

**REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**13 JULY 2005**

Report of the Director of Regeneration  
**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK : STEERING GROUP**

**purpose of the report**

1. To inform Members of the matters considered at the Member/Officer Steering Group and to agree recommended action.

**background**

2. At the meeting of the Regeneration Committee on 25 May 2005 members received an update on the process of producing the new Local Development Framework and on the agreement by GONE for our Local Development Scheme (the Service Level Agreement with GONE dictating the content and timetable for LDF activity). Members also agreed to establish a Member/Officer Steering Group to oversee production.
3. The first meeting of the group was held on 14 July 2005 and involved:-
  - Cllr Townsend (Chair)
  - Cllr Grogan (Weardale and Tow Law)
  - Cllr Zair (Bishop Auckland)
  - Cllr Laurie (Chair of Development Control)
  - Director of Regeneration
  - Head of Development & Building Control.
4. The meeting agreed a remit (Annex 1) and received the first in a series of informative briefing notes on the new procedures. In addition the Group considered the process of producing the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
5. It was agreed that the remit of the group be restricted to procedural and progress issues. Consideration and development of policy be clearly the responsibility of the Regeneration Committee.

**statement of community involvement**

6. As members are aware the SCI will identify how the Council will engage the community of Wear Valley in the production of the LDF. The principles and process of Community involvement needs to be established at the outset and implemented continuously throughout the LDF programme. The SCI needs to be produced for consultation by the end of July and be submitted to GONE in December.

7. Informal discussions have taken place with Wear Valley Community Network to explore the potential to use the network as the means to access community groups and organisations in the District. It is proposed that this arrangement be explored through the development of a Service Level Agreement with the Network to facilitate community consultation and engagement. This is seen as a practical solution to an obvious time consuming and complicated process. As the network exists it is considered appropriate to build on its strengths to achieve engagement with all its constituent member groups. This role is seen as distinct from the technical role involving policy development and content of the LDF, but clearly this will be informed by active and involved consultation which the network can facilitate.

### **planning and young people project**

8. On behalf of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), Planning Aid North (PAN) has sought the support of the Durham District and County Councils to finance a Community Planner post to deliver a 'Planning and Young People' project. It is proposed that the project would run initially for a 2-year period that could be extended thereafter depending upon its success. A management group made up of partnership organisations would be set up to steer the project.
9. The project is aimed at providing the opportunity for pupils and teachers of primary, secondary and special needs schools to become involved in the planning process, increasing their understanding in planning issues, including the LDF process. It is expected that this knowledge base will filter through to the parents of those pupils i.e. 'knowledge transfer', thus maximising its coverage and impact.
10. This proposal has come about at a time when this Council is seeking ways in which to facilitate and deliver meaningful, inclusive community involvement in the planning process. I consider that this project would be a useful tool to assist in enabling the Council to move towards creating a climate that promotes inclusion of all sectors of the community. Support for the project would also demonstrate the Council's commitment to young people in the forthcoming SCI.
11. The key outcomes proposed by the project by the Community Planner are:-
  - Raising teacher awareness through the provision of workshops and other events.
  - Facilitating planning studies in the classroom delivered by teachers, PAN staff and volunteers through structured lesson plans, local projects and schemes of work.
  - Improving the awareness of young people in the community through the development of a countywide community project based upon democracy, consultation and participation.
12. To date all of the other Durham authorities have formally financially committed themselves to the project. The proposal would compliment proposals to

employ a Youth Involvement Officer, based with 2D. Whilst the Local Education Authority has been made aware of the project more detailed discussions are required. Currently no schools have been approached. PAN intends to do this once funding has been secured. Therefore it is not possible to advise members of actual take up and therefore impact within this district at this present time.

### **financial implications**

13. PAN has requested commitment to cover year 1 and 2 costs. This will allow the regional PAN co-ordinator to attain remaining funding required. Given time constraints I have already confirmed that this Council is supportive of the project. PAN has forwarded a Memorandum of Understanding in lieu of a detailed contract. I consider that this document requires amendment before signature to enable the Council to withdraw should it transpire that take up by schools within the district is considered insufficient. The LSP Manager has advised that costs for year 1 could be met from The Youth Fund. I advise that it would be possible to fund year 2 costs from the Plan Preparation budget if necessary.

