitor this area. Work still needs to be undertaken on in-depth site investigations and remediation programmes.	Director Regeneration
2l Local Action 21		The Council will review how it works to protect and promote Wear Valley's environment.	Director Housing

Delivering for Wear Valley – Improving Willington

The people of Willington are being given a new look green space in the heart of their community. Local people have welcomed the move by Wear Valley District Council, Willington Community Partnership and Groundwork West Durham to give the town a much needed facelift.

They secured funding through the Countryside Agency's Doorstep Green Scheme which is supported by the National Lottery, the Big Lottery Fund, European Regional Development Fund and SureStart.

Included in the revamp was a new children's playground, avenues of trees, planting, seating areas and artwork telling the stories of Willington from Roman times to the present day.

Wherever possible, local people have been involved in the work to develop the area and children from Willington Primary and Willington Church of England School helped develop some of the artwork and planting.

Also in Willington the Jubilee Meadows project has seen improvements to the riverside and Cenotaph and the planting of new meadows, trees and shrubs to create an attractive environment for people to enjoy.



Crime

Objective 5

The Council will design its services to increase community safety and crime prevention and work closely with key partners to improve crime reduction.



Background and Key Issues

The total amount of recorded crime in Wear Valley has fallen over the last three years by almost 10% compared to an increase of over 7% across England and Wales. Vehicle related crime accounted for almost a quarter of all recorded crimes followed by theft and criminal damage which each accounted for about a fifth of all crime. Violent crime accounted for a further 16% of all crimes committed in Wear Valley.




House burglary has fallen by over 17% and other burglary (for example from garden sheds) has fallen by almost 22%.

Violent crime in Wear Valley has fallen by 29% whereas it has risen by over a third across England and Wales.

Criminal damage has fallen in Wear Valley by 3.5% whereas it rose by 13% in England and Wales.

However, theft of a motor vehicle rose over 16% over the same period and criminal damage to motor vehicles has increased by almost a quarter.

Progress on Priority Actions from last Council Plan

Priority Action	On Target?	Comments	Lead
<p>4a Look at developing our structure to more effectively integrate cross-departmental working on community safety issues</p>		<p>Review is complete.</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer</p>
<p>4b Geographically based arrangements for crime and disorder</p>		<p>This action is now complete.</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer</p>
<p>4c Monitoring fear of crime</p>		<p>Extensive research has been undertaken and the findings have been built into our Crime & Disorder Strategy.</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer</p>
<p>4d Evaluate whether or not the Council should act primarily as facilitators or deliverers in terms of addressing the crime and anti-social behaviour agenda</p>		<p>The Council undertook a Best Value Review of its Community Safety function and has drawn together a number of actions in the Improvement Plan.</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer</p>
<p>4e Develop and implement a training and awareness raising programme support compliance with section 17 requirements</p>		<p>A training programme has been developed and will be rolled out to all employees over the coming year.</p>	<p>Head MSU</p>
<p>4f Continued support for Crime and Disorder partnership</p>		<p>Ongoing support has been built into staffing arrangements and 2005/06 budgets. 4a may have an impact on this priority outcome.</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer</p>

Delivering for Wear Valley – Working with the community to cut crime

Crime is a major issue in Woodhouse Close, the most deprived ward in Wear Valley. Statistics show that it not only has high levels of unemployment, poor health and low educational attainment but it is also the most violent ward in County Durham and has the 2nd highest incidence of anti-social behaviour in Wear Valley.

In 2002, to address crime in the District, we have secured funding to pilot a Street Warden scheme. Six wardens and a project manager are employed and they work from a base in Bishop Auckland. Police and voluntary workers are also based with the wardens at 75 Proudfoot Drive. This is to provide a visible presence and accessible one stop service for local residents who want to report crimes or know more about what they can do to cut crime on the estate.

This project has proved so successful that an additional six wardens have recently been

employed and are based in other areas across the district including the rural areas of the Dales.

We have also taken a number of practical measures to reduce crime and improve community safety including:

- Fitting door chains, door viewers, shed bars,
- Marking property with SmartWater
- Setting up a hospital/holiday watch scheme complete with the loan of light timers;
- Organising activities and events to divert young people away from crime and reassure the community about crime.

