

## Agenda Item 5(a)

STATUS PUBLIC

<b>Portfolio Member/Director/Head of Service</b> Cllr Sue Pitts/ Tracey Ingle	<b>Portfolio</b> Leisure and Culture
<b>Subject</b> Adoption of Bowburn Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan	<b>Date</b> 7 January 2009
	<b>Forward Plan</b> No
<b>Contact Officer</b> Michael Hurlow, Heritage and Design Manager (0191 3018703) <a href="mailto:mhurlow@durhamcity.gov.uk">mhurlow@durhamcity.gov.uk</a>	<b>Previous Minutes</b> Minute 242
<b>Purpose of Report</b> The following report presents the Conservation Area Appraisal for formal adoption and for all purposes relating to the management of the Conservation Area. It has been amended following the results of public consultation.	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	
<p>It is a statutory requirement that all Conservation Areas are appraised and Management Plans prepared. This is measured by Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs 219 b and c).</p> <p>At a meeting of Cabinet on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2005 it was agreed that the Heritage and Design Section undertake a rolling programme of Conservation Area Appraisals for the 14 of the District's Conservation Areas. Draft appraisals were to be brought back to Cabinet for ratification, following a public consultation exercise.</p> <p>Five character appraisals have been produced and consulted upon. One of the areas, Bowburn is now brought forward in its completed form for adoption together with necessary approvals for changes in boundaries. The remaining appraisals will be brought forward for ratification at subsequent Cabinet meetings. These are Sherburn Village, Brancepeth, Sunderland Bridge and Burn Hall. Further work on the City Centre Conservation Area and at least one minor Conservation area is anticipated to lead to consultation as published drafts.</p> <p>The draft Appraisal for Bowburn is appended in Appendix 1. It was subject to a consultation process where residents were contacted by letter and the draft Appraisal deposited in relevant locations. This was followed by an exhibition in a community centre and a public evening meeting. The period of consultation was in excess of 28 days. Comments and corrections were subsequently included and the appraisal and management plan are now offered for approval</p> <p><b>Bowburn Conservation Area Consultation Results:</b> No written responses were received. Cllr Syer (Cllr. at time of consultation) helpfully discussed the document at length, clarifying, correcting and making suggestions. The public meeting, which was held on 31st March 2006, was attended by Cllr. Syer and 13 residents. A staffed public exhibition (29<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> March) preceded the meeting. A useful and varied discussion was held on the document and the Conservation Area in general. The following issues arose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The suitability of including the neighbouring allotments within the boundary of the Conservation Area.</li> <li>•The need to provide clear guidance on the implications of living and within a conservation area and design guidance.</li> <li>•The possibility of financial assistance for repair and re-instatement of architectural</li> </ul>	

features.

- The need to better restrict permitted development through making an Article 4 Direction and to enforce against unauthorised changes.

These comments were subsequently reflected in the management aspirations of the Appraisal with the exception of the boundary extension which is considered in Appendix 2 of the Appraisal.

As a result it is recommended is made to include the original village allotments to the north of the current boundary. A justification is given within Appendix 2 of the Bowburn Appraisal.

### **Portfolio Member Recommendations or Items Requiring a Cabinet Decision**

It is recommended that:

1. The Bowburn Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan is approved and distributed in line with regulation and best practice.
2. The Bowburn Conservation Area boundary change is approved.
3. The Head of Cultural Services carry out the relevant notifications to implement the boundary change above.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

To ensure the better management and understanding of the District's Conservation Areas

### **Alternative Options To Be Considered**

To adopt the Conservation Area Character Appraisal without the boundary changes. This is not considered appropriate for the reasons cited in the Appraisal and by virtue of issues raised during public consultation.

### **Consultation**

No further consultation is required, but the approved report will be distributed to appropriate City, County and Unitary Councillors, the Parish Council and interested organisations or individuals. The boundary changes will require reporting as described below.

### **LGR Implications**

The process of appraising Conservation Areas and forming Appraisals and Management Plans is covered by previous Cabinet report in 2005. Approving the Appraisal and Management Plan requires no further 'Business as Usual' consent.

### **Financial, Legal and Risk Implications**

Boundary changes require advertisement in the London Gazette and a local newspaper.

While each Appraisal contains a section on management and enhancement, including the possibility of grant aid and public realm these are phrased as recommendations and aspirational, subject to further approval and budget commitment.

Conservation Area Character Appraisals form a material planning consideration.

Conservation area boundary changes should be reported to affected residents, owners and

interested bodies as well as departments within the City Council and County Council.

**Resource Implications**

The production of supporting documentation and design advice for the Conservation Area Management Plans and suggested reviews will take up staff time, particularly when additional conservation area appraisals are adopted. In combination these will require continued conservation and design staff support. This will require servicing by the new Unitary Council.

**Timescale for Action**

Boundary changes will be implemented by February 2009 and the distribution of adopted Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans by March 2009.

**Associated Policies and Plans**

Durham City Local Plan

**Supporting Documents**

Bowburn Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

**Background Papers**

None

APPROVED VERSION  
August 2008

Prepared & Published by:

City of Durham Council  
Cultural Services  
17 Claypath  
Durham  
DH1 1RH

# BOWBURN

## Conservation Area Appraisal

Bowburn is a recent industrial village dating from the early 20th century. The colliery housing exhibits several features of interest that both give them a special character and indicate the improved standards incorporated into the design. The most notable feature of the Conservation Area is the stepped nature of the terraces with steeply pitched slate roofs and stout brick chimneys.



# BOWBURN

## Conservation Area Appraisal

August 2008

APPROVED VERSION  
Prepared & Published by:

**City of Durham Council**  
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**DH1 1RH**

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Signed off by;

Portfolio Holder

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Head of Cultural Services  
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## PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 1.1 CONSERVATION AREAS

There are over 9,000 Conservation Areas in England. These vary widely in size and character. The first areas to be designated were town centres in the main, but Conservation Areas now include villages, model housing layouts, and simple open spaces. There are 14 Conservation Areas in the Durham City area, and each has its own unique character and appearance.

The planning system is currently being reformed. This appraisal forms part of a suite of documents that form the conservation policy for the City of Durham. A new Durham Unitary Council is being formed from the District Councils and County Council. This will impact on the timing and nature of the final planning documents. Heritage legislation is changing with the forthcoming Heritage Protection Bill. This is planned to be enacted in 2009 and will re-work the way in which listed buildings and conservation areas are managed.

Therefore the Appraisal should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- City of Durham Local Plan 2004,
- Conservation Management Proposals,
- Emerging planning documents: Local Development Framework consisting of:
  - a) Development Plan Documents (DPDs),
  - b) Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs),

c) Statement of Community Involvement (SCIs),

d) Area Action Plans (AAPs).  
This document will be monitored and reviewed in line with evolving changes within the planning system.

### 1.2 WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA?

20 years after the production of the first lists of buildings of special interest, it was recognised that whole areas would also need special protection.

The definition of a Conservation Area is given in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as;

‘areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’.

Conservation areas do not need to include any buildings of individual architectural merit or historical importance but can be an area of collective interest.

It is not only the architectural quality and historic interest of specific buildings, but importantly the character and appearance of the entire area that gives rise to the designation of a conservation area.

### 1.3 WHO DESIGNATED CONSERVATION AREAS?

Under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Local Planning Authorities have a duty to designate Conservation Areas.

The City Council, between 1968 and 1981, designated 14 Conservation Areas within the City of Durham.



## PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Conservation Area	Designation Date
Durham City Centre	6-Aug-1968
Durham (enlargement)	25-Nov-1980
Brancepeth	4-May-1972
Brancepeth (enlargement)	28-Apr-1981
Sunderland Bridge	2-Mar-1976
Brandon Village	2-Mar-1976
Shadforth	30-Nov-1976
Shincliffe	30-Nov-1976
Hett	1-Feb-1977
Bowburn	4-Sep-1979
Sherburn	4-Sep-1979
Pittington Hallgarth	3-Feb-1981
Sherburn House	3-Feb-1981
Burn Hall	28-Apr-1981
Hollywell	28-Apr-1981
Old Cassop	30-Jun-1981

The boundary for each Conservation Area within the City of Durham is provided in the Adopted City of Durham Local Plan. Copies of the Local Plan are kept at the City Council Offices and at local Libraries within the District.

### 1.4 WHAT DOES DESIGNATION MEAN?

The designation of a Conservation Area imposes additional controls over development within or adjacent to the area. It encourages proposals to have a sound design basis and achieve high quality buildings to maintain the character of the area. In certain circumstances an application may be required for Conservation Area Consent and/or Planning Permission.

**These circumstances include:**

- Demolition, where total or substantial demolition of any building within the Conservation Area is proposed;

- Minor development, which would normally be permitted development outwith a Conservation Area;
- Advertisements;
- The protection of trees.

These additional controls allow the Local Planning Authority to control works which may have a negative impact on the character or appearance of the area.

Policy E22 of the Adopted Durham City Local Plan states that all applications for new development either within a Conservation Area or affecting the setting of one will have to demonstrate that they either preserve or enhance the quality of the Conservation Area.

A Conservation Area Appraisal will help to make this assessment. Extra controls to preserve the character and historic interest of a Conservation Area can have other benefits.

**These include;**

- Helping to improve the local economy; encourage tourism;
- Attracting grants and investment;
- Raise property values;
- Prevent un-neighbourly alterations; Encourage traditional trades;
- Save residents money through repair rather than replacement of traditional building features.

## PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 1.5 WHAT IS A CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL?

#### Aim:

A Conservation Area Appraisal aims to understand and appreciate the significance and character of a specific area.

#### Objective:

The objective of a Conservation Area Appraisal is to provide a benchmark assessment of an area from which to measure and assess the impact of development proposals on the Conservation Area.

Appraisals will become a statutory requirement for all conservation areas within the forthcoming Heritage Protection Bill (to be enacted in 2009)

A Conservation Area Appraisal assesses, analyses and defines the significance of the area and the elements that contribute to the special character.

It sets out what opportunities there are for preservation and enhancement, what detracts from the quality of the area and identifies the areas considered to have a neutral effect on the Conservation Area.

It ensures that all development within the designated area responds to the local context and reinforces local distinctiveness.

It supports appropriate, sustainable, durable and adaptable proposals.

Therefore, an appraisal is necessary to:

- Promote an understanding of why the area was designated a Conservation Area, by setting out its significance and vulnerabilities;
- Understand the local context of what should be preserved or enhanced;
- Draw up effective policies and proposals to support the preservation or enhancement of the area;
- Introduce design guidance that creates a framework for the Conservation Area within which new development can be assessed for its appropriateness and sustainability.

The benefits of making a comprehensive assessment of the Conservation Area are that it forms a sound basis for development control decisions, policy formulation and for development initiatives to improve the area.

In addition the appraisal will have wider benefits for the community as an educational and informative document.

Conservation Area Appraisals by their nature cannot be completely comprehensive, because of the dynamic, changing nature of the areas. The omission of any building, feature or space from the appraisal should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

### 1.6 WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF SPECIAL CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE?

Conservation Areas are complex environments covering multiple periods of development.

There are a range of physical and visual relationships between buildings, open spaces and vistas. They are living, evolving, changing environments and usually accommodate many different activities.

## PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

When considering any change to these designated areas it is the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

The term 'character' includes, but is not limited to:

- Important buildings both listed and non-listed;
- Materials, textures and colours;
- Scale, height and massing;
- Principle land uses;
- Landmarks and focal points;
- Historic patterns and styles of building;
- Unique or unusual features;
- Street patterns and scenes;
- Archaeological landscape;
- Landscape, open spaces and vegetation;
- Views into, within and out of the Conservation Area Setting;
- Individual areas within the Conservation area as a whole;

- Less tangible assets such as the cultural history of the area;
- Elements that make a positive, neutral or negative contribution.

### 1.7 CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

In association with the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals Local Planning Authorities are required from time to time to review, formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas.

Conservation Area Management proposals will be published alongside the appraisal setting out proposals for the long-term management of the Conservation Area.

### 1.8 WHO WILL USE THE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL?

A Conservation Area appraisal will provide useful guidance to a number of different groups with an interest in the Conservation Area.

These groups include:

- Local Residents to help further their understanding of the context of the Conservation Area or who propose to make an alteration to their property;
- Architects and Developers in designing and formulating proposals for a planning application;

- The Heritage and Design, Development Control and Forward Planning sections of the City of Durham in assessing Conservation Area and Planning Applications, or successive services in the new Unitary Council.

The combination of wide streets and narrow back lanes provides a pleasant contrast in urban form. The broad streets avoid the creation of claustrophobic character that can be created in lower quality streets of terraced housing elsewhere.

## SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

There is a new area of housing development that has replaced the ex-works site adjacent to Stevenson Street.

### 2.1 SCHEDULE OF THE AREA

Bowburn Conservation Area covers the industrial village dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the adjacent school, playing fields and a modern library bounded on the north side by a small stream. The boundary is defined on the aerial plan on page 9 and described as follows.

Starting at the north western boundary by the library (NZ30643785) then south along Durham Road.

Continue east along Crow Trees Lane, passing behind the Wheatsheaf Public House across the end of Stevenson Street and out back onto Crow Trees Lane by Clarence Street. Then again east past the school and playing fields to the junction with the small stream (NZ31053779), following this stream west.

### 2.2 GENERAL CHARACTER AND PLAN FORM

Bowburn Conservation Area comprises north - south orientated development constructed in a grid-iron street formation. The character of the area arises from the architectural rhythm of the street pattern. Uniformity of materials and architectural detail throughout the area further enhances the character and appearance (1).



1 - The view north-south along Durham Road.

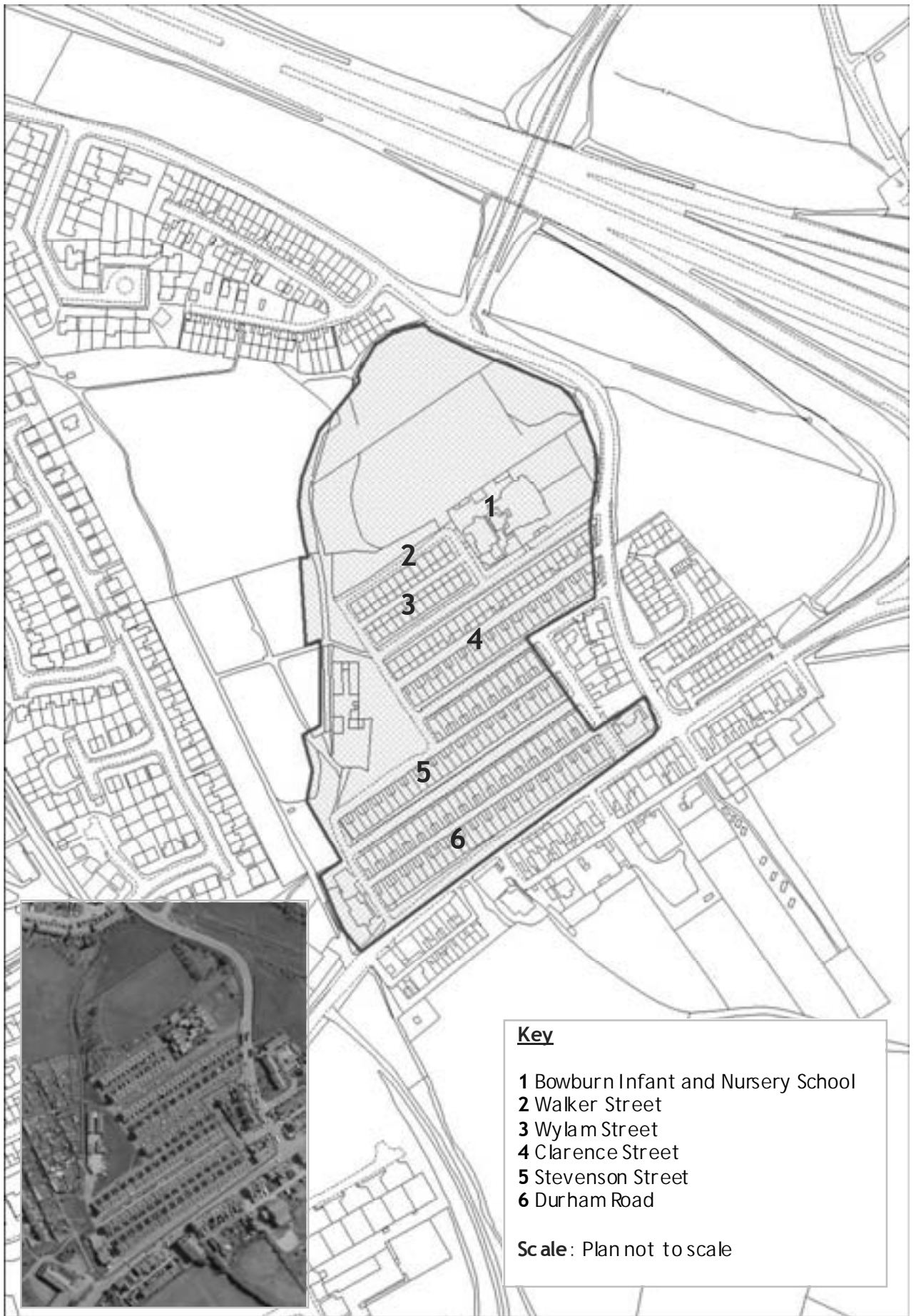


1 - Terraced housing typical of mining villages.



# 2

Fig. 1 Bowburn Conservation Area Boundary



## 2.3 LANDSCAPE SETTING

The terraces forming the conservation area are constructed on a relatively steep hillside, rising from its lowest point at the northern boundary with Bowburn Beck, to its highest point at the south. The sloping topography of the site adds considerably to the area's character.

Although bounded on two sides by green space, the conservation area is very insular, and inward-looking. There is little relationship with the surrounding environment.

However, there are important glimpsed views of the conservation area from the surrounding locality.

A particularly attractive view can be gained from Surtees Avenue, on the other side of Bowburn Beck to the conservation area. The area includes part of the adjacent allotment, the stream banks and the school playing fields.

From this slightly elevated viewpoint, the uniformity of rooflines can be appreciated. The densely-developed nature of the conservation area can be further appreciated in longer views into the area.

Another view of the conservation area can be gained from Landsdowne Crescent on the Broadmeadows estate. From this vantage point, the symmetry of the properties on Walker Street can be appreciated.

## 2.4 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHAEOLOGY

### 3.4.1

#### The origins and historic development of the area

County Durham has a long history of mining and mineral working which did more than any other industry to shape the character of the county. With over 100 coal mines in the county and over 40 around the city, the mining heritage of the area was extremely rich. The decline in deep mined coal and the eventual closure of the pits in the Durham coalfield has left a legacy of redundant colliery sites. When successfully reclaimed for new development and inward investment, these have been an improvement to the local environment. However, much of the tangible colliery history and industrial archaeology has been lost.

In villages like Bowburn, where regeneration has not been as successful, the legacy is large areas of brownfield land and the colliery housing. The terraced 'rows' typical of mining villages are now the principle remaining historic feature.

Recognition of this led to its designation as a conservation area. The village townscape and landscape changed in the last 20 years, but the nature and setting of the colliery rows has not **(2)**. It is notable that its intact survival through to the late 1970s was a result of the properties remaining in single ownership, most recently the National Coal Board.

Bowburn is a product of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Prior to the sinking of the pit close to Bowburn Beck, little was situated on the Durham to Stockton turnpike road, now Durham Road. The Hare and Greyhound and the Wheatsheaf public houses survive from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These two pubs served the small local community of farm labourers, from Peat Edge and Bowburn Hall farms and the miners working at the nearby established pit at Tursdale.



2 – The view north – south up Stevenson Street, the original built form still very evident today.

In 1906, the Bell brothers began the sinking of the pit known initially as Tursdale New Pit, but soon renamed Bowburn. In the same year, construction of houses for the workforce began fronting onto Durham Road. These houses set the standard for the five streets of terraces that form the main body of the conservation area.

The pit began production in 1908, and reached peak output in the 1950s before its final closure in 1967.

Following the completion of the housing, the educational needs of the community were addressed with the construction of the school in around 1912.

This replaced the arrangement for schooling in the local primitive Methodist chapel and saved pupils the lengthy walk to the Tursdale School for lessons. Since that time, there has been little physical change in this part of the village. This is with the exception of the new housing development.

#### 2.4.2

#### The archaeological significance and potential of the area (including identification of scheduled monuments)

The Bowburn Conservation Area has nothing noted that is of archaeological significance, and contains no scheduled ancient monuments.

However, a Roman road may have passed to the West of the area. Roman jewellery has also been found in a field to the north of the village.

## 2.5 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

### 2.5.1

#### Character and interrelationship of spaces within the area

The linear pattern on which the streets of Bowburn Conservation Area are laid out gives rise to a character of uniformity in terms of the spaces in the area. The broad streets offer contrast to tighter back lanes.

The street pattern and similarity of the house types gives a closely unified feel to the conservation area. The open space adjacent to Walker Street and the neighbouring allotments enhance the insular character by holding the edge of other development back from the edge of the conservation area.

## 2.6 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### 2.6.1

**Activity, prevailing or former uses within the area, and influence of these (and any historic patronage) on the plan form and building types**

The built form is entirely a product of the colliery and the need to house its workers. It is high density housing of an easily constructed type. In this case the build and basic design quality are higher than usually found with this type of housing, particularly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The loss of the colliery and the slow return of economic prosperity were not sufficiently harmful to lead to demolition and sufficiently slow to avoid more rapid unsuitable improvement and renovation.

### 2.6.2

**The architectural and historic qualities of the buildings and the contribution they make to the special interest of the area**

The Colliery houses are built in standard rows of 32 houses to a row, running from east to west along the line of Durham Road.

The houses are constructed of an orange multi-hued brick with shallow arched window heads and cill details, also in brick.

The slate roofs have projecting eaves and are topped with squat, solid chimneystacks.

Originally the windows were of two types, ground floor being double sliding sash windows in the single opening, and upstairs featuring two pairs of early 20<sup>th</sup> century pivoting windows with fine glazing bars.

The front doors were plain boarded with a small two-pane top-light. The first floor level is indicated by a slightly projecting brickwork string course (3).

To the rear of the houses in line of the terraces is a single storey pitched roof offshoot with a substantial chimney on the gabled rear wall. High yard walls at the rear enclose the properties and provide a strong urban character to the rear lanes.



3 – Number 54 Stevenson Street, well preserved original features.



### 2.6.3

**The contribution made by key unlisted buildings (including any recommendations for locally listed buildings)**

The public house, now the Cooperage, but formerly the Wheatsheaf, has been extensively altered over time, probably since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is a focal point on an important corner of the conservation area, and its scale and character blend well with the adjoining housing.

Bowburn Infant School was constructed around 1919 in red engineering brick with sandstone dressings to well established design principles for educational buildings. This was designed by H. T Gradon who also designed the Miners Hall at Redhills.

### 2.6.4

#### Listed Buildings

There are no listed buildings in Bowburn Conservation Area.

### 2.6.5

**Local details and prevalent local and traditional building materials and the public realm**

It needs to be emphasised that the majority of buildings in the conservation area survive in their broadly original form.

Slate coverings remain on nearly all principle roofs, and only a few buildings have been rendered or "stone clad".

The main house chimneys survive, although many have lost their chimney pots.

Although the rear extensions have been subject to various alterations, many retain the rear gable with a chimney. The strong rhythm imparted by the rear pitched roofs and end wash-house chimney stacks is a very important characteristic, unique in the district (4).



4 – Rear extensions to the back of Stevenson Street and Clarence Street.

Very few solid boarded doors survive on the front elevations, and in many cases the whole frame and toplight have been replaced.

Rainwater goods were all cast iron and replacement in other materials is occurring.

### 2.6.6

**The contribution made by greenery and green spaces: and ecology/biodiversity value**

The urban nature of Bowburn Conservation Area means there is little green space in the Conservation Area itself. However, the area is bordered to the north by public allotments and the east by a strip of green open space (5). The openness of these areas serves to accentuate the terraced townscape of the conservation area.

## 2

## Summary of Special Interest

The area also includes the school playing field, also open in character. There are some ancillary spaces to the north. They are plain, with no additional tree planting to enhance grass areas. The beck adjacent to the allotments forms part of the conservation area boundary, it separates the housing area and open spaces from the allotments.

## 2.6.7

**The extent of loss, intrusion, or damage, i.e. negative factors**

The most pleasing aspect of Bowburn Conservation Area is its uniformity. Therefore a significant negative factor is the cumulative impact of unsympathetic alterations to properties, which disturbs the architectural rhythm.

A small number of properties have been stone-clad or rendered, covering the detail of the original brickwork.

Window replacement has been extensive, and only one or two properties maintain the original pattern windows to the front elevation.

Most replacement fenestration has been manufactured to fit the substantial existing openings. Because of this, future replacement fenestration in a historically accurate style should not involve structural works.

Two properties have also recently installed bay windows to the lower floor front elevations. This severely disrupts the architectural rhythm created by window openings.

Rainwater goods have been lost, some to well-intentioned "improvement" to the cast iron elements. Others are a mixture of plastic and cast iron, where elements have failed and the cheapest modern alternative has been used.



5 - The village within the wider landscape setting.



5 - The view north across the strip of green open spaces lying adjacent to the infant school towards Runcie Road and Beaumont Place.

There are prominent external gas meter bases on many buildings that are not sympathetic to the terrace street pattern. Overhead power cables are intrusive on some terraces.

Many of the wash-house chimneys have been reduced in height and chimney pots removed. Rear walls and yards are also beginning to be lost to the need to accommodate a car. There are a variety of gates and finishes. This trend is unfortunate but understandable, and the aim should be to encourage visual homogeneity in gate styles. This would assist in retaining the streets' strong urban edge.

There is parking on the wide tarmac verge between the footpath and the road. Many of these are sloped and this type of parking creates a cluttered appearance and part blocks the footpath.

#### 2.6.8 The existence of any neutral areas

Although many properties have lost architectural details, the attraction of Bowburn Conservation Area is as much in the rhythmic nature and repeating patterns of the streets. Therefore it is regrettable that new development at the northern boundary of the conservation area has failed to pick up on the geometric pattern of the street formations. The blocks of the new scheme are built at an angle to the streets of the conservation area.

The new development is to one side of the terraces and can therefore be classed as "neutral" in its impact.

#### 2.6.9 General condition of the area and built fabric, identification of buildings at risk

The general condition of the terraces throughout the conservation area is good, although some general maintenance of properties (such as re-pointing work) should be advanced.

The widespread use of UPVC windows is regrettable, and detracts from the overall quality of the streetscape (6).

There are no listed buildings at risk within the conservation area.



6 – Above, loss of chimney pots, prominent meter box and satellite dish, replacement UPVC windows and doors.

## 2

## Summary of Special Interest

## 2.6.10

Problems, pressures (including need for any Article 4 directions), and the capacity for change

The fundamental problem within the conservation area is gradual alteration of architectural detail by private householders (7). The attraction of the conservation area is its uniformity, yet changes in fenestration, backyards, boundary walls and roofing materials are steadily eroding the area's uniform character.

Serving an article 4 direction on the Conservation Area would have the effect of removing permitted development rights for householders. Therefore, if a householder wished to change their windows, they would need to apply for permission to do so.

However, given that only one house in the entire area retains original fenestration throughout there is limited value in the serving of an article 4 direction at this stage.

A supplementary planning advice document advising householders on carrying out sympathetic changes to their property should be produced.

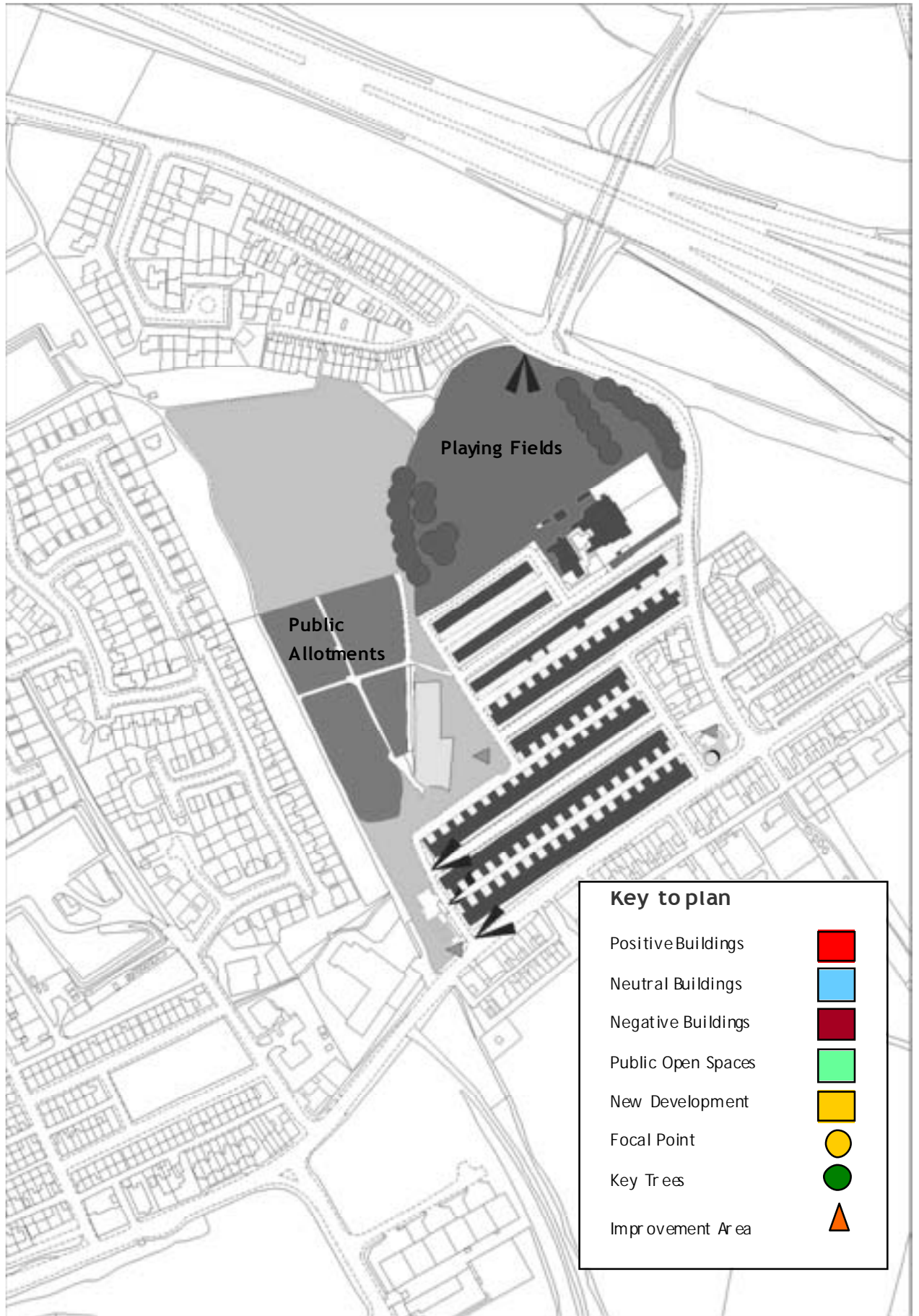


7 – Original fenestration to upper floors, UPVC replacement on the ground floor.



# 2

Fig. 2 Townscape and Landscape Analysis Plan



# 3

## Community Involvement

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

#### 3.1 PROCEDURE

The proposed stages for publication adoption, consultation, amendment and confirmation are as follows.

- 1) Sign off by Services member portfolio holder and ward members; June/July 2007.
- 2) Distribution to key stakeholders; July 2007.
- 3) Public exhibition and meeting; 25<sup>th</sup> July 2007, 16no. participants including Parish Council.
- 4) Revision based on comments; July 2008.
- 5) Final amended version to City of Durham Cabinet for approval; September 2008.
- 6) Distribution of final Appraisal.



Above – Bowburn Library and Durham Road viewed approaching the Conservation Area from the north.



Above – The allotment gardens bordering the northern edge of the Conservation Area

### BOUNDARY CHANGE REVIEW

#### 4.1 GENERAL

Following public consultation it is proposed to include the allotment gardens within the Conservation Area boundary. Full details of this proposal can be found in Appendix 2 at the back of this document.

# 4

## Boundary Change Review

## LOCAL GENERIC GUIDANCE

### 5.1 GENERAL

Repair and reinstatement of features could make a dramatic impact to the quality of the conservation area.

This element is covered in the management issues & strategy element of this appraisal.

## SUMMARY OF ISSUES

### 6.1 GENERAL

There is no requirement for statutory action identified in this appraisal.

Other issues are:

- Satellite dishes and;
- External gas meter boxes;
- Replacement of original windows in alternative forms and materials;
- Removal of wash house chimneys;
- Removal of walls to rear yards, creation of car parking in yard;
- Addition of bay windows;
- Cladding to walls;
- Loss of stone setts to rear lanes;
- Replacement of cast iron rainwater goods other materials;
- Replacement of slate roofs in other materials;
- Unsightly overhead cables;

- Variation in rear gate details;
- Grass areas and tracks overrun on edges by vehicles;
- Lack of trees to open space area.



Above – satellite dishes on the street frontage, UPVC windows, prominent gas metre boxes and plastic rainwater goods.

## MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS/STRATEGY

### 7.1 MID/LONG TERM STRATEGY

Identifying objectives addressing issues/recommendations from appraisal, identifying additional work required.

Enhancement works to the pavement along Durham Road are currently nearing completion and have added to the character of the conservation area.

