

1. Building community capability and strengthening social enterprise

Key issue: There is a plethora of Community Support Agencies non of which are meeting expectations of community groups.

Priority: To establish a progression pathway

Task:

- Undertake mapping exercise of Community Support Agencies and Community Groups (with indication of stage of development)
- Identify challenges and set parameters
- Develop 'Pathway' approach using joined up agencies
- Establish clear outcomes and monitor achievements

Lead Group: WVDA/TEA with support of DRCC/2D/County Durham Community Support Unit, SRI/MTI Project Managers and Community Capacity Development Officers.

2. Skills and enterprise for sustainable tourism

Key issue: given the severe economic problems faced by the District it has the opportunity to capitalise on the beauty of the natural and physical environment by developing the tourism sector to the benefit of the local economy.

Task:

- Improve standards of accommodation by ensuring that maximum benefit is achieved from better targeting of existing activity
- Review and improve toilet provision to link with visitor sites
- Develop and gain agreement for a better and more integrated promotion of the area
- Better and more effective provision of interpretation and signage
- Improve perception of public transport and more integrated provision

Lead Group: Interim grouping WV Forum for Business, including North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership, Business Link and Centre of Vocational Excellence in Travel & Tourism Services (Development of cross district grouping to be explored)

3. Health and quality of life of young people

Key Issues:

- High numbers of young people on long term sickness benefit suffering from stress related illness and depression.
- Poor Educational achievement.

Priority: work with Partners to maximise job opportunities and aspirations

Task:

- Raise aspirations, change culture
- Work 'upstream' with young people
- Develop the idea of volunteering as a stepping stone to employment
- Define what success is – could be unemployment benefit
- Expose young people to the world of work
- Develop alternative routes to academia
- Ensure Wear Valley benefits from regional programmes such as ASPIRE

Lead Group: Durham Dales Children & Young People Planning Group (linked to WVF4B)

4. Development of the knowledge economy locally.

Key issue: weakness of the local economy, lack of strong employer base and widespread employment deprivation, which affects 86% of the District. Between 1997 –2002 Wear Valley has had only 0.4% growth in employment compared to 7.7% growth for Durham County and 8.2% in England.

Priority: To encourage a knowledge-based economy by focusing on indigenous business growth as well as inward investment.

Tasks:

- Develop linkage with CDEP Knowledge Economy Working Group
- Develop niche marketing opportunities to attract 'return migrants' in higher value added industry sectors.
- Discuss with CDDC options for increasing investment enquiries into West Durham
- Explore means of capitalising on NetPark and local universities
- Work with WVDA to:
 - look at ways of improving the competitiveness of indigenous businesses
 - explore how knowledge intensive business start-ups can be encouraged

Lead Group: Interim grouping WVF4B, including Business Link. Development of cross district grouping to be explored