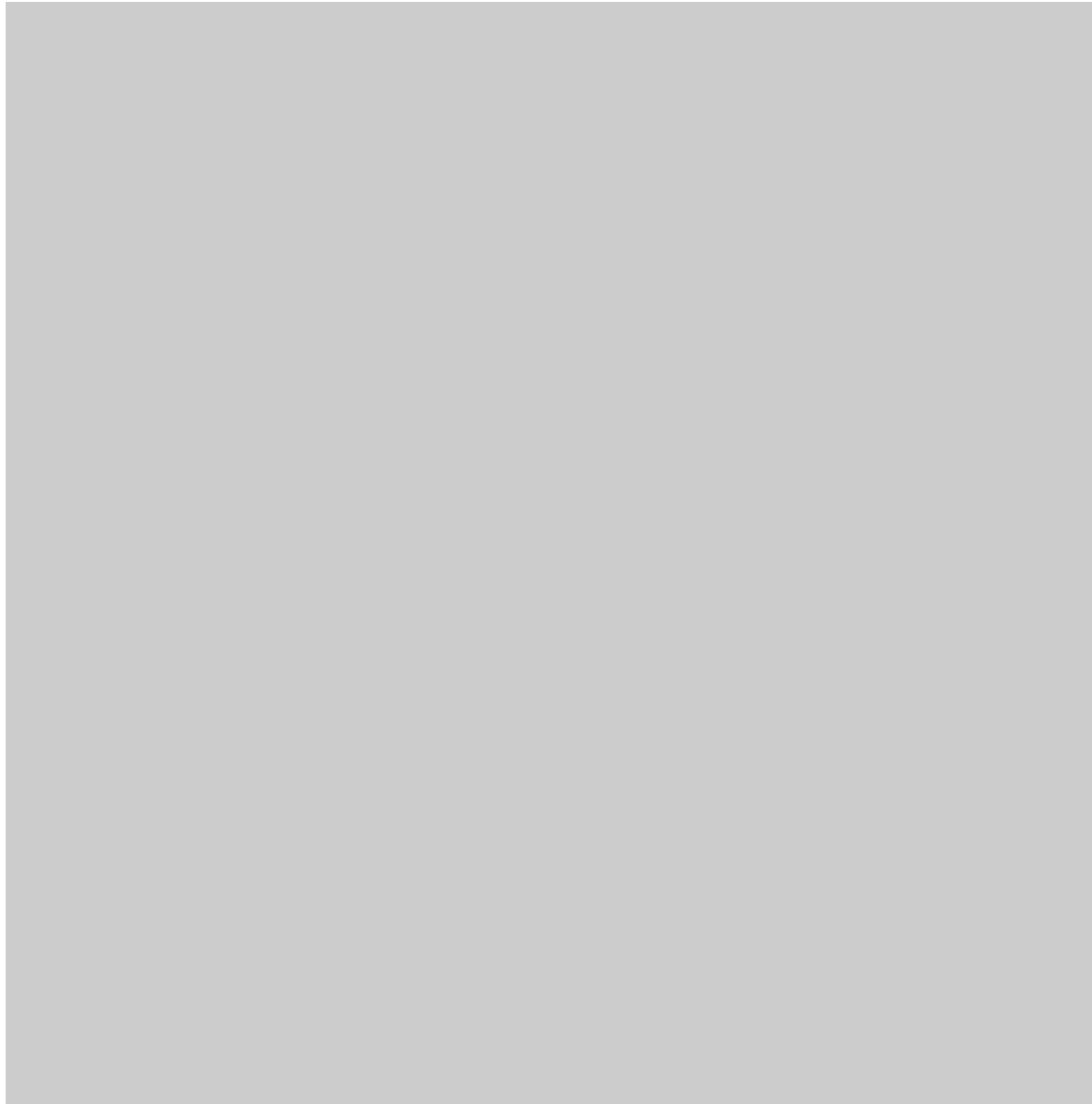
These measures have had results. House burglary has fallen by 33% during the period 2001–2004 in comparison to a 17.6% reduction across Wear Valley. Criminal damage has also fallen by 6% over the same period compared to an increase of over 13% in England and Wales.



Health

Objective 6

The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being.










Background and Key Issues

Almost a quarter of Wear Valley residents had a limiting long term illness according to the Census in 2001. Life expectancy in Wear Valley is on average two years shorter than in England. Heart and circulatory disease about 20% more common in Wear Valley than in England as a whole.

Although it is falling, the teenage pregnancy rate in Wear Valley is still almost 20 points higher than the rate for England. Wear Valley has one of the worst teenage conception rates in Europe.

Progress on Priority Actions from last Council Plan

Priority Action	On Target?	Comments	Lead
5a Money advice campaigns		We have undertaken much work on this priority with an additional 300 people now claiming benefit. We have developed an outreach programme to access the hard to reach groups.	Director Central Resources
5b Reduce number of unfit homes		We have levered in Government funding to set up a Home Improvement Agency and extend the capital bid. An officer has been appointed and the Fuel Poverty Action Plan is being implemented.	Director Housing
5c Support access to exercise		As a key issue for the LSP and Wear Valley District Council alike this will remain a priority outcome. Much work has been undertaken but more needs to be done.	Director Community Services
5d Toothbrushes		Joint working with Durham Dales PCT and Surestart has been established.	Director Community Services
5e Access to healthy food		Work is ongoing, breakfast clubs have been set up in schools and discussions are taking place with the PCT in an effort to take this forward.	Director Community Services
5f Environmental health control and regulation of food sold		We are meeting our statutory responsibilities to ensure that food sold is safe	Director Community Services
5g Prevent homelessness		Work is ongoing and it will remain a priority indicator.	Director Housing

Delivering for Wear Valley – Benefit Take Up Campaign

Government research shows that access to income is one of the key determinants to good health. Wealthier people are also healthier people. Our benefit take up campaign works to ensure that some of the poorest people in Wear Valley receive the benefits they are entitled to.

Working in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), we have contacted pensioners in the District who currently receive pension tax credits but are not yet claiming Housing and Council Tax Benefit. Since April 2005 over £95,000 has been given to some of the poorest households in the District.

The next step will be to work with the DWP to identify households who are claiming Council Tax and Housing Benefit but are not yet receiving pension tax credits. This could bring a windfall for scores of the poorest households in Wear Valley.

We are also going out to supermarkets, tea dances and events like the Wolsingham Show and working in partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureaux and Durham Welfare Rights Service to make more people aware of the benefits they are entitled to. In September 2005, in partnership with the Coundon and Leeholme Partnership we will be opening a monthly surgery to offer advice on welfare benefits to local residents.



“The Best District Council in England” – The Capacity to Deliver

Capacity to Deliver

The Council will continuously improve its services and its capacity to deliver its objectives.

Background and Key Issues

In 2003 the Audit Commission carried out a Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the Council and found that Wear Valley was a ‘fair’ Council. It identified a number of areas where the Council needed to improve. We have drawn up a list of actions to improve the way we work by:

- Having clear, achievable priorities and setting out what success looks like.
- Managing our resources effectively.
- Making sure we have the right skills, competencies and culture to meet the challenges of the future.
- Organising ourselves in the best way to deliver our objectives.
- Supporting the development of staff and Members.
- Managing our performance across all our objectives.









We can already report several milestones on our journey of improvement. We are sharpening our focus on key objectives through preparing key plans like this. We are managing our performance better and putting in place strategies to recover where our performance is not as good as it needs to be.