#### Mid term

Funding is likely to be limited to minor schemes or alteration of basic maintenance within the public realm. Funds available to private owners are also likely to be limited.

The mid term strategy is to:

- Carry out public consultation to establish level of support for a possible English Heritage Grant Scheme.
- Produce design guidance and distribute to all residents within the Conservation Area. Details of this proposal are included in the "Supplementary Planning Guidance" Section.
- Pursue minor improvements to grass open spaces including tree planting.
- Review the production of a local heritage trail including the village, conservation area and surroundings.
- Investigate changes to roadside verges to accommodate car parking that would enhance the character of the streets.

#### Long term

These suggestions will be subject to funding and will need to be viewed in the context of any of the conclusions of the Bowburn and Parkhill Masterplan. Investigate a programme of architectural and environmental enhancements, including the following:

- A programme to overhaul main house chimneys, and replacement of chimneypots where necessary.
- Environmental enhancement of the area around the Cooperage Public House. There is also potential for environmental improvements at the library and stream to the south of the area, and at the area boundary at Crow Trees Lane.

### 7.2 APPLICATION OF PLANNING GUIDANCE (GENERIC/LOCAL/NATIONAL/LINK TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

A supplementary planning document specific to Bowburn Conservation Area should be produced. This would include the following:

Designs of original windows, showing dimensions and materials. This would enable replacements to be made to the original design, or if occupants insist on using UPVC products then a close match could be produced.



- A specification for a dark, lime-based mortar produced to assist with repointing.
- A guide to the placement of satellite dishes.
- Possible designs for rear yard gates, including gates which allow car parking.

### 7.3 RESOURCE REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

There needs to be reliance on owners funding their own buildings changes.

Maintenance of the landscape setting, roads and footpath is dependant on Local Authority resources.

Enhancement schemes will be subject to availability of public funding or application for additional funding.

### 7.4 CHANGE MONITORING MECHANISM

The architectural quality of Bowburn Conservation Area has regrettably decreased through the loss of uniform features (such as windows) and their replacement with many differing designs. There is a need to stop unnecessary replacement of original features.

It is suggested that Development Control and Heritage and Design officers or successive services in the new Unitary Council, in consultation with the Parish Council should review the Conservation Area on periodically an informal basis.

An annual review of planning applications should analyse trends.

### 7.5 ENFORCEMENT STRATEGY, ENSURING CONSISTENCY OF DECISION MAKING

Given the current lack of enforcement taken against minor unauthorised developments within the Conservation Area, the possibility of not enforcing against minor infringements already carried out will be reviewed.

However, certain developments could be particularly harmful to the Conservation Area and should be enforced against if carried out in the future without planning approval.

#### This would include:

- Erecting bay windows;
- Erecting Dormer windows;
- Demolition of yard walls;
- Demolition of chimneys;
- Demolition of any original offshoot outbuildings (Durham Road, Stevenson Street and Clarence Street).

All of the above alterations have the potential to detract from the unified appearance of the Conservation Area.

## 7.6 ARTICLE 4 PROPOSALS

An article 4 direction has the effect of removing householders' Permitted Development rights within the Conservation Area. This would mean that Planning Permission would be required for any material change to properties, such as replacing windows or re-roofing.

If further original windows remained in situ in properties within the Conservation Area, it would be recommended an article 4 direction be served. However, given the level of changes that have already taken place, it would not be appropriate to serve an Article 4 direction in Bowburn.

Conservation Area legislation means a reasonable degree of planning control can be exercised on the area. This level of control is considered to be sufficient for the area at present.

However, should an opportunity arise for a grant aid scheme whereby original architectural features were restored, the possibility of serving an Article 4 direction should then be re-examined.

## 7.7 ACTION TO ENSURE USE AND REPAIR OF BUILDINGS AT RISK

There are no Buildings at Risk or potential buildings at Risk within Bowburn Conservation Area.

## 7.8 ENHANCEMENT SCHEMES, MANAGEMENT & IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC RELAM

Potential schemes dependent on funding are:

- Landscaping Scheme at the Cooperage;
- School grounds enhancement;
- Improvements to the area to the rear of the Library;
- Improvement to Beck;
- Improvement of green space.

## 7.9 DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC & REGENERATIONS STRATEGY

If public consultation appears to offer grounds for establishing a scheme this can be pursued with English Heritage and others. The area is entirely residential (with the exception of the public house, library and school) and economic regeneration is not a factor for Conservation Area Management Plan.

## 7.10 GREEN SPACE, TREE, ECOLOGY, BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

There are limited opportunities for developing this further. As resources become available the local open spaces can be checked and surveyed if appropriate and may be appropriate for additional management changes or landscaping to enhance their value.

The beck condition and banks treatment should form part of any survey.

## 7.11 URBAN DESIGN, PUBLIC REALM, FRAMEWORK-SPACES AND MOVEMENT

Works have been identified to Durham Road. General design advice is referred to above. The treatment of footpaths and surfaced verges is of significance to the appearance of the terraced street. Any change to the existing should be considered carefully.

### Scope for enhancement exists:

- Enhancement of allotment boundaries and access tracks;
- Enhancement of minor open space;
- Footpath improvements and accommodation of car parking.

**APPENDIX 1****CITY OF DURHAM LOCAL PLAN  
POLICY E22**

THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO PRESERVE OR ENHANCE THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREAS WITHIN THE CITY OF DURHAM BY:

1. NOT PERMITTING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD DETRACT FROM THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA OR ITS SETTING. ALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD BE SENSITIVE IN TERMS OF SITING, SCALE, DESIGN AND MATERIALS, REFLECTING, WHERE APPROPRIATE, EXISTING ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS;
2. NOT PERMITTING THE DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE AREA'S CHARACTER. PERMISSION FOR THE DEMOLITION OF ANY SIGNIFICANT BUILDING WILL NOT BE GRANTED UNTIL A DETAILED SCHEME FOR APPROPRIATE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE HAS BEEN APPROVED;
3. PROTECTING TREES, HEDGEROWS, LANDSCAPE FEATURES, VIEWS AND UNDEVELOPED AREAS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE AREA AND ITS SETTING;
4. REQUIRING A SUFFICIENT LEVEL OF DETAIL TO ACCOMPANY APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT TO ENABLE AN ASSESSMENT TO BE MADE OF ITS IMPACT ON THE CONSERVATION AREA.

IN ADDITION THE COUNCIL WILL ALSO IMPLEMENT SCHEMES FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS WHERE APPROPRIATE AND AS RESOURCES PERMIT.

**Justification**

A Conservation Area is an area which is designated as being of special architectural or historic interest and the Council has a statutory duty to preserve and enhance the appearance of those areas. There are currently 14, designated conservation areas in the City of Durham:

Durham (City Centre), Brancepeth, Sunderland Bridge, Brandon Village, Shadforth, Shincliffe, Hett, Bowburn, Sherburn, Hallgarth, Sherburn House, Burn Hall, Holywell and Old Cassop.

Durham (City Centre) Conservation Area is also subject to Policy E6, which expands upon part 1 of Policy E22. Supplementary Planning Guidance will be prepared clearly identifying the special architectural or historic interest which justifies their designation along with opportunities for enhancement.

New development in or affecting the setting of a conservation area must protect or enhance its character. It is therefore vital that any new development, or alterations and extensions are of a high quality and are entirely appropriate to their settings. To ensure that this is achieved it will usually be necessary for development proposals to be submitted in the form of a detailed planning application. An outline application does not provide sufficient detail to determine the impact of a development proposal on a conservation area. It is also vital to preserve buildings or structures (such as boundary walls) which are integral to the historic fabric of the conservation area. Permission will not, therefore, be granted for the demolition of any buildings which contribute to the area's character.

Where total demolition of a building is acceptable and where re-development of the site is desirable, permission for demolition will normally be granted subject to planning conditions requiring prior letting of a contract for an approved re-development to ensure that premature demolition does not take place.

Trees, hedgerows and open spaces are an integral part of most conservation areas. Indeed, the character of a conservation area can rely as much on features such as the spaces between buildings, changes in ground level, village greens, gardens and grounds, as on the buildings themselves. It is therefore important to retain such features in order to safeguard the character of the conservation area as a whole.

Local planning authorities, as part of their statutory duties, are required to prepare schemes for the enhancement of conservation areas. The Council will seek to implement a number of enhancement schemes in the Durham (City Centre) Conservation Area during the Plan period and in other conservation areas within the City as appropriate and where resources permit. Schemes could involve carrying out environmental improvement works, facilitating fabric renewal or improvement and initiating the appropriate development of derelict land. The Council has a statutory responsibility to monitor and review existing conservation area boundaries when considering schemes for their enhancement as part of the process of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation areas.

## APPENDIX 2

### PROPOSED EXTENSION TO BOWBURN CONSERVATION AREA

#### Description, Justification, Character Statement and Implications

##### Introduction

Following the public consultation exercise for this document, residents expressed a desire to see the allotments that border the conservation area included within its boundaries. This request was later considered and agreed, subject to ratification by Cabinet.

##### Description

The allotment gardens border the northern section of the current conservation area. Covering a relatively large area the allotments are grouped into five unequal parcels of land divided by tracks. Overall the allotments appear to be well-used.

##### Justification

These allotments are shown within the earliest 20<sup>th</sup> century plans for the village. They are an integral part of the original village and including them adds depth to the social historical value of a conservation area whose aim is to preserve an early 20<sup>th</sup> century mining village.

##### Character Statement

The allotment gardens were constructed at the same time or shortly after the main village. Allotments provided an important practical and recreational role for working class people in Industrial Britain. As such they may be viewed as an integral part of the historical industrial landscape. The fact that they are still used by local residents for the same purposes is a

measure of their success and continuing relevance.

Those at Bowburn are located on the gradual slope of a hill leading back from the Durham Road and the village. Unmetalled tracks divide the allotments into five unequal groups: four plots forming a square around a cross of paths and a long narrow plot that forms the northern boundary.

There is little to distinguish these allotments from any others; they are the typical amalgamation of close-knit plots bordered by wooden fences. Sheds and shelters of various sizes and construction are to be found in most plots. There is no obvious evidence of historic structures or boundaries remaining, though further exploration and consultation may reveal such features.

Architecturally the allotments are of little importance; a pattern of modern and makeshift sheds, shelters and boundaries is well-established. There is a notable aesthetic value to the gardens in that they provide a green cultivated area of considerable variety and density.

Moving along the paths at the start of the slope the allotments crowd the pedestrian and attention is focussed and limited to the plots, paths and, to the north, the backs of modern houses along Runcie Road. At the top of the slope near the entrance to the park and also along its southern edges views open up and the allotment gardens can be seen in conjunction with the houses of the conservation area. The combination of allotment and houses produces a very traditional scene. Consequently the allotments play an important role in forming the setting to the main section of the conservation area.

**Planning Implications**

The inclusion of the allotments within the conservation area will add to their significance. This will have a bearing in favour of their retention **if** it is ever proposed to develop and remove them. In this respect the designation will add weight to Local Plan Policy R5, which seeks to retain allotments apart from where they are redundant or in certain exceptional circumstances.

The every day running of the allotments will be little affected by the designation. The current size of most boundaries and sheds are under the dimensions that normally trigger the need for planning permission for construction or conservation area consent for demolition. Tree cover is not a strong feature and fruit / orchard trees are exempt from conservation area regulations regarding work to trees.

Conservation Area status may influence future plans for the management of the allotments but it is unlikely to dictate them.





**EXISTING  
CONSERVATION  
AREA BOUNDARY**



**AREA PROPOSED  
FOR INCLUSION  
WITHIN  
CONSERVATION  
AREA BOUNDARY**



**PROPOSED  
CONSERVATION  
AREA BOUNDARY**



## Agenda Item 5(b)

STATUS PUBLIC

<b>Portfolio Member/Director/Head of Service:</b> Councillor F. Reynolds/ Director of Corporate Services	<b>Portfolio:</b> Leader of the Council
<b>Subject:</b> Application to Purchase Land Adjoining 10 Yorkshire Drive, Belmont, Durham – (LT/1521)	<b>Date</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> January, 2009
	<b>Forward Plan</b> No
<b>Contact Officer:</b>  Ann Whitton/ Martin Tindle Tel: 0191 301 8789/8441 E-mail: awhitton@durhamcity.gov.uk	<b>Previous Minutes</b> N/A
<b>1. Purpose of Report:</b> For Cabinet to consider the applicant's proposal to be allowed Right of Vehicular Access over Council land. Upon further discussions the Applicants wish for a permanent easement.	
<b>2. Executive Summary:</b>  An application has been received from Mr A M Watt, Design & Build acting on behalf of Mr A. Thompson, owner of 10 Yorkshire Drive enquiring if the Council would consider granting him vehicular access over Council land as shown on the location plan attached at appendix A. Upon further discussions/correspondence, the Applicants' wished for a permanent easement, i.e., outright disposal of the land.  Comments were obtained from Chief Officers with regard to the Applicants' proposal and were in agreement to support the application.  Ward Councillors have expressed opposing opinions regarding the application.	
<b>Portfolio Member Recommendations or items Requiring a Cabinet Decision</b> Cabinet Members' instructions are required.	
<b>Reasons for Recommendations</b> Based upon the comments of Officers and Ward Members	
<b>Alternative Options to be Considered</b> For the Council to retain the land in question.	

**Consultation**

The **Director of Strategic Services** and the **Head of Environment and Leisure Services** stated no objections to the proposal.

The **Head of Planning Services** has commented as follows:

“A retrospective application has been received in respect of works at the above address. Works have been carried out on Council land to effect vehicular access to the adjoining property. The area of land involved is 12m<sup>2</sup>.

There are no objections in principle from a planning viewpoint to the formation of the access to the property and there are advantages to the creation of off-street parking. The property in question has been the subject of improvements following an unsuccessful planning application to redevelop the site and subsequent disposal to the current owner. As regards the Applicant’s decision to now pursue disposal, there are advantages to a permanent arrangement.”

The **Head of Legal and Strategic Services** has commented as follows:

“If the Council is minded to retrospectively approve this arrangement by way of granting of a Licence, there will be no need to advertise the disposal (the driveway having been constructed on open space). However, by its very nature, a Licence can be determined by the Council on short notice and the Applicants may not be satisfied with this. If there is any suggestion that the Council may be called upon to consider a *permanent* vehicular access easement, this would constitute an outright disposal. There is no Developer at this location with the benefit of an open space user covenant, but the Council would nevertheless be obliged to advertise the disposal.

It is not for the Council to be advising the Applicants as to the legalities of Licences or a permanent easements but the Authority would certainly be acting prudently if it brought this to the Applicant’s attention and sought further instructions prior to progressing the application further.

Having perused the photographs provided by the Council’s Architect, the new driveway has been constructed to a high specification.

Whilst there has been some damage to the adjoining public highway, I have alerted the County Council to this matter and understand that they are making their own enquires with regards reinstatement and any necessary kerb and footway crossing consent. There has been no apparent damage to the City Council’s adjoining open space and I believe that the loss of amenity is minimal. Accordingly, I would offer my support to the application (whether by way of granting of a Licence or permanent easement), subject to the views of the Technical Officers and to the below mentioned conditions applying.”

**Ward Councillors** had taken opposing views of the application; one local ward member agreed that the land in question should be sold to the Applicant while the other local ward member disagreed that the Applicant should be sold the land as there was already an access to the property from Lancashire Drive.

Copies of Local Ward Members and Chief Officers comments can be found at appendix B

**LGR Implications**

None

**Financial, Legal and Risk Implications**

The Applicant has signed a formal written undertaking agreeing to bear the Council's legal costs and surveyor's fee should they decide at any stage not to proceed.

**Resource Implications**

N/A

**Timescale for Action**

N/A

**Associated Policies and Plans**

N/A

**Supporting Documents**

Appendices A & B

**Background Papers**

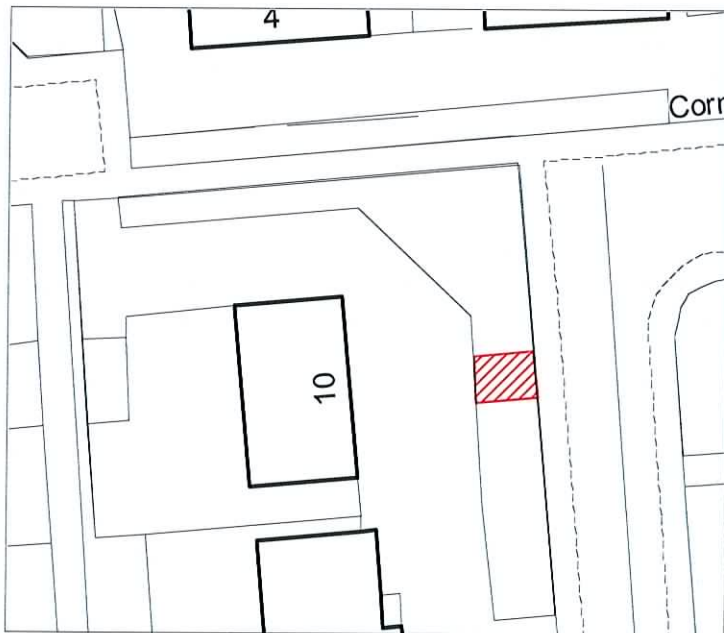
- Letters and e-mails from Mr A.M. Watt dated 26/09/08, 21/10/08 and 30/10/08.
- Memo from Head of Planning Services dated 02/09/08.
- Internal Notes from Head of Legal & Strategic Services dated 30/09/08 and 01/10/08.
- Email from Director of Strategic Services dated 06/10/08.
- Memo from Head of Environment & Leisure Service dated 15/10/08.



NORTH



Scale 1:1250



Detailed View not to Scale

O.S. Ref. NZ 3043

Deed Packet Ref: NC 935

Area equals 12 square metres or thereabouts

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**CITY OF DURHAM**

**DIRECTORATE OF PROPERTY SERVICES: Head of Service, Angelo Moscardini**  
Unit 1, Damson Way, Dragonville. Durham DH1 2YN. Tel. DURHAM (0191) 3866111



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**Encroachment across Council Land at**  
**10, Yorkshire Drive, Belmont**

Date 15th July 2008

Drawing Number M563

	<p>Whilst there has been some damage to the adjoining public highway, I have alerted the County Council to this matter and understand that they are making their own enquires with regards reinstatement and any necessary kerb and footway crossing consent. There has been no apparent damage to the City Council's adjoining open space and I believe that the loss of amenity is minimal. Accordingly, I would offer my support to the application (whether by way of granting of a Licence or permanent easement), subject to the views of the Technical Officers and to the below mentioned conditions applying."</p>
<p><b>Recommendation:</b></p>	<p>That subject to contract and undermentioned conditions that 12 square metres or thereabouts be offered to the Applicant on terms to be agreed by the Council's Valuer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of the Land being restricted to Vehicular Access only, there being no enclosure of the site whatsoever.</li> <li>• The Applicant indemnifying the Council against any claims arising.</li> <li>• The Applicant to obtain any kerb and footway crossing consent from the Highways Authority.</li> <li>• The Applicant to obtain any necessary Planning permission.</li> <li>• The Applicant bearing the Council's legal costs and valuation fees and any advertising costs incurred.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reasons for Recommendation:</b></p>	<p>Based on Officers' comments.</p>
<p><b>List of Background Papers:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters and e-mails from Mr A.M. Watt dated 26/09/08, 21/10/08 and 30/10/08.</li> <li>• Memo from Head of Planning Services dated 02/09/08.</li> <li>• Internal Notes from Head of Legal &amp; Strategic Services dated 30/09/08 and 01/10/08.</li> <li>• Email from Director of Strategic Services dated 06/10/08.</li> <li>• Memo from Head of Environment &amp; Leisure Service dated 15/10/08.</li> </ul>

**Application to Purchase Council Land Adjoining 10 Yorkshire Drive, Belmont, Durham (LT/1521)**

I agree / ~~disagree~~ with recommendation (please indicate as appropriate)

Comments (Please give reasons for your recommendation) OBSVIOUSLY I  
WOULD OF PREFERRED TO HAVE BEEN CONSULTED PRIOR  
TO WORK BEING CARRIED OUT. HOWEVER I AM HAPPY  
TO DEAL WITH THE OFFICERS RECOMMENDATIONS

Signed: SPM Dated: 17/11/08

3, Cambridgeshire Drive  
Moor Park  
Belmont, Durham.  
DH1 2LS  
18<sup>th</sup> November 2008

20 NOV 2008

CITY OF DURHAM

Dear Sir,

**10 Yorkshire Drive Encroachment on Council Land**

Thank you for your notification regarding the above, my views have already been expressed to the legal department in both phone calls and emails when the occupier blatantly ignores council legislation regarding the above.

I am somewhat surprised that you are all in agreement to his retrospective application with the history relating to this particular property.

The owner is a builder that unsuccessfully tried to demolish this bungalow in order to build two properties on the site with the approval of the Planning department. He is therefore fully aware of the legislation relating to his entering council land. He totally ignored all correspondence until the final letter.

To say it takes vehicles off the street is a fair comment but if you know the area he has access to this property via Lancashire Drive and has a paved entrance from this direction, which is the original entrance to this property. The original developer deliberately only put a footpath to the front of this property in Yorkshire Drive because they could see problems as this is at the top of the cul de sac with Cornwall Walk at its head.

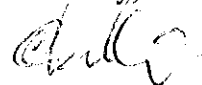
I am totally against his application to purchase this land from the Council. He has taken away a green area and a soak-away, as this area is prone to flooding. It is enhancing the property for his own personnel gain and I believe the council should not be encouraging this form of enterprise. It could also help him in applying to build on this plot in the future with two distinctive driveways now in position.

I might add that he has now removed all the pin curbs separating the property boundary with Council land. He has now re-turfed his land but it appears that this property extends to the footpaths on both sides once the grass takes hold.

This again is a blatant move to flaunt the rules and this is a person that you are prepared to

I hope you will refuse his application and have the land returned to grass with only the original footpath to the front of the property left intact. My view is that he is taking the Council for 'fools' in this matter, which I know you are not, so therefore reject his application.

Yours faithfully,



Cllr A.C. Walker.

Ward councillor Belmont

## Agenda Item 5(c)

STATUS PUBLIC

<p><b>Portfolio Member/Director/Head of Service</b></p> <p>Councillor Nigel Van Zwanenberg/Head of Planning Services</p>	<p><b>Portfolio</b></p> <p>Strategic Planning &amp; Regeneration</p>
<p><b>Subject</b></p> <p>Design Brief for Lower Claypath</p>	<p><b>Date</b></p> <p>7<sup>th</sup> January 2009</p>
	<p><b>Forward Plan</b> No</p>
<p><b>Contact Officer</b></p> <p>David Thornborrow, Head of Planning Services, (0191 3018701)</p>	<p><b>Previous Minutes</b></p> <p>None</p>
<p><b>Purpose of Report</b></p> <p>To report progress regarding the finalisation of the brief and action being undertaken to realise the site's potential for redevelopment</p>	
<p><b>Executive Summary</b></p> <p>Specialist consultants (EDAW) were appointed jointly by One NE (funding partners for Durham City Vision) and the City of Durham as planning authority to undertake the preparation of a design brief for an area of the "Cultural Quarter" identified in planning documents as being of strategic importance as a potential redevelopment site.</p> <p>The subject land is privately owned but adjoins land in local authority ownership; some of which may also have development potential in the longer term. The privately owned land has been the subject of development pressure and Durham City vision has sought to intervene to secure wider objectives that are outlined in planning documents. Funding of the design brief has been enabled by OneNE but has been directed through the City of Durham as planning authority, in consultation with Durham City Vision.</p> <p>Formal consideration of the brief is required by Cabinet. [The document can be viewed or downloaded from the Planning page of the Council's website and is available to Councillors through Members Online.]</p> <p>The Council is required to offer clear guidance to reconcile the difference aspirations for the site, reflect the development and design criteria that will lead to a successful application as such befits the expectations of interested parties.</p> <p>The Brief responds to key development influences (including the Local Plan, the 2020 Masterplan for Durham City, and the views of key stakeholders).</p> <p>The landowners are aware of the contents of the brief and have accepted its purpose as a basis for pre-application discussions.</p>	

**Portfolio Member Recommendations or Items Requiring a Cabinet Decision**

It is recommended that

1. The key issues, opportunities and guiding principles of the Brief be accepted.
2. The brief be publicised and distributed to Statutory Consultees
3. The Head of Planning Services be authorised to incorporate, as appropriate, the comments of consultees into pre-application advice

**Reasons for Recommendations**

The Local Planning Authority has a responsibility to provide sound and practical planning advice that is intended ultimately to influence a successful redevelopment. The brief is purposefully leads the preparation and delivery of an optimum development solution and, through a process of development management, seeks the highest possible quality of design and construction as well as maximising benefits for Durham's local communities and visitors.

**Alternative Options To Be Considered**

Proposals submitted hereafter without adequate adherence to an agreed design brief will be unlikely to be acceptable either to the local planning authority and statutory consultees or other parties with an interest in the scale, mass and quality of development. Alternative options include development proposals that are more likely to be speculative, of an inappropriate nature and design that compromise the aspirations for the City Centre set out in other strategy documents. The design brief is not, however, a rigid planning document and, in any event, must be applied with reference to other tools of planning guidance.

**Consultation**

The Brief will be a public document that will be used as a basis for informing pre-application discussions and assessing future development proposals. Publicity and further consultation will accompany progress towards an emerging scheme.

**LGR Implications**

It is likely that discussions with architects and developers will follow. Pre-application discussions may be expected prior to April 2009 although they will continue beyond that date and the submission of a formal planning application is expected to be determined by the new unitary planning authority.

**Financial, Legal and Risk Implications**

The preparation of the Brief has been financed by One NE as a result of mediation by the 2020 Vision for Durham City Centre.

The preparation of the Brief will reduce the risk of speculative development and links the aspirations of interested parties to a set of aims and objectives. A more successful outcome for a future development based upon the principles and parameters is likely to be achieved; this will also reduce the risk of confrontational positions of interested parties and abortive resources including, in due course, the possible examination of proposals through a local public inquiry.



**Resource Implications**

A considerable level of pre-application discussion is involved in the preparation of proposals for this strategically important, prominent and sensitive site. The Brief will serve to eliminate weak or unsuccessful elements of any emerging proposals and ensure effective use of Council resources, as well as the commitment required by other stakeholders.

**Timescale for Action**

The Brief is expected to lead to discussions with the landowning interests in the site. An application would then follow from pre-application discussions in 2009.

**Associated Policies and Plans**

The National, Regional and Local Policy frameworks as represented by Planning Policy Statements/Guidance, the Development Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy (NE), City of Durham Local Plan) and related good practice advice.

**Supporting Documents**

Principles and parameters enshrined within the Brief

**Background Papers**

Design Brief, EDAW December 2008.  
2020 Vision and Masterplan for Durham City Centre.

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## Agenda Item 5(d)

STATUS PUBLIC

<b>Portfolio Member/Director/Head of Service</b> Councillor Denis Jackson/Ron Henderson	<b>Portfolio</b> Performance Management
<b>Subject</b> Investors in People Post Recognition Review Report	<b>Date</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> January 2008
	<b>Forward Plan</b> No
<b>Contact Officer</b> Mrs.L. Greathead, ext. 8859	<b>Previous Minutes</b> N/A
<b>Purpose of Report</b> To provide an overview of the Authority's recent IIP review and its subsequent recommendations for future development.	
<b>Background</b> <p>The Council were first recognised as an Investors in People Organisation in April 2002 and this review is our third against the standard. This review is an external assessment of our progress and key future development points are highlighted to ensure continuous improvement.</p> <p>Since the last review the standard has changed from a one which was based on the principles of 'Commitment, Planning, Action and Evaluation' comprising of 12 indicators to one of 'Plan, Do, Review' comprising of 10 indicators. The key changes to the standard since the last review include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Recognition that managers comprise both 'top managers' and 'managers' with top managers being responsible for the business and development strategies whilst managers implement those strategies.</li> <li>2) Inclusion of an indicator specific to the involvement of people in the organisation and requires evidence that people are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility to satisfy this indicator.</li> <li>3) Evaluation requires that the organisation continually improves its management and development of people based on the evaluation of its previous development activities.</li> </ol> <p>Due to the onset of Local Government Review it was recognised that this review required clear specific objectives. These were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To seek confirmation that the City of Durham Council continues to meet the standard.</li> <li>2) To identify further developments at individual and/or team level that might benefit the organisation.</li> <li>3) To review the effectiveness of communication in connection with LGR.</li> <li>4) To assess employees perception of their readiness to transfer to the new council.</li> </ol>	

## Methodology

To determine the sufficiency of evidence, 52 employees were independently identified by the assessor to be involved in interviews. The interviews were conducted from 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> October 2008, either on a one to one basis or with small groups of either two or three people.

The evidence gathered by the assessor was used alongside procedural and corporate documentation provided by the Council to assess us against the 10 standard indicators.

## Findings

Key comments from the full review assessment included a conclusion that more than sufficient evidence was available against the 10 indicators to support our continued status as an Investor in People recognised organisation.

A number of service based comments were also highlighted in the review:-

- 'People interviewed confirmed that they were clear as to the aims and objectives for themselves and their teams and were also able to link their work to the overall aims of the council. Many people interviewed....said that they were proud to work for the City of Durham Council'.
- 'Senior managers described how development opportunities continue to be identified.....and they explained how additional funding for post entry training had been determined....to ensure people were not disadvantaged during LGR.'
- 'The review and resulting development programmes are clearly well embedded in the organisation and people were consistently able to describe what they had learnt and what the purpose for their development was.'
- 'Management training through Northumbria University has been deemed effective following evaluation and is continuing alongside other management programmes e.g. Solace programme to help managers prepare for change.'
- 'On balance people said that their managers were keeping them as informed as well as they could with regard to LGR developments.'
- 'Generally there was a strong positive response to the question of ownership. People said that they were encouraged to take responsibility for their work areas and were given autonomy to complete tasks in the most efficient and safest way.'
- 'People new to the organisation confirmed that they had had an effective induction. They found the organisation welcoming, a friendly place to work and one in which they had settled very quickly.'
- People interviewed said that they believed improvements to the organisation during the last two to three years included an overall improvement to management effectiveness...and in recent month's improvement in communication processes. 'Communication Matters' in particular is well received and provides an accepted update on LGR developments for people across the whole of the council.

## Conclusion

The full post recognition review report which is attached as appendix 1 is an extremely positive outcome for the Council, particularly during this period of change and uncertainty for many employees.

The review objectives as identified in the introduction can be summarised as follows:

**1) To seek confirmation that the City of Durham continues to meet the IIP Standard**

City of Durham still continues to meet the standard.

**2) To identify further developments at individual and/or team level that might benefit the organisation.**

Three further development points were identified as part of the review and these will continue to be progressed by Officers with the view to ensuring a business as usual approach until the new Unitary Authority is established on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.

**3) To review the effectiveness of communication in connection with LGR.**

The review established that employees recognise that every effort is being made to communicate developments with LGR as timely and as effectively as possible. Feedback mechanisms are trusted on balance particularly 'Communication Matters' and it is recognised that although not yet widely recognised, the viewpoint panel is open, transparent and provides valid feedback to issues raised.

**4) To assess people's perception of their readiness to transfer to the new Authority.**

The review highlighted that employees are largely as well prepared for LGR as they can be given the uncertainty that exists in some areas. The majority of people understand the transition process and acknowledge that decisions affecting them individually have not yet been made.

## Portfolio Member Recommendations or Items Requiring a Cabinet Decision

That the report be noted and that all staff are made aware of the review through the normal internal communication methods.

## Reasons for Recommendations

To ensure employees recognise that despite LGR, City of Durham continue to operate a business as usual approach which includes continuing to invest in its employees and preparing them for the transition to the new Unitary Authority on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.

## Alternative Options To Be Considered

N/A

## Consultation

OMT

<b>Financial, Legal and Risk Implications</b> N/A
<b>Resource Implications</b> N/A
<b>LGR Implications - Control of Disposals, Contracts and Reserves</b> N/A
<b>Timescale for Action</b> Immediate
<b>Associated Policies and Plans</b> N/A
<b>Supporting Documents</b> Investors in People Post Recognition Review Report
<b>Background Papers</b> N/A



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INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE  
POST RECOGNITION REVIEW REPORT**

for

**CITY OF DURHAM COUNCIL**

Assessor:	Ian Girvan
Number of people in scope:	996
Date of onsite review:	7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> October 2008

## I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Durham Council continues to provide front line services for residents, visitors and people who work in the city and environs and comprises nine service departments:

- Community
- Corporate
- Cultural
- Environment & Leisure
- Executive
- Financial
- Planning
- Property
- Strategic

The mission of the Council is *'To improve the quality of life for all people who live, work in or visit the Durham City Council district'*.

Currently the major overriding development for the organisation as a whole is the merger with Durham County Council and the six other district councils throughout County Durham. That merger will result in a unitary council for the whole of County Durham with vesting day planned for April 9<sup>th</sup> 2009.

To arrive at the final structure, managers from the eight current councils are meeting regularly through a schedule of work streams to agree outcomes on a functional and departmental basis leading to the overall outcome of a defined, agreed unitary authority.