### **conclusion**

14. Progression of work on the LDF can now continue with the support of a dedicated steering group, whose remit has now been clarified. The next work stage is the preparation of a draft SCI for consultation. The volume of work required to continue to meet the milestones adopted in the Local Development Scheme remains a challenge for the Forward Planning Section. In this context the opportunities for partnership working with PAN and the Community Network present solutions to resource issues to deliver effective community involvement which would otherwise exist. Perhaps most importantly these partnership opportunities will demonstrate best working practices for delivering meaningful and inclusive involvement. Such examples will enhance the actual content of the forthcoming SCI, its integrity as well as assisting in its effective delivery. These arrangements should therefore be welcomed.

<b>RECOMMENDED</b>	1	That Members agree the remit (Annex 1) of the LDF Steering Group.
	2	That members endorse discussions with Wear Valley Community Network to determine the means of community engagement in the LDF process.
	3	That members agree to confirm the actions of the Director of Regeneration to contribute and participate in the Planning and Young People programme facilitated by Planning Aid for the North East.

**background documents**

Planning & Young People : A Community Outreach Project for Young People Project Plan.

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**Officer responsible for the report**

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**Author of the report**

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**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK STEERING GROUP****PROPOSED REMIT**

- To monitor progress against the adopted Local Development Scheme.
- To oversee the work required in the preparation of the Local Development Framework.
- To identify potential risks relating to the work programme.
- To consider actual risks and to agree contingencies.
- To consider and agree the methodology for each stage of the plan making process.
- To consider and agree work programmes prepared by the Principal Forward Planning Officer.
- To regularly receive and consider reports from the Principal Forward Planning Officer relating to the progression of work, having regard to the key milestones set in the Local Development Scheme.
- To receive and consider emerging Local Development Documents and associated reports as appropriate.
- To log and consider issues arising throughout the plan making process.
- To consider and agree practical matters such as the format and physical structure of local development documents to be produced.
- To promote the LDF plan making process through other related activities and duties of individual group members.

**REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**13 JULY 2005**

Report of the Director of Regeneration

**LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN ANNUAL STATEMENT AND LTP2 CONSULTATION**

**purpose of the report**

1. For members to agree the LTP Annual Statement and to note the response to the draft LTP2 from the Local Strategic Partnership.

**background**

2. The LTP (2001/6) is the County Durham Transport Plan detailing a programme of activity from major road building to demand management and road local maintenance. Members have, in the past, identified priority schemes for inclusion and have received updates on progress through the Annual Progress Reports (APR) produced by Durham County Council. The Annual Progress Report for 2004/5 (APR5) is currently being produced and the County Council has requested a District Statement for inclusion.
3. As members are also aware Durham County Council have consulted on the provisional version of the draft LTP2 which will cover the period 2006 to 2011. The document will replace the existing LTP1 and is to be submitted as a provisional draft to Government by July 2005. A final version of LTP2 has to be submitted to Government by March 2006.
4. The County Council convened a joint meeting of the Council and LSP in April to discuss this issue.

**annual progress report (apr5)**

5. Attached at Annex 2 is a draft Wear Valley Statement for inclusion in APR5. The statement identifies the strategic concerns expressed by both Council and LSP members at the LTP2 consultation event, and highlights the need for progress on both major and minor schemes in the District.
6. Members are requested to consider the attached for submission to the County Council.

**ltp2 consultation**

7. LTP2 will include policies and specific proposals to address highway improvements, maintenance and traffic management and public transport throughout County Durham.

8. The objectives of LTP2 reflect the Government's shared priorities including:-
- Access to jobs and services;
  - Reduced problems of congestion;
  - Improved public transport;
  - Reduced problems of air quality;
  - Improved safety; and
  - Improved quality of life and health.
9. Attached at Annex 3 is a schedule of comments endorsed by the LSP and submitted to the County Council as a formal response on LTP2. The LSP also requested further input and consultation on the development of the LTP2 before final version of LTP2 is submitted to Government in March 2006.
10. The County Council is currently analysing all comments made and will produce a summary of such for distribution in August/September this year. Detailed discussions will be invited at that time to input into area programmes for inclusion in LTP2.

### **implementation**

11. There are no financial, IT, human resources or legal implications of the above.

### **conclusions**

12. The Annual Progress Report and LTP2 are important documents for the Council. The activities of the LTP will be instrumental in achieving Council objectives by increasing accessibility to employment, health and other facilities for all District residents. The physical implications of LTP2 will need to be reflected in the emerging Local Development Framework.
13. The APR5 and comments on LTP2 attached are a statement of Council and LSP aspirations. It is proposed that these be supported. In addition it is welcomed that the County Council will engage the Council and LSP in the final submission of LTP2 into this year.