Through Best Value Reviews we are becoming better at challenging the way we currently do things and this is leading to real improvements in the services that people receive. We are improving the way we work in partnership locally and our objectives will contribute to the priorities set by the community in the Community Plan. Our ability to deliver services electronically is growing rapidly and we are on course to meet the Government’s deadline for all services to be capable of being delivered electronically by the end of 2005.





We still need to do more, however. Challenges for the coming years include;

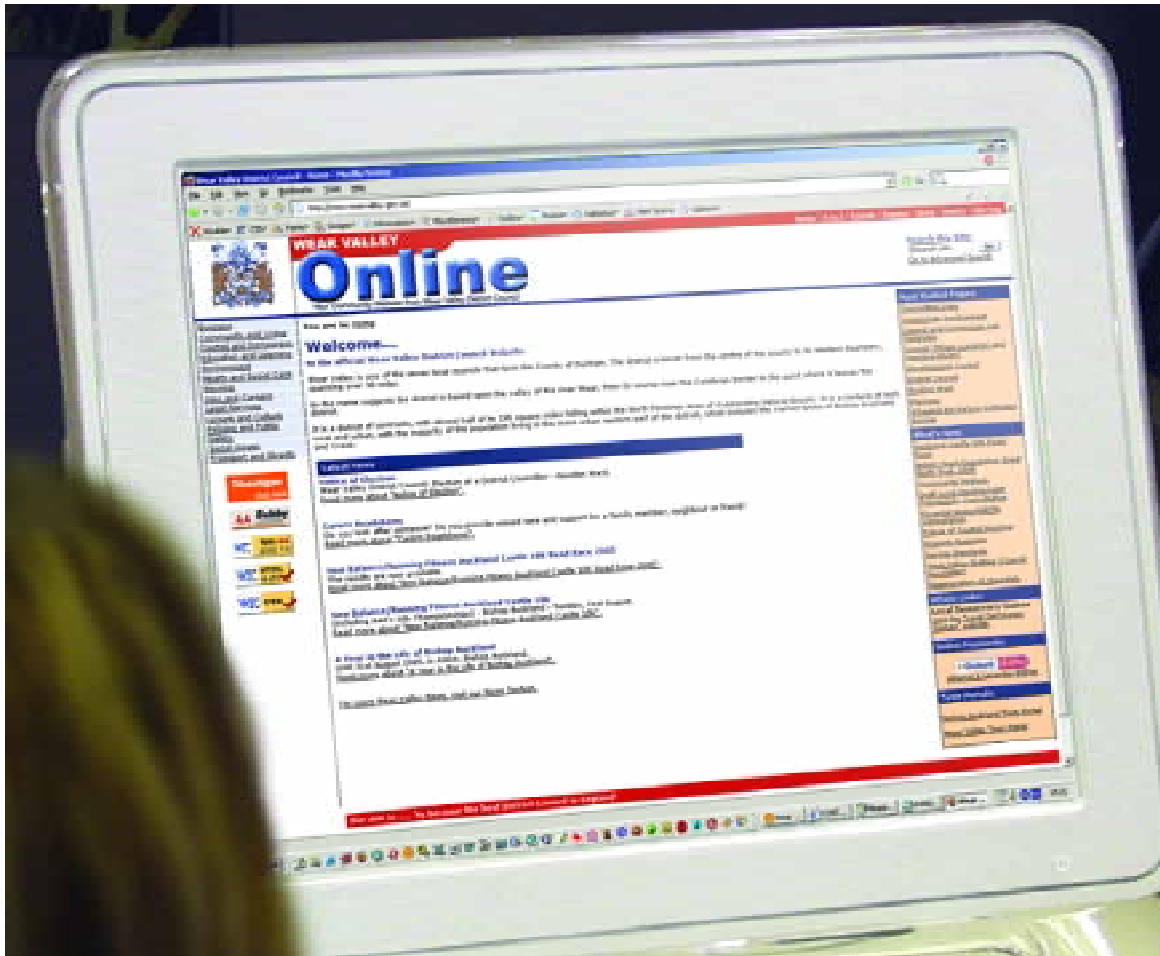
- becoming more efficient and delivering the same or better services with fewer resources,
- mainstreaming community safety into the work of the whole Council,
- improving the way we consult and involve local people in decision making,
- working with all sections of our population and meeting the needs of diverse communities, and
- embed the progress we have already made in our organisational capacity and culture.

Progress on Priority Actions from last Council Plan

Priority Action	On Target?	Comments	Lead
7a Clarify priorities		We are getting better at clarifying our priorities and making the links between the Council Plan, Service Plans and the Community Plan but work still needs to continue.	Chief Executive Officer
7b HR strategy		A consultant had been employed to develop this and a good start has been made but there is still much to do on this priority outcome.	Director Central Resources
7c Performance management		A lot of background work has been undertaken and the Performance Management Framework will be revised to take into account changes like CPA over the next 6 months.	Head MSU
7d Challenge ourselves		Regular update meeting and reports are scheduled to deal with low performance and not meeting priority actions and targets both from the Council Plan and Service Plans.	Head MSU
7e Financial management		Although much work has been undertaken there is still scope to improve the Council's financial management and align strategies further.	Director Central Resources
7f Learning		We must develop further, sharing of best practice within the Council.	Head MSU
7g Change management programme		Work has progressed and options are being investigated. This is a particularly difficult area to tackle and will therefore remain a priority outcome.	Chief Executive Officer
7h Equality and diversity		The Council has reached Level 1 of the Equality Standard and is now drawing up plans to progress further.	Director Housing

Progress on Priority Actions from last Council Plan (continued)

Priority Action	On Target?	Comments	Lead
7i E government		We are on track to achieve 100% by March 2006.	Director Central Resources
7j Develop our community leadership role		A consultation mapping exercise has been undertaken the findings of this need to be addressed in 2005/06. Area Based Mechanisms are being reviewed. Much work remains outstanding in order to achieve this outcome.	Chief Executive Officer
7k Organisational development		Roles and responsibilities of senior managers have been reviewed. A restructuring exercise is being investigated. It is anticipated a performance management system will be in place early 2006. Approval has been given to set up an ALMO. We are actively engaging with the young people and public of Wear Valley.	Head MSU
7l Local Government reorganisation		This action is complete.	Chief Executive Officer



Delivering for Wear Valley – E-Government

The Government set a target for all local authorities to offer their services electronically so that access would be more convenient for users. We are on track to meet that target and already people are seeing the benefits. Over the past year we have increased our score on the government's measure of e-government capacity BV 157, by over 50%.