### **Review objectives**

From the set up meeting the following review objectives were identified:

1. To seek confirmation that the City of Durham Council continues to meet the Standard
2. To identify further developments at individual and/or team level that might benefit the organisation
3. To review the effectiveness of communication in connection with LGR
4. To assess people's perception reference their readiness to transfer to the new authority

## 2. METHODOLOGY

A range of documentation was provided for background information including: -

- Corporate performance Plan
- Transition Plan
- Organisation Development Plan

A comprehensive review application was also provided plus an overview of intranet websites and portals that provide information for employees.

The review process remains that of interviewing a diagonal slice of people from all areas throughout the organisation. From the total workforce of 996, 52 people were selected for interview that equates to 5.2%.

### 3. FINDINGS

#### Developing strategies to improve the performance of the organisation An Investor in People develops effective strategies to improve the performance of the organisation through its people.

##### Indicator 1. BUSINESS STRATEGY

A strategy for improving the performance of the organisation is clearly defined and understood.

1	Top managers make sure the organisation has a clear purpose and vision supported by a strategy for improving its performance.
2	Top managers ensure the organisation has a business plan with measurable performance objectives.
3	Top managers make sure there are constructive relationships with representative groups (where they exist) and the groups are consulted when developing the organisation's business plan.
4	Managers can describe how they involve people when developing the organisation's business plan and when agreeing team and individual objectives.
5	People who are members of representative groups can confirm that top managers make sure there are constructive relationships with the groups and they are consulted when developing the organisation's business plan.
6	People can explain the objectives of their team and the organisation at a level that is appropriate to their role, and can describe how they are expected to contribute to developing and achieving them.

Senior managers described the top level aims of the Council in line with the mission statement referring to the supporting strands e.g., flourishing communities and the range of supporting BVPI's. They explained that during the transition period they were placing a strong emphasis on two aspects in particular: maintaining services and supporting staff throughout the period of LGR.

The development strategy to continue to provide post entry training development opportunities to people is unchanged in terms of process i.e. PDR's, six month reviews and a resulting Organisational Development Plan being created. However the training budget to support those activities has been doubled to ensure people are not disadvantaged during the reorganisation and receive additional support if required – see following.

They explained the strategy in place to allow the new single authority to evolve i.e. the gradual introduction of people in key positions from Chief Executive downwards and the work streams in place that will lead to agreement on the structures and services across the new authority county wide. They are mindful that individuals – some more than others – are concerned not only for their jobs but also possible changes to terms and conditions. To help people practically during this time additional courses have been identified and provided including change management, interviewing skills and career transition.

Senior managers said that they realised effective communication was extremely important during the transition period especially as many changes and outcomes directly affecting people are as yet unknown. The Executive Director regularly sends out a '*Communication Matters*' e-mail to all employees, there is an intranet communication site – *Share Point* – that is regularly updated and that everyone has access to and notice boards are used as another communication route. They explained that people involved in the work streams also feed back developments to their teams as they occur. Another initiative set up by the Council to provide information and feedback is a '*Viewpoint panel*' comprising senior managers and employee representatives. The group meets monthly to discuss any issues and concerns raised by people concerning LGR and the minutes are posted on *Share Point*.

People interviewed confirmed that they were clear as to the aims and objectives for themselves and their teams and were also able to link their work to the overall aims of the Council. Several people made reference to '*flourishing communities*' in this context e.g. City Care and mobile wardens referring to people's safety and security. Many people interviewed spoke with pride of their involvement in the community and said that they were proud to work for the City of Durham Council.

**Indicator 2. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Learning and development is planned to achieve the organisation's objectives.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Top managers can explain the organisation's learning and development needs, the plans and resources in place to meet them, how these link to achieving specific objectives and how the impact will be evaluated. |
| 2 | Managers can explain team learning and development needs, the activities planned to meet them, how these link to achieving specific team objectives and how the impact will be evaluated.                        |
| 3 | People can explain how they are involved in identifying their learning and development needs and the activities planned to meet them.  |
| 4 | People can explain what their learning and development activities should achieve for them, their team and the organisation.  |

Senior managers described how development opportunities continued to be identified through the well established PDR programme, six month reviews plus ad hoc development needs as required. They explained how the additional funding for post entry training had been determined and its purpose i.e. to ensure people were not disadvantaged during LGR. They said the intent was to prepare people for career changes and also to enable them to benefit from any resulting opportunities.

Managers were able to identify individual and team developments that were aimed at improving performance. One example is the introduction of SX3 appointment booking for Property Services, another identified is the single contact approach (telephone or face to face) to resolve any queries from tenants, residents or members of the public. These initiatives and others are aimed at improving core service delivery and have required specific training programmes to enable them to be effectively introduced. Managers were able to describe the anticipated benefits and could link the objectives to various PI's for their departments.

People interviewed confirmed that they were consulted as to their development needs and had ready access to development opportunities through the PDR process, reviews and in general whenever needed. The review and resulting development programmes are clearly well embedded in the organisation and people were consistently able to describe what they had learnt and what the purpose for their development was. There is a considerable degree of learning taking place at all levels, some formal with qualifications and much informal through mentoring and coaching.

One or two people (only) made the observation that they thought there was less opportunity for development since LGR had started. But when pressed as to why they thought that, no factual evidence was given. Few people were aware that the funding for post entry development had increased but the vast majority of people saw the development process continuing as normal and were aware of the 'normal' and new opportunities available relevant to career progression within the new authority.

**Indicator 3. PEOPLE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Strategies for managing people are designed to promote equality of opportunity in the development of the organisation's people.

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|---|---|
| 1 | Top managers can describe strategies they have in place to create an environment where everyone is encouraged to contribute ideas to improve their own and other people's performance.  |
| 2 | Top managers recognise the different needs of people and can describe strategies they have in place to make sure everyone has fair access to the support they need and there is equality of opportunity for people to learn and develop which will improve their performance. |
| 3 | Managers recognise the different needs of people and can describe how they make sure everyone has appropriate and fair access to the support they need and there is equality of opportunity for people to learn and develop which will improve their performance.             |
| 4 | People believe managers are genuinely committed to making sure everyone has appropriate and fair access to the support they need and there is equality of opportunity for them to learn and develop which will improve their performance.                                     |
| 5 | People can give examples of how they have been encouraged to contribute ideas to improve their own and other people's performance.  |

Senior managers confirmed that everyone had access to learning and development made possible by ensuring that everyone was included in the review processes and development programmes. They said that everybody had access to formal qualifications e.g. NVQ programmes, professional qualifications and further qualifications. They confirmed their support for the Learning Zone development in conjunction with Trade Union representatives that is providing Skills for Life learning to employees, relatives and beyond.

Managers confirmed that the above approach is adopted throughout all areas of the Council and gave several examples of people who had '*risen through the ranks*' as a result of the encouragement people had been given to develop and progress. They said many of their people were long servers and that supervisors and managers had been mainly promoted from within the Council.

People confirmed that they had the opportunity to access the various development opportunities (see previous indicator) and they were also very appreciative of the approach taken by their managers in times of personal difficulties. Several people described the council as providing a family friendly approach that they appreciated and responded to in kind. '*don't mind doing a bit extra when it's needed – they did for me*'.

Access to higher qualifications was identified by one or two people as an area of inconsistency. See *Further Development 1*

People also stated that their opinions were sought on relevant work issues and any ideas offered were listened to and if appropriate taken up and implemented.



**Indicator 4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The capabilities managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively are clearly defined and understood.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Top managers can describe the knowledge, skills and behaviours that managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively, and the plans they have in place to make sure managers have these capabilities.</li><li>2. Managers can describe the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to lead, manage and develop people effectively.</li><li>3. People can describe what their manager should be doing to lead, manage and develop them effectively.</li></ol> |
|--|

Senior managers explained that the way that way people were managed was through an open consultative manner and that there was much emphasis on sharing, coaching and mentoring. They said they encouraged people to develop and referred to the number of people who have progressed to senior positions from within the organisation as evidence. The management training through Northumbria University has been deemed effective following evaluation and is continuing alongside other management programmes e.g. the Solace programme to help managers prepare for change.

Managers were able to describe what they needed to provide to support their people in their roles. They referred to information specific to the job e.g. programmes, job sheets, PPE, H & S information and ensuring resources required were available. They said coaching was key part of their role and described practically what they meant by coaching. They also explained that since LGR they were ensuring people were as prepared as possible for future eventualities. Examples were given of people being encouraged to attend meetings (as deputies) to gain experience.

People stated that they expected their managers to be accessible, to listen and to be responsive to their needs. They said that particularly at this time [LGR] they wanted to know what was happening and in particular any development that would impact on them.

**TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ORGANISATION**  
An Investor in People takes effective action to improve the performance of the organisation through its people.

**Indicator 5. MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS**  
Managers are effective in leading, managing and developing people.

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Managers can explain how they are effective in leading, managing and developing people.</li><li>2. Managers can give examples of how they give people constructive feedback on their performance regularly and when appropriate.</li><li>3. People can explain how their managers are effective in leading, managing and developing them.</li><li>4. People can give examples of how they receive constructive feedback on their performance regularly and when appropriate.</li></ol> |
|---|

The majority of managers explained that their roles were 'hands on' and they worked mainly alongside their people supporting them in whatever way was needed. Examples given included:

- Holding regular team meetings and making sure issues raised are responded to
- Carrying out PDR reviews and following through to make sure developments take place
- Making sure support mechanisms during LGR are in place, understood and accessed and result in people applying for positions in the new authority
- Involvement in induction – clarifying roles and ensuring equipment and information is provided including training logs

People confirmed that their managers provided support including the following examples:

- *'Promptly backed up my decision when challenged by a member of the public'*
- *'When the work backs up she just works alongside us'*
- *'I'm comfortable going to see the boss about anything'*
- *'Spent ages with me on the computer saying 'You can do it''*
- *'I said the paperwork was becoming excessive and since then some has been simplified and some removed'*

The observation made in *Indicator 3* concerning the support given in difficult times was also seen as a positive by people. Several people said *'Could not have been more helpful'*

On balance people said that their managers were keeping them as informed as well as they could concerning LGR developments, that managers often knew little more than they did and believed mainly that they were sharing any relevant information they had with them.

People described how they received feedback from their managers through team meetings, reviews and through daily contact when job discussions prompted feedback. Some front line operatives however, did not believe their contribution was recognised and valued and commented that there was little constructive feedback on their performance. See *Further Development 2*

**Indicator 6. RECOGNITION AND REWARD**  
**People's contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued.**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Managers can give examples of how they recognise and value people's individual contribution to the organisation.</li> <li>2. People can describe how they contribute to the organisation and believe they make a positive difference to its performance.</li> <li>3. People can describe how their contribution to the organisation is recognised and valued.</li> </ol> |
|--|

Managers described how performance feedback was given through a range of processes. These included day to day observations and comments, through the PDR reviews, team meetings and e-mails. They said that as managers they were 'hands on' hence feedback was often informal, based on job outcomes and resulting information.

People were able to describe the contribution they made to the organisation including benefits to the public and tenants. They said on balance that they did believe their contribution to the Council was recognised and valued due to feedback received. Examples included:

- Achievements discussed in team meetings – positive comments given
- 'Thank you' and 'Well done' said to many individuals; 'You're doing fantastic'
- E-mails sent acknowledging achievements
- Long term service awards – genuinely appreciated by people
- 'I was asked to trial the new [expensive] equipment – they trusted me'

The majority of people do receive feedback such that they believe their contribution is recognised and valued. People also said that they work in well established teams with managers they have known for a considerable period and hence 'feel' that they are part of a team and hence valued. When people were probed as to how their contribution was recognised some were unable to say. This observation along with the fact that a few people did not feel their contribution was recognised has prompted *Future Development 2*

**Indicator 7. INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT**  
**People are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility by being involved in decision-making.**

- |  |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Managers can describe how they promote a sense of ownership and responsibility by encouraging people to be involved in decision-making, both individually and through representative groups, where they exist.</li> <li>2. People can describe how they are encouraged to be involved in decision-making that affects the performance of individuals, teams and the organisation, at a level that is appropriate to their role.</li> <li>3. People can describe how they are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility for decisions that affect the performance of individuals, teams and the organisation, at a level appropriate to their role</li> </ol> |
|--|

Managers stated that there is a well embedded tradition of seeking to involve people in their work areas by consulting them and seeking their opinion. They said they do this through day to day involvement, team meetings, sharing previous experiences through project team meetings and generally by delegating roles and responsibilities as appropriate.

Examples provided by people and managers of involvement and resulting ideas included:

- Plasma screens located in appropriate offices to enable support staff to monitor calls waiting and intercept as appropriate
- IT improvements introduced to improve data gathering and provide better management information
- Managers involved in work stream meetings seeking input from their people e.g. software programme considerations

- Where practical front line staff have the autonomy to work out their own job schedules

Generally there was a strong positive response to the question of ownership. People said that they were encouraged to take responsibility for their work areas and were given autonomy to complete tasks in the most efficient and safest way.

**Indicator 8. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**  
**People learn and develop effectively.**

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Managers can describe how they make sure that people's learning and development needs are met.</li><li>2. People can describe how their learning and development needs have been met, what they have learnt and how they have applied this in their role</li><li>3. People who are new to the organisation, and those new to a role, can describe how their induction has enabled them to perform effectively.</li></ol> |
|---|

Managers said that development activities were identified through the review processes and once agreed invariably took place. They said they provided people with the opportunity to consolidate their learning and put it into practice whenever possible.

People confirmed that development activities routinely took place and they were able to identify what they had learnt and how it helped them in their jobs. Examples included:

- Mandatory training e.g. moving & handling, – refresher courses and updates
- Legally required competencies e.g. Corgi, SIA, POVA – all providing proof of competency/suitability for individual post holders
- Management & supervisory skills gained through various programmes:
  - Absence management
  - Appraisal training
  - Discipline & grievance
- IT/software training with resulting applications:
  - Data base/excel applications to improve data gathering
  - SX3 system introduced to improve appointment scheduling

Several managers and people interviewed stated that much learning took place by people simply observing and shadowing colleagues as they either started in their job or took on new responsibilities. More than one person said '*I learn best by doing the job – courses may help but I really learn best by just getting on with it*'.

People new to the organisation confirmed that they had had an effective induction. They mentioned the corporate induction, the information specific to their role and also commented that they had found the organisation welcoming, a friendly place to work and one in which they had settled very quickly.

People who changed their role or returned to work after a gap also on balance said that they had been effectively inducted into their new role/return to work but there were exceptions – see *Further Development 3*

**EVALUATING THE IMPACT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ORGANISATION**  
An Investor in People can demonstrate the impact of its investment in people on the performance of the organisation.

**Indicator 9. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**  
Investment in people improves the performance of the organisation.

1. Top managers can describe the overall investment of time, money and resources in learning and development.
2. Top managers can explain and quantify, where appropriate, how learning and development has improved the performance of the organisation
3. Top managers can describe how the evaluation of their investment in people is used to develop their strategy for improving the performance of the organisation.
4. Managers can give examples of how learning and development has improved the performance of their team and the organisation.
5. People can give examples of how learning and development has improved their performance, the performance of their team and that of the organisation.

Senior managers described the overall resource available for the development of people including the recent increase to enable people to prepare for future developments. They stressed that consideration for people and their future was a key consideration at this time hence the increased resource and the introduction of development opportunities specific to relocation needs for people at all levels.

They also confirmed that during the transition period they had not lost sight of the need to continue to deliver service level agreements within the city and confirmed that they had continued to do this.

*Senior managers believe that they have continued to develop the organisation during the last three years citing improved financial*

Managers described how a range of developments had improved the performance of the organisation including:

- 80% of resident/tenant queries satisfied from first contact call/query as a result of introduction of single contact call
- Improved software programmes introduced into a number of areas resulting in time and financial savings
- Successful opening of Freeman's Quay
- Northumbria University management development programme has raised the consistency and standards of management throughout the Council
- Learning zone outcomes – several examples provided of people directly benefiting from learning
- Introduction of SX3 programme to improve appointment scheduling and response times – impact: reduced workload backlog and verifiable audit trail
- Void properties project that significantly reduced void times
- Community development schemes resulting in improvements to communities, reduction in crime and fear of crime

People were able to identify benefits for both them and the organisation as a result of their learning and development:

- Multi skills developments resulting in increased skill levels, flexible working and job satisfaction
- IT skills enabling people to develop data bases, spreadsheets etc to simplify data gathering

- HGV driver training requested and agreed resulting in significant job satisfaction and a dedicated employee

**Indicator 10**

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

**Improvements are continually made to the way people are managed and developed.**

1. Top managers can give examples of how the evaluation of their investment in people has resulted in improvements in the organisation's strategy for managing and developing people.
2. Managers can give examples of improvements they have made to the way they manage and develop people.
3. People can give examples of improvements that have been made to the way the organisation manages and develops its people.

Senior managers explained that their approach to continuous improvement was geared to the continuation of effective representation for the City of Durham in the new unitary authority by assisting the people currently working in the Council. They explained they had reviewed the development needs of people required to help them merge into the new authority and had sought to provide appropriate opportunity and support to assist them as effectively as possible. They said that work stream involvement was not only helping to align City of Durham service deliveries to those of the new authority but was also preparing people for the transition.

Managers interviewed confirmed the comments made by senior managers in terms of preparing people for transition arrangements. They also added the observation that management developments through the Northumbria University link had improved the effectiveness of managers throughout the organisation.

People interviewed said that they believed improvements to the organisation during the last two to three years included an overall improvement to management effectiveness in terms of providing practical support to people and also, during recent months, improvements to communication processes. Comments concerning communication referred to a more open and transparent approach on the part of their managers as well as specific department and company wide communications. 'Communication Matters' in particular is well received and provides an accepted update on LGR developments for people across the whole of the Council.



## 4. CONCLUSION

The review objectives were identified in the Introduction and the review outcomes can be summarised as follows:

1. To seek confirmation that the City of Durham Council continues to meet the Standard

From the evidence gathered during the review it is confirmed that the City of Durham Council continues to meet the Standard

2. To identify further developments at individual and/or team level that might benefit the organisation

For *Further Developments* identified from the review see below.

3. To review the effectiveness of communication in connection with LGR

The general consensus of people interviewed is that senior managers and managers are communicating as effectively as they can concerning LGR developments. People recognise that the transition is taking place in real time and decisions are being made on an ongoing basis. The feedback mechanisms are trusted on balance particularly 'Communication Matters'. View point is not yet widely recognised but may well come into focus more as decisions affecting people in the body of the organisation start to take place. People currently involved with the View Point group said it is open, transparent and provides valid feedback to issues raised.

4. To assess people's perception reference their readiness to transfer to the new authority

People in the main are of the opinion that they are as well prepared for reorganisation as they can be given the uncertainty that exists in some areas. They are positive in terms of the contribution that they believe they will be able to make to the new authority and welcomed the development opportunities recently provided to assist them preparing for transition to the new authority.

On balance the majority of people understand the transition process and acknowledge that decisions affecting them individually probably have not yet been made. People who indicated least understanding were some front line staff. This situation may link to Team Leader effectiveness in those areas – see *Further Development 2*.

## 5. FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

### *Further Development 1*

One or two people expressed the view that there was an inconsistent approach concerning agreement for people to attend higher qualifications courses. The perception is that people who cannot be readily released from their job are less likely to be granted leave to attend higher qualification courses than people working in other areas. The assessor recognises that further decisions on higher education are not likely to be taken now by the organisation, and also the perception may well be misplaced. However there was a strong view presented and it is appropriate to feed back that perception in order that it might be addressed to eliminate any unwarranted dissatisfaction with the review processes particularly at this time.

### *Further Development 2*

On balance people said that they did receive constructive feedback such that they believed their contribution was recognised and valued. However, some of the front line operatives said they did not receive feedback on their performance and hence did not believe their contribution was recognised.

This observation links to that for Indicator 6 and indicates that some Team Leaders are not providing constructive performance feedback to their people. There are established and effective review processes in place in the majority of areas and if there is a feedback review it will enable best practice to be shared and duplicated in all areas.

### *Further Development 3*

The standard requires effective induction process for people new to the organisation and also people who need a re-induction following a period of absence or when changing roles or responsibilities. Induction for people new to the Council is effective but there were some examples of people changing roles with no re-induction and consequently poor performance for an initial period of time. Awareness by managers of a need for re-induction will remedy this oversight with subsequent benefit to the organisation and to the individuals.

**Assessor Endorsement**

In view of all the evidence collected during the assessment, it is recommended that the City of Durham Council continues be recognised as an Investor in People.

Signed



Date : 14 October 2008

Ian Girvan  
Assessor

On behalf of Assessment North East

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## Agenda Item 5(e)

**STATUS PUBLIC**

<b>Portfolio Member/Director/Head of Service</b> Leader / Director of Strategic Services	<b>Portfolio</b> Leader
<b>Subject</b> Appointment of Director to Durham Heart of the City Limited	<b>Date</b> 7 January 2009
	<b>Forward Plan</b> No
<b>Contact Officer</b> Elizabeth Hall	<b>Previous Minutes</b> Min No. 563(b) Cabinet 9.2.04
<b>Purpose of Report</b> To appoint a Director to Durham Heart of the City Limited	
<b>Executive Summary</b> Durham Heart of the City Limited was set up with AMEC plc (now Muse Developments Ltd) for the purposes of supervising and facilitating the redevelopment of Walkergate, Back Silver Street and Framwellgate Peth, together with any future sites identified by the City Council with AMEC within the regeneration areas as suitable for redevelopment.  The City Council was entitled to appoint up to three directors and at any time to require the removal or substitution of any directors so appointed. Currently, the Directors of the Company appointed by the City Council were Councillor Wynn, Elizabeth Hall as the Director of Strategic Services and Brian Spears in his capacity as former Chief Executive.  Mr Spears has now tendered his resignation from the Board of Directors and a replacement appointment is required.	
<b>Portfolio Member Recommendations or items Requiring a Cabinet Decision</b> That the Executive Director be appointed as a Director to replace Mr B Spears.	
<b>Reasons for Recommendations</b> To ensure that the City Council has appointed three Directors and is thus able to be fully represented in any future meetings or initiatives involving this company.	
<b>Alternative Options to be Considered</b> Not to appoint a Director	
<b>Consultation</b> N/A	
<b>LGR Implications</b> Arrangements will need to be put in place by the Unitary Council to appoint Directors from 1 April 2009.	
<b>Financial, Legal and Risk Implications</b> Failure to appoint would weaken the Council's representation on and involvement with this company should both partners wish to undertake further initiatives in Durham City.	

<b>Resource Implications</b> None
<b>Timescale for Action</b> The appointment to be effective following approval by this Cabinet.
<b>Associated Policies and Plans</b> None
<b>Supporting Documents</b> None
<b>Background Papers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ e-mails from Muse Developments Ltd and Mr Spears</li><li>■ report to Cabinet, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2004</li></ul>



## Agenda Item 5(f)

STATUS PUBLIC

<b>Portfolio Member/Director/Head of Service</b> Cllr Sue Pitts/ Tracey Ingle	<b>Portfolio</b> Culture and Leisure
<b>Subject</b> Public Art Strategy	<b>Date</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> January 2008
	<b>Forward Plan</b> No
<b>Contact Officer</b> Tracey Ingle, 0191 3018800 <a href="mailto:ingle@durhamcity.gov.uk">ingle@durhamcity.gov.uk</a>	<b>Previous Minutes</b> None
<b>Purpose of Report</b> This report places a Public Art Strategy and Action Plan before Members for approval. The Strategy sets out a framework and a thematic range of programmes to promote public art in Durham City. This promotes public art using past best practice and has an Action Plan which may help to secure Durham City's future cultural vitality.	
<b>Executive Summary</b> The City Council and Commissions North (part of Arts Council England North East) commissioned a Public Art Strategy and Action Plan to help ensure the outputs of the Supplementary Planning Policy, % for Art, were managed in a planned manner and that any future windfall funding could be carefully targeted to an agreed programme of art works and sites within the City. This aimed to assist the Council in delivering its Corporate aim of Capital City alongside assisting the City's continuing regeneration and supporting Flourishing Communities.  The final draft of the Public Art Strategy was delivered in November 2008. The final Draft of the Strategy is attached as Appendix One. It will also need approval by Commissions North.  The Strategy sets out how the % for Art policy has worked. It further proposes that suitable planning obligations and Section 106 agreements could be agreed as part of the Development Control process to help deliver a programme of public art within the City.  The Strategy proposes two arts programmes, City of Stone and City of Letters. The former uses the theme of stone to allow the provision of permanent statues or other art works at agreed locations throughout the City Centre. In addition it suggests there are various places within the City that could be used as "plinths" for temporary pieces of work to be displayed for a defined period tied to themes or festivals within the City. City of Letters draws upon the City's rich heritage as an ecclesiastical centre and seat of education to celebrate the written word. It suggests this could be physical manifestations of words inscribed into stone or the future commissioning of written pieces of work to be displayed in various ways throughout the City. These too could be tied to Durham's established Book Festival or allied to emerging festivals such as Durham's Mystery Plays.  The Action Plan sets out a five year, budgeted programme which illustrates how this work could be managed within an active and dynamic arts commissioning environment.  This is of course a challenging time and one may question bringing forwards such a strategy. However the setting of aspiration and planning how the value of public art can be harnessed is believed to be a worthy objective. It also helps celebrate the success of the work of the City Council as well as proposing a well considered programme of arts activity in principle for the future of the City and County.	

**Portfolio Member Recommendations or Items Requiring a Cabinet Decision**

It is recommended that the Durham City Public Art Strategy and Action Plan is approved.

**Reasons for Recommendations**

The Durham City Public Art Strategy and Action Plan is the culmination of many years work to promote the value of arts in Durham City and approval of the strategy will assist in delivering a future programme of vital public art within the City.

**Alternative Options To Be Considered**

Do nothing: this option would not assist in securing the great potential of Durham City as a centre for dynamic arts intervention

Use Ad Hoc delivery: this method has been used in the past based on site by site work. From this there has been a clear desire to allow a more structured approach to allow developers different options for arts delivery within the planning environment and for such funding to be used on site and off site. The strategy meets this need.

**Consultation**

The Strategy has been written with some consultation with major stakeholders and organisations. It has also drawn on the experience of delivering the % for Art policy since 2006. If approved further publicity is planned alongside the setting up of a steering group to manage future progress.

**LGR Implications**

The Strategy has been carefully written to harness the current planning policy context as well as taking due cognisance of the County's future planning policy proposals. The documents does not bind the County Council to future investment but sets out a set of proposals that may be helpfully followed in the future to secure dynamic arts activity is so desired.

**Financial, Legal and Risk Implications**

There are no direct financial implications for the City or County Council's. Future funding will be drawn down based upon investment developers in the City and County alongside the potential for other funders to be part of a planned investment programme of public arts implementation. There are no direct financial or reputation risks to manage. The major risk in delivery would be the future sustainability of the City Council's Arts Delivery partner Durham City Arts. Work to secure this will rest with other spheres of influence.

**Resource Implications**

There are no direct resource implications. There will be the continuation of investment of officer time to implement approved planning policy. The potential for future involvement of Durham City Vision in the implementation and roll out of schemes where proposals interact with sites within the approved Vision Master Plan will be explored.

**Timescale for Action**

If approved the Strategy will come into force immediately.

**Associated Policies and Plans**

Durham City Local Plan  
% for Art Supplementary Planning Guidance  
Durham City Vision Master Plan

**Supporting Documents**

Appendix One: Durham City Public Art Strategy and Action Plan

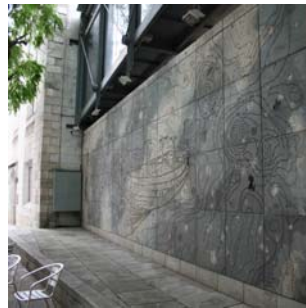
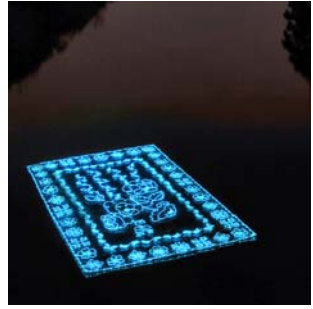
**Background Papers**

None

DURHAM PUBLIC ART STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN 2009 - 2014

# CITY OF LETTERS : CITY OF STONE

v2



# executive summary

## Background

The catalyst for this Action Plan is the City of Durham Council's Supplementary Planning Document "*Provision of Public Art as part of Major New Planning Schemes*", adopted in August 2006. This policy contained the requirement that 1% of the construction costs of major developments (floorspace of 1000 m<sup>2</sup> or more; or sites in excess of 0.5 hectares) must be allocated to public art and design. In the majority of instances where the '%forArt' applies the artwork will be created for the actual site under development, but there will be circumstances where this is not appropriate.

In such instances the policy allows for these funds to be levied from the developer as part of planning approval, and allocated to a suitable, agreed scheme away from the development site. This opens up the option to pool developer contributions in a Public Art Action Plan fund, and to commission artworks that offer wider benefit to the City, its residents and its visitors. Such a fund, and the management structures created for it, also forms the infrastructure for the delivery of public art funded through other routes.

This Action Plan is intended to create an agreed vision for these developer contributions, and to outline specific sites, themes and projects which could form a commissioning framework for public art in the city. It comes at a key point in the political and organisational history of the City, with the dissolution of the district councils including City of Durham Council, and the Durham area becoming a unitary authority as Durham County Council. The report has behind it the recent successes within the City of art commissions at the Gala Theatre, Freemans Quay Leisure Centre and the Enlightenment Festival, but the challenge in front of it of advocating the vision for public art to an unfamiliar audience in a newly formed authority.

## An introduction to the Action Plan

The first section, ***The Current Position***, provides a summary of recent commissioning activity within the City centre and a review of existing documents with a bearing on the Action Plan.

Section two, ***Key Themes and Concepts***, identifies some of the key challenges which public art in Durham should be addressing if it is to bring strategic benefit to the City, and makes a recommendation that is fundamental to the rest of the report – that Durham differentiates itself from the rather generic approach of other cities in the North-East by commissioning the majority of its artworks within two relatively narrow and clearly defined programmes.

***The Spaces and Projects*** is the heart of the action plan, identifying a number of interlinked and overlapping commissioning opportunities within the City. This includes projects for Market Place, Claypath Bridge, the Vennels, the riverside, Fowlers Yard and Durham Railway Station.

The final section, ***Making it Happen***, looks at the practicalities of achieving this vision. It recommends a management structure; outlines indicative costs, funding sources and timescales;

and makes a series of comments on related issues such as creative risk, procurement and interpretation.

## Key themes and concepts

Durham has little external contemporary public art within the City centre, and it would be easy to form a picture of a City in thrall to its heritage and frozen by that responsibility. But recent commissions reveals a bold, adventurous approach to architecture, design and public art, with major developments at Millennium Place and Freemans Quay Leisure Centre having due sensitivity to Durham's unique qualities but also embracing a contemporary aesthetic.

As a medieval City with few straight lines on its plans or elevations, and with so many centuries of development, the urban grain in Durham is incredibly rich. In recognising Durham's unique qualities and character, the role of art within general public realm improvements becomes one of acknowledging, enriching and strengthening the diversity of the City, and of facilitating the experiencing of this diversity amongst a wider audience. The key challenges in achieving this aim are:

- CH 1**      **Drawing attention to Durham's hidden places, spaces and routes, adding to the *experience of the City* and broadening its visitor offer.**
  
- CH 2**      **Achieving the difficult balance between making these hidden spaces feel *safe and accessible* without losing their unique 'backwater' charm.**
  
- CH3**      **Contributing to the *legibility* of the City by increasing the *definition* between the City's primary and secondary spaces and routes.**
  
- CH4**      **Creating high-quality and meaningful art commissions in a restricted heritage environment.**
  
- CH5**      **Creating projects which add value to the other activity in the City by enhancing existing strengths and providing solutions to recognised problems.**

Each of the individual projects outlined in the Action Plan have been developed with a view to meeting some or all of the above challenges.

The proposed timescale for this Action Plan is for five years from the start of the new authority in April 2009 to April 2014.

## **avoiding the generic – a unified and consistent approach**

The main characteristic of art commissioning in most cities is the absence of a defining characteristic. Diversity of artform and approach is in fact the common link, and the 'signature' artworks from each City could quite easily have been commissioned for another. Our recommendation is that Durham, in seeking to differentiate itself, takes the opposite path and adopts some clearly defined and relatively narrow themes, materials and approaches to its public art commissioning. We propose two interlinked programmes as the focus for new commissioning activity, although of course there will be instances where alternative approaches will be more appropriate. The programmes are:

## **CITY OF LETTERS      CITY OF STONE**

These two programmes acknowledge and build upon two inalienable facts – that stone is emblematic of the city and a major material within the visual fabric of the City, and that learning is a cornerstone of the City's identity and trade.

*City of Letters* and *City of Stone* projects can combine and overlap within spaces through careful curation and, where appropriate, collaborative practice. It is also important to note that this report does not recommend vetoing other forms of art practice, but simply that the limited resources available through %forArt contributions and other funding should prioritise these two programmes in a structured and strategic manner.

### **City of Letters**

*City of Letters* is, alongside *City of Stone*, a core commissioning programme within the Durham Public Art Action Plan. The theme is purposefully described as 'City of Letters' rather than 'of Text' or 'of Words'. In part this recognises the connection with key religious texts associated with the City; with academic distinction and qualifications and the influence of the University on the City; but it is also meant to suggest the imaginative world that text can transport its reader into.

*City of Letters* is about the use of text as a correspondence between the City and its public, as a means of explaining or enriching an understanding of the City, and as a route for animating spaces and places on either a permanent or temporary basis.