### **RECOMMENDED**

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|---|---|
| 1 | That members endorse the attached Annual Progress Report.   |
| 2 | That members note programme on LTP2 and receive comments submitted jointly by the Council and LSP.          |
| 3 | That members welcome engagement with the County Council to develop further proposals for inclusion in LTP2. |

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## **LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN : ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2003/2004**

### **Introduction**

Wear Valley District is a diverse area which includes densely populated urban centres, and yet some of the most remote locations in England, let alone in the region. The Development and maintenance of a good transport system is fundamental to the economic and social well-being of Wear Valley, which has been affected recently by the contraction in traditional manufacturing industry and poor representation in new growth and service sectors. Improved accessibility within and beyond the District is an essential component of a range of measures being introduced to tackle the problems of the District.

The Council, therefore, views the successful implementation of the Local Transport Plan as one of the most significant ways by which wider Council objectives related to population growth, stimulating the economy, improving health, cutting crime, achieving environmental improvement, and developing lifelong learning can be assisted in very practical ways.

The partnership arrangement for local transport planning ties in very well with the integrated approach which is necessary to meet increasingly complex and inter-related transport and social-economic problems, and the District Council is happy to endorse this method of working.

### **THE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AND TRANSPORT**

The Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership involves local communities working with the District and County Councils, Police, health, business and other local service providers. The Partnership seeks to help local communities have an active role in the planning, development and delivery of services.

Through the Environment Sub-Group the LSP has highlighted transport and access to services as a major issue for the District. A major debate in April at the LSP identified a range of potential issues and solutions for consideration in LTP2.

The LSP clearly welcomes the integrated approach LTP2 proposes to ensure that all action to improve transport and accessibility accords with strategies for economic development and housing, at regional, county and local level. The full integration of LTP activity with emerging Local Development Frameworks (District based Local Plans) is essential. Concerns exist about how the District will develop within key regional strategies, including the Northern Way, and how transport can assist in increasing accessibility to the District which is situated on the edge of the proposed regional development patterns.

The emphasis on strategic infrastructure remains important, both rail and road.

The A68 is a major through route that is also a key to improved communications within Wear Valley. The draft Wear Valley Community Plan and the Weardale Strategy, which was subject to extensive public consultation and endorsement, underscore the need for further improvements to that route to ensure better access to the District. One aim is the eventual extension of the West Auckland Bypass

Stage 2 to link up to the A68, coupled with other works outside Wear Valley District (Toft Hill Bypass) to make the route north less tortuous.

The difficulty faced in accessing public transport is a particularly intractable element that has been identified. Work is needed in particular to identify more clearly and accurately the issues facing local communities in terms of travel to work and accessing community facilities. The Local Strategic Partnership has committed resources to funding innovative solutions that should be considered by the Local Transport Partnership in due course. The work of the Durham Rural Transport Partnership and the Rural Transport Co-ordinator in attempting to use innovative ways to overcome this problem also represents initiatives which the Council is particularly pleased to support. Funding has been made available by the LSP to support this approach, in particular to support community transport initiatives.

The District Council supports the establishment of the Community Rail Partnership for the Bishop Auckland to Darlington rail line.

Town centre revitalisation is a high priority for the LSP. Both Crook and Bishop Auckland are currently subject to master planning and improvement. Traffic circulation and management is an important element of this. The LSP seeks a commitment from LTP2 to support innovative ways to reconcile traffic and urban design issues and supports traffic modelling on each centre to plan more accurately for future traffic growth. The County Walking and Cycling Strategies promote a safe environment for non-motorised transport linked to wider health improvement benefits. Such initiatives are of real importance since Wear Valley has particular health problems and co-ordinated action utilising a range of measures is essential to deal with these problems effectively. The importance attached to these schemes in helping to meet the wider objectives of the Local Strategic Partnership (and the District Council) needs to be emphasised from the outset.

## **LOCAL DELIVERY**

- **Progress on Major Schemes**

The two major schemes in the District are the West Auckland Bypass Stage 2 and the Crook Bypass.

- **West Auckland Bypass**

Completion of the West Auckland Bypass is critical to achieve:-

- Better links to the west;
- Improved access to a large areas of land with development potential in the Bishop Auckland area, and
- A significant and much needed boost in environmental conditions for residents in the West Auckland/Tindale Crescent and St Helen Auckland areas.