We are making it easier for people to access our services electronically by introducing service based email addresses (for example, land.charges@wearvalley.gov.uk). Any emails sent to these 'service-based addresses' (including those emails produced by website forms) are automatically issued with a receipt number and an automated response sent to the author of the email. Together with the necessary logging of service requests, this

allows customers to track the status of their submission.

More people are viewing our website (there were over 80,000 visitors to our site in the first quarter of 2005) and more people are downloading job or planning applications and submitting forms for services like Street Scene or bulky waste collection electronically.

Our success is also being recognised beyond Wear Valley. In a monthly survey of Local Government websites, Wear Valley District Council's website has been ranked as 15th out of over 460 tested. The survey, conducted on behalf of the national Local Government Forum checks the quality and standard of websites around the country. One of the tests passed is how well the website can be used by web users with visual or physical disabilities.

Council Plan 2005 - 2008

Action Plans

Population

Objective 1: Population

The Council will use its statutory powers, resources and influence to help create a balanced, vibrant and growing population across the whole of the whole of Wear Valley District.

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
1a	Allocate resources, develop policies and use our influence to achieve a stable or growing population in Wear Valley	Head of Management Support	Include findings of population determinants review in Council Plan, supporting documents such as Local Development Framework and Community Plan (ongoing)	Findings of review strengthen effectiveness of our activities to stabilise and grow population in Wear Valley	County Council LSP Health Authority	Local Development Framework
1b	Organisational development	Head of Management Support	<p>1. Young people: develop a strategic approach to work with young people which ensures we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage with young people identify all current areas of activity and the resources currently deployed in working with young people identify the wider provision and activity in the community develop a coherent set of actions which represent the best interventions we can make to improve the life opportunities of young people 	<p>Number of young people satisfied with Wear Valley as a place to live</p> <p>Number of young people satisfied with Council services</p> <p>Children and Young people element of Rural Pathfinder</p>		

Lifelong Learning

Objective 1: Lifelong Learning

The Council will encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
2a	Build community capacity and confidence to participate in neighbourhood decision making and policy delivery	Chief Executive	Work with 2D and other voluntary and community groups to train people in voluntary and community work (Mar 07)	<p>Number of people trained in community and voluntary work</p> <p>Number of people who receive qualifications in community and voluntary work</p> <p>Number of training courses on voluntary and community work</p> <p>Increased capacity of voluntary and community groups as a result of more trained and confident volunteers</p>	<p>2D LSP/Community Network</p> <p>Learning Partnership</p> <p>County Durham LSP (Community hubs)</p> <p>LSC</p> <p>Bishop Auckland College</p> <p>Connexions</p>	<p>Economic (futures) strategy</p> <p>Local Development Framework</p> <p>Weardale Strategy</p> <p>Liveability Strategy (Intermediate Labour Markets)</p> <p>Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy</p> <p>Financial Strategy</p> <p>Education Development Plan (Countywide)</p> <p>LSC Local Strategic Plan (countywide) and draft 14-19 strategy</p>

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
2b	Provide and support Modern Apprenticeships (including basic skills elements) and NVQs	Director of Central Resources	Audit the business community to identify skills gaps Deliver and develop Council-sponsored Modern Apprenticeships Develop NVQs in partnership with Bishop Auckland College	Number of Modern Apprentices qualified as a result of our input Number of NVQ students qualified as a result of our input	Bishop Auckland College Forum for Business	LSC Local Strategic Plan (countywide) Performance Management Framework
2c	Contribute to Sure Start and Early Years Childcare provision in Wear Valley	Director of Community Services	Deliver the agreed contribution to Surestart programmes to target and budget Ensure a smooth transition as SureStarts are incorporated into Children's Centres	Deliver the agreed contribution to Surestart programmes to target and budget Ensure a smooth transition as SureStarts are incorporated into Children's Centres	SureStart Learning Partnership	

Desirable Actions

Activities felt to be desirable but not prioritised for 2005-2008	
Ref	
2d	Support the development of a strategic approach to community based learning, incorporating the Full Service Schools, Aim High Centres, Children's Centres and Community Hubs concepts
2e	Through the Learning Partnership, build on research done by the LSC into potential economic growth sectors; identify skills gaps and work with learning providers to fill them
2f	Develop our initiatives with local schools

Economy

Objective 4: Economy

The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley.