A key strength of the *City Of Letters* programme is its flexibility, and the sheer variety of spaces and places that it can be tailored to. Flexibility comes first from the writer and the diversity of writing styles, approaches, subject matter and themes; but it continues in the options for translating that text into a visual public experience: projections, fretwork, signwriting, lighting, sculptural forms and, connecting with the *City of Stone* theme, as letter-cut or grit-blasted text in walls and flooring. It can provoke, challenge, be informative and move people; direct people through a space and reassure them that they are on a safe and cared-for route; it can act as a placemaker, a focal feature or a stopping point; and it can remediate difficult spaces within complex urban environments.

## City of Stone

*City Of Stone*, the other core commissioning programme within the Durham Public Art Action Plan, happily welcomes an association with traditional skills, a pleasing aesthetic and the tactile quality of stone as a material. It also recognises stone as one of Durham's vernacular building materials, and the potential that brings as a means of exploring Durham's heritage. It is important to state clearly that this programme is not about the promotion or prioritising of conservative artworks, or about placing a creative stranglehold on artists. Rather it is about the creative commissioning of innovative new artworks that adopt a range of approaches and explore diverse themes relevant to the City, but within the cohesive framework provided by the *City of Stone* umbrella.

As with the *City Of Letters* programme, changes in scale can move the experience of stone from the civic and public through to the personal and intimate. It can address the similar challenges and offer the similar benefits throughout the City.

The true flexibility of this programme strand does not come from the material, techniques or processes involved, but from the creativity of the artists invited to develop projects for the City. The challenge will be to work with this material in an innovative way without rejecting the fundamental qualities that make stone so enduringly popular, and the Action Plan sets out a procurement route via which innovative artists can be attracted to the commissions and fully supported throughout the design process.

## The spaces and projects

This section identifies a number of important spaces within the City, and is not divided into 'Letters' projects and 'Stone' projects as many of the spaces are equally suited to either of these options, or a combination of both. Market Place, the Vennels, Millennium Place, the riverside, Durham Rail Station and Fowlers Yard are all significant spaces with the cultural offer of the City Centre, and projects are proposed for these spaces and to create greater linkages and natural routes between them.

### Market Place Events: 'Stripping Down and Dressing Up'

Whilst not strictly an arts commission in its own right, this project sets out the case for the integration of infrastructure that supports future arts activity. To maximise the huge potential of the Market Place for arts events two actions need to transform the space. Firstly it needs to be *stripped down* to create a larger, more usable space in which events can be programmed safely. This involves the rationalising of street furniture, the creation of a clear performance and event area, and the relocation of the statues within Market Place.

Secondly, the infrastructure needs to be put in place for *dressing up* the space during an event. Key actions include installing 'pop-up' electrical and water supply points, exploring options for a sound auditorium, and providing the infrastructure for the temporary transformation of the space for events. This investment in infrastructure for events activity would effectively transform the market place into a bookable space for programming by a wide range of cultural event organisers.



### **Market Place: Flooring Commission**

In creating a more usable events space for the City the enlarged floor surface becomes the canvas for a major art commission without impeding any events. This commission, which should embody both the *City of Letters* and *City Of Stone* themes, becomes a new focal point and focal feature of the Market Place.

### **The Durham Market: 'Setting Out A Stall'**

The redesigned and revitalised Market Place that the Design Team will deliver will bring direct benefits to the market traders, and some elements proposed in the '*Dressing Up*' element of the Action Plan could inform the Market Place's redesign (i.e. pop-up electrical columns). The Action Plan also proposes that the market stalls themselves could be addressed as a creative project – either within the Market Place regeneration scheme or as a standalone project. Informed by careful local research and consultation with market traders, this would be a commission for a sculptor, architect, furniture maker or product designer to create a suite of new, Durham-specific Market Stalls.

### **Claypath Bridge: Linkages with Millennium Place**

The Claypath road across the dual carriageway between Market Place and Millennium Place is an extremely significant space: it connects the cultural offer of Millennium Place's Theatre, Library, performance area and restaurants with the heritage offer of the Durham Peninsula. It is also a high-profile site within the visitor experience of the City, and the highway area that bisects Millennium Place and Market Place has been recognised by all parties as an image issue for the City and identified as such in numerous documents.

The most ambitious vision for this site is a major, architecturally-scaled structure on Claypath Bridge that incorporates seating and shelter, and promotes the City of Durham to a wide audience. With the potential to reclaim the space from a highway environment and link Market Place and Millennium Place into virtually one space, the opportunity is such that this extremely challenging project should be considered.

### **The Vennels**

Durham's Vennels – the narrow back alleys that radiate from Market Place, Silver Street and Saddler Street – have a unique charm and create additional linkages between the major streets and other areas of visitor interest such as the riverside and Fowlers Yard. Their usage is currently limited due to uncertainty about their status as public rights of way, the perception that they may be unsafe, and doubt amongst visitors as to whether they lead anywhere of interest and merit.

To bring the Vennels into wider use, greater attention must be drawn to their entrance points. New gates, railings and stone 'entrance mats' would all help to define these thresholds without being garish or inappropriate, offering a clear indication that these spaces are not only safe but of interest and a part of the 'tourist map' for the City. To encourage a visitor to then cross that threshold a 'trail of breadcrumbs' approach is proposed, with small artworks drawing people into and through the Vennels.

### **The Durham Plinths**

A key strand in the *City Of Stone* programme, and envisaged as both a formalised trail and a series of standalone artworks that may be stumbled across during a self-directed walk, the *Durham Plinths* project extends from the Durham Peninsula across to the riverbanks and up to the railway Station, taking in some of the niches, quiet backwaters and intersections created during Durham's long history. The flexibility of this route allows for its integration into Durham City Vision

regeneration schemes, potentially encompassing the Market Place and Vennels redevelopment, North Road, the former Ice Rink site and the River Gardens.

### **Fowlers Yard Gateway Feature**

Attracting additional footfall to Fowlers Yard will have a clear benefit to the viability of the cultural businesses operating there. Alongside signage improvements taken forward via the Durham City Wayfinding Strategy, the art projects proposed for the Vennels – the main pedestrian routes to Fowlers Yard – will also make a contribution to that achieving that objective. In addition a specific commission for a 'gateway feature' at the vehicular entrance point on Back Silver Street is also proposed.

### **Durham Railway Station: Steps and Underpass**

A key gateway to the City, the Durham Railway Station and its environs have recently been improved to good effect, but the road and pedestrian underpass remains an unwelcoming environment through which many residents and tourists pass on route to the City centre. A creative response could provide a more fitting entrance to the City, becoming the first cultural experience of the City and setting a standard for the City as a whole. Projects are proposed for the new steps to the front of the station, to the underpass, and for the Bishops Prospect, a viewpoint over the City.

### **Strategic support for temporary visual arts projects**

Temporary art projects can animate and revitalise spaces, and can offer new ways of interpreting or approaching familiar spaces. They are the lifeblood of creativity in the public realm, and have an expansive effect on the appetite for art and on a general understanding of what can work in public space. The City's cultural organisations, acting on the council's behalf, have recently begun collaborating on ambitious projects such as 2008's *Durham Enlightenment Festival* – a project which proved its 'value' not just in the positive response from the public but also in the estimated £500,000 additional spend within the City during the three days of the event.

Private sector '%forArt' contributions could make a significant impact in the viability of such projects by offering the match funding required by regular funders such as Arts Council England. Such projects are eligible for support through the council's %forArt policy provided that they offer proven benefit to the community, and the scale and quality of events such as Enlightenment certainly qualify under this criteria.

## Making it happen

The final section, *Making it Happen*, looks at the practicalities of achieving this vision. It recommends a management structure; outlines indicative costs, funding sources and timescales; and makes a series of comments on related issues such as creative risk, procurement and interpretation.

### Delivery and Management

The Action Plan makes a case for Durham adopting a clearly defined programme of art commissions within the *City of Letters* and *City of Stone* strands. To achieve this, the curation, management and allocation of resources will need to be addressed carefully, and a Steering Group would ensure that individual projects were compatible with the strategic vision for the programme.

The Steering Group would have representation from the Cultural, Heritage, Planning and Tourism arms of the unitary authority Durham County Council; and from Durham City Vision, Arts Council England, Durham City Arts and the private sector. In addition, an expanded panel with literature expertise would be required for discussion of *City of Letters* commissions.

The Action Plan highlights both the specialist nature of public art commissioning and the need for a consistent approach, and suggests that one of the key tasks for the Steering Group will be to recruit an appropriate body to deliver the public art programme on its behalf.

### Funding and funding sources

An indicative budget of £1,615,000 over five years is suggested for the total programme outlined in the Action Plan, with indicative funding sources including the private sector %forArt contributions, Durham County Council, Durham Economic Partnership, Arts Council England (NE), charitable trusts and major City stakeholders.

The projects outlined in this document are designed to be deliverable in a series of phases as and when funding becomes available through the %forArt process (which will fluctuate between years and is difficult to estimate), and the programme is entirely scalable. To provide some stability to the programme, and aside from developer contributions or %forArt allocations within the council's own capital projects, a small amount of core funding should be sought from Arts Council England (NE) and the new unitary authority Durham County Council.

## Key recommendations

- The City of Durham Council's %forArt Supplementary Planning Document is a major asset in the development of high quality public art throughout the City, and all possible steps should be taken to have a similar policy adopted by the new authority.
- A Public Art Action Plan fund for holding and pooling developer contributions should be established, and a Steering Group convened.
- Available funding should be 'invested' on the first two phases of a number of public art commissions (Outline Proposals and Design Development), thereby readying project to take advantage of any additional funding opportunities that might arise.

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## introduction

This report comes at a key point in the political and organisational history of the City, with the dissolution of the district councils including City of Durham Council, and the Durham area becoming a unitary authority as Durham County Council. The report has behind it the recent successes within the City of art commissions at the Gala Theatre, Freemans Quay Leisure Centre and the Enlightenment Festival, but the challenge in front of it of advocating the vision for public art to an unfamiliar audience in a newly formed authority. Allowing for consultation and amendments to this draft, the proposed timescale for this Action Plan is for five years from the start of the new authority in April 2009 (i.e. to April 2014).

**Section 1: The Current Position** provides a summary of recent commissioning activity within the City centre and a review of the three existing documents with the greatest bearing on the Action Plan. These are: *Wide Angle – A Public Art Review for County Durham* by RKL Consultants, which was written in 2005 and proposed a number of initiatives designed to maximise the opportunities for public art across the county; the City of Durham Council's Supplementary Planning Document *Provision of Public Art as part of Major New Planning Schemes*, which imposes a '%forArt' commitment on major developments and is therefore a major potential funder of public art activity in the City; and *Durham City: A Vision For Art*, a report commissioned by Durham City Vision from artist Howard Bowcott which outlines art opportunities in Durham Market Place.

**Section 2: Key Themes and Concepts** identifies some of the key challenges which public art in Durham should be addressing if it is to bring strategic benefit to the City, and makes a recommendation that is fundamental to the rest of the report – that Durham differentiates itself from the rather generic curatorial approach of other cities in the North-East by commissioning the majority of its artworks within two relatively narrow programmes. A conceptual and practical rationale for both these programmes – *City of Letters* and *City of Stone* – is included in this section.

**Section 3: The Spaces and Projects** is the heart of the action plan. Working within the *City of Letters* and *City of Stone* strands, this section identifies a number of interlinked and overlapping commissioning opportunities within the City. This includes projects for:

- The Market Place
- Claypath Bridge
- The Vennels
- The riverside paths
- Fowlers Yard creative studios
- Durham Railway Station

Alongside these public art commissions, this section also makes recommendations about the relocation of the Neptune Statue within Market Place, practical steps towards the use of Market Place as an event space, and strategic support for temporary visual arts projects.

The final section, ***Making it Happen***, looks at the practicalities of achieving this vision. It recommends a management structure; outlines indicative costs, funding sources and timescales; and makes a series of comments on related issues such as creative risk, procurement and interpretation.

# section 1 the current position





## 1.1 recent and current commissions

Perhaps because of its historic public realm and architecture, and the legislative constraints that heritage imposes, Durham has little external contemporary public art within the City centre. Statues of Neptune and Lord Londonderry dominate the Market Place and Fenwick Lawson's recently installed *The Journey* in Millennium Place is in this traditional mould. Stone bollards that reference the Cathedral's decorative motifs are discrete modern additions to Claypath bridge and Saddler Street/Elvet Street junction.

A casual observer or tourist that never ventured from the Peninsula could easily form a picture of a City in thrall to its history and frozen by its responsibility to that heritage. But closer analysis of recent commissioning activity reveals a bolder, more adventurous approach to architecture, design and public art. Major developments at Millennium Place and Freemans Quay Leisure Centre display due sensitivity to the Durham vernacular but also embrace a contemporary aesthetic. The public art commissions for both developments employ modern materials, technologies or aesthetics and make confident visual statements in the same vein as the architecture itself. Durham County Council's ambitious proposal for Pal Svensson's *Skybowl* at Akley Heads fits this mood of confidence and suggests that, in the City at least, the risk-aversion that the RKL report identified is being addressed.

In addition to these permanent artworks, cultural providers such as Durham City Arts and Durham City Vision's Events Team, aided by other City of Durham staff, deliver an increasing programme of temporary events throughout the calendar in public spaces. Initiatives such as the Enlightenment Festival and the annual 'Sculpture in the Park' exhibitions enrich the experience of the City and visitor offer without choking the City's limited public space in a glut of permanent artworks, and their temporary status allows for a greater level of experimentation and innovation than would otherwise be sanctioned. This controlled acceptance of risk is essential to the commissioning of art of any quality, and plays a vital part in preventing the City's architecture and public spaces from atrophying into a pastiche of itself.



**Bollards**, Durham County Council; **The Journey**, Fenwick Lawson, Millennium Place; **Birdboxes** Angus Morrogh-Ryan, Durham riverside walk; **The Visitor** Ron Haselden, Gala Theatre; **Counterweight** Simon Watkinson, Gala Theatre; **Durham Needles** Keri Townsend, Freemans Quay Leisure Centre; **200 Million Years** Gavin Marshall, Freemans Quay Leisure Centre

## **1.2 Wide Angle – A Public Art Review for County Durham RKL Consultants, April 2005**

The 'Wide Angle' report by RKL Consultants was commissioned by the County Durham Strategic Arts Officers Group in April 2005. It highlights the huge scale of opportunity with public sector capital programmes but also identifies key issues that inhibit the quality and extent of public art commissioning within the county. The report opens with, and is guided by, the assertion that:

*Public art enhances the quality of life by helping to define and formulate responses to social, economic, cultural and political issues faced by a community. At its best, public art is more than simply art integrated, installed or performed in a public place; rather it is a community-based process of dialogue, involvement, and participation.*

Read as a standalone statement this definition for public art is easy to misinterpret as a plea for artwork created through practical workshops with local communities. But when read as part of the full report and in the context of national best practice, the statement becomes extremely aspirational and should be read as both a call for a high-level of expertise and capability, and for an understanding of the cost and resources required for creating artwork of the highest quality.

RKL identify the following key issues as limiting factors on this aspiration:

- lack of effective advocacy
- lack of a vigorous design debate
- lack of public art remit for LSPs
- weak project development infrastructure
- lack of consensus on how to take public art developments forward
- risk aversion and a procurement culture that tends towards conservatism

To begin to address these issues the report proposes a £315,000 three year programme, including recommendations for a short-term visioning process; Public Art Officer posts within the County Council and Durham City Arts; seed funding for new projects and initiatives; and the resourcing of a county-wide 'Wide Angle' Public Art Steering Group. Funding for this programme was to come from set contributions from each District Council and the County Council with a strategic level of support from Arts Council England.

This proposed programme of initiatives has prompted some shared aspirations within the Durham District Strategic Arts Officer Group, although activity remained somewhat disjointed. The opportunity to take a strategic approach to the role of public art has now opened up within the structure of the new unitary authority Durham County Council.



### **1.3 Provision of Public Art as part of Major New Planning Schemes Supplementary Planning Document, City of Durham Council August 2006**

City of Durham Council adopted a '%forArt' policy in August 2006. The policy, "*Provision of Public Art as part of Major New Planning Schemes*", was drafted by the planning department of City of Durham Council and Christian Barnes in his public art consultancy role at Durham City Arts, and has the status of a Supplementary Planning Document.

Building on general principles and aspirations already embedded in the Local Plan, the policy is primarily focussed on the integration of art and design into major developments. It applies to residential developments of ten or more dwellings; commercial/industrial, education, retail and leisure developments with floorspace of 1000 m<sup>2</sup> or more; or for sites in excess of 0.5 hectares. Developers (including the local authority and other statutory and administrative bodies) must allocate 1% of their construction costs to public art.

DCA are currently managing projects that have directly resulted from the policy including The Meadows housing development at Framwellgate Moor (Miller Homes), Parkgate office development at Belmont Industrial Estate (The Hanro Group) and the Freemans Quay Leisure Centre.

In these examples there has been a healthy budget and scope on site for innovative and worthwhile artworks to be developed, and the active engagement of the developer. Regrettably this is not always the case, and there will be instances where developers do not wish to offer onsite arts provision; where developments submitted to the planning authority offer no physical scope for public art; and/or the cash value of the 1% contribution is not sufficient to commission an artwork of any merit.

In such instances the policy allows for City of Durham Council to levy this money from the developer via the %forArt policy, 'Section 106' agreement or, in practice, to 'champion' such conditions as part of planning approval. These funds can be allocated to a suitable, agreed scheme away from the development site. This opens up the option to pool developer contributions in a Public Art Action Plan fund, and to commission artworks that offer wider benefit to the City, its residents and its visitors. The themes, projects and processes outlined in this strategy will give private developers the confidence that their contribution will be put to good use and be recognised as contributing to the City's cultural capital. Therefore funds gained via this process must address a public need, and the majority of the individual commissions proposed in this report relate to central spaces where the benefit to a wide public is proven – e.g. the Railway Station, Riverside walks, Market Place and Vennels.

***Recommendation>> Establish a Public Art Action Plan fund for holding and pooling developer contributions***

## **1.4 *Durham City: A Vision For Art* Howard Bowcott, April 2008**

*Durham City: A Vision For Art* was submitted to Durham City Vision in April 2008 by artist Howard Bowcott as part of Miller Research's *Retail Distinctiveness Strategy*. The remit of the report, which is limited to the critical space of Market place and its immediate surrounding area, is to offer an 'artist's eye' of the space and is therefore similar in approach to this document.

Bowcott – an experienced and traditional public artist based in Wales – provides a spatial analysis of the Market Square and its approaches, sketches out a series of commission opportunities and makes more general recommendations for visual enhancements. The approach has much in common with an urban designer, offering a solid assessment of key spaces, thresholds, sightlines and other 'formal' qualities that would form the context and *raison d'être* for the art commissions that might follow. Although developed independently of this strategy, and in parallel to it, Bowcott's report does not contain any major recommendations that contradict the projects in this document.

As the Market Place is perhaps *the* critical space in the centre of the City, and given that both documents are authored by artists, there are many overlaps between the two, including:

- two dimensional artworks for the gable end of the Boots building and the rear façade of Claypath Library
- artist-designed seating, lighting and other multi-function street furniture
- an improved floorscape in Market Place
- greater definition to the boundaries of the Market Place

Bowcott proposes one major project which we had not identified within our own provisional programme of projects – an artwork or architectural intervention on Claypath Bridge, linking Market Place with Millennium Place – which we agree with as an important opportunity. Therefore, and with due credit to Bowcott, we have included that space within our report and attempted to flesh out what this artwork might achieve in more detail.

## section 2 key themes and concepts



## 2.1 the city centre – characteristics and challenges

As a medieval City with few straight lines on its plans or elevations, and with so many centuries of development, the urban grain in Durham is incredibly rich. The experience of walking through the City centre is one of moving in and out of fast-flowing currents. A walk up Silver Street towards Market Square has a sense of convergence and moving with the pulse of the City, and yet a few steps to one side take you into the stillness and tranquillity of the Vennels.

In recognising this unique quality as a fundamental to Durham's character, the role of art in a Masterplan or more general public realm improvements becomes one of acknowledging, enriching and strengthening this diversity, and of facilitating the experiencing of this diversity amongst a wider audience.

The key challenges in achieving this aim are:

- CH 1**      **Drawing attention to Durham's hidden places, spaces and routes, adding to the *experience of the City* and broadening its visitor offer.**
- CH 2**      **Achieving the difficult balance between making these hidden spaces feel *safe and accessible* without losing their unique 'backwater' charm.**
- CH3**      **Contributing to the *legibility* of the City by increasing the *definition* between the City's primary and secondary spaces and routes.**
- CH4**      **Creating high-quality and meaningful art commissions in a restricted heritage environment.**
- CH5**      **Creating projects which add value to the other activity in the City by enhancing existing strengths and providing solutions to recognised problems.**

Each of the individual projects outlined in section 3 of this report has been developed with a view to meeting some or all of the above challenges.

## 2.2 avoiding the generic – a unified and consistent approach

Put simply, Durham is unique amongst cities in the North-East. It bears little visual similarity with Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland or Middlesbrough, and has more in common with market towns such as Hexham but is clearly on another scale. It follows that the approach to commissioning artworks should also be unique and, most importantly, be quite distinct from the commissioning that characterises the other cities.

To an extent, public artworks always reveal the interests of the small number of individuals that have been responsible for commissioning them, but it is fair to say that the main characteristic of art commissioning in most cities is the absence of a defining characteristic. Diversity of artform and approach is in fact the common link, and the 'signature' artworks from each City could quite easily have been commissioned for another.

Our recommendation is that Durham, in seeking to differentiate itself, takes the opposite path and adopts some clearly defined and relatively narrow themes, materials and approaches to its public art commissioning. We propose two interlinked programmes as the focus for new commissioning activity, although of course there will be instances where alternative approaches will be more appropriate. The programmes are:

### CITY OF LETTERS

### CITY OF STONE

These two programmes acknowledge and build upon two inalienable facts – that stone is emblematic of the city and a major material within the visual fabric of the City, and that learning is a cornerstone of the City's identity and trade.

Stone and text do place significant limits on the range of options available to artists, but this of course only limits in one direction – the themes, sites, scale and techniques are left open. Stone might be the material used to explore varied ideas, but a *City Of Stone* commission could alternatively approach stone as a theme and create an artwork in an alternate material. Letters could be created in any permanent or temporary medium or material from lettercut stone through to projected film. The focus on one 'Letters' commission might be a narrative event, and on another the visual impact of typography. *City of Letters* and *City of Stone* projects can combine and overlap within spaces through careful curation and, where appropriate, collaborative practice. It is also important to note that this report does not recommend vetoing other forms of art practice, but simply that the limited resources available through %forArt contributions and other funding should prioritise these two programmes in a structured and strategic manner.

Nor should the focus on text and stone be taken to be a recommendation for the commissioning of traditional art forms, archetypes or artists. The RKL 'Wide Angle' report notes that "*respondents wanted public art to convey a 'sense of place' about their locality*", but does not clearly state that public art also has the potential to *create* a sense of place and to contribute a new layer to Durham's heritage. Passive referencing of the City's existing heritage condemns the City into becoming a pastiche of itself. The recent and successful integration of major contemporary buildings into the fabric of the City, and the artworks that have been commissioned as part of those developments, clearly proves that the City on a collective basis is able to accept risk and welcomes contemporary projects where appropriate.

## 2.3 City of Letters

*City of Letters* is, alongside *City of Stone*, a core commissioning programme within the Durham Public Art Action Plan. The theme is purposefully described as ‘City of Letters’ rather than ‘of Text’ or ‘of Words’. In part this recognises the connection with key religious texts associated with the City; with academic distinction and qualifications and the influence of the University on City life; but it is also meant to suggest the imaginative world that text can transport its reader into.

For our purposes, *City of Letters* is about the use of text as a correspondence between the City and its public, as a means of explaining or enriching an understanding of the City, and as a route for animating spaces and places on either a permanent or temporary basis.

A key strength of the *City Of Letters* programme is its flexibility, and the sheer variety of spaces and places that it can be tailored to. Flexibility comes first from the writer and the diversity of writing styles, approaches, subject matter and themes; but it continues in the options for translating that text into a visual public experience: projections, fretwork, signwriting, lighting, sculptural forms and, connecting with the *City of Stone* theme, as letter-cut or grit-blasted text in walls and flooring.

Changes in scale can move the experience of text from the civic and public through to the personal and intimate. Employed sensitively in the right font, size and layout within a space, text can perform many of the functions required of public art in the Market Place, Vennels and other key sites in the City centre. It can provoke, challenge, be informative and move people; direct people through a space and reassure them that they are on a safe and cared-for route; it can act as a placemaker, a focal feature or a stopping point; and it can remediate difficult spaces within complex urban environments.

Text, as an extremely specific medium, needs to be of the highest quality and entirely appropriate to site. There is a substantial amount of text-based public art in the North-East but the quality of content and delivery is extremely variable. To achieve the best results for Durham care must be taken to ensure that:

- The writers or poets commissioned are of the highest quality and appropriate to the City
- The typographers, craftspeople or fabricators who translate the text into public space enter into a collaborative dialogue with the writer
- The support that both are given in terms of research, time and funding is adequate

### **Expertise and Resources**

Fundamental to recruitment of high-quality writers and poets for this programme is a symbiotic relationship with the City’s flagship Durham Book Festival (previously the Durham Literature Festival, programmed each October). An established highlight in the region’s cultural calendar, the festival attracts writers of a high-calibre to the City each year for a series of readings, promotions and events, and offers access to a unique range of creative practitioners. The vision is to commission one writer or poet participating in the Book Festival annually to develop a temporary or permanent piece of public art specifically for the City, setting a benchmark for the calibre of writer that would be sought for this programme. The commissions would provide a unique and lasting legacy of each Festival, and help to strengthen its connections with the City’s identity.



Alongside the Durham Book Festival, other live literary events such as the Mystery Plays planned for 2010 could inform the commissioning of *City Of Letters*. The English department at Durham University also offers a wealth of experience in the field of literature, and academic staff should be invited to engage with the selection process for *City Of Letters* commissions. University and Cathedral archive holdings of illuminated manuscripts and other rare texts should be drawn upon as contextual material for the commissions.

*commission>> given that the regeneration of the market place offers a unique opportunity to integrate a commission into the overall design of the space, the first City of Letters commission could be for this site.*

*Recommendation>> to provide an efficient introduction to the possibilities ways of physically outputting text in public space a background report would need to be produced. This would primarily be visual and would include examples of text in a variety of materials and used as seating, kerb edging, signage, projections etc. This document would be appended to the Writers Brief for each commission.*



*Fowlers Yard Vennel; Gable end of the Boots Building, Durham Market Place; Clayport Library; Durham Market Place flooring; Text Incorporated into the Welsh Assembly building, Cardiff; Poet Laureate Andrew Motion's What If..., Sheffield Hallam University; small text pieces in Newcastle's Grainger Town by Rupert Clamp and Bill Herbert*

## 2.4 City of Stone

If, as noted in 1.1, recent architectural projects in the City have been characterised by a good balance between sensitivity to the Durham vernacular and a contemporary aesthetic, then the art commissioning programme needs to display a similarly sure-footed and balanced approach. This synergy between artwork and architecture has already been achieved through the commissioned artworks at the Gala Theatre and Freemans Quay Leisure Centre. The latter are good examples of this – Gavin Marshall's glazing design takes an extremely illustrative approach to Durham's heritage, but the scale and confidence of the delivery give it a contemporary feel. By contrast Keri Townsend's *Durham Needles* fencing appears entirely abstract, but is based closely on the topography of the City. Irrespective of their starting points, both suit the aesthetic of the architecture.

*City Of Stone*, the other core commissioning programme within the Durham Public Art Action Plan, must achieve a similar balance. Stone sculpture is popular with the general public, offering as it does an association with traditional skills and a pleasing aesthetic and material quality. For the commissioner it also offers extreme durability and easy maintenance, making it a viable option for infrequently visited areas that may be prone to vandalism. In Durham it is a vernacular building material, and its use in art offers a clear and obvious link with that heritage. It is important to state clearly that this programme is not about the promotion or prioritising of conservative or derivative artworks, or about placing a creative stranglehold on artists. Rather it is about the creative commissioning of innovative new artworks that adopt a range of approaches and explore diverse themes relevant to the City, but within the cohesive framework provided by the *City of Stone* umbrella.

Commissioning a programme of artworks requires the same skills in microcosm as the City of Durham needs when striking a balance between preserving and celebrating heritage and the commissioning of new architectural forms: an appreciation for the existing field, a commitment to new learning and measured risk, and imagination for how things might be done.

### **Selection of artists**

The challenge will be to work with this material in an innovative way without rejecting the fundamental qualities that make stone so enduringly popular. With that in mind, recruitment for commissions would fall into one of two distinct camps:

- Identify a pool of the best artists working regularly in stone across a wide range of styles, techniques and concerns
- Identify a pool of consistently engaging contemporary artists with no background in working with stone, and pair them with a skilled carver, mason or stone processing facility.

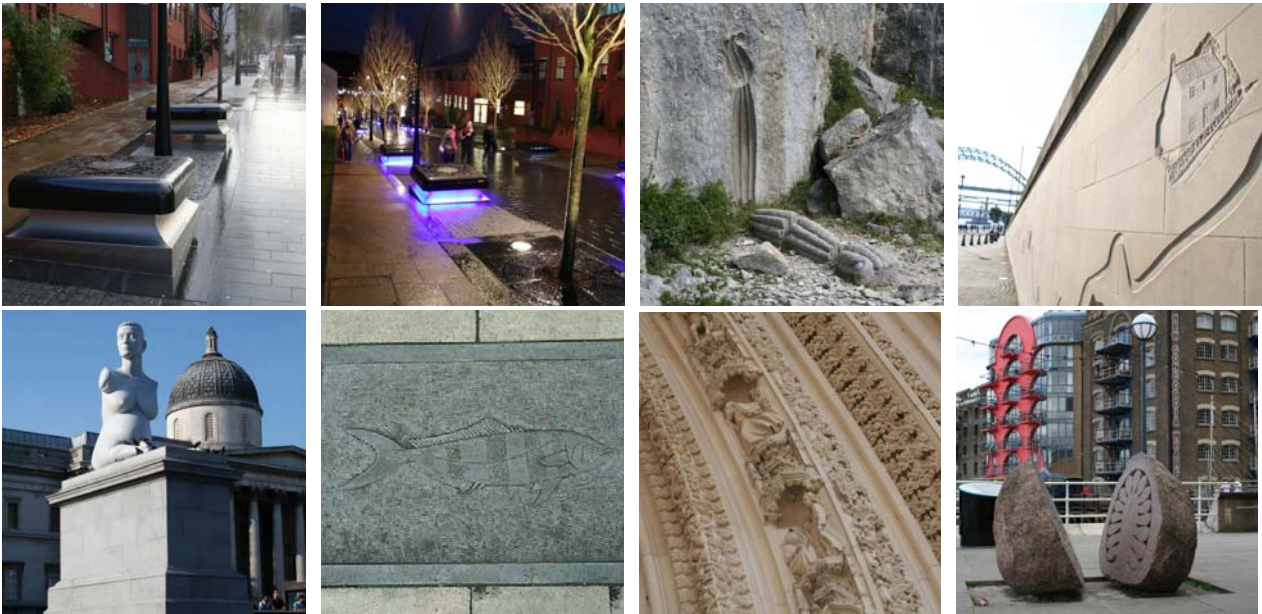
The success of the programme would be if all the commissioned works functioned as a collection without a clear split between the two approaches.

As with the *City Of Letters* programme, changes in scale can move the experience of text from the civic and public through to the personal and intimate. It can address the same challenges and offer the same benefits throughout the City, and section 3 outlines a number of projects within the *City Of Stone* strand on a range of scales. The true flexibility of this programme strand does not come from the material, techniques or processes involved, but from the creativity of the artists invited to



develop projects for the City. Plans for the procurement and management of artists for this programme are outlined in section 4.

**Recommendation>> to provide an efficient introduction to the possibilities of stone as a material, and background report would need to be produced for use by artists new to the material. This would include information on stone (types, properties, longevity etc); processes (carving specialists, CNC routing, water-jet cutting, laminating etc); and logistical issues (weight, quarries, lead-in time, costings). This document would be appended to the Artist Brief for each commission.**



Contemporary street furniture, Sheffield; Untitled stone carving, Tout Quarry, Portland; Relief Carving, Newcastle Quayside; Portrait of Alison Lapper, Mark Wallinger, carrara marble, Trafalgar Square, London; Pilot Fish Hull Fish Trail, Gordon Young; Ecclesiastical carving, York Minster; Peter Randall-Page, South Bank, London

# section 3 the projects



### 3.1 overview of key spaces

This section identifies a number of important spaces within the City. It has not been divided into 'Letters' projects and 'Stone' projects as many of the spaces are equally suited to either of these options, or a combination of both. Some of the projects outlined in Section 3 are designed to create greater linkages and natural routes between one or more of these spaces.

#### Millennium Place

Housing the Gala Theatre, Tourist Information Centre and Clayport Library, this recent addition to the Cityscape of Millennium Place provides the City's best programmable external event space and is the home for numerous events. In part this is due to the lack of street clutter, which needs to be kept to a minimum, but there is sufficient space within Millennium Place's split level plaza to accommodate events and permanent sculpture.