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
3a	Develop a longer-term District Economic (Futures) Strategy based on analysis of economic prospects and economic attractiveness of Wear Valley	Director of Regeneration	<p>Reappraisal of existing approach</p> <p>Identification of strategic economic priorities for District</p> <p>Establish clear links between the economic strategy and Development Strategy</p>	<p>Unemployment rate</p> <p>Economic activity rate</p> <p>Business formation and survival rates</p> <p>Amount of business accommodation available in the District</p>	<p>LSP/Forum for Business/Community Network</p> <p>One Northeast</p> <p>County Council</p> <p>SRBs/Wear One/other regeneration partnerships</p> <p>Wear Valley Development Agency</p> <p>Community partnerships</p>	<p>Wear Valley Strategy</p> <p>Community Plan</p> <p>Local Development Framework</p> <p>Regional Economic Strategy</p> <p>County Durham Economic Strategy</p> <p>Rural Action Plan</p>

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
3b	Deliver economic aspects of rural pathfinder	Director of Regeneration	<p>Review business support services available within Wear Valley including support for social enterprises</p> <p>Work with others to rationalise provision of business support</p>	<p>Business formation and survival rates</p>	<p>LSP/Forum for Business/Community Network</p> <p>One Northeast</p> <p>County Council</p> <p>SRBs/Wear One/other regeneration partnerships</p> <p>Wear Valley Development Agency</p> <p>Community partnerships</p>	<p>Wear Valley Strategy</p> <p>Community Plan</p> <p>Local Development Framework</p> <p>Regional Economic Strategy</p> <p>County Durham Economic Strategy</p> <p>Rural Action Plan</p>
3c	Ensure that sufficient premises and land are readily available for business development	Director of Central Resources	<p>Deliver development proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wolsingham Steelworks • Bracks Farm • Wear Valley Innovation Centre phase 3 <p>Identify future development sites to be developed in the medium term</p>	<p>Land made available for industry/housing/other planned development</p>	<p>One North east</p> <p>GONE</p> <p>Durham County Council</p>	<p>Local Development Framework</p> <p>Regional Economic Strategy</p> <p>Local Development Framework</p>

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
3d	Encourage business investment in the District	Director of Regeneration	<p>Improve marketing and promotion of Wear Valley as business location using findings from economic futures research</p> <p>Full integration of Area Brokerage Model into business support activities in Wear Valley</p>	<p>New businesses attracted</p> <p>Jobs created</p> <p>Grants given</p>	<p>ONE</p> <p>County Durham Development Company</p> <p>Private Sector</p>	<p>Wear Valley Economic Futures Strategy</p> <p>County Durham Economic Strategy</p> <p>Regional Economic Strategy</p>

Desirable Actions

Activities felt to be desirable but not prioritised for 2005-2008						
Ref						
3e	Work in specific sectors (e.g. high value food, sustainable tourism)					
3f	"Last mile" technology problems. Work with others to increase access to broadband internet across Wear Valley.					

Environment

Objective 2: Environment

The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
4a	Produce Local Development Framework that supports population stability and growth in Wear Valley and enables the growth of business and employment in the district	Director of Regeneration	<p>Complete the first set of Development Plan Documents and Statement of Community Involvement which will form part of the emerging Local Development Framework as set out in the Local Development Scheme.</p> <p>Develop a system to monitor planning policies and produce an annual monitoring report by the end of each calendar year.</p>	<p>Review completed on time</p> <p>Number of new houses built</p> <p>% built on previously developed land (BV106)</p> <p>Number of empty properties brought back into occupation (BV64)</p> <p>Number of new/modernised commercial premises</p> <p>Area of land developed for industry</p>	<p>LSP</p> <p>Community Partnerships</p> <p>Statutory agencies</p> <p>GONE</p> <p>Neighbouring local authorities</p> <p>Town Centre Forum</p> <p>Market Towns partnerships</p> <p>Private sector</p>	<p>Town Centre Strategy</p> <p>Market Towns initiative</p> <p>Local Development Framework</p> <p>Housing Business Plan</p> <p>Capital Strategy</p> <p>Asset Management Plan</p> <p>Planning & building control measures</p> <p>Regional Spatial Strategy</p> <p>Regional Economic Strategy</p>

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
4b	Review Bishop Auckland Town Centre Strategy	Director of Housing Services	<p>Review existing strategy and integrate Council led activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifying new development opportunities and planning policies environmental enhancements measures to prevent anti-social behaviour street cleansing promotion and marketing Urban Renaissance activities Traffic and parking improvements <p>(Review activities Mar 06 and produce new plan to deliver improvements)</p>	<p>Integrated approach with clear activities, responsibilities, timescales and resources developed by target date</p> <p>Town centre "health check" to be formulated from retail consultancy</p>	<p>Town centre businesses</p> <p>Town Centre Forum</p> <p>WeAr One</p> <p>LSP</p> <p>One North East</p> <p>County Council</p> <p>Police</p>	<p>Town Centre Strategy</p> <p>Market Towns initiative</p> <p>Local Development Framework</p> <p>Housing Management Plan</p> <p>Capital Strategy</p> <p>Asset Management Plan</p> <p>Planning and building control measures</p> <p>Crime and Disorder Strategy</p>

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
4c	Deliver the Weardale Strategy	Director of Regeneration	<p>Deliver and monitor projects</p> <p>Work with private sector to Deliver Wolsingham Business Park</p> <p>Progress the development of the Eastgate Cement Works</p>	<p>Projects delivered to timescale and budget according to project plans</p> <p>Area of industrial land available</p> <p>Reclamation of derelict land</p> <p>Number of new jobs created</p> <p>Business formation and survival rates</p> <p>Number of visitors to the area</p>	<p>One North East County Council</p> <p>LaFarge</p> <p>Newcastle University</p> <p>Environment Agency</p> <p>Wear Valley Development Agency</p> <p>Groundwork</p> <p>Weardale Railway</p>	<p>Weardale Strategy</p> <p>Financial strategy</p> <p>Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy</p> <p>Regional Economic Strategy</p> <p>Regional Rural Action Plan</p> <p>County Durham Economic Strategy</p> <p>Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action</p>

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
4d	Produce an Open Space Strategy to deliver sustainable improvements in the quality of public space and satisfaction with public space	Director of Community Services	<p>Identify priority areas and resources</p> <p>Deliver planned public space enhancement</p> <p>Integrate waste, cleansing and maintenance of public space functions</p> <p>Identify provision for regulation and policing</p> <p>Ensure that the Strategy incorporates improvements needed in the waste Management Strategy identified by the CPA Public Space Diagnostic</p>	<p>Development of strategy by target date</p> <p>Percentage of residents perceiving Wear Valley as a good place to live</p> <p>Percentage of people satisfied with cleanliness standards (BV89)</p> <p>Percentage of open space which is of Green Flag Award Standard</p>	<p>Contractors</p> <p>CABE</p> <p>Groundwork</p> <p>Parish Councils</p> <p>Community Partnerships</p> <p>Neighbouring local authorities</p>	<p>Financial Strategy</p> <p>Grounds Maintenance contract/cleansing contract</p> <p>NRF Cleaner, Greener Safer Fund</p> <p>Local Development Framework</p>
4e	Raise the percentage of household waste that is recycled or composted	Director of Community Services	<p>Identify obstacles to improved rates of recycling and composting of household waste</p> <p>Put in place actions to improve recycling and composting rate including any additional investment necessary</p>	<p>Percentage of household waste recycled (BV82a)</p>	<p>Durham County Council</p> <p>Groundwork West Durham</p>	<p>Waste Management Strategy</p>
4f	Establish Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) to manage Council's Housing Stock and secure the investment necessary to meet the Decent Homes Standard	Director of Housing	<p>Get 2** stars for Council Housing Service (Sep 05)</p> <p>Establish ALMO (Mar 2006)</p> <p>Develop strategic housing role</p>	<p>ALMO Indicative Inspection</p>		

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
4g	As part of our Community Appraisal activities map the transport issues facing our communities in terms of travel to work accessing public services (such as health services) and use this information to influence West Durham, County and regional transport priorities.	Director of Central Resources	Identify demand and potential delivery models.	Completed Community Appraisals and report on transport needs	LSP West Durham Rural Transport Partnership Transport providers Community transport partnerships	Community transport strategy for Stanhope and Weardale (part of Weardale Strategy) Rural pathfinder Local Development Framework

Statutory Responsibilities

Ref	Responsibilities requiring specific action in next 3 years	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
4h	Coalfields Housing Study Proposals	Director of Housing Services	Complete the English Partnerships Business Case Produce masterplan for Council priority areas	Achievement of English Partnerships funding to deliver our objectives Masterplan elements delivered on time and to budget according to project plans	English Partnerships One Northeast Partner local authorities	Development Strategy
4i	Contaminated Land strategy	Director of Regeneration	Complete first stage strategy (identifying extent and scale of contamination) Commence in-depth site investigation and remediation programme	Number of sites investigated Number of sites where remedial action taken	Environment Agency Landowners	Local Development Framework Weardale Strategy Wear Valley Vision 21

Statutory Responsibilities

Ref	Responsibilities requiring specific action in next 3 years	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
4j	Revise Local Action 21 Strategy	Director of Housing Services	Review our LA21 strategy, including our approach to energy conservation and use, to bring it in line with our current priorities	Revised strategy produced by target date	LSP County Council	Wear Valley Vision 21

Desirable Actions

Activities felt to be desirable but not prioritised for 2005-2008						
Ref	Develop a strategic approach to "rural" landscape/environmental enhancement with reference to River Wear Corridor, building on the work of Valley of River Wear Project.					
4k						

Crime

Objective 1 : Crime

The Council will design its services to increase community safety and crime prevention and work closely with key partners to improve crime reduction.

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
5a	<p>Deliver the targets in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to reduce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> House (and other) Burglary Violent Crime Domestic Abuse Vehicle Crime Anti Social Behaviour and Criminal Damage Drugs and Alcohol Misuse Hate Crimes Offences by prolific offenders Fear of Crime 	Chief Executive	<p>Work in partnership with other bodies</p> <p>Use our enforcement and regulatory powers to reduce crime</p> <p>Apply 'secure by design' standards to new developments and provide measures to secure Council housing and other premises</p> <p>Raise awareness of crime and how to reduce crime</p> <p>Provide street wardens to reduce crime and reassure residents</p>	<p>Police Crime Statistics</p> <p>British Crime Survey statistics</p> <p>British Crime survey statistics on fear of crime</p> <p>Council surveys</p>	<p>Police</p> <p>PCT</p> <p>Probation Service</p> <p>Youth Offending Team</p> <p>Durham County Council</p> <p>2D</p> <p>Business Forum</p>	<p>Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy</p>
5b	<p>Deliver recommendations of Best Value Review Improvement Plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align service plans more closely with Council Plan Consider community safety issues more systematically in the Council's decision making process Train staff to be aware Section 17 Community Safety Implications Evaluate impact of measures and activities to reduce crime 	Chief Executive	<p>Develop and implement formal process to align service plans with Council Plan</p> <p>Implement processes to consider systematically community safety aspects of Council activities</p> <p>Train staff in Section 17</p> <p>Develop and apply processes to measure impact of community safety activities</p>	<p>Alignment of Service and Council Plans</p> <p>Staff awareness of Section 17</p> <p>Measurement of impact of community safety</p>	<p>Staff</p> <p>Police</p> <p>PCT</p> <p>YOT</p> <p>CDRP</p> <p>2D</p> <p>Business Forum</p>	<p>Council Plan</p> <p>Supporting Corporate Plans</p> <p>Service Plans</p> <p>Community Plan,</p> <p>Community safety Strategy</p>

Health

Objective 6: Health

The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well-being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
6a	Increase the income of those reliant on state benefits through the use of money advice campaigns over a 3-year period	Director of Central Resources	<p>Identify resources to deliver money advice, benefit uptake and debt control campaign</p> <p>Plan, implement and evaluate campaign, targeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> disabled people those with a disabled child lone parents those living in most deprived wards in health terms elderly people 	<p>Percentage of claimants making new claims based on Council campaigns</p> <p>Number of benefit recipients apportioned to wards (this is a factor in IMD)</p>	<p>LSP</p> <p>PCT</p> <p>Strategic health authority</p> <p>CAB</p> <p>Other voluntary sector agencies</p> <p>Benefits Agency</p>	
6b	Reduce the number of unfit homes and increase energy efficiency to national standards by 2007.	Director of Housing Services	<p>Prioritise resources to be invested in unfit properties and energy efficiency</p>	<p>Percentage of unfit properties in the District (Miller Mitchell scale)</p> <p>Average SAP rating of local authority owned dwellings (BV63)</p>		<p>Housing Business Plan</p> <p>LA21 Strategy</p>