The recent introduction of Fenwick Lawson's *The Journey* into the upper plaza effectively prevents the installation of any other permanent sculpture within the same space as the style of the sculpture is so distinct. The *City of Letters* strand does remain a viable option for the Millennium Place plazas as it can work subtly alongside *The Journey* and an events programme without creating visual overload.

#### Palace Green

Owned by the University, and now part of the World Heritage Site, Palace Green is of great historical significance but in itself is visually unobtrusive, giving a subtle spatial setting to the principal monuments. With both the Castle and Cathedral as backdrops there are compelling reasons to leave this space alone, and as the Green is both large and open the scale required of any new sculptural object would be such that it would compete with those two Durham icons. This report leaves this space alone, except to note that the prestigious nature of the space does warrant the budget to allow for bespoke design of the very highest quality for any new street furniture or streetscape design.

#### Market Place

The Market Place is the historic heart and meeting place for the City and remains its central space. It is the natural starting point for trails or walking routes and is an important space for most of the projects outlined in this report. Usage and pressures from stakeholders are complex and the area is scheduled for a major capital investment and redesign exercise in the coming months. This offers the first opportunity to comprehensively impact on the space since the last scheme some thirty years ago. All the projects outlined in Section 3 are interlinked, but core projects for Market Place could include:

- 'Stripping Down and Dressing Up': infrastructure to facilitate temporary events
- 'Mapping History': redesign of the market place flooring
- 'Durham Plinths': inclusion in the Durham Plinths stone carving trail
- 'Setting Out': provision of artist-designed market stalls
- 'City Of Letters' inclusion of the Market Place as a site for a text-based commission

### **The Vennels**

Durham's Vennels – the narrow back alleys that radiate from Market Place, Silver Street and Saddler Street – have a unique charm and create additional linkages between the major streets and other areas of visitor interest such as the riverside and Fowlers Yard. Their usage is currently limited due to uncertainty about their status as public rights of way, the perception that they may be unsafe, and doubt amongst visitors as to whether they lead anywhere of interest and merit. The personal and contemplative nature of these spaces makes them more suited to small, integrated artworks. Alongside the Market Place the Vennels are scheduled for a major capital investment and redesign exercise in the coming months.

### **The Riverside**

The heavily wooded Riverside area has major walking routes around the peninsula, and currently offers a variety of spaces, openings, views and secluded areas. The area has a recent history as the site for artworks including Richard Cole's reclaimed Cathedral pinnacle by Prebends Bridge (the outcome of a Durham Cathedral residency) and the contemporary bird boxes by architect Angus Morragh-Ryan. These artworks are unobtrusive and fit well with the inherent qualities of their environment, and the uncluttered feel of the area should be retained through sensitive and low-key commissioning, with an emphasis on temporary projects. The 'Durham Plinths' project would be a logical way of connecting the Riverside with key walking routes in the City centre. The area is in multiple ownerships, but the Riverside Management Group provides the forum via which this project and others could be taken forward.

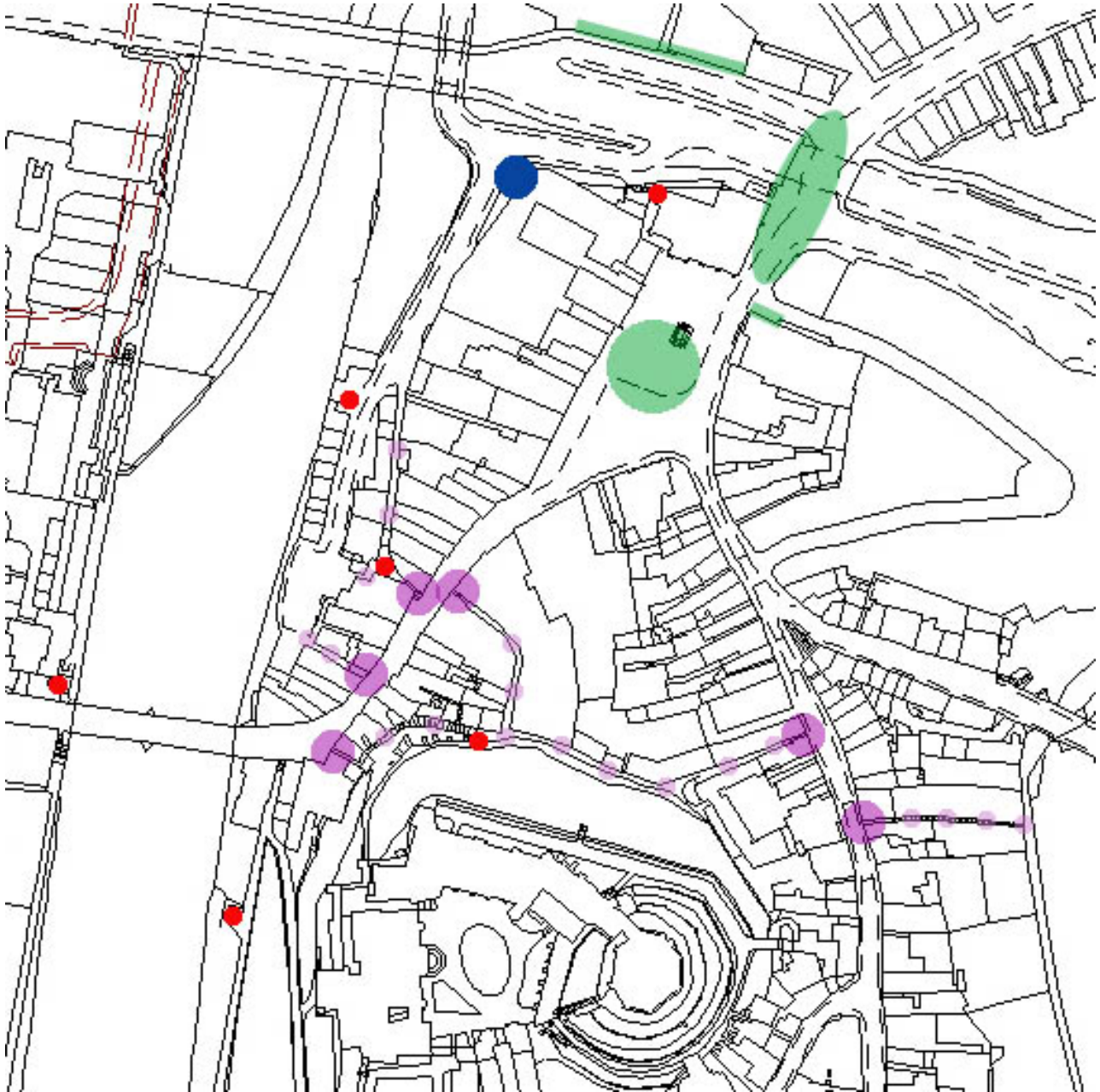
### **Durham Rail Station**

A key gateway to the City, the Durham Railway Station blends original and contemporary architecture, and to some extent captures the prevailing design ethos of new developments such as Millennium Place. The immediate environs around the station offer a further opportunity for the City to convey its approach to heritage and contemporary art and design. Projects are proposed for the new steps to the front of the station, to the underpass, and for the Bishops Prospect, a viewpoint over the City.

### **Fowlers Yard**

Home to a small number of cultural industries, the Fowlers Yard complex is, with the nearby Gala Theatre, part of the Cultural Quarter for the City. Tenants within the work/retail units, which are owned and managed by the City Council, have identified a need for greater promotion of the Fowlers Yard complex. Projects proposed for the Vennels – the main pedestrian routes to the Yard – will have particularly relevance to the ongoing success of Fowlers Yard, but a specific commission for a 'gateway feature' at the entrance point on Back Silver Street is also proposed.

### 3.2 Artwork locations



**Green Circles** – major artworks integrated into landscaping enhancements

**Green lines** – wall locations for City Of Letters major commissions

**Blue Circle** – Fowlers Yard Gateway Feature

**Red circles** – Durham Plinth stone sculptures

**Purple Circles** – Vennel entrance improvements and small works



### 3.3 The Market Place: Statues and Flooring



In his evaluation of the Market Place for the *Durham City: A Vision For Art* report Howard Bowcott refers to a recent public consultation exercise and notes a public concern about the creation of a blank, featureless space. In part to allay that concern, and in part to create better sightlines from Claypath and Silver Street, Bowcott recommends a third “*focal point of mass and height*” alongside the Lord Londonderry and Neptune statues. The suggested location is at the top-end of Market Place, potentially with a political theme to create a dialogue with the existing statues. He also raises the potential for a more functional focal point such as a contemporary kiosk, information point or shelter.

The fear of a blank featureless space has been overstated. The facades of the buildings, St Nicholas Church and the two statues are all of positive and permanent interest, although the common experience of the space and those structures is one interrupted by vehicles, market stalls, red phone boxes etc. The current space would benefit from rationalising, and in light of that we recommend that a third structure or sculpture is *not* added to Market Place. Instead we suggest that the location of the statues be considered, potentially reclaiming vehicular space for pedestrians and improving the sightlines to the sculptures from Claypath, Silver Street and Saddler Street.

In creating a more usable events space for the City the enlarged floor surface becomes the canvas for a major art commission without impeding any events. This commission, which should embody both the *City of Letters* and *City Of Stone* themes, becomes a new focal point and focal feature of the Market Place.



Roger McGough text, Liverpool; Gordon Young, Morecambe Bay; Lawrence Weiner, Newcastle; Bottle Bank, Sunderland

**action>> relocate the Neptune statue to create a larger event space**

**commission>> explore the scope for create a major flooring design for the central event space incorporating text and stone with the commissioned design team for the Durham City Vision Market Place and Vennels project.**

### 3.4 Market Place Events: ‘Stripping Down and Dressing Up’



Event images courtesy of Durham City Vision

A balance must be achieved between competing visions for the Market Place. It must work on a day to day basis as the heart of the City’s everyday life, filled with interest and adding to the City’s layers of heritage, it must be both a meeting point and the location for the market itself. It must also be open enough to provide a much-needed flexible space that can be temporarily transformed for unique events. These conflicting requirements are not insurmountable – simply an interesting creative challenge to which a number of interlinked art and design projects provide an answer.

Relative to its footprint, the market place underperforms as a public event space. The subdivisions between highway, parking and pedestrian space; the volume and positioning of street furniture; the positioning of the two statues: all conspire to limit the usability of the Market Place for the kind of events that Durham City Arts, Durham City Vision’s Events Team and other cultural stakeholders in the City would wish to programme.

To maximise the huge potential of the Market Place for events two contradictory actions need to transform the space. Firstly it needs to be *stripped down*, to create a larger, more usable space in which events can be programmed safely. Secondly, the infrastructure needs to be put in place for *dressing up* the space during an event.

Key actions for ***stripping down*** the space are:

- Remove or rationalise street furniture, replacing with the minimum amount of highest quality, bespoke artist-designed furniture. Where possible the designs should be multipurpose to further reduce the volume of objects in the Market Place
- Create a clear performance and event area with a large footprint and, if viable within budgetary and logistical constraints, with a realignment of levels to create flat, horizontal flooring
- Consider the relocation of the statues within Market Place, reclaiming current vehicular space for pedestrians and improving the sightlines to the sculptures from Claypath, Silver Street and Saddler Street

Key actions for ***dressing up*** the space are:

- install 'pop-up' electrical supply columns and water standpipe points flush into the paving at agreed locations
- explore the options for a sound auditorium, installing discrete speakers within the space and to the facades of key buildings, wired back to a control point in a public building
- provide the infrastructure for the temporary transformation of the space for events, by ensuring that street furniture can, where practicable, be altered (e.g. light fittings with dimmer switches) or accept additional elements during events (e.g. temporary signage)

This investment in infrastructure to support events activity effectively transforms the market place into a bookable space for performance and audio works, and will be of use to a wide range of cultural event organisers and major city stakeholders.

***action>> ensure that the Market Place and Vennels Design Team incorporate cultural event needs into the emerging design process***



*Multifunctional street furniture, Sheffield City Centre – seating, lighting and vehicular barrier*

***commission>> bespoke suite of seating, lighting columns and other street furniture***



### 3.5 The Durham Market: ‘Setting Out A Stall’



*Durham Outdoor Market – cramped into one corner of the space by poor streetscape, and nearly invisible behind the delivery vans  
Durham Indoor Market – cheap looking signage and entrance points*

Improvements to the Market Place layout, including waymarking, interpretation and vehicular layout are currently in development by the Market Place and Vennels Design Team, and are largely beyond the scope of public art to resolve. One major stakeholder in this process will be the market traders, who currently bring not just economic benefit to the city but also animation and purpose to the Market Place.

The redesigned and revitalised Market Place that the Design Team will deliver will bring direct benefits to the market traders. As a component of the ‘*Dressing Up*’ element of the Market Place’s redesign, sockets and connection points for the stalls could be inset into the flooring to allow for a clean, elegant display. The pop-up electrical columns would reduce or remove the need for unsightly and noisy market stall generators.

The market stalls themselves could also be addressed as a creative project – either within the overall redevelopment or as a standalone project. With the agreement and participation of the market traders, this would be a commission for a sculptor, architect, furniture maker or product designer, who would work with the market traders to agree a technical specification for the stalls. Whilst a contemporary project in terms of its overall aesthetic, the opportunity exists for the detailing of the stalls to be informed by careful local research – for example, the fabric roofs of the stalls could incorporate specific motifs, patterns and iconography relating to Durham’s weaving traditions.

***commission>> consultation with traders leading to the redesign and fabrication of new, Durham-specific market stalls.***

### 3.6 Claypath Bridge: Linkages with Millennium Place



As noted in 1.1.3, the significance of the space on Claypath Bridge leading into the Market Place was identified by artist Howard Bowcott in his *Durham City: A Vision For Art* report. Bowcott states that the space on either side of the carriageway on the entrance to Market Place has “*an opportunity to signal entry to the heart of Durham and promote what it has to offer*”. The physical detail of such an artwork is left purposefully open, but his most ambitious version of this proposal is a major, architecturally scaled structure on Claypath Bridge that incorporates seating and shelter.

The Claypath road across the dual carriageway between Market Place and Millennium Place is an extremely significant space: it connects the cultural offer of Millennium Place’s Theatre, Library, performance area and restaurants with the heritage offer of the Durham Peninsula. This piece of highway engineering bisects the two areas and presents a set of unappealing concrete monoliths with their attendant highway-standard balustrades and signage. These issues have long been recognised by all parties, and attempts made to improve the aesthetic appeal of the space, but it remains a serious challenge for all concerned.

This longstanding vision has real merit and significance, reclaiming the space from a highway environment and linking Market Place and Millennium Place into virtually one space. Assuming that the forthcoming redesign of Market Place does create a more usable event space, then that linkage becomes all the more important. The bridge is sufficiently wide to allow for structures that would screen the road from the pedestrian’s experience of the route, and be highly visible from the highway as a ‘gateway’ to the Durham Peninsula. Although an extremely challenging proposition in terms of permissions, structural engineering and Health & Safety on the highway, the opportunity is such that options should still be considered.

***commission>> major project to create a promenade between Millennium Place and Market Place, replacing or screening the existing highway balustrade with a larger architecturally-scaled structure that screens the highway from Market Place and Millennium Place, acts as a high-visibility promotional statement when viewed from the highway, and provides seating and lighting***

### 3.7 The Vennels

Durham's Vennels – the narrow back alleys that radiate from Market Place, Silver Street and Saddler Street – have a unique charm and create additional linkages between the major streets and other areas of visitor interest such as the riverside and Fowlers Yard. Their usage is currently limited due to uncertainty amongst potential users about their status as public rights of way, the perception that they may be unsafe, and doubt amongst visitors as to whether they lead anywhere of interest and merit. Public realm improvements being developed by the Market Place and Vennels Design Team should address many of these perceived negatives, and the role of lighting (including creative lighting commissions by artists) is fully recognised in the Lighting and Darkness Strategy commissioned from Speirs and Major (2007).

Currently the Vennels are more an important component of the City's imagination and image than they are an active participant in its social space, and it is their physical qualities that make the Vennels simultaneously attractive and uninviting. A visitor to Durham could stand at the entrance to a Vennel and fairly ask:

- Am I allowed down there?
- What is down there to see?
- Does it lead anywhere I could be missing?
- Is it safe?

With such doubts the Vennels remain something of an untapped resource in the City, and public art has a significant role to play in maximising their potential. Many of the questions a visitor might pose to themselves when poised at the entrance to a Vennel can be answered positively through public art.

Working within an overall improvement scheme, and to an extent able to operate in advance of it, public art has three roles to play in the Vennels:

- Improvements to the thresholds
- Enhancements to the views into the Vennels
- Leading people through the Vennels

The challenge is to address the negative aspects of the Vennels without compromising or diluting their essential characteristics. The Vennels are in public ownership, but the visitor's experience of one is essentially private due to their narrowness, their twists and turns and the absence of other users. They are spaces in which small pieces of poetry and sculpture can be stumbled across or sought out and considered quietly on a one-to-one basis.

***Recommendation>> small, intimate scale artworks are the most appropriate approach for art commissions in the Vennels.***

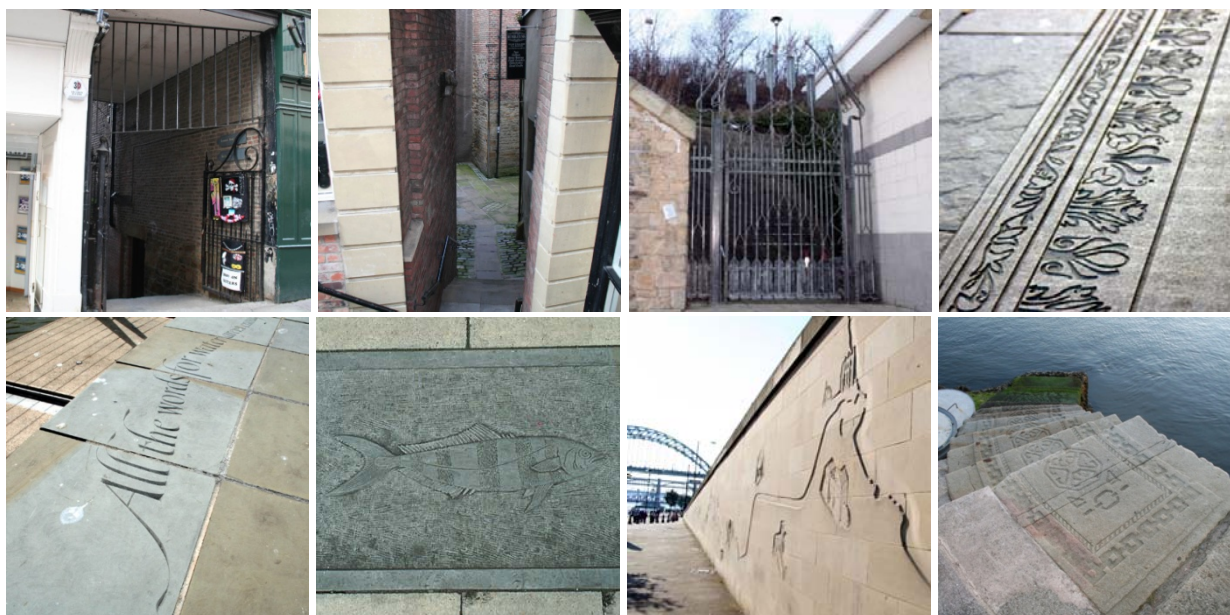
Assuming the Vennels are to be brought into wider use then greater attention must be drawn to their entrance points, which are currently poorly defined. This is particularly important for the Silver Street to Back Silver Street and Fowlers Yard Vennels which lead off from Silver Street, which offer a pedestrian link with the Fowlers Yard artist studios. New gates, railings and stone 'entrance mats' would all help to define these thresholds without being garish or inappropriate, and the care given

to the creation of the Vennel entrance points offers a clear indication that these spaces are not only safe but of interest and a part of the 'tourist map' for the City.

Such improvements to the entrance points of the Vennels have little value if the subsequent view into the interior is unappealing. To encourage a visitor to cross the threshold there needs to be some sense that the experience will be both worthwhile and safe. A 'trail of breadcrumbs' approach is required to help people progress into and through the Vennels: from the threshold there must be something visible ahead to draw people in, and small artworks inset into the walls or flooring can perform this function. From that new location there must be something else visible up ahead, and so on, throughout the Vennel. Lighting will also have a crucial role to play in the Vennels, and although led by a lighting designer could integrate successfully with an arts project.

These artworks need not be large or expensive. A pertinent example is the *Hull Fish Trail*, created by artist Gordon Young in the early nineties as an A to Z of fish (starting with the Anchovy at the Tourist Information Centre) and creating a circular route through Hull's historic but fractured old town area. What lifts this simple idea beyond a clunky illustration of a City's primary industry is the quality of the delivery – the choice of sites and the quality of craftsmanship. Each individual artwork is sensitively placed to relate to it's environment and the type of fish – the Electric Eel is adjacent to the Sub-Station; the Pilot Fish outside the office of the Humber Pilots; the Prawn carved into a stone heavily marked with fossilised crustaceans, the Eel is hidden away in a small crevice etc.

#### artworks that attract and lead....



**Paddle Gates**, Craig Knowles, Sunderland Marina; **Welcome Mats** Catherine Bertola, Grainger Town, Newcastle;  
**Truth and Illusion**, Linda France and Alec Peever, Museum and Winter Gardens, Sunderland; **Hull Fish Trail**, Gordon Young, Hull ;  
**Relief Carving**, Neil Talbot, Newcastle Quayside; **Stone Carpet Steps**, Colin Wilbourn, Sunderland Marina

**commission>> replacement of poor quality metalwork with matching, more sensitively specified alternatives. High-profile entrance points such as the Silver Street entrance to Fowlers Yard warrant bespoke design. Introduction of carved stonework into the flooring at key entrance points.**

**commission>> a series of small additions to the City of Letters and City of Stone programmes in the Vennel walls and flooring, creating a basic walking trail and drawing people through the route. The first should be visible from the entrance points, the second**

*from the site of the first etc. Similar additions would be required across major routes (Silver Street, Market Place, Saddler Street) to connect the Vennels into an overall scheme.*

**Current context: redevelopment of the Market Place and Vennels**

Design proposals for enhancements to the Vennels are currently being procured by Durham City Vision as part of the Market Place initiative, and change to the Vennels will largely be a task for the appointed design team. Complex land ownership and heritage issues will impinge on the ability for the design team to make substantial changes to the Vennels environment, bringing the role of art to the forefront in terms of addressing some of the pressing issues that face those spaces.

Craftspeople should have a role to play in the creation of the gates, screens and other products that will be specified by the landscape designers, and light-artists a role to play in the creative delivery of aspects of the Light and Darkness Strategy. These small artworks recommended for the Vennels are best installed as an integrated component of a wider scheme, but can be installed at any point as discrete commissions with the *City of Stone* and *City of Letters* programmes.



### 3.8 The Durham Plinths



*Eight indicative sites (all subject to review against future development plans):  
 Moatside Lane; beneath The Gates Shopping Centre; to the rear of St Nicholas Church; Fowlers Yard; on the former site of the Rotarians Shelter; the Back Silver Street Vennel; riverside walk near Prebends Bridge; threshold of the Kingsgate Bridge*

As noted in the Introduction, a walk through the centre of Durham is one of moving in and out of currents – the differences between main thoroughfares and back streets and alleyways are extremely distinct, and a detour ‘off the beaten track’ is a rewarding aspect of Durham City Centre. This project makes use of those niches, quiet backwaters and intersections that have been created during Durham’s long history of development and redevelopment.

A key strand in the *City Of Stone* programme, and envisaged as both a formalised trail and a series of standalone artworks that may be stumbled across during a self-directed walk, the project extends from the Durham Peninsula across to the riverbanks and up to the railway Station. The flexibility of this project allows for its potential integration into Durham City Vision regeneration schemes, with the heart of the route and many of the proposed artwork locations falling within the boundaries of the Market Place and Vennels redevelopment. Future initiatives for priority sites such as North Road, the former Ice Rink site and the River Gardens could also be linked with the Durham Plinths.

The purpose of this project is to:

- weave an additional layer of visual interest into the City
- create a loose trail of artworks around the less used areas of the City centre, encouraging additional and more diverse usage of the space
- creating a new attraction for the City without drawing attention away from the Cathedral and Castle

As noted in 2.4, care should be taken to commission artists that can offer something new to the material and processes, and a procurement route to achieve that is outlined in Section 4. Diversity of artworks would be achieved by commissioning established stone carvers or by pairing other interesting artists with skilled technicians and advisors; and by identifying a range of sites with

varied scales and qualities. The material itself, and the branding and marketing of the projects, provides the linkage between each artwork.

***commission>> an initial six artworks from a diverse range of artists***



*Peter Randall-Page, South Bank, London; Druva Mistry, Birmingham; Ian Hamilton-Finlay, Little Sparta, Scotland*

***temporary option>> To raise profile, create dialogue and raise aspirations for future projects, an option is to curate a temporary exhibition of artworks located around the City for between three to twelve months.***

### 3.9 Fowlers Yard Gateway Feature



*Fowlers Yard units; poorly defined entrance to Fowlers Yard; indicative entrance features*

Fowlers Yard is a terrace of creative industry spaces, and is owned and managed by City of Durham Council. There are a range of creative businesses operating from these units, with current occupants including a photography studio, milliner/clothes designer, painter, jeweller, micro brewery and Durham City Arts.

The majority of businesses in Fowlers Yard operate on a combined studio/shop basis and attracting additional footfall to Fowlers Yard will have a clear benefit with the viability of those businesses. In part this promotion can be achieved through PR and advertising, but the role of physical signage and improvements to the nearby public realm is of equal importance. There are three areas where improvements can be made:

- Enhancements at the highway entrance to Back Silver Street, from which there is currently little indication of the Fowlers Yard complex.
- Information on Silver Street and at Market Place indicating the existence, location and distance to Fowlers Yard via the pedestrian walkways that link them.
- Improvements to the Vennels that lead from Silver Street and Market Place to Fowlers Yard.

The Durham City Wayfinding Strategy addresses some of these requirements as part of a holistic programme of signage improvements for the city, and several of the art projects already outlined will also contribute to this process and bring benefit to Fowlers Yard by improving legibility. The space immediately to the front of Leonards Coffee Shop or Durham City Arts fit logically into the proposed route for the Durham Plinths project, and plans for the Vennels (both arts commissioning and more general physical improvements) should prioritise the linkages between Silver Street and Fowlers Yard as 'early wins'.

The primary, sculptural entrance-marking feature could be located on the grass at the entrance to Back Silver Street with secondary features within the Vennels entrances.

***commission>> an entrance or gateway feature at the corner of Walkergate and Fowlers Yard, promoting Fowlers Yard.***



### 3.10 Durham Railway Station: Steps and Underpass



*Durham Station steps, viewing area and underpass; cladding to brick wall of the pedestrian walkway to Waterloo Station, London; Elley Dee, Jeremy Lord, Cramlington; textured concrete wall design, Temple Bar, Dublin*

Durham City Vision recently completed new access steps and landscaping enhancements adjacent to the Railway Station. The project, funded by Single Programme via ONE North East, comprises major new steps down the embankment in front of the station entrance, opening up a new vista. It concludes at the base of the steps with improvements to the small viewing area overlooking the City.

The scheme was to include a small art commission for which artist Catherine Bertola was selected. Although the commission could not be progressed at that point, suitable stone (in terms of sizes and surface texture) was specified to allow for the possibility of 'retro-fitting' the artwork at a later date. The proposed commission – part of *City of Stone* – would have started with a short period of historical research by the artist, after which a series of motifs or designs would be generated and grit-blasted into the stone steps and walls.

Whilst the Station and its environs have been improved, the road and pedestrian underpass remains an unwelcoming environment through which many residents and tourists pass on route to the City centre. The solution could be a simple and standard public realm scheme with a clean-up, enhanced lighting and new railings and floor surfacing, but a more creative response could provide a more fitting entrance to the City, becoming the first cultural experience of the City and setting a standard for the City as a whole.

***commission>> Catherine Bertola designs for the stone steps and viewing area.***

***commission>> Extend the scope of the above project to include the underpass using alternate materials.***

### 3.11 Strategic support for temporary Visual Arts Projects



*Durham Enlightenment Festival: **The Third Eye**, Sanchayan Ghosh; **Calcutta Lights**, Nandita Pouchadhury; **Chandelier**, Lulu Quinn; **Illuminated Carpet**, Julie Westerman*

Too many permanent projects in key spaces would soon clog up the space available for temporary artworks and events. The statues in Market Place and Millennium Place have effectively ‘filled’ them – they could not sensibly accommodate another art object of similar scale. As a reflection of this the majority of the projects in this plan are for small, overlooked spaces rather than the major spaces, and even in these major spaces care has been taken to propose specific artforms that do not dominate or clutter the space.

Temporary projects can animate and revitalise spaces, can offer new ways of interpreting or approaching familiar spaces, and most importantly offer a ‘no-risk’ route to experimenting with the spaces. This last point is essential, as temporary artworks typically require less scrutinising than permanent projects and therefore a greater level of risk can usually be accepted. After all if it doesn’t work, or fit in, then there is no harm done. Temporary projects are the lifeblood of creativity in the public realm, and have an expansive effect on the understanding of the subject for those officers, councillors and other stakeholders that are involved in the creation of public art.

City of Durham Council is a core funder and major stakeholder in both Durham City Arts (DCA) and Durham City Vision (DCV), and both organisations act on the council’s behalf as delivery vehicles for events and arts activity in the City. DCA and DCV have recently begun collaborating on larger, more ambitious projects such as the Enlightenment Festival in 2008.

Projects with this level of ambition are expensive and difficult to fund, with major funders tending not to finance annual events. Private sector %forArt contributions will never become the backbone of a temporary art commissioning programme, but they could nonetheless make a significant impact in the viability of such projects – offering match funding required by regular funders such as Arts Council England. Temporary public art commissions are eligible for support through the council’s %forArt policy provided that they offer proven benefit to the community, and the scale and quality of events such as the Enlightenment Festival certainly qualify under this criteria.

Care must be taken that only projects of the highest calibre are supported through this route, and that a strategic scrutiny is in place to evaluate each opportunity. This would be the role of the Public Art Steering Group (see Section 4: Making it Happen).



# section 4 making it happen



#### 4.1 Programme Management

Section 2.2 of this Action Plan notes that the defining characteristic of the public art collection in most cities is actually the lack of any defining characteristic, and goes on to make a case for Durham adopting a more clearly defined programme of art commissions within the *City of Letters* and *City of Stone* strands. If this core principle is accepted then the curation, management and allocation of resources will need to be addressed carefully.

Depending on the specific nature of each project, Durham County Council could deliver individual commissions on an ad-hoc basis via a number of arts officers, arts organisations or public art consultants. The specialist nature of public art commissioning and the need for a consistent approach suggests that DCA could play an important role in the delivery of this programme, and this recommendation echoes the findings of the RKL Consultants 'Wide Angle' report from April 2005 (see 1.2).

#### 4.2 Steering Group and Programme Scrutiny

It is equally clear that, to ensure that the agreed vision and strategic aims are not lost sight of, the commissioners will need to be under scrutiny by a steering group. The process would require absolute transparency, and it would be the Steering Group's responsibility to ensure compliance with the terms of the contribution and to provide an audit trail for the expenditure.

Recommended Steering Group members would be:

- **CHAIR:** Head Of Cultural Services\*, Durham County Council
  - *Client representation and strategic guidance*
- Director, DCA (Durham City Arts)
  - *Director of the annual Durham Book Festival;*
  - *project manager of the Durham Public Art programme*
- Heritage & Planning Officer\*, Durham County Council
  - *guidance on planning, heritage, urban design and landscape issues;*
  - *advice on key opportunities via the private sector*
- Director, Durham City Vision
  - *integration with major regeneration projects and activity within the City*
- Tourism Manager\*, Durham County Council
  - *Perspective on the value of the programme for the City's tourism offer*
- Commission North, Arts Council England
  - *guidance on public art; regional and national perspective; strategic buy-in*
- Chair of DCA (Durham City Arts)
  - *advocate of arts within the City*

- Private Developer
  - *An observation-only place on the Steering Group for developers contributing funding to the delivery of %forArt projects*

\* *These job titles may change within the new unitary authority Durham County Council*

In addition, meetings where *City of Letters* commissions were under discussion would require an expanded panel with literature expertise:

- Cultural Lead, Durham University
  - *access to expertise, archives and resources within the University*
- Director, New Writing North
  - *the regional development agency for creative writing*
- Arts Council England (NE) Literature Officer
  - *strategic buy-in and guidance*

As with all steering groups, a simple Terms of Reference document would be required, and invited members would need to understand the time commitment for meetings and their role and workload outside of the meetings themselves. When finalising membership, the question must be asked as to whether the panel members have the right balance between authority within their organisations and the time to commit to the process. The programme managers would service the Steering Group.

### **4.3 Identifying sites**

Agreed sites for commissions need to be determined through a selection matrix which represents the interests of all parties:

*For an artist (including writers), the selection of a site would involve spending time in the City, responding on a personal level to its spaces and creating a unique site-specific artwork or text for one space or a series of spaces.*

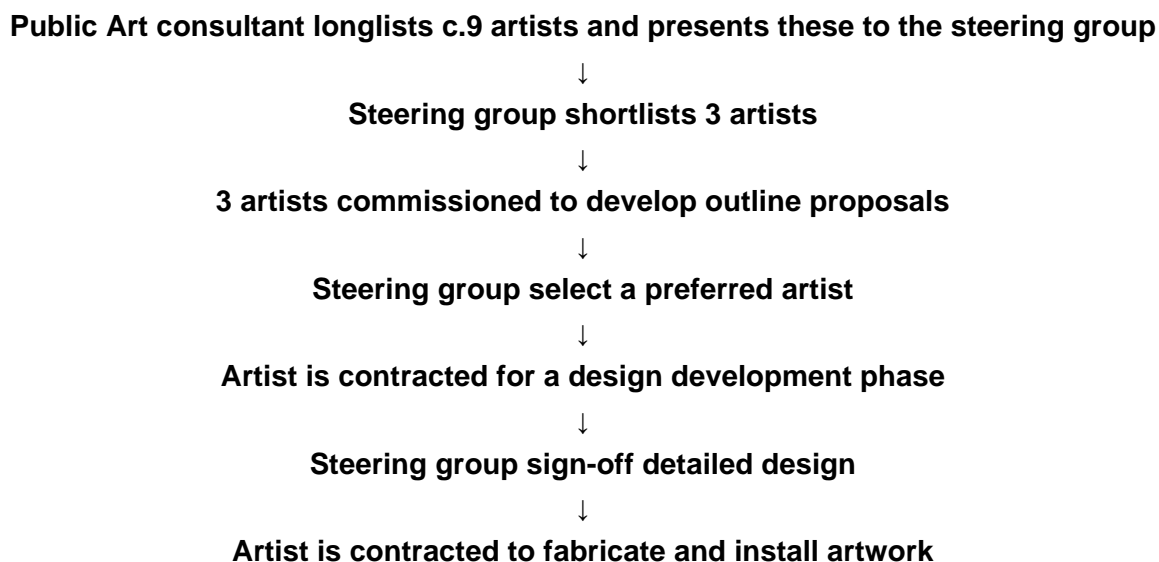
*For those individuals with a remit for culture and tourism in the City, the preferred sites would be those which offer the greatest benefit to the City's image and have the greatest synchronicity with ongoing events and activities.*

*For the regeneration team working on the development of the City's public realm and architecture, it will be logical to 'follow the money' – an integrated commissioning as part of wider developments by specifying the location, timescale and budget in advance of an artist's appointment.*

Each of these agendas would inform a shortlist of preferred sites, although the appointed artist/writer should be welcome to propose alternatives. The steering group and artist would liaise throughout the process to identify the most appropriate site and a number of alternates.

#### 4.4 The Procurement Process: Standard Processes and Exemptions

The majority of the projects outlined in this action plan can be successfully commissioned through a well-tried and accepted process along the following lines:



However there are a number of projects where a more flexible approach to procurement will need to be adopted in order to achieve best results:

##### ***Example 1: City of Stone***

As outlined in 2.4, stone sculpture is a professional field dominated by conservative and often derivative artists, and the challenge will be to commission artwork with this material in an innovative way. A dual approach to recruitment is proposed, including a proactive route of pairing a contemporary artist with no background in working with stone with a skilled carver, mason or stone processing facility. That pairing needs to be assembled and managed extremely closely, and the working relationship becomes something akin to a three-way collaboration between artist, artisan and public art consultant, with traditional boundaries and professional distinctions largely broken down.

##### ***Example 2: Durham's Creative Community***

Cumulatively the projects outlined in this plan represent a major investment in the City's public realm and a scale of commissioning that is unprecedented in Durham. The emphasis within the plan is on commissioning work of the highest quality, and this will require artists of the highest quality. Inevitably this approach will see most if not all of the commissions being awarded to artists from outside the City, which has a relatively small number of artists and very few with an established profile.

City of Durham Council has a very positive recent experience of 'affirmative action' in what became Keri Townsend's *Durham Needles* project at Freemans Quay Leisure Centre. The Council requested a longlist of North-East artists at an early point in their career, and the resulting artwork clearly reveals the innovation and ambition that such artists bring. However the project did require additional management time, programme time and cost, and also carried an increased risk of failure.

Other forms of affirmative action could include ring-fencing specific commissions for local artists; establishing mentoring and other professional development opportunities as part of each commission and the wider programme; and allocating resource to support artist-initiated activity within the City.

***Example 3: Purchase of existing artworks***

This approach is unusual in public art commissioning within the public sector, although not unheard of. Typically it is a mechanism for taking advantage of end-of-year capital underspend, and has been used in several local authorities in the North-East, most notably in Newcastle's Grainger Town area. Although considered by many to be bad practice due to an implied lack of connection with the context of the site, when done sensitively this approach can be as successful as any other form of commissioning. It has a particular relevance to the Durham Plinths project, where some of the artworks could be commissioned from experienced stone carvers for example. A significant proportion of such carvers look inwards to the unique qualities of an individual piece of stone for the starting point in their carving process, and many of the resultant sculptures are as much about the material, the object and the artist's private concerns as they are the eventual site. Therefore existing artworks could be just as appropriate as newly commissioned ones.

**4.5 Promotion, Interpretation and Education**

Commissioned public art typically receive a press release on its installation and perhaps at the point of the artwork being picked up by the press during the planning permission process. Subsequent interpretation is likely to be limited to a small plaque with title, artist, year and probably the key funder(s). Education activity – workshops, activity packs etc - is uncommon.

This limited approach is the result of lack of funding, capacity and often the disproportionate costs when expressed in percentage terms against a project budget. By contrast, a significant programme of commissions managed in a strategic fashion by a Steering Group has the advantage of economies of scale – in terms of both finance and capacity. With the explicit agreement of the relevant private developers an allocation could be made across the programme to allow for high-quality PR and education activity.

Education and outreach activity of this sort is best undertaken by a local organisation with existing links to, and understanding of, the artists, the creative sector and the political context at a local level.



#### 4.6 Funding and funding sources

This document has been drafted in reference to the likely availability of funding via adopted %forArt policy or Section 106 planning obligations. This funding stream will fluctuate between financial years dependent on receiving major planning applications, the general world economy, and the likely preference of developers towards delivering public art on their own sites rather than transferring the funding to the projects in this Public Art Action Plan.

The projects outlined in this document, including the routes and trails, are designed to be deliverable in a series of phases as and when funding becomes available through the %forArt system – what is important is to agree and hold to that strategic vision over a number of years.

Aside from developer contributions or %forArt allocations within the council's own capital projects, this core funding should be sought from Arts Council England (NE) and the Durham County Council (note: at this time One North East and its subsidiaries state that they do not fund public art. However they have done so on a regular basis when the application is packaged into a wider regeneration scheme).

As a registered charity Durham City Arts may be able to access other funding sources, especially for engagement and education activity around the programme, but this would not act as a substitute for support from the statutory bodies.

As Durham City Arts is not currently VAT registered the income from the private sector %forArt contributions and other sources should be held and processed by the local authority.

The budget outlined in 4.7 provides an estimate of the total costs to deliver all the schemes outlined in this action plan, the cost of which would far exceed the projected income from private sector %forArt contributions and the recommended covering of the programme 'core costs' by Durham County Council and Arts Council England (NE). Collectively the projects have the potential to radically enhance the visitor offer within the City centre, to transform the quality of the public realm, and to revitalise the City's approach to its heritage. The majority of funding is therefore likely to come from the usual public sector funders through regeneration and tourism budgets.

As noted previously the individual projects that comprise the programme have been developed with a view to being delivered as and when funding is available, and the programme is entirely scalable.

#### 4.7 Indicative outline programme budget – 5 year programme

##### INDICATIVE EXPENDITURE

The Durham Market: Setting Out A Stall	50,000
Claypath Bridge: Linkage with Millennium Place	260,000
City Of Letters major commissions (assume annual @ 70k)	350,000
The Vennels	up to 100,000
The Durham Plinths ( <i>assumed 10 @ an average of 40k</i> )	up to 400,000
Fowlers Yard Gateway Feature	50,000
Durham Railway Station: Steps	20,000
Durham Railway Station: Underpass	80,000
Temporary visual arts projects ( <i>assume an average of 10k p.a.</i> )	50,000
Indicative Management Fees @ 15%	<u>255,000</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,615,000</b>

##### INDICATIVE INCOME

Durham County Council – annual basic contribution of 20k*	100,000
Arts Council England (NE) – annual basic contribution of 20k**	100,000
Durham County Council – contribution to specific projects	500,000
ONE/Durham Economic Partnership – contribution to specific projects	500,000
Other stakeholders (i.e. Durham University, Durham Cathedral)	65,000
Charitable Trusts and Bodies (inc. Landfill Tax)	100,000
Private Sector %forArt contributions***	<u>250,000</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,615,000</b>

\* Note: Investment from Durham County Council will be a future decision for the Unitary Authority

\*\* Note: a level of core funding from project partners is essential to stabilising the activity into an actual programme of strategic activity, particularly in reference to an annual City Of Letters commission

\*\* Note: Income levels from the Private Sector will vary enormously from year to year, and are impossible to predict. The suggested sums can only be taken as a 'best guess' based on recent activity and the assumption that the majority of %forArt activity will remain on the developer's own sites and outside of the control of the Steering Group.

Note: The Market Place projects: relocation of the statues, flooring schemes, and equipping the space for events would be agreed by the Market Place regeneration scheme with the design team's overall management and ownership of the process.

#### **4.8 Key recommendations**

The first key recommendation is that the City Council's %forArt Supplementary Planning Document represents a major asset in the development of high quality public art throughout the City, both on new development sites and as a levied fund for agreed City projects. It is a clear and robust policy which sets out the Council's expectations of developers, and all possible steps should be taken to have a similar policy adopted by the new authority.

The second is that a programme of commissions such as those outlined in this report need to be curated and managed within a strategic vision, and that this will require a stable delivery body and the ongoing engagement of a steering group. The role of curating and project managing the programme, and of servicing the steering group that will oversee activity, could be undertaken by Durham City Arts.

The third recommendation, based on experience in other local authorities, is that available funding should not be allocated to the delivery of one commission, but instead 'invested' on the first two phases of a number of public art commissions: outline proposals and a further research and development phase. Proportionately these two phases take up a small amount of the overall budget and a large amount of the project time, and using available resource to take a project through these phases readies them to take advantage of any funding opportunities that might arise.



**Commissioned by City of Durham Council and Arts Council England (North East)**

v1 Prepared by Grit & Pearl on behalf of DCA (Durham City Arts), October 2008

v2 Revised in line with guidance from City of Durham Council, December 2008

## Agenda Item 6(a)

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

#### REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

##### REVIEW SCRUTINY OF THE PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Playing Pitch Strategy was commissioned by the City Council, County Council and Sport England in June, 2001. It was initially carried out by external consultants and subsequently completed by Officers of the Council.
- 1.2 Prior to its adoption by Cabinet, the Strategy had been referred to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration, and they had then passed it to the Community Services Scrutiny Panel.
- 1.3 Promoting the use of Playing Pitches was considered to be of particular importance because of the increased tendency for people to engage in more sedentary pastimes such as watching television and computer activities. Evidence that less physical activity, combined with inappropriate diet, can lead to serious health problems suggested a need for people of all ages to have the opportunity and incentive to engage in more physically active leisure pursuits. Playing pitch sports may also help in combating antisocial behaviour and encouraging community cohesion.
- 1.4 The scrutiny encompassed the views of a wide range of witnesses. In addition to valuable information presented by a number of Durham City Council Officers, meetings also involved Durham County Council's PE Inspector and a Senior Strategy Officer. There was welcomed input from a Primary Care Trust Doctor representing the Health Improvement Group; the Director of Sport of Durham University; the Manager of Durham Schools Sports Partnership; representatives from Durham City Cricket Club and Durham City Football Club; and the Manager of Durham Soccarena.
- 1.5 The Community Services Scrutiny Panel scrutinised the Strategy between October, 2005, and April, 2006, and carried out a site inspection of some of the Council's recreation grounds. This Scrutiny was reviewed in July, 2007, at which time further site inspections had been carried out. Progress was noted and the recommendations were updated.

#### 2. Actions

- 2.1 The Council's Technical Support Manager (Environment & Leisure), Streetscene Technical Officer and Policy and Regeneration Manager attended the Panel's Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2008.

#### 3. Outcomes

- 3.1 Progress has been made towards implementing many of the recommendations made by the Panel in their last report.
- 3.2 The Active Durham initiative has been set up with the Community Sports Network. Leisure Services is working with local groups at grass roots level and across all age groups. The scheme is Sports Council funded and will therefore continue after LGR.
- 3.3 Pitches are allocated on the basis of two teams per pitch and reminders are sent to users to enquire of they wish to use the pitch the following season to allow supply to be matched to

demand. A number of pitches are not marked out as such where there is no demand, but are available if needed.

- 3.4 Adhesive signage has been provided in changing facilities detailing acceptable use and behaviour, and a code of conduct is part of the hire agreement.
- 3.5 A survey has been carried out to recommend improvements to individual pitches. Capital funding had been sought to improve drainage but the bid was unsuccessful. Compacted areas have been broken up, herbicide and fertiliser treatments have been carried out, and soil levels have been made up and over seeded.
- 3.6 The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 allows Authorities to introduce Dog Control Orders. These can be used to control dog fouling, areas where dogs must be kept on leads, and areas where dogs are banned. (The Durham District Councils are currently looking to bring in an order relating to dog fouling, and the new Unitary Authority will be considering areas where dogs are to be kept on leads, or banned, in due course.) As part of the LGR process work is currently ongoing to enable the new unitary authority to bring in an order relating to dog fouling on Vesting Day 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. It is the intention that orders relating to areas where dogs are to be kept on leads, or banned, will follow in due course.
- 3.7 The Durham City News has been used to try to recruit potential sports coaches however the response was disappointing. There have however been a good number of Durham University students who have taken up sports coaching roles. Durham University run sports coaching courses which were also open to residents and the response to these was much more encouraging.

#### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 Having reviewed the recommendations made in their previous reports, considered progress made towards achieving these, and being conscious that further recommendations need to be relevant to the new Unitary Authority, the Community Services Scrutiny Panel recommend the following.
  - 4.2 City Council Pitches
    - 4.2.1 That all playing pitches within City of Durham ownership, together with all of these leased to the City Council by organisations such as the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation, be retained for recreational use.
    - 4.2.2 That in accordance with the conclusions in the Playing Pitch Strategy, the availability, condition and maintenance of all City of Durham owned and administered pitches continue to be monitored and reviewed.
    - 4.2.3 That in accordance with current practice, where a pitch is under used, reasons should be carefully analysed, and with a flexible approach to supply and demand measures to improve take-up should be considered.
    - 4.2.4 That Dog Control Orders be introduced where necessary, and that the necessary signage be provided.
  - 4.3 Changing Facilities
    - 4.3.1 That particular attention be given to increasing the availability and improving facilities for female players.
    - 4.3.2 That increased community engagement be pursued to extend the use and concept of ownership and responsibility for premises.

- 4.3.3 That the Hire Agreement and Code of Conduct for use continue to be sent to all those people using the facilities.
- 4.3.4 That the facilities be regularly inspected and appropriately maintained.
- 4.3.5 That in accordance with the present practice, users be asked to either remove all sports equipment at the end of their season, or arrange acceptable storage with the Council.
- 4.3.6 That the new Unitary Authority be asked to give consideration to the provision of changing facilities for all at those sites where no provision currently exists.

#### 4.4 Maintenance and Drainage

- 4.4.1 That funds be allocated to continue the drainage improvement works being carried out, as identified in the recent survey.

#### 4.5 Working with other Organisations

- 4.5.1 The Panel urge continued and supportive working with partners to fulfil and secure playing pitch needs throughout the District and to maximise participation in sports activities as part of the Active Durham initiative.
- 4.5.2 That the new Unitary Authority be requested to maintain the City Council's close working relationship with Durham University.
- 4.5.3 That close communication be maintained with the School Sports Partnership Manager to explore ways of extending links, shared use and sports promotion to make full use of all facilities.
- 4.5.4 That further research be made into recruitment and training of more sports coaches; this work to be across the County Council, School Sports Partnership and University.
- 4.5.5 That encouragement be given to clubs that currently use Council pitches and facilities, and that where appropriate new joint initiatives be considered.

#### 4.6 General

- 4.6.1 That the recommendations with regard to the promotion of each sport, as made in the City of Durham Playing Pitch Strategy and approved by the City Council's Cabinet, should be actively pursued to further develop pitches and facilities for participants of both sexes, across the full age range, and that the Strategy and Panel's recommendations be forwarded to the new Unitary Authority to encourage use and development of these facilities.
- 4.6.2 That this report and recommendations be brought to attention of the new Unitary Authority and relevant Workstreams.



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## Agenda Item 6(b)

### **Economic Scrutiny Panel**

#### **Review of Community Development**

##### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The work of the Economic and Community Development team had been brought to the attention of Economic Scrutiny Panel through their excellent SRB work this was originally scrutinised in July, 2005. SRB funding is no longer available but Economic and Community Development teams have continued to work closely with the communities within the District completing many successful projects.
- 1.2 The Community Development Team was set up following a restructure in 2005.
- 1.3 The Panel were eager to discover what is going well, what the current situation is and how the excellent practice can be continued in the new Unitary Authority.

##### **2. Findings**

- 2.1 The Community Development structure is not replicated in any of the other seven Councils in County Durham. The work carried out by the Team is unique, they with community groups and individuals on a range of projects, they help to build capacity and confidence
- 2.2 The Community Development Team have developed a 'hands on' approach and there is one Community Development Officer (CDO) for every three villages. The CDOs help groups and individuals in various ways from filling application forms for funding at the beginning to seeing a project all the way through to the end.
- 2.3 Since the team was formed in 2005 over 300 new groups have been supported this is an average of 87 groups per month being supported. The team has been directly responsible for securing approximately £3 million of funding for City of Durham District local groups and residents. This figure does not include projects where officers have had limited responsibility or where officers have just made recommendations.
- 2.4 Community Development Officer Activity Grants were established in June 2006. The grants allow CDO's to use their discretion to distribute funds to projects within their zone. Up to February 2008 a total of £91,266 had been distributed to local community groups.
- 2.5 The Community Development Team is not subject to National Performance Indicators therefore they have developed 12 outputs which are recorded. Therefore monitoring their own progress and recording how grants benefit the local groups and communities. A list of the 12 outputs is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.6 The team have also assisted with a wide range of corporate exercises relating to most departments of the Authority

##### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 That the City of Durham Community Development Team be commended for their excellent work and achievements over the last 3 years.
- 3.2 That the Durham County Council adopts the City of Durham model of Community Development as a framework in order to provide a level of service across the County equal to current best practice and to provide a solid foundation on which the relevant LGR workstreams and DCC Directorates can build upon.

## Appendix 1

■ **Outputs to CDO grants June 2006 – February 2008**

Outputs are attached to the previously highlighted Community Development Activity Grants in order that we may effectively monitor how our grants benefit the local groups and communities we fund. Outputs as at February 2008 were as below:

<b>Output</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Actual</b>
1A	No. of employed people trained obtaining qualifications	27
1A(i)	No. of unemployed people trained obtaining qualifications	12
1A(ii)	No. of 1A or 1A(i) who are female	20
1A(iii)	No. of 1A or 1A(i) who are from minority backgrounds	6
1B	No. of training programmes supported	13
2A	No. of young people benefiting from projects to promote personal and social development	7464
2B	No. of older people (60+) benefiting from projects to promote personal and social development	3924
3A	No. of community safety initiatives	11
4A	No. of new community health opportunities supported	46
4Ai	No. of people accessing these new opportunities	6425
5A	No. of new community sports opportunities supported	252
5A(i)	No. of people accessing these new opportunities	7702
6A	No. of new community cultural opportunities supported	1205
6A(i)	No. of people accessing these new opportunities	10794
7A	No. of voluntary organisations/community groups supported	394
8A	No. of individuals involved in voluntary work	2224

## Agenda Item 6(c)

### **POLICY SCRUTINY PANEL**

### **EQUALITIES POLICIES UPDATE**

#### **BACKGROUND**

1. The Policy Scrutiny Panel previously considered the content and level of application of the Council's Equality Policies. A Report with Recommendations was subsequently drawn up and submitted to the Cabinet which approved and adopted the Recommendations.

1.1. The aim of the update was to review progress against Recommendations previously made by the Policy Scrutiny Panel and to assess the current and likely proportion of the City of Durham's Elected Members and Employees who will be fully trained in Equalities Issues by April, 2009.

#### **ACTIONS**

2. The Panel had previously recommended that the Corporate Training Programme be reviewed in order to ensure that Employees and Elected Members who had not received Equalities Training were given the opportunity to do so before December, 2008.

2.1 The Director of Corporate Services attended the Policy Scrutiny Panel Meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2008, to update Members on the current situation.

#### **OUTCOMES**

3. Eighty seven per-cent of City Council employees have already received Equalities Training and the Corporate Training Programme for 2008/2009 included further Equalities Training opportunities for those wishing to take advantage of them.

3.1 The Panel was advised that because of the increasing pace of preparatory LGR work it was no longer feasible to target one hundred per-cent of Employees to be trained in line with the Panel's previous Recommendation.

3.2 It is acknowledged however that relevant work in relation to the harmonisation of Equalities Issues between constituent Councils is currently being carried out in the appropriate LGR Workstream.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

4. Members acknowledged that the priority given in the current Corporate Training Programme was to allow access for City of Durham employees to training in the range of key skills necessary for them to have for their transition to the Unitary Authority in April, 2009.

4.1 It was further acknowledged that the County Council currently had a robust system of Equalities integration across their Service Areas and had already been assessed at Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Authorities.

## **Recommendations**

1. That the good practice evident in the Equalities Policies and Procedures at the City of Durham Council, together with further examples of good practice from across the other constituent Councils be incorporated into the work of the appropriate LGR Workstream.

2. That Durham County Council is requested, following Unitary Authority Vesting Day on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2009, to ensure that every employee receives relevant Equalities Training as part of Induction or as part of the ongoing Corporate Training process.

## Agenda Item 6(d)

### POLICY SCRUTINY PANEL

#### REVIEW – WORKING WITH PARISH COUNCILS

##### BACKGROUND

1. The Policy Scrutiny Panel Report “Working with Parish Councils” was originally submitted, along with a number of Recommendations, to Cabinet in September, 2007. The Report and Recommendations were deferred by Cabinet pending the outcome of unitary status developments.

1.1 The Panel agreed to review the contents of the Report together with the original Recommendations in order to establish what, if any, practical measures of assistance the Panel may be able to recommend the new Durham County Council give Parish Councils in light of Local Government Reorganisation, the possibility of devolution of functions and future developments in community governance.

##### ACTIONS

2. Panel Members were provided with the original Report and the Executive Officer of the County Durham Association of Local Councils was invited to speak to the Panel and advise Members of current developments in relation to LGR.

##### OUTCOMES

3. Members were informed of a number of current developments.

- The County Association have brought together a Working Group of Parish Clerks of which at least three were from Parishes within the City of Durham area, to look at future developments. Topics being considered include Governance Arrangements, Standards Issues, Charter Development and the possible role of Parish Councils in AAP's. Their findings will be submitted to Elected Members and the County Council.
- It was hoped to establish a small number of Pilot Schemes for Service Devolution to Parishes, perhaps to carry out certain Horticultural, Street Scene and Planning Services. A business case for this is currently under development.
- It is apparent that certain issues remain problematic. How issues such as Double Taxation, Rationalisation of Precepts, Duplication/Amalgamation of Functions etc. are dealt with will be critical.
- The issue of parishing current unparished areas is ongoing. As well as those in the City of Durham area, Chester-le-Street and Crook have also commenced consultations over a Parish/Town Council.
- Future involvement of Parish Councils in AAP's is being considered and there is a possibility of smaller Parish Councils coming together in “clusters” to share resources in order to resolve common individual issues.
- Finance has been made available to Parish Councils by the County Council for expenses in relation to training for Parish Clerks and costs of publications.
- The attainment of Quality Status by Parish/Town Councils is still a major issue. CDALC has made financial assistance available to Local Councils to

assist in the necessary training of Clerks and Councillors. It was noted that Brandon and Byshottles Parish Council has attained Quality Status. The City Council has also made finance available to Parish Councils within its area in relation to the production of Parish Plans.

3.1 It is noted that there was a commitment in the County Council's Unitary Bid to eventually parish all unparished areas. However to take advantage of the possible devolution to Local Councils, and therefore local communities, of certain functions together with their respective budgets it would be necessary for Local Councils to demonstrate their ability to properly administer and manage those functions and budgets. Local Councils may therefore need assistance from the Principal Authority to demonstrate this ability.

3.1 The Policy Scrutiny Panel's original 2007 Report highlighted some specific examples of assistance then offered to Parish/Town Councils by Principal Authorities.

- District of Easington had offered to pay the Registration Fees of Clerks beginning training for the CiLCA qualification.
- Bradford Borough Council had paid for a Training Course (£195), for each Parish/Town Clerk in their area.
- Cumbria County Council had established a "Parish Champion", liaison Member.

3.2 The original Report identified that the development of a Joint Charter between Principal and Local Councils would be likely to provide:-

- Enhanced roles for Local Councils
- Improved working relationships between Local and Principal Councils
- Better Community Planning
- Written rights and responsibilities for both partners
- Agreed working compacts
- Proper Consultation and Involvement

3.3 The original Report also identified that the achievement by a Local Council of Quality Status would provide benefits for:

The Local Community – From more responsive services, better communication and discussion about, and access to those services.

The Principal Authority – From evidence of the capacity and ability of the Local Council to deliver services on its behalf or in partnership and from a stronger partnership with a Local Council which is demonstrably representative, competent and well managed.

The Local Council – From greater public credibility leading to enhanced representation of the local community. Greater civic pride and the ability to articulate the needs and wishes of that community. Enhanced partnership working by demonstrating the organisation is properly and effectively managed with suitably qualified staff.

3.4 The original Report identified that Principal Councils are in a position to support and encourage Local Councils to participate in the Quality Status process and perhaps offer practical assistance to Local Councils in relation to facilitating the use of available resources eg Information Technology and Training.



## **CONCLUSIONS**

4. It is noted that previous suggestions for formal agreements between Parish Councils and Principal Authorities have largely come to nothing. The future relationship between Local Councils and the County Council is currently unclear and it is considered that any issue of Devolved Powers to Local Councils must in the future be fully supported by adequate funding.

4.1 The County Council's proposals for promoting Councillors as leaders in their own communities are also at present vague and in need of development and it was suggested that some communities in smaller parishes would only benefit from the new arrangements after formalised partnership working arrangements were adopted.

4.2 It is also noted that issues surrounding Quality Council Status carried with them significant resource implications particularly for the smaller Parish Councils.

4.3 It was acknowledged by Members that both the future development of Area Action Partnerships and the current Boundary Commission study on existing electoral boundaries were likely to impact on the future governance of Local Councils though as yet it was unclear what that impact would be.

4.4 The Policy Scrutiny Panel considers that the following Recommendations will therefore assist in enabling an enhanced level of future partnership working between Local Councils and the Principal Authority.

## **Recommendations**

- 1). That Durham County Council be requested to support in principle the development of a Joint Charter with all Parish/Town Councils.
- 2). That Durham County Council be requested to offer appropriate financial assistance to Parish Councils to support their efforts to attain Quality Council Status.
- 3). That Durham County Council be requested to offer appropriate practical assistance to Parish Councils to support their efforts to attain Quality Council Status.
- 4) That Durham County Council be requested to consider the establishment of a Joint Parish/Town Council Liaison Group made up of Local Council representatives and County Council Members.

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## Agenda Item 6(e)

### **POLICY SCRUTINY PANEL**

#### **REVIEW OF SICKNESS ABSENCE OCT' 08**

##### **BACKGROUND**

1. The Policy Scrutiny Panel has reviewed the Council's Sickness Absence levels on an ongoing basis. The Panel has previously submitted its Reports and Recommendations to Cabinet.

1.1 The aim of this Review was again to consider progress against the implementation of the Recommendations previously submitted and agreed by Cabinet and to receive an update on the current levels of Sickness Absence.

##### **ACTIONS**

2. At the Policy Scrutiny Panel Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2008, Members were provided with updated Sickness Absence figures. Subsequently, at the Panel Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2008, the Director of Corporate Services was in attendance to give Members a strategic overview of the figures.

##### **OUTCOMES**

3. Current figures showed a further reduction in the rate of Sickness Absence. Though there were variations in the rate between Service Areas, the reduction was apparent across all Council Services.

3.1 There has been a continuous decline in the overall Sickness Absence figure over the past five years. From a national Lower Quartile figure of 13.9 days per employee in 2003/2004 it has fallen to a current figure of 9.9 days and as the trend continues to show a reduction it is anticipated that the figure will fall to around 8 days which would place it in the Upper Quartile nationally.

3.2 A slight reversal was noted in September, 2008. This appeared to have corrected itself however the Director of Corporate Services advised Members that caution will still be needed over the next six months as the figure could rise in response to the general uncertainty surrounding the lead up to Unitary Authority Vesting Day.

3.3 The continuing reduction in the figure has been as a result of a number of factors but a significant impact has been made by the consistent application of Corporate Sickness Absence Procedures across the Authority and the introduction of the services of Diagnostic Health Solutions as a mechanism for dealing with Employee Absences.

3.4 It is noted by Members that there continue to be certain areas of Council activity where the Sickness Absence average is proportionately higher. However it is accepted that these are areas where the nature of the work can be particularly physical or stressful.

3.5 The Panel was informed that the County Council had in place similar support mechanisms for employees with regard to Sickness Absence and had, as had the City of Durham, achieved the Silver Award for "Wellness at Work".

3.6 In relation to the Panel's Recommendations contained in the previous Review Report in April, 2008, the proposed annual Staff Attitude Survey had not been carried out due to LGR.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

4. In the Report on the Review of April, 2008, the Panel had Recommended that the efforts of all Staff and Managers in reducing the rates of Sickness Absence be acknowledged.

4.1 Again, Members considered that congratulations were due to the Director of Corporate Services and all employees involved in the ongoing reduction in Sickness Absence Figures.

4.2 It was noted that a different method of measurement and interpretation of the figures may have been utilised and may have produced slightly different results. However the Panel acknowledged that the methods of measurement used were used by other Local Authorities and were nationally accepted for benchmarking purposes.

4.3 Members of the Policy Scrutiny Panel once again expressed their satisfaction at the improvement in the Sickness Absence Figures.

## **Recommendations**

1) That the Policy Scrutiny Panel commend the Director of Corporate Services, his staff, and Employees across the Council for their efforts in reducing Sickness Absence Levels.

2) That following Unitary Authority Vesting Day, Durham County Council direct, for the same purpose, the amount of funding previously held by the City of Durham Council specifically for employee support in relation to Sickness Absence.

## Agenda Item 6(f)

### REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

#### SCRUTINY TOPIC – KERBSIDE RECYCLING SCHEME SIX MONTH REVIEW

##### 1. BACKGROUND

The City of Durham, along with several of the District Councils within County Durham, had in place an existing contract that provided a household kerbside recycling scheme, known as the “Kerb-It” Scheme. This contract terminated on 31 March, 2008 and consequently, the contract to operate a household kerbside recycling scheme on behalf of the Council was put out to tender. Following a joint tendering process by Chester-le-Street District Council, City of Durham, Easington District Council and Sedgefield Borough Council, a contract with Greencycle Plc. was entered into, with the new scheme commencing 1 April, 2008. The scheme as proposed by Greencycle provided an opportunity for cardboard and plastics to be included as recyclable items which increased the scope of recycling for Residents.

##### 2. AIMS

It was the remit of the Panel to consider information from the appropriate Council Officers to gain insight into the first six months of operation of the new kerbside recycling scheme. In addition, the Panel also felt that as Durham City was home to a large population of Students, representatives from the University of Durham should be invited to attend Panel meetings to give Members information on how the University and its Students recycled.

##### 3. ACTIONS

###### 3.1 University of Durham – September 2008

Representatives from the University of Durham attended a meeting of the Panel to give Members information as regards the internal operations of the University's Environmental Policies. In addition, insight was given as to how the University liaised with its Students via individual College Representatives to spread information about various environmental issues, not merely recycling. It was also brought to light the existing working relationships between the University of Durham and the City of Durham Council in respect of both operational issues relating to waste and recycling from large Student halls of Residence, but also in activities in order to promote a heightened awareness of environmental and sustainability issues.

The University of Durham contract BIFFA Waste Management to collect the recycling from University buildings and some of the Colleges. Some purely residential colleges have their recycling collected by Greencycle via the Council's scheme.

Representatives from the University of Durham made it clear that often, the Student populous were actually keener to recycle than perhaps facilities would allow, and that if many of the Students “living out” in private accommodation were given sufficient

information, uptake of the kerbside scheme, amongst other methods of recycling and reuse, may indeed increase.

The University of Durham conducts a "Green Move Out" in order to attempt to reuse or recycle items that may be thrown away at the end of the University year. At these times, there may be need to have additional provisions to ensure the additional waste generated is cleared swiftly.

### **3.2 City of Durham, Environment Services – October 2008**

The City of Durham's Environment Services Manager attended a meeting of the Panel to give Members an overview of the progress that had been made over the first six months of the new kerbside recycling scheme. Estimates of volumes of recycling that may be generated when the new scheme came online were based upon a similar scheme operated in Congleton. However, due to an increase of over 70% in comparison to the April 2008 period, there were problems in the collection of recycling from households. Through investment in additional vehicles, equipment and staff by Greencycle, it is noted that initial teething problems appeared to have been overcome.