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
6c	Support Wear Valley residents in accessing exercise	Director of Community Services	<p>Agree the Council's strategic approach to the provision of leisure centres</p> <p>Deliver and expand Cardiac Rehabilitation, Exercise Referral and Walking for Health schemes</p> <p>Promote Chance to Live</p>	<p>Percentage of the population taking part in regular exercise</p> <p>Number of exercise referrals</p>	<p>PCT</p> <p>Strategic Health Authority</p> <p>LSP</p> <p>SAZ</p> <p>Northern Echo</p>	<p>Cultural strategy</p> <p>Sport and recreation strategy</p>
6d	Deliver activities to reduce incidence of dental caries in under 5s	Director of Community Services	<p>Develop a campaign to provide toothbrushes and toothpaste to all local children under 5</p>	<p>Number of local children supplied with toothbrushes</p> <p>Reduction in incidence of dental caries in under 5s</p>	<p>PCT</p> <p>LSP</p> <p>Surestart</p>	
6e	Increase access to healthy food	Director of Community Services	<p>Work with PCT to develop programmes to increase access to healthy food in areas where it is not easily available</p> <p>Work with schools and the PCT to encourage healthier school meals</p>	<p>To be developed in discussion with PCT</p>	<p>LSP</p> <p>LEA</p> <p>PCT</p> <p>Groundwork</p> <p>Surestart</p>	
6f	Ensure environmental health and regulation of types of food sold	Director of Community Services	<p>Deliver public protection in terms of food, noise, air and pests</p>	<p>Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for environmental health trading standards (BV166)</p>	<p>Traders</p>	

Statutory Responsibilities

Ref	Responsibilities requiring specific action in next 3 years	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
6g	Invest in the prevention of homelessness to meet the national good practice standard by 2007	Director of Housing Services	Deliver all elements of the Wear Valley Homelessness Strategy Improvement Plan 2003-2006.	Achievement of homelessness standard by 2007.		Housing Business Plan.

Desirable Actions

Ref	Responsibilities requiring specific action in next 3 years					
6h	Health Education activities					

The Capacity to Deliver our Objectives

Capacity to deliver

The Council will continuously improve its services and its capacity to deliver its objectives.

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
7a	Citizen Focussed Promote Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion in Wear Valley	Director of Housing Services	Develop and implement a project plan to achieve level 2 of the Equality Standard beginning with awareness raising among Members and officers in November 2005 Review Race Equality Scheme Produce Community Cohesion Scheme	Level 2 achieved by XXXX Project plan agreed to progress to higher levels of Equality Standard by XXXX	Durham and Darlington Race Equality Council Commission for Race Equality Audit Commission	Race Equality Scheme Equality Standard Community Cohesion Strategy

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
7b	<p>Develop our Community Leadership role to engage and involve citizens in making decisions that matter to them</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Use NRF and other funding to develop neighbourhood arrangements to tackle problems in areas of greatest need (Feb 06)</p> <p>Engage local residents, stakeholders and Members in discussions about what neighbourhood arrangements they want to see and what would (Mar 07)</p> <p>Support the Local Strategic Partnership in its work to engage voluntary, community and business sectors and involve BME and other hard to reach groups (ongoing)</p>	<p>Neighbourhood arrangements in place in most deprived parts of Wear Valley as a result of Neighbourhood Element part of NRF</p> <p>Discussions about appropriate neighbourhood arrangements lead to specific proposals</p> <p>Satisfaction among residents, voluntary, community sector and harder to reach groups about participation in decision making</p>	<p>LSP</p> <p>Durham and Darlington Race Equality Council</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Element of Safer and Stronger Communities Fund</p> <p>NRF funding</p> <p>Community Cohesion Plan (if applicable)</p> <p>Community Plan</p>

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
Customer Focussed						
7c	Customer Access		Develop a consistent approach to measuring and managing customer satisfaction Develop a consistent approach to customer care that reflects our values	Customer satisfaction		Balanced scorecard
7d	E-government	Director of Central Resources	Enable more Council services to be delivered by electronic systems to improve business efficiency and access to services, for example, procurement, and payments	Customer Satisfaction Improvement in relevant PIs Annual Efficiency Statement Balanced Scorecard score (if applicable)	County Durham authorities (joint BV review)	Implementing E Government Statement
Centre of Management and Organisational Excellence						
7e	Clarify priorities	Chief Executive Officer	Finalise Council Plan 2005-2008 (Sep 05) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link National, LSP and Council priorities (Sep 05) • Develop Service Plans linked to Council Plan, LSP and national priorities (Dec 05) • Develop corporate Balanced Scorecard (Jun 06) • Develop departmental Balanced Scorecards (Jun 06) 	Production of Council Plan, service plans and Balanced Scorecards to timescale	LSP	Community Plan Council plan Service Plans Key corporate strategies

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
7f	Human Resources	Director of Central Resources	<p><i>(continued)</i></p> <p>Develop a HR strategy which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies the human resources we need to deliver our priorities, eg managerial capability (Dec 05) Identifies the gaps between our current capacity, competencies, culture and structures and where we want to be (Dec 05) Addresses areas of poor performance (eg sickness) Addresses key objectives such as diversity and equality Puts in place an action plan for delivery (Dec 05) <p>Develop a parallel approach to member development including participation in the Leadership Academy (Dec 05)</p>	<p>Production and implementation of Strategy and action plan to timescale</p> <p>Measurable increase in management capacity</p> <p>Number of working days lost to sickness (BV12)</p> <p>Employee satisfaction with the Council as an employer</p>	<p>Staff</p> <p>Members</p> <p>Trade Unions</p> <p>Audit Commission</p> <p>NEREO</p> <p>IDeA</p> <p>SOLACE</p>	HR Strategy