Initially, the recyclable materials were sorted at the kerbside into the individual streams. However, due to the larger than anticipated volume of recycling, this method of operation was thought to be too slow. Accordingly, upon suggestion from District Authority Officers, items were roughly sorted at the kerbside, with a final sort conducted back at Greencycle's Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) at Tursdale. At the MRF, the items that have been collected are fed on to two "picking belts" and the items are separated by material. The City of Durham had investigated the Companies that are taking the recyclable items from Greencycle, to ensure these companies are reputable and that the items would indeed be recycled. This was to ensure that material was not in fact ending up back at landfill as had happened in some cases via recycling schemes operated on behalf of some Local Authorities.

## **4. OUTCOMES**

### **4.1 In relation to Students within the City**

In response to the annual influx of students to Durham City, Environment Services Staff including Neighbourhood Wardens have issued leaflets to the City Centre Student areas. Also information relating to the kerbside recycling scheme and other environment issues would be disseminated via Durham City News, and by way of stickers on waste and recycling bins. In addition, fridge magnets with recycling and waste collection information have been provided for distribution to Students.

### **4.2 Enforcement**

As a last resort in cases where there has been continued non-use of the kerbside recycling scheme and recyclable items are simply being put into the main waste bins, there will be an option to issue a Section 46 Environmental Protection Enforcement Notice to households.

### **4.3 Future options regarding recycling**

As the current Aerobic Digester facility at Thornley Crossings is offline and the proposed Digester at Tursdale is only at the initial planning stages, the services provided by Greencycle are key in maintain progress towards stringent targets for diversion from landfill. Once technology relating to aerobic digestion has been

verified as a viable option then it may be possible to return to all waste simply being collected by a single refuse vehicle and the materials being sorted after digestion.

These will be issues for the new Unitary Authority to consider in the near future with help from District Colleagues, and in much greater detail after amalgamation post April 2009.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel gained an insight into the work that has been undertaken by City of Durham Officers and appreciate that this work was not undertaken in isolation, but rather through working in Partnership with other Local Authorities. The current kerbside recycling scheme initially had difficulty in coping with the unprecedented uptake by the Residents of the four participating Districts. However, it is noted that now the scheme is operating very well and is helping to keep diversion from landfill statistics from being far short of target.

Therefore the following recommendations are made by the Panel:-

1. That staff from the City of Durham's Environment Services section and from Greencycle Plc. be congratulated on their hard work in overcoming initial teething problems with the Kerbside recycling scheme in order to have a scheme that is operating at an average increase of 57%.
2. That the new Unitary Authority gives consideration to the Kerbside Recycling Scheme as operated by Greencycle Plc. in formulating approaches to meeting diversion from landfill targets in the future, especially in light of the closure of the Aerobic Digester located at Thornley Crossings, near Shotton Colliery. Such consideration should be by whichever Authority/Body is appropriate at this point in the LGR process, i.e. by currently operating workstreams with District and County Officers, or by Durham County Officers once they are in place within a new Directorate.
3. That as an interim measure, until the new Unitary Authority brings together an integrated website encompassing all current District and County Council functions, the appropriate pages of the City of Durham website be amended to make it easier for Residents (including Students) to obtain information relating to recycling and the days of the kerbside collections.
4. That further to the measures already undertaken by the City of Durham's Officers in relation to helping to inform the incoming Students, the relevant University of Durham Officers be given the relevant links to the City Council's website as an interim solution, prior to the new Unitary Authority putting in place an integrated website.



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## Agenda Item 6(g)

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

### REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL

#### REVIEW SCRUTINY OF COUNCIL HOUSE REPAIRS

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 Council house repairs had originally been scrutinised as part of the Building Services Best Value Improvement Plan in 2003. The topic had been reviewed by the Panel on several occasions, the most recent being in November, 2007, when four recommendations had been made. These recommendations were subsequently approved and adopted by Cabinet.

#### 2. Actions

- 2.1 The Head of Property Services and Responsive Maintenance Manager attended the Panel's Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2008, and together with the Portfolio Holder for Communities, updated the Panel on progress made towards the recommendations made in the last report.

#### 3. Outcomes

- 3.1 Since April, 2008, the number of emergency and non-urgent repairs completed on time has been at least 97% and in some months, 99%. The results of the Gas Satisfaction Survey (April – November, 2008) show that 100% of tenants were satisfied with the workmanship and the attitude of staff.
- 3.2 The Exceptions system of the new Northgate system allows potential missed appointments to be spotted in advance which allows alternative staff to be dispatched or the customer to be contacted. Staff continue to use the handheld telephone/PDA communication system, which following upgrades, is now performing much better and many of the blackspots have been eliminated.
- 3.3 The Panel had previously recommended that ongoing training be provided for staff. This has been carried out over the last 12 months and the introduction of the Repair Finder allows both customers and Customer Services to identify repairs and is working very well.
- 3.4 A small number of recharges have been carried out where the emergency reporting system had been used by tenants to bypass the appointments system, although it is difficult to prove misuse of the system. Efforts are being made to reduce this problem.
- 3.5 The emergency call out teams have been responsive and have provided good service to tenant, but Members expressed some concern about ongoing problems with radiators and boilers.
- 3.6 Members have previously been reminded that customer repairs must be reported to Customer Services to be logged at the first point of contact. This provides an audit trail and enables the jobs to be actioned more quickly than if they are reported to Officers direct.
- 3.7 Members stressed the importance of the provision of co-ordinated service from first inspection to completion of a job with the tenant being kept fully informed.

- 3.8 Re-let times on void properties have increased by 4 days since last year to 47 days. This was due to a great extent to the inclusion of one particularly difficult to let property which had been empty for 917 days. Additionally the number of void properties at any one time is difficult to predict and when the number is high, it is difficult to carry out all of the necessary works. Some void properties are in very poor condition, particularly where previous tenants had refused to allow modernisation works to be carried out in the past. Three major house fires had also added to the workload.
- 3.9 The Panel are very pleased with the progress made and congratulate the Head of Property Services and his staff for the work they have done. It is hoped that the same standard of work would continue following the move to the new Unitary Authority.

#### **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 In drafting its recommendations the Panel recognises that had the City Council continued in office, it would have been appropriate for scrutiny of Council House Repairs to be ongoing, with a view to supporting service provision to tenants. Accordingly we anticipate that the recommendations will have immediate significance but will also need to carry over to the administration of the unitary authority.
- 4.2 The Panel therefore recommends:-
- 4.2.1 That procedures continue to operate to deter tenants who persist in using the emergency call out repairs service as an out of hours repair service, including the possibility of charging after a warning has been given.
  - 4.2.2 That continued attention is given to the co-ordination of the repair system from initial investigation of the nature of a repair through to its completion in order to ensure efficiency and customer satisfaction.
  - 4.2.3 That the continuing review of older central heating systems is particularly important in the winter period.
  - 4.2.4 That the Head of Property Services and his staff be thanked and congratulated for their efforts in bringing about the improvements noted and the high standard of the service they provide.
  - 4.2.5 That this report and recommendations be brought to the attention of the new Unitary Authority with the expectation that the Authority will support Property Services provision to the high standard currently being achieved by the City of Durham Department.

Community Services Scrutiny Panel  
November 2008

## Agenda Item 8(a)

**STATUS PUBLIC**

<b>Report to</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date</b>	7 January 2009
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Elizabeth Hall, 0191 301 8596
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Elizabeth Hall, 0191 301 8596
<b>Subject</b>	Report of Audit Commission Access to Services in County Durham – County of Durham and Districts

**Purpose**

To inform Cabinet of the findings of the Audit Commission in respect to Access of Services in County Durham. This report is available on the Audit Commission's website.

**Recommendations**

That the report be noted

**Information**

The Audit Commission has completed its inspection of Access to Services in County Durham – County of Durham and Districts. This inspection covered all eight local councils in the county. It was not a detailed review of the approach taken by each individual district for the county council and did not make judgements about individual councils or have scored judgements.

The report found that all councils in County Durham have a strong commitment to improve the way in which local people can access their services and that the councils have taken a broad range of approaches. It found that all councils had made some good, but recent progress:

- all councils had made improvements to the way telephone calls are handled
- the use of ICT systems is improving

The report praised customer service staff in all councils, as they demonstrate genuine commitment to delivering a high quality service to the public, appear well skilled to handle enquiries efficiently and have good local knowledge.

The report does note that quality of service is good in those modern recently refurbished One-Stop-Shops with one single point of access. It refers positively to the development and implementation of the county-wide Customer Relationship Management System, noting that Durham City is one of the more advanced users, recoding all service request on the system. It notes that Durham City has an online Planning System and residents can book leisure activities on-line in all of its five leisure centres. Among the good examples in the report of taking services out to local communities and peoples' homes, including working with local groups, is the wide range of services provided by this Council directly in people's homes, including benefits, housing, mobile and neighbourhood wardens. It comments favourably on partnership working across the county, not just through the e-government partnership, but also work with community and voluntary sector partners and their stakeholders. It refers to Durham City, Derwentside and Easington sharing web site hosting.

However, unsurprisingly, the Audit Commission does note that overall arrangements across the County are fragmented and lack coherence, with variations in the ability of local services to respond quickly and little commonality of customer services standards, their differing qualities and approaches to telephone access and physical access being variable. The report does identify opportunities for improvements and the following three recommendations:

- Develop a clear and coherent long term access strategy that will ensure equitable access for all
- Develop and implement an action plan for the strategy
- Develop a better understanding of local communities and their needs

The Councils collectively working together to create the unitary council will consider this report, its conclusions and recommendations and incorporate its findings when developing arrangements for access to services.

**Elizabeth Hall**

**Director of Strategic Services**

**Date:** 14 November 2008

## Agenda Item 8(b)

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> January 2009
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	David Thornborrow, Head of Planning Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Gavin Scott (Policy & Regeneration Manager)
<b>Subject</b>	<p>Early Integration of Local Development Framework function:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Development Scheme (LDS) for County Durham – “What we’re doing and when”</li> <li>• Annual Monitoring Report</li> </ul>

**Purpose**

Two reports have been produced as part of the early integration of the Development Plans function of the planning service brought about by the Government’s Local Government Review.

The Local Development Scheme is a statutory requirement and sets out the timetable and revised family of planning documents that will together form the Local Development Framework for the newly constituted Unitary County area. Particular attention is drawn to the preparation of the Core Strategy which is intended to embrace aspirations for Durham City emerging from the Durham City Vision. The Annual Monitoring Report brings together information compiled by individual planning authorities in County Durham for the period April 2007 to March 2008 relating to the delivery of specific economic, social and environmental benefits prescribed by national and local indicators.

Both reports have been formally submitted to and accepted by the Cabinet of Durham County Council [20<sup>th</sup> November (Local Development Scheme) and 4<sup>th</sup> December (Annual Monitoring Report) 2008] for referral to Government Office (North East)

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the reports be noted.

**Information**

The Portfolio Member (Strategic Planning & Regeneration) has overseen the transitional arrangements and has accepted the reports on the Council’s behalf.

Copies of the Local Development Scheme and Annual Monitoring Report may be viewed or downloaded by the public from the Planning section of the Council’s website. The documents are also available in the Members library and through Members Online

*Signature*

TITLE

David Thornborrow, Head of Planning Services

Date December 2008

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## Agenda Item 8(c)

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date</b>	7 January 2009
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Michael Thompson, Head of Community Services 0191 3018429
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Anne Delandre, Strategy & Development Manager 0191 3018220
<b>Subject</b>	Strategy & Development Service Half Year Report

**Purpose**

To inform Cabinet of performance/progress in the Housing Strategy and Development Service for the half year period April – September 2008.

**Recommendations**

That the report be noted

**Information**

The report outlines the work of the Housing Options and Strategy & Development sections. It also provides details of partnership working, key projects undertaken within the service, performance monitoring and key achievements in 2008. It also comments on the Best Value Review of Strategic Housing Services. Overall the report highlights the development of the service following the review.

Michael Thompson

**Head of Community Services    1 December 2008**





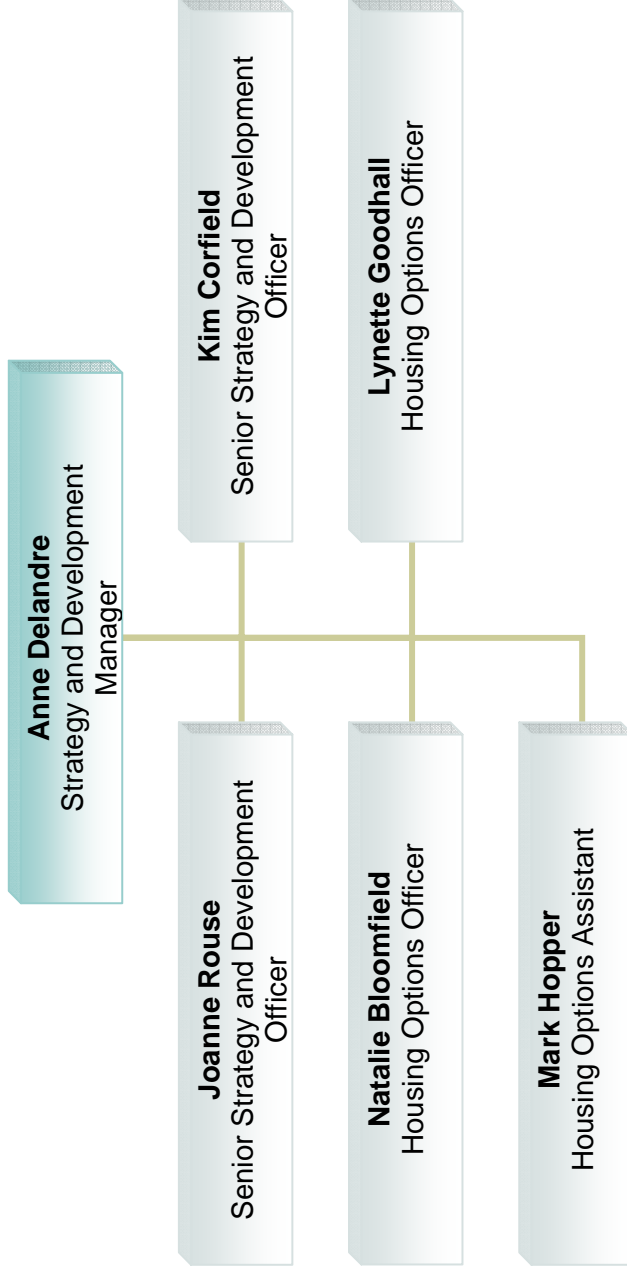
## **STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT**

**HALF YEAR REPORT – October 2008**

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### Structure of the Strategy and Development Section



### Introduction

The Strategy and Development Section is located within Community Services and its three key functions are:-

- The provision of a comprehensive homelessness and housing options service
- The production of a Housing Strategy
- Partnership working with DVRC and RSLs to increase the provision of affordable housing across the district

### **The Work of the Housing Options Service**

There are significant daily demands on the staff working in the Housing Options Service who are dealing with people when they are at their most vulnerable – when they are homeless or they are in danger of losing their home.

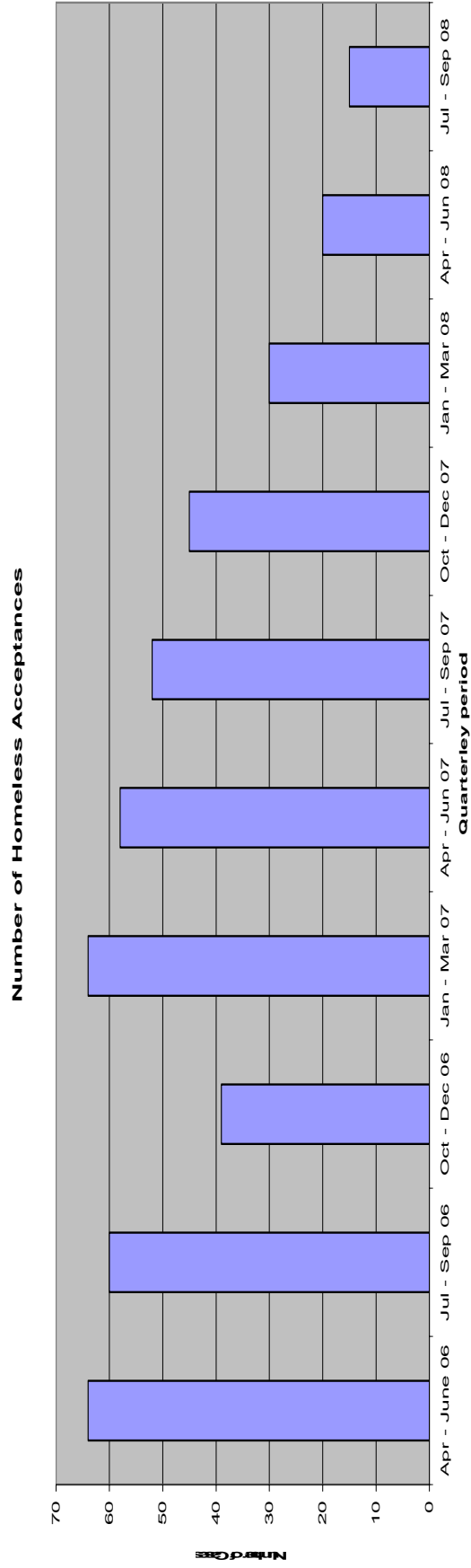
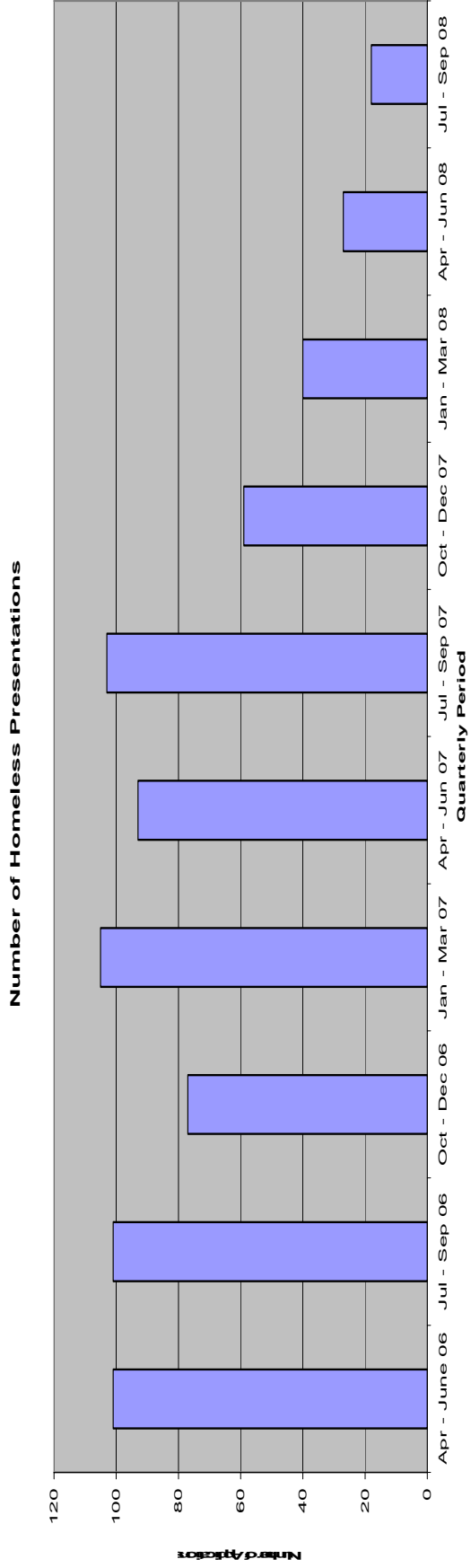
There is no such thing as a 'stereotypical' homeless person. People often perceive a homeless person as someone who sleeps rough or in a shop doorway, but the reality is that anyone can find themselves homeless or threatened with homelessness, particularly at the current time when the housing market is in such turmoil and repossessions are on the increase.

The Government's Agenda is very much around homelessness prevention and local authorities offering a range of 'housing options' to people. As a result, the Section was re-structured to provide a Housing Options Service. Two Housing Options Officers (Lynnette Goodhall and Natalie Bloomfield) work with applicants to offer a range of housing solutions, including assisting applicants to access accommodation not only with the City Council but also with private landlords or RSLs, the provision of Floating Support for the more vulnerable applicants, referrals to the Mediation Service (Support2Talk) for 16-25 year olds etc. They also work with a range of stakeholders, both statutory and non-statutory, to assist the authority to discharge its duty under the homelessness legislation.

For the financial year 2008/09 the authority received £40,000 grant from CLG to assist with the delivery of the homelessness service. This funding has been used primarily to fund an additional post of Housing Options Assistant (Mark Hopper) to assist both the Housing Options Officers and the two Senior Strategy and Development Officers (Kim Corfield and Joanne Rouse) to provide an improved homelessness service which also demonstrates Value for Money. The funding has also been used to support the work of the Centrepoint Monitoring Officer, the Joint Protocol for 16/17 year olds and the work of Moving On who provide a specialist service for 18-25 year olds, as well as the establishment of a Bond Guarantee Scheme to assist applicants access the private rented sector, a Sanctuary Scheme for victims of domestic abuse and hate crime and a Homelessness Prevention Fund.

In addition, the authority received a grant of £10,000 from CLG to work with the Legal Services Commission and DAWN (Advice) Ltd. to promote the work of the Court Desk in Durham County Court to assist households across all tenures facing possession proceedings. City of Durham is the only authority in the country to receive this grant and staff are currently working with CLG to share good practice.

The increased work involved in the Housing Options approach has seen a significant decrease both in the number of statutory homeless presentations and the number of acceptances, as demonstrated by the following charts.



The Homelessness Section also offers an emergency 24/7 response via the authority's City Care Service. Since 1 April 2008 staff received 17 calls outside normal working hours.

In addition, the authority also provides temporary emergency accommodation at Edward Street, Gilesgate. During the first half of the year 9 households have been accommodated at Edward Street. Staff from the Homelessness Section visit Edward Street on a daily basis when it is occupied to ensure that there are no problems with the tenancy and that health and safety issues are in order.

### **The Work of the Strategy and Development Section**

#### **COUNTY DURHAM SUB-REGIONAL HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2008-2013**

The HAP (Homelessness Action Partnership) is currently consulting on the first sub-regional homelessness strategy for County Durham. Local government reorganisation from April 2009 onwards will mean that the seven district councils and the County Council will merge to form a new unitary authority. In anticipation of the new authority, and building on the partnership work between the authorities that is already well established, the County Durham HAP has drawn together a Homelessness Strategy for the county for the next 5 years.

This Strategy has three objectives and an Action Plan mapped to these objectives:-

- To prevent homelessness.
- To ensure that sufficient, appropriate and affordable accommodation is available for people who are homeless or at risk.
- To support people who are homeless or who are at risk of repeat homelessness

This strategy replaces the City of Durham Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008 which was monitored on a regular basis by a range of external stakeholders who formed the City of Durham Strategic Homelessness Implementation Group (HIG). The HIG devised and piloted a 'Common Referral Form'. This form replaced a number of others used by each agency providing Floating Support in the district; now officers need only complete one form and copy it to a relevant agency to seek support for clients. As this pilot has been a success the form is now being used across the whole of County Durham for any one who provides Floating Support and who received funding from Supporting People.

Equality and Diversity Task Group – A task group was established whose main aims were:-

- For all members of the group to achieve at least a level 'B' in the Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) for Equality and Diversity
- To increase the client base and expand the avenues in which to interact with hard to reach groups

Moving On Task Group – This group met to discuss ‘bed-blocking’ in temporary accommodation and to identify gaps in service.

## DURHAM HOUSING STRATEGY

The Durham Housing and Neighbourhoods Partnership Board developed the first Durham Housing Strategy 2008-11. It is the first such strategy to embrace housing issues at a sub-regional level and will contribute towards both regional policy development and the development of local neighbourhood priorities.

The Vision of the strategy is to “Make your home in Durham a great place to live” and is underpinned by three key principles:-

Information – we seek to gather good quality evidence that can be used to develop strategy and policy

Investment – we seek to make the most of public and private resources

Influence – we seek to influence and make a positive difference in our partnerships with others

There are four key objectives

- 1 Regeneration and Rejuvenating Housing Markets – our aim is to have a strong and supportive housing market in Durham that supports the regeneration of existing communities and associated economic growth
- 2 Delivering Quality and Choice – our aim is to have a strong and supportive housing market in Durham that offers a wide choice of affordable housing of the right quality
- 3 Improvement and Maintenance of Existing Housing – our aim is to have a strong and supportive housing market in Durham that invests in its existing housing across all communities
- 4 Meeting Specific Social and Community Needs – our aim is to have a strong and supportive housing market in Durham that supports all sections of the community especially older persons and people with additional needs

## PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

City of Durham continues to work in partnership with DVRC, RSLs and the Housing Corporation to increase the provision of affordable housing across the district. Successful bids to the National Affordable Homes Programme (NAHP) 2008-11 have already secured funding for the following schemes:-

Hallgarth Street, Sherburn Village – 12 units for rent  
 Valley View, Ushaw Moor – 20 units for rent  
 Phase 3a Bowburn – 10 units for rent  
 Doric Road, New Brancepeth (20 units for rent and 6 units for shared-ownership)  
 Rose Lea, Witton Gilbert (10 units for rent)  
 Cassop (4 units for rent)

Staff continue to work with colleagues and it is anticipated that further bids will be submitted as part of the current programme.

### **Partnership Working**

The authority works with a wide range of partners to assist with the prevention of homelessness and to deliver the statutory homelessness function.

#### **HOMELESSNESS ACTION PARTNERSHIP**

The Homelessness Action Partnership (HAP) is the main vehicle for joint working on homelessness across the county. It is a strategic multi-agency partnership which aims to prevent and tackle homelessness and ensure that homeless people or people at risk of becoming homeless have access to decent accommodation and support to live as independently as possible in County Durham. Partners include the County Council (Children and Young People's Service and Adult Services, including Supporting People), the seven district councils, the Drug and Alcohol Action Team, Probation and the Housing Provider where housing stock is no longer managed or owned by the district.

The HAP was brought together, and is facilitated by Centrepoint, the leading national youth homelessness charity, whose role as the independent 'critical friend', and in the progression of various developments for the partnership, has been intrinsic to its positive achievements since 2004. As a result of the achievements, the HAP, including the role of Centrepoint, has been widely cited as good practice by a number of agencies including the Regional Centre of Excellence, CLG and the National Youth Homelessness Scheme.

County Durham has been short listed to be one of the second wave of Enhanced Housing Options Trailblazers, which, if won, will build on the existing housing options services in the county by expanding the service to ensure that people who need housing advice also have their wider needs assessed, looking at employment, health and so on, and ensuring that the local authority works in partnership to meet these needs. The securing of this funding will depend on the existing services being on a firm footing and a commitment from the new authority to pursue a "housing options" approach to its homelessness function.



## DASH

In October 2006 the City Council entered into a contract with DASH (Durham Action on Single Housing) for the provision of managed temporary single person homeless accommodation in Durham.

The authority provides six flats at Churchill Square, with one flat used as office space, which offer six bed spaces, and the scheme is managed on a 24-hour basis by staff employed by DASH. DASH receive revenue funding from Supporting People and the Drug and Alcohol Action Team and the provision of this scheme enables the Housing Options Officers to offer temporary (usually for a period of 28 days), emergency accommodation for homelessness applicants from across the county. On 1 April 2008 all six spaces were occupied and 40 tenants have moved into the accommodation between 1 April 2008 and 30 September 2008.

## CARE LEAVERS ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT PROTOCOL (CLASP)

This protocol is an agreement that is designed to ensure that the County Durham Children and Young People's Service (CYPs), the seven strategic housing authorities, and the housing providers within County Durham work together to ensure that the accommodation and support needs of care leavers are met. It outlines each agency's respective role and responsibilities to achieve successful transition to independence amongst this group.

The aims of this protocol are to:

- Ensure the effective discharge of corporate and statutory responsibilities between CYPs, strategic housing authorities and housing providers by jointly addressing the diverse accommodation and support needs of young people leaving care
- Support care leavers to achieve independent living and become responsible and successful tenants
- Prevent care leavers becoming homeless

## JOINT PROTOCOL FOR 16/17 YEAR OLDS

The County Durham Joint Protocol for homeless 16/17 year olds is an agreement that establishes the roles and responsibilities of our partner agencies and how we work together to meet the needs of 16/17 year olds experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The aims of the protocol are to increase joint working, improve communication between agencies, prevent homelessness and ensure 16/17 year olds receive the support they need and assistance in accessing appropriate and suitable accommodation, where necessary, and to prevent the young person being passed between agencies to reduce the risk of 'falling through the net'.

In practical terms this means that when a 16/17 year old presents to one of the partner agencies (Children and Young People's Services Children in Need Teams, District Housing Authorities, Connexions, Youth Engagement Service, Moving On), that agency completes an initial assessment; this assessment covers both the young person's housing and other needs (ie financial, emotional health, potentially harmful behaviour etc). If the matter can not be resolved immediately a Multi-Agency Panel Meeting is convened by the agency to which the young person has presented. The purpose of the meeting is to make a collective decision on the most appropriate way forward for the young person based on their situation and needs.

During the first six months of the year 10 young people accessed the service in Durham with only one person making a statutory homeless application.

#### FLOATING SUPPORT PROVIDERS

The Housing Options Service works with a wide range of Floating Support providers.

Floating Support is a flexible support service which helps clients manage their affairs and live independently. This service is available for both existing and new tenants. If they are accepted onto a scheme, the client is allocated a Floating Support Worker who visits the home to assess their independent living skills to help them maintain and live confidently.

The Worker develops a support plan, identifying areas where help is most needed. This is flexible and is reviewed regularly. As the package is developed to meet an individual client's needs, support is available for as long as it is needed, but this is not usually longer than two years.

#### **Durham Action on Single Housing (DASH)**

Offers Floating Support to people aged 18 - 65 years of age. In addition has supported accommodation for people aged 16 - 65 years who are single and homeless or likely to become homeless

#### **Moving On**

Offers Floating Support for young people aged 16 – 25 years. Also offers housing advice and a range of social group work activities.

#### **Waddington Street**

Offers Floating Support, day centre activities and supported accommodation to people who suffer from mental health problems and are aged between 18 – 65 years.

#### **Community Floating Support**

Offers support for people aged 18 – 65 with mental health issues who live in supported accommodation or in their own homes. Access to the service is via a Care Co-ordinator.

**DISC Independent Living**

Offers Floating Support and housing advice to young people aged 16 - 25 years.

**Norcare**

Offers Floating Support to people with a history of offending or people who are at risk of offending.

**Stonham**

Offers Housing related support to clients with substance misuse issues. They also provide a floating support service to clients with learning disabilities and to clients with mental health issues.

**BID**

Offers support for people who are deaf, deafened or deaf/blind in the County Durham area for people who are aged 16 years and above.

**MOVING ON**

Moving On offers advice, support and practical guidance to young people who are homeless or experiencing housing difficulties to help them secure, sustain and survive in appropriate accommodation.

Moving On has delivered the Advice and Information Service for 18 - 25 year olds on behalf of the Council since 1 November 2007. They have a dedicated worker who provides advice and assistance and support to young people aged 18 - 25 who are experiencing problems with housing. Any 18 - 25 year old presenting to the City Council is referred to Moving On.

For the period April to end of September 2008 the Advice service assisted 42 young people. Of those cases now closed the following outcomes were recorded:-

	Apr-Jun 08	Jul-Sep 08	Total
Homelessness Prevented	0	0	0
Homelessness Delayed	0	0	0
Secured settled accommodation	1	1	2
Secured temporary accommodation	1	2	3

Secured LA temporary accommodation	1	0	1
Client re-housed	0	2	2

SUPPORT2TALK

Support2Talk is a mediation service aimed at helping young people and their families resolve problems and improve communication.

It is about helping people to talk and listen to each other without shouting and arguing. It can help to:-

- Make it possible for a young person to stay at home or to move back
- Make leaving home a planned move
- Re-establish contact with families

It is a free, confidential service. All mediators are trained in helping people explore their issues and find solutions.

Between April and September 2008 there were 5 referrals from the City of Durham area to Support2Talk.

DURHAM COUNTY COURT PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

The authority received £10k grant from CLG to work with the Legal Services Commission to publicise the work of the Court Desk in Durham County Court. City of Durham is the only authority to receive this grant and is liaising with CLG to share the good practice in Durham with colleagues across the country.

The current economic climate has seen an increase in house re-possession and the publicity campaign is to highlight the work of the Court Desk in Durham County Court. Household holders who attend the Court Desk are able to receive free advice from DAWN (Advice) Ltd and this service has been publicised using a range of methods:-

- Radio campaign on Durham fm – a further campaign will be run in December 2008/January 2009
- Advertising on the back of buses
- Adverts in the Durham Advertiser
- Leaflets and Posters to be made available throughout the district, including Council Offices and libraries etc.

## DURHAM COUNTY COURT PILOT SCHEME

City of Durham was asked by CLG to take part in a Pilot Scheme, initially introduced in Norwich, to target tenants who were facing possession proceedings to attend the County Court, ahead of any possession hearing, to resolve their arrears. This would ensure that tenants could receive advice and assistance and they would not be burdened with additional court costs. The aim of the scheme is to select six tenants every month who it is felt would benefit from accessing the scheme.

The authority is working with the Ministry of Justice, Durham County Court, DAWN (Advice) Ltd, and Legal Services Commission to pilot this scheme. The Durham Pilot Scheme is also involving other social landlords – Three Rivers Housing Group, Home Housing and East Durham Homes – who also refer tenants to Durham County Court.

The first session was held on 22 October 2008 with further sessions already arranged for November and December 2008. The outcome of the first three sessions will be evaluated in January 2009 and a decision taken whether to proceed with the scheme.

### Performance Monitoring

The Housing Options Section, in its Business Plan, set itself a number of targets to contribute towards the achievement of the Corporate Performance Indicators and performance to date is detailed below.

Description	Target 2008	Performance to 31 September 2008
NI156 Number of households living in temporary accommodation	7	2
BVPI202 Number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the local authority area	0	0
LPI202 Proportion of households accepted as statutorily homeless who were accepted as statutorily homeless by the same authority within the last two years	6%	4.76%
LPI203 Total number of cases where positive action was successful in preventing/relieving homelessness	100	66

LP204 Proportion of households where positive action was successful in preventing/relieving homelessness	75%	35%
LPI205 Number of households accessing Bond Guarantee Scheme	8	0
LPI206 Number of households provided with Level 3 security (Sanctuary minimum) to assist victims of domestic violence to remain in their property	7	0

NI156 - This indicator has been established to monitor the progress towards halving the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010. The figure provides a "snapshot" of how many households are living in temporary accommodation on the last day of every quarter. The authority owns six units of temporary emergency accommodation managed by Durham Action on Single Housing (DASH) located at Churchill Square. In addition, there are three units of temporary accommodation at Edward Street. The figure of 7 households takes into account that Churchill Square operates, as far as possible, at 100% occupancy. The reported figure for the end of the second quarter is below the target set.

BVPI202 - This figure relates to the Rough Sleeper Count which was carried out by the authority in 2004. The issue of rough sleeping has been considered by Scrutiny as part of a wider review of Homelessness and, in view of LGR and evidence that incidences of rough sleeping in City of Durham remain low, a further Rough Sleeper Count will not be carried out this year.

LPI202 - The figure records the proportion of households accepted as statutorily homeless who were accepted as statutorily homeless by the same authority within the last two years. The figure of 4.76% is below the target and, more importantly, it relates to only two cases of repeat homelessness within the first two quarters.

LPI203 - As a result of the provision of a Housing Options Service a target of 100 cases where positive action was successful in preventing/relieving homelessness was set. The definition for this target is very prescriptive ie the advice must involve 'detailed file-based case recording, the outcome of which is subject to a system of quality checking and control'. One-off telephone advice provided through, for example, an advice line is not included in the definition. The positive outcome must also resolve the immediate homelessness or threat of homelessness and it is likely that this will be sustainable for a period of at least six months. The results to date are very encouraging and it is anticipated that the annual target of 100 cases will be exceeded.

LPI204 - LPI203 was established with a target of 100 cases in the current year. As this indicator merely records the number of cases, LPI204 was established to record the proportion of households where positive action was successful in preventing/relieving homelessness. A target of 75% was set for this indicator. This figure was set to reflect both the (still) limited capacity within the section and also a number of wider external

factors such as the current housing market and the 'credit crunch'. It would appear that the target of 75% was very ambitious and it is already apparent that this target will not be met. It must be emphasised, however, that despite a case being unable to be identified as having a positive outcome, homelessness or the threat of homelessness may still have been prevented as shown by the figures detailed below.

During the first two quarters of the year 212 new cases were opened. During the same period 189 cases were closed with the following outcomes:-

Homelessness prevented (remained in existing property) – 16 cases

Homelessness prevented (secured suitable alternative accommodation) – 49 cases

Homelessness relieved – 1 case

Lost contact – 33 cases

Service no longer required – 67 cases\*

\*Work has been carried out by the Housing Options Section but the client has resolved their situation, for example, secured private rented accommodation themselves

Forwarded to homelessness assessment – 23 cases

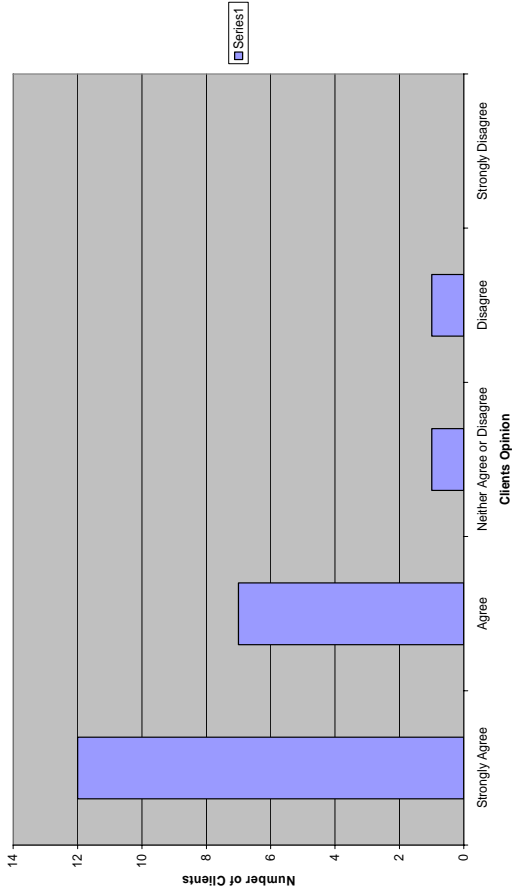
LPI205 - In order to assist clients access private rented accommodation a Bond Guarantee Scheme has been established and a target of eight households accessing this scheme was established. To date, no clients have accessed the scheme, primarily as a result of affordability, and the target will not therefore be met. A county wide scheme has been established, which is scheduled to be operational by November, and any under-spend from this budget will be transferred to the county wide scheme.

LPI206 - The quarterly P1E Homelessness Return indicates that presentations that represent the second highest primary reason for homelessness. A report was considered by Cabinet on 15 October 2008 when it approved the establishment of Level 3 Sanctuary Scheme security initiatives. These initiatives will be carried out in partnership with DISC (Durham Initiatives Supporting Communities). The scheme will become operational in November 2008 and it is hoped that the target of 7 households provided with Level 3 security (Sanctuary minimum) will be achieved.

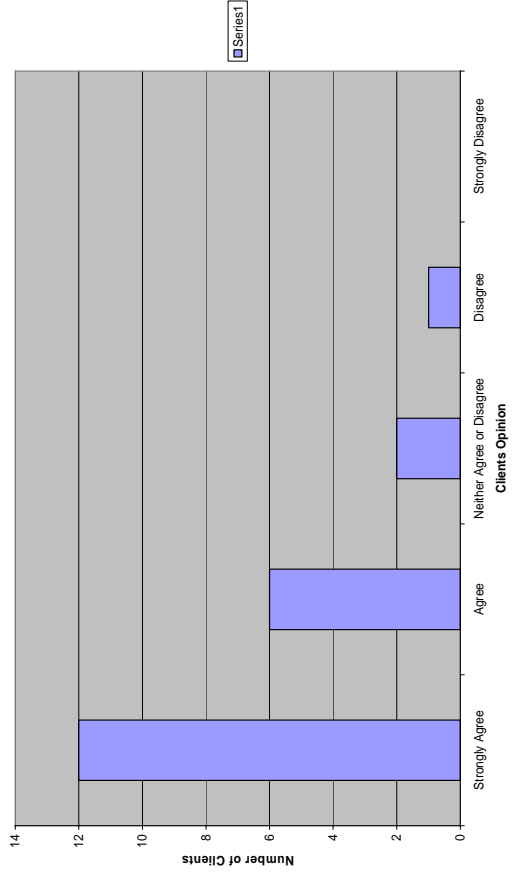
### **Housing Options Service Questionnaires**

When every case is closed a Housing Options Satisfaction Questionnaire is sent to customers in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Housing Options Service. Between 1 April 2008 and 30 September 2008 21 completed questionnaires were received and the results are detailed below.

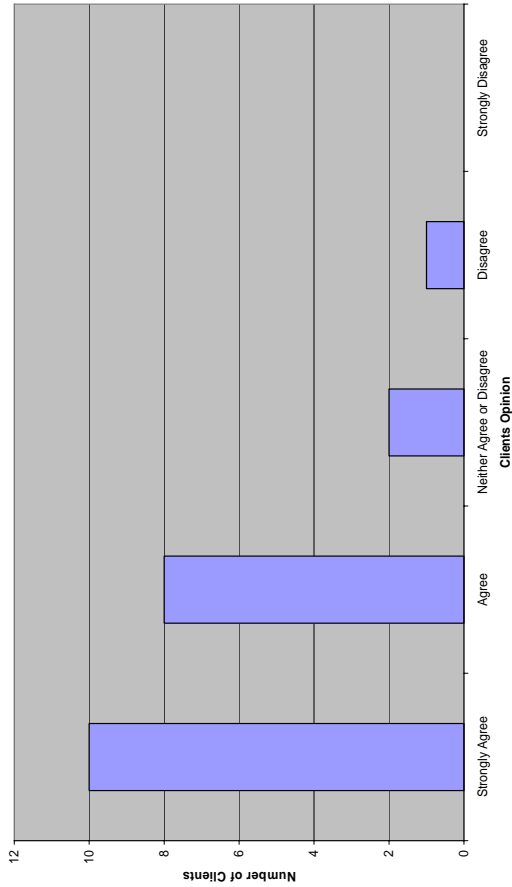
The Client saw the Housing Option Officer Quickly



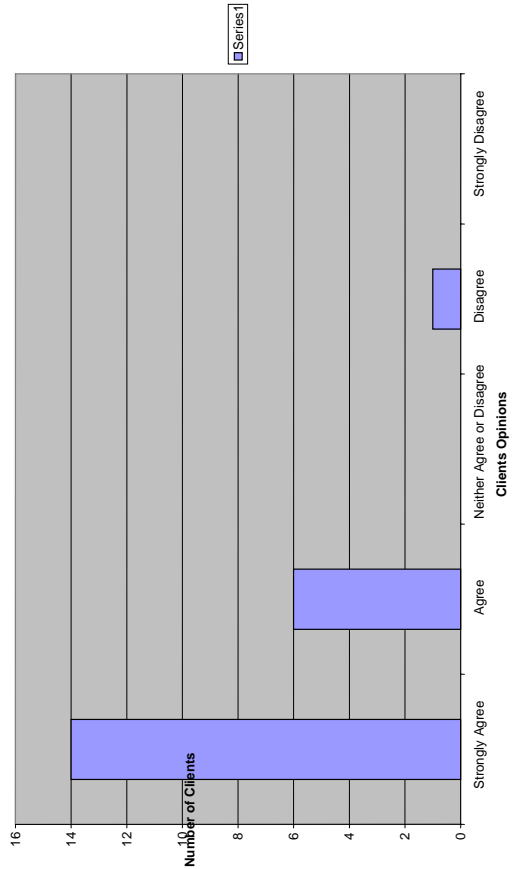
The Officer kept me informed of my case



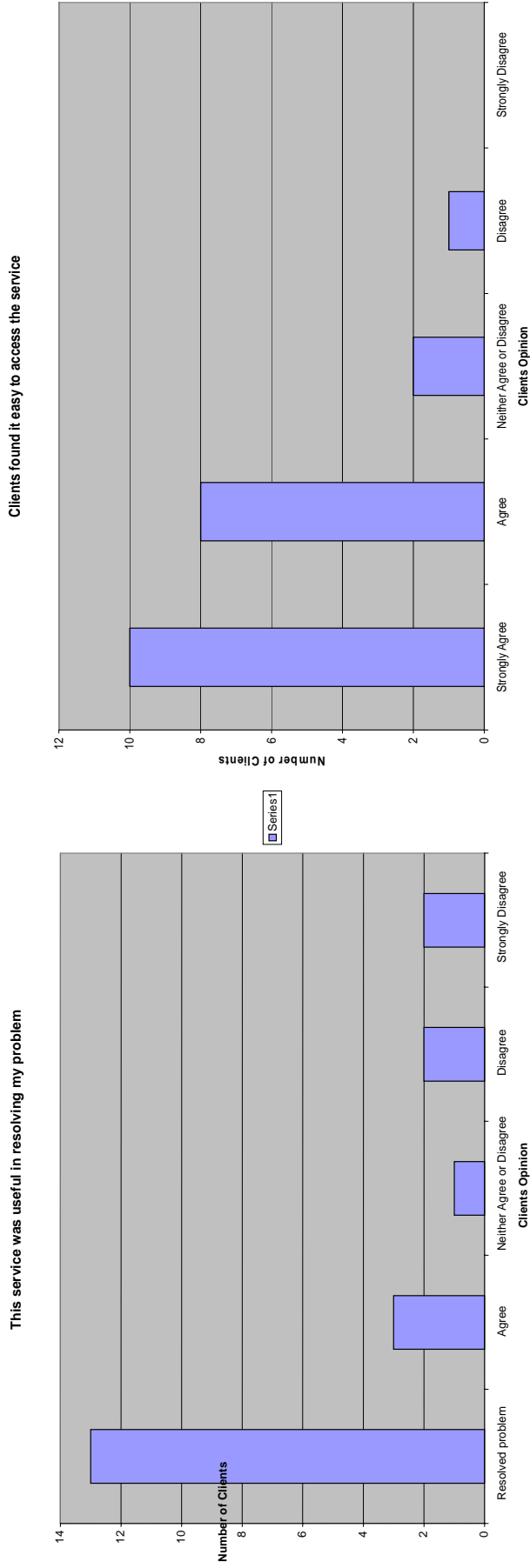
Clients found it easy to access the service



My Housing Options were fully explained to me







The Questionnaire also asks customers to provide additional comments on the service they have received and a selection of comments are listed below:

“Natalie Bloomfield gave me every assistance when I was at a low ebb, she is an asset to be proud of, her customer relations skills and knowledge are second to none, I thank her dearly”

“Lynette Goodhall was very polite, sensitive and helpful in assisting me. Thank you”

“Natalie’s service was outstanding and I am very grateful”

“My husband and I think that Lynette Goodhall was extremely helpful and that she went out of her way to help in any way that she could”

## Key Achievements in 2008

### SANCTUARY SCHEME

City of Durham acknowledges the impact of domestic abuse and that it affects all kinds of women; it is not confined to any social class, ethnic origin or particular age.

During the year 2007/08 185 households were accepted as homeless by City of Durham; of these acceptances 38 applications were made as a result of domestic abuse (20%) and this category of applicant was the second highest reason for loss of last settled home for households accepted as homeless (Figures taken from P1e Quarterly returns submitted to CLG).

Staff in the Strategy and Development Section have been working with colleagues, both internal and external, to introduce Level 3 (also known as Sanctuary minimum) security initiatives to assist victims of domestic abuse and hate crime.

At a meeting of Cabinet held on 15 October 2008 it was agreed to approve the establishment of a Level 3 Sanctuary Scheme and a Service Level Agreement is currently being drawn up with DISC (Durham Initiatives Supporting Communities) to deliver the service on behalf of the authority.

### BOND GUARANTEE SCHEME

Access to private rented accommodation is often hindered by an applicant's lack of access to a deposit or bond. In response to this, the authority has established a Bond Guarantee Scheme and an initial sum of £2,000 (funded from CLG Homelessness Grant) has been ring-fenced to provide a bond of a month's rent (to a maximum of £500) to assist applicants access the private rented sector.

The principle of the scheme is that no money is paid 'up front' to the landlord, however, the landlord is guaranteed an amount to the maximum of the bond should the tenant default on their conditions of tenancy, for example, damage the property or leave the tenancy owing rent arrears. During the course of the first six months of their tenancy the tenant is expected to pay to the landlord an amount equivalent to the bond.

It is acknowledged that not all tenants are able to access this scheme as a result of affordability, however, it is considered to be good practice to operate such a scheme.

## HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION FUND

To ensure that the authority takes a proactive approach to homelessness prevention and responds positively to the social, personal and economic cost of homelessness, the causes need to be tackled and resources made available specifically targeted towards homelessness prevention. As a result a Homelessness Prevention Fund has been established and an initial sum of £2,000 (funded from CLG Homelessness Grant) has been ring-fenced to the fund.

Applicants are entitled to a maximum payment of £300 (payment may be increased in exceptional circumstances) and it must be demonstrated that access to the fund would sustain accommodation for at least six months.

To date, six households have been assisted by the scheme, primarily to assist them access accommodation in the private rented sector where they are unable to utilise the Bond Guarantee Scheme as a result of affordability, however, payments have also been made towards accommodation costs and to pay court fees to suspend a court order.

## NORTHGATE SX3 HOUSING ADVICE MODULE

The introduction of the Northgate SX3 Housing Advice Module in September 2007 has enabled the individual recording and monitoring of rent accounts of homelessness applicants in both Churchill Square Emergency Access and the authority's homelessness unit at Edward Street. In addition, the system has enabled staff to interrogate and report on data from the Housing Database and has greatly reduced the time spent on collating data required for performance management and information required by CLG.

## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

All staff in the Strategy and Development Section are encouraged and supported to utilise the Corporate Training Programme and, where necessary, staff are able to access specialist training courses relevant to their job.

Specialist training courses attended by staff include:-

- Introduction to Homelessness Law facilitated by Shelter
- Sharpsafe facilitated by Nationalfirst
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Awareness facilitated by Durham County Council
- Illegal Eviction and Harassment facilitated by Housing Solutions

- Violent Crime Workshop facilitated by Government Office North East

#### WEBSITE

Significant improvements have been made to the City of Durham Website and a comprehensive range of advice and information is available for customers, including the full range of Housing Options leaflets, advice on the Bond Guarantee Scheme, floating support providers, Mediation Service etc.

Customers can access the service by typing in the key words 'homeless', 'housing advice' or 'housing options' on the Site Search facility

#### **Best Value Review of Strategic Housing Service**

Staff from the Strategy and Development Section were involved in the Audit Commission's Review on the Strategic Housing Services and most staff were interviewed as part of the site inspection in February 2008.

Although disappointed by the Inspector's summary of the service – a fair, one star, service with uncertain prospects – there were many positive statements regarding Housing Advice and Homelessness in the report including:-

- "City of Durham Council performs well against government priorities"
- "Staff fully understand options available and how to access them"
- "Positively there is intensive work with households accepted as statutorily homeless to discuss and identify housing solutions, including regular visits to people in temporary accommodation and hostels"
- "City of Durham Council works successfully in partnership to prevent young people from being homeless, commissioning a voluntary agency to deliver housing advice for people between 16 - 25 years old. This enables young people to receive advice from staff with specific youth and housing experience"

and it was acknowledged that strengths significantly outweigh weaknesses in the area of enabling housing provision to meet needs and that:-

- "City of Durham Council is successful in securing funding through the National Affordable Homes Programme"

In addition, a number of weakness addressed in the report have been addressed including:-

- The implementation of a Sanctuary Scheme
- The introduction of a Bond Guarantee Scheme
- Adoption of the Sub-Regional Homelessness Strategy

## Agenda Item 8(d)

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date</b>	Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> January 2009
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Jeff Riddell Head of Environment & Leisure Services Tel: 3018684
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Andrew Jackson Technical Support Manager Tel: 3018693
<b>Subject</b>	Britain in Bloom 2009

## 1 Purpose

To inform Cabinet of Durham's nomination by Northumbria in Bloom to represent the north east in the Small City category of the 2009 Britain in Bloom National Finals

## 2 Recommendations

That the report be noted

## 3 Information

### 3.1 Background

In 2008 Durham won the Northumbria in Bloom Best Small City category (35,001-100,000 population) achieving a Silver Gilt Medal. In addition to this a number of Special Awards were also received:

Best Voluntary Project in support of Northumbria in Bloom – St. Margaret's Allotments (Gold)

Best Combined efforts of residents of a community – Oswald Court, Elvet (Silver Gilt)

Best Conservation Project – Botanic Gardens (Gold)

Best Shopping Precinct – Prince Bishop's Shopping Centre (Silver Gilt)

Best Grounds of a college or university – University of Durham (Gold)

The City has an excellent track record in Northumbria in Bloom having won the Best Small City category on 9 occasions in the last 10 years. In 2005 the City gained national recognition for its horticultural and environmental quality by winning the Britain in Bloom National Finals when it achieved a Gold Medal.

On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008 the Northumbria in Bloom organisers announced that Durham has been nominated to represent the north east in the Small City category of the 2009 Britain in Bloom National Finals.

### 3.2 Britain in Bloom Competition

Britain in Bloom is an all-inclusive campaign, organised by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) that encourages communities of all sizes to make positive and lasting improvements to their local areas for the benefit of all local people. The campaign is the largest of its kind in Europe and incorporates floral features, permanent planting / landscaping, tackling issues of litter / dog fouling / graffiti / vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Entries are encouraged to involve all sectors of the community such as businesses, community groups, residents groups, volunteers, schools and other public bodies to boost civic pride and help retain and enhance identity both locally and nationally. Britain in Bloom also promotes good practice in the environment by encouraging recycling / composting, the establishment of biodiversity / conservation areas and other sustainable projects.

Britain in Bloom encourages all sections of the community to get involved to help create safer, cleaner and greener local environments.

The main judging takes place during August each year. Prior to their visit the judges are also sent a portfolio document detailing year round involvement in the campaign. Each entrant is judged against three main criteria namely:

- Horticultural Achievement
- Local Environmental Quality and Sustainability
- Community Participation

Each entrant is awarded either a Gold, Silver Gilt, Silver or Bronze award. However it is possible to fall below a Bronze award and receive a 'No Award' statement. There are also a number of discretionary awards given for special projects.

### 3.3 Advantages of Participation

Participation in Britain in Bloom fits well with the Council's key aims as set out in the Corporate Performance Plan. Specifically participation in the competition supports the development of Flourishing Communities, the provision of Quality Public Services and the promotion of Durham as a Capital City.

The following are identified as some of the specific benefits and opportunities for Durham:

- Raising civic pride and establishing a greater awareness of the City's environment among local people and the business community.
- Encouraging residents, local businesses and other organisations to take an active part in maintaining and improving the City's environment
- Raising the profile of the City at both regional and national levels.
- Achieving permanent and sustainable improvements to the environment.
- Securing additional income through sponsorship to maintain and enhance new and existing environmental features
- Assisting with economic development by enhancing the image and identity of the City.
- Providing a 'vehicle' to support other emerging environmental campaigns including 'The Big Tidy Up' and other Environmental Action Days

## Agenda Item 8(e)

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date</b>	7 January 2008
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Director of Corporate Services Tel: 0191 301 8885
<b>Contact Officer</b>	David Collingwood Tel: 0191 301 8851
<b>Subject</b>	Register of Electors 2009 Changes to Polling District References

## Purpose

To inform Cabinet of changes to the referencing of Polling Districts for the Register of Electors 2009.

## Recommendation

That the report be noted.

## Information

The Council is required to produce each year lists of Parliamentary and Local Government electors and these are published on 1 December in the form of the Register of Electors. Currently each of the seven district authorities in the County publishes their own Electoral Register. As a consequence of local government re-organisation, with effect from 1 April 2009, there will be only one Electoral Register covering the whole of the County Council area.

Currently each of the seven districts authorities is responsible for identifying their own Polling District letters that make up their Register of Electors. With the need to amalgamate all of the Registers on 1 April 2009, it will be necessary to revise all of the Polling District letters in order to avoid duplication of the letters.

This exercise has been undertaken by the Electoral Officers Workstream when the opportunity was also taken to make the Polling District letters more identifiable with Parliamentary Constituencies as per the attached schedule.

The revised Polling District letters are to be implemented by each district authority in the County for the Register of Electors to be published on 1 December 2008 thus avoiding the need for a new Register to be published for the County area on 1 April 2009.

**Ron Henderson**

**Director of Corporate Services**

**Date:** 1 December 2008



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Durham  
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Direct Line: 0191 301 8851  
Fax: 0191 386 0625  
Email: dcollingwood@durhamcity.gov.uk

Ron Henderson MCIPD  
**Director of Corporate Services**

To: All Members of the **COUNCIL**

Our Ref: DC/DW

9 December 2008

Dear Councillor

**Register of Electors 2009  
Changes to Polling District Referencing**

As you will be aware, the Council is required to produce each year lists of Parliamentary and Local Government electors. These are published on 1 December in the form of the Register of Electors.

Currently each of the seven district authorities in the County publishes their own Electoral Register, however, as a consequence of local government re-organisation, with effect from 1 April 2009, there will be only one Electoral Register covering the whole of the County Council area.

Each of the seven district authorities is responsible for identifying the Polling District letters that make up their Register of Electors. With the need to amalgamate all of the Registers on 1 April 2009, it will be necessary to revise all of the Polling District letters in order to avoid duplication of the letters.

This exercise has been undertaken by the Electoral Officers Workstream when the opportunity was also taken to make the Polling District letters more identifiable with Parliamentary Constituencies. I enclose for your information a schedule of the revised Polling District letters.

The revised Polling District letters are to be implemented by each district authority in the County for the Register of Electors to be published on 1 December 2008 thus avoiding the need for a new Register to be published for the County area on 1 April 2009.

Yours sincerely

**David Collingwood  
Electoral Support Officer**

**CITY OF DURHAM CONSTITUENCY**

<b><u>District Ward</u></b>	<b><u>Current PD</u></b>	<b><u>Proposed PD</u></b>
Newton Hall North	AA	DAA
Newton Hall South	AB	DBA
Crossgate & Framwelgate	AC	DCA
	AD	DCB
	AM	DCC
	AP	DCD
Pelaw & Gilesgate	AE	DDA
	AF	DDB
	AH	DDC
	AI	DDD
	AJ	DDE
St. Nicholas	AG	DEA
Nevilles Cross	AK	DFA
	AL	DFB
Elvet	AN	DGA
	AO	DGB
Coxhoe	DA	DHA
	DD	DHB
	DFF	DHC
	DE	DHD
	DEE	DHE
Cassop Cum Quarrington	DAA	DIA
	DC	DIB
	DB	DIC
	DBB	DID
	DCC	DIE
	DG	DIF
	DGG	DIG
Pittington & West Rainton	DH	DJA
	DHH	DJB
	DI	DJC
Shadforth & Sherburn	DII	DKA
	DJ	DKB
	DJJ	DKC
	DK	DKD
Shincliffe	DM	DLA
	DN	DLB
	DO	DLC
Bearpark & Witton Gilbert	DR	DMA
	DW	DMB

<u>District Ward</u>	<u>Current PD</u>	<u>Proposed PD</u>
Framwellgate Moor	DT DU DV DVA DVB	DNA DNB DNC DND DNE
Belmont	DX	DOA
Carrville & Gilesgate	DY DZ	DPA DPB
Brancepeth, Langley Moor & Meadowfield	GA HB HC	DQA DQB DQC
Brandon	HA	DRA
New Brancepeth & Ushaw Moor	HD HE HF HG	DSA DSB DSC DSD
Deerness	HH HI HJ	DTA DTB DTC

## Agenda Item 8(f)

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> January 2009
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Head of Legal & Strategic Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Clare L. Greenlay, ext 8878
<b>Subject</b>	Charter Trustee

### Purpose

To update Cabinet on the position in respect of the creation of Charter Trustees for the City of Durham.

### Recommendation

That the information be noted.

### Information

Members have previously been advised that, in view of Local Government Review, Charter Trustees are to be created to protect the cultural heritage and civic traditions of the City of Durham following the demise of City of Durham District Council (the Council).

Draft regulations in relation to the creation of Charter Trustees have been published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). They are expected to be laid before Parliament early in 2009. DCLG have also confirmed their intention that the unitary councillors of the area of the Council will be appointed as Charter Trustees.

The functions of the Charter Trustees include but are not limited to:-

- The annual election of one of their number as mayor, and another as deputy mayor - the first business to be transacted at their annual meeting.
- Appointment of local officers of dignity (e.g. recorder, pantmaster, billetmaster etc)
- Holding the historic property (i.e. historic and ceremonial property held by a predecessor council [other than land and buildings, and property held for the purposes of any statutory function] and in particular charters, insignia and plates) relating to the charter trustee area (whether by retaining it under the control of the Charter Trustees or vesting it in the Unitary Authority).
- Acquiring or accepting gifts of historic or ceremonial property (other than land and buildings) and, in particular, charters, insignia and plate, of the area for which they act and may execute any work (including works of maintenance or improvement) incidental to or consequential on the acquisition, acceptance or holding.
- Determining whether to appoint or reappoint as charter trustees up to three councillors from the relevant council provided that at any time no more than 3 of their number have been appointed in this way (save that additional Charter Trustees must be appointed if the number of Charter Trustees falls below 5).
- Holding an annual meeting which, in the case of the first annual meeting, shall be within one month following the reorganisation date, and in any other case, within 21 days following the annual meeting of the relevant council.
- Paying the mayor and deputy mayor for the purpose of enabling them to meet the expenses of their office such allowance as they think reasonable.

- Appointing such officers as they think necessary for the proper discharge of their functions. Arrange for the discharge of their functions by Committee or Officers, other than the election of the mayor or deputy mayor; the appointment of local officers of dignity and functions relating to the issuing of a precept or the borrowing of money;
- Setting a precept to recover the costs of the arrangements for the charter trustees
- Paying reasonable subscriptions, whether annually or otherwise, to the funds of the Association of Charter Trustees and Charter Town Councils.

The regulations provide that where on the reorganisation date (1<sup>st</sup> April 2009) there is a Councillor on the Council who immediately before the reorganisation date was mayor, that person shall continue in that role for the charter trustees after the reorganisation date until such time as the completion of the election by the Charter Trustees of the Mayor. Thus, Cllr Holland will continue as Mayor of the City of Durham until the first annual meeting of the Charter Trustees.

The regulations also provide that unitary council shall provide accommodation for the proper discharge of the functions of any charter trustees; and the accommodation to be provided and the terms on which it is provided shall be determined by agreement between that council and the charter trustees or, in default of such agreement, by the decision of a person agreed on by them or, in default of their agreement, appointed by the Secretary of State. Any question as to the interpretation or application of the regulation in relation to the historic property which is not resolved before the end of the period of 12 months beginning with the establishment date may be determined by a person agreed on by the parties or, failing their agreement, appointed by the Secretary of State.

The Charter Trustees are entitled to precept upon the billing authority. The creation of the Charter Trust and subsequent precepting is treated exactly the same as in the case of a new Town or Parish Council. The County Council is able to “anticipate” the first year’s precept, in line with provisions of the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 1998 SI No 119 (as amended by SI No 3270 of 1998). The Charter Trustees would then have until 31 October 2009 to formally issue its precept to the new authority. Confirming the budget and then issuing the appropriate precept is likely to be a priority for the Charter Trustees.

Officers are discussing the issues surrounding the funding, staffing, accommodation and ceremonial requirements of the Charter Trustees with Durham County Council and it is hoped that a meeting of the potential Charter Trustees will be convened in the New Year to brief them on the issues, rights and responsibilities attaching to their role as Charter Trustees.

***Clare L. Greenlay***

**Head of Legal & Strategic Services**

**Date 16<sup>th</sup> December 2008**

## Agenda Item 8(g)

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date</b>	7 January 2009
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Head of Legal & Strategic Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Clare Greenlay – Tel 0191 3018878, Email cgreenlay@durhamcity.gov.uk
<b>Subject</b>	Freedom Of Information Publication Scheme

**Purpose**

To advise Cabinet of the adoption of the Information Commissioner's Model Publication Scheme 2009 to assist the general public in accessing information held by the council which is generally available for publication.

**Recommendation**

That the information be noted.

**Information**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) creates for the general public certain rights with regard to requesting information held by public authorities. All public authorities under Section 19 of the Act are required to adopt and maintain a Freedom of Information Publication Scheme. Most of the information published by the council is available to the general public on the council's web site. Individual requests for specific information which is not generally available on the council's web site may be made in writing to the Freedom of Information Officer.

*Signature* Clare Greenlay

**TITLE** Head of Legal & Strategic Services

**Date** December 2008

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## Agenda Item 8(h)

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date</b>	7 January 2009
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Executive Director Tel: 0191 3018867 email: dmarrs@durhamcity.gov.uk
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Kay Laidlaw – Legal & Complaints Officer Tel: 0191 3018876 email: klaidlaw@durhamcity.gov.uk
<b>Subject</b>	Local Government Ombudsman Cases

**Purpose**

For Members' Information, I attach at Appendix A, schedule of successful defences of complaints referred to the Commission for Local Administration in England

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**Recommendations**

That the report be noted.

Signature **D Marrs**

TITLE Executive Director

Date: December 2008



City of Durham

CABINET

7 January 2008

Report of the Executive Director - For Information

Schedule of Successful Defences Referred to the Commission for Local Administration in England

<u>L.O. Case Ref. No.</u>	<u>Summary of the Nature of the Complaint</u>	<u>Local Ombudsman's Findings/Decision</u>
08 004 230	<p>That the council has treated the complainant differently from other people in the street in relation to the complainant's wish to move to another bungalow and failed to act on neighbours offer to exchange bungalows. The complainant is unable to use the steps at the front of the house and is effectively trapped in it. The complainant also believes that a housing officer was rude and failed to return telephone calls.</p>	<p>The ombudsman's conclusion is that whilst she understands that the complainant is absolutely certain that they were offered a bungalow and feels let down by the council and the information that was provided was true, the ombudsman has been unable to find any evidence to support the views of the events and is unable to take matters further.</p> <p>Reason for termination: No or insufficient evidence of maladministration.</p>