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
7g	Performance Management	Head of Management Support	<p>(continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and adopt corporate balanced scorecard Develop and adopt departmental Balanced Scorecard Develop and measure appropriate local Performance Indicators for each service Embed the Council's objectives into our day-to-day processes by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requiring all policy committee papers to demonstrate how they link to corporate priorities (Sep 05) Revise Performance Management Framework (Dec 06) Revise corporate 'suite' of policies to ensure that they are clear, focused and comprehensive (Sep 06) 	Production of Corporate and departmental balanced scorecards		Performance Management Framework

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
Centre of Management and Organisational Excellence <small>(continued)</small>						
7h	Challenging ourselves	Strategic Management Group	<p>Roll out the Performance Improvement Team concept to identified priority service areas not in the worst quartile but where performance could improve</p> <p>Deliver a programme of Best Value reviews which reflects our priorities</p> <p>Build challenge skills into the management and Member development programmes (</p> <p>Continue to strengthen the role of Scrutiny (ongoing)</p> <p>Improve our preparation for external assessment such as CPA, Direction of Travel, Use of Resources assessment, ALMO</p>	<p>Measurable improvement in relevant PIs</p> <p>Timely completion of Best Value reviews</p> <p>All reviews deliver measurable improvements</p>		Balanced Scorecards Performance Management Framework
7i	Use of Resources	Director of Central Resources	<p>Deliver the HRA recovery action plan developed with the Audit Commission</p> <p>Develop Medium Term financial Strategy (MTFS) linking Council budgets and activities to our objectives</p> <p>Use the budget process to mainstream proven activities that reduce exclusion and deprivation</p>	<p>Achievement of Recovery plan to satisfaction of the Audit Commission</p> <p>MTFS that links budgets and activities to our priorities</p>	Audit Commission	MTFS Asset Management Plan Housing Business Plan

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
Centre of Management and Organisational Excellence <i>(continued)</i>						
7j	Deliver services cost effectively	Director of Central Resources	<p>Improve the efficiency of our services and functions to deliver the same or better for less</p> <p>Improve how we procure goods and services</p> <p>Ensure maximum benefit from Council spending is retained locally by encouraging use of local suppliers</p>	<p>Annual Efficiency Statements</p> <p>Satisfactory/Good CPA rating for value for money</p> <p>Volume/Value analysis</p>	<p>Audit Commission</p> <p>North East Centre of Procurement Excellence</p> <p>Forum for Business</p>	<p>Annual Efficiency Statements</p> <p>CPA Use of Resources Assessment</p>
7k	Learning	Head of Management Support	<p>Develop policies database</p> <p>Develop learning capacity of officers and Members</p> <p>Analyse good practice from elsewhere and incorporate learning into mainstream services</p>	<p>Changes to mainstream services as a result of innovative regeneration programmes</p>	<p>LSP</p> <p>Improvement Partnership for North East</p> <p>Local Government</p>	<p>Council Plan and supporting plans</p> <p>Community Plan</p>
7l	Managing change	Chief Executive	<p>Ensure that resources, policies and processes are in place to identify challenges and opportunities in external policy environment</p> <p>Ensure that Council can allocate resources, develop policies, processes, structures, cultures and behaviours to meet those challenges and opportunities</p>	<p>Develop capacity to scan policy horizon</p> <p>Balanced scorecard score showing sufficient capacity to manage change</p> <p>Positive Direction of Travel Assessment in CPA</p> <p>Good CPA score</p>		<p>Balanced Scorecard</p> <p>Council Plan</p>

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
Centre of Management and Organisational Excellence						
7m	Organisational development	Head of Management Support	<p>(continued)</p> <p>Review roles and responsibilities of senior managers to identify the most effective structures for delivering our objectives</p> <p>Develop capacity and capabilities of managers at all levels of the organisation</p> <p>Service integration: develop a formal strategy for exploring joint working arrangements to assess improvements in efficiency, cost and quality (for example performance management, procurement with other authorities)</p>	<p>Review completed to timescale</p> <p>Senior Management PMS in place</p> <p>Management Development programme in place</p> <p>Impact measures to be developed alongside approaches to area based mechanisms and service integration</p>	<p>Teesdale</p> <p>other Durham District Councils</p>	

Priority Actions

Ref	Priorities	Lead	Key tasks in next 3 years	Key Measures	Partners	Relevant Tools/Plans
Centre of Management and Organisational Excellence <i>(continued)</i>						
7m ctd	Organisational development	Head of Management Support	Service integration: develop a formal strategy for exploring joint working arrangements to assess improvements in efficiency, cost and quality (for example procurement management, performance management with other authorities)	Impact measures to be developed alongside approaches to area based mechanisms and service integration	Teesdale other Durham District Councils	
7n	Organisational development Local Area Agreement (LAA)/ Local Public Service Agreement 2 (LPSA2)	Chief Executive Officer	Contribute to County Durham LAA/LPSA2 (2006/2009)	LAA with objectives and targets that benefit Wear Valley	Durham County Council, other local authorities and service users	LAA/LPSA2
7o	Prepare for CPA and other external inspections	Head of Management Support	Prepare for CPA, Direction of Travel, Use of Resources, Service Block, Best Value Review and other external inspections	2* promising prospects for improvement or better in all Best Value Reviews, Good scores in CPA and CPA component assessments	Audit Commission	Council Plan Balanced Scorecards Performance Management Framework