It is noted that delays to this scheme have resulted from a public inquiry. The Council strongly support the completion of this scheme that has strong local support, (92% of respondents to a consultation questionnaire supported the scheme).

- **Crook Bypass**

This new route, now complete has opened up a number of brownfield sites and stimulated new housebuilding.

- **Tourism Routes**

The opening of the Weardale Railway in July of last year from Wolsingham to Stanhope was a tremendous boost for the tourist economy of Weardale and contributed to a 10% increase in visitor numbers. It is unfortunate that the business hit problems but the LSP is wholly committed to supporting the operation of the line.

The opening up of new cycling and walking routes should also help the tourism potential of the area and assist initiatives like the Black Grouse bus to become better established and utilised.

- **Car Parking in Bishop Auckland**

The regulation and improvement of car parking in Bishop Auckland, a fundamental element of the Council's agreed Town Centre Strategy, has benefited the town.

The car parking proposals have:-

- Maximised the availability of car parking spaces for shoppers and visitors, i.e. predominantly short stay parking;
- Made provision for workers and residents i.e. some long stage parking, and
- Improved the appearance and security of the car park (the first phase of improvements at Victoria Avenue now complete).

The District Council supports action to complement off-street parking regulation by consideration of on-street regulation (the responsibility of the County Council) in order to take into account of and mitigate any displacement effects which have occurred.

A new charging arrangement (agreed with the Town Centre Forum, and Traders Association) operates in association with a concessionary shopping scheme promoted by traders to encourage growth in retailing. The scheme continues to be monitored. Proposals are being developed to introduce a similar scheme in Crook town centre.

- **Minor Schemes Review**

The Council has commented upon the review of minor schemes proposed by the County Council as they affect Wear Valley. The Council is of the opinion that the County Council should give further consideration to the schemes in Bishop Auckland and Crook, as well as those already mentioned relating to the A68 and Toft Hill Bypass.

## **Conclusion**

The District Council appreciates the opportunity of being involved in the preparation, implementation and review of the Local Transport Plan through the County Council and the Partnership Forum. It will retain its commitment to this process and looks forward to even closer co-operation in the future.

## **WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL / LSP COMMENTS ON LTP2**

### **Strategic Issues to be addressed/included in LTP2**

1. The full integration of the transport strategy to be agreed in LTP2 with complimentary development strategies for economic development and housing at regional, county and local levels.
2. The full integration of LTP 2 with emerging Local Development Frameworks (District based Local Plans)
3. The full integration of implementation plans, ensuring infrastructure is provided in a timely manner to enable other development proposals to be achieved.
4. Support for the Tees Valley City Region development plan proposals to further develop and exploit the economic potential of the Darlington-Newton Aycliffe-Bishop Auckland gateway, to help facilitate the spread of economic benefit from city regions to rural West Durham.
5. Greater emphasis needs to be given to rural transport issues;
6. Implementation of major highway infrastructure schemes, including:
  - Completion of the West Auckland Bypass scheme; and
  - Development and implementation of proposals for improvement to the A68, including extension of the West Auckland Bypass to Spring Gardens and the potential Toft Hill bypass in Teesdale, to give better access to Crook/Willington and Weardale from the A1(M) to the south, and to achieve the tourist potential of the route as a major north-south transport corridor through the county.
7. Support for the Weardale Railway:
  - as a sustainable form of transport to help the regeneration of Weardale;
  - for extension and integration with the Darlington to Bishop Auckland branch line; and
  - to help integrate and further develop the tourist facilities along the line (exploiting links to Locomotion at Shildon).
8. Support for the Community Rail Partnership on the Darlington to Bishop Auckland branch line to improve facilities and service, and support increased usage.

### **Local issues to be addressed/included in LTP2**

9. Support for the implementation of a detailed transport/traffic modelling study for the District's major centres (Bishop Auckland and Crook), to help plan accurately for future traffic needs.
10. Support for the major centres 'urban renaissance' programmes by a commitment to the implementation of appropriate highway and traffic management improvements.
11. A commitment to flexibility of approach in the implementation of adopted highway standards to achieve;

- Innovative conservation and urban design lead solutions to town centre enhancements; and
  - Innovative approaches to achieve pedestrian/residential friendly new housing schemes.
12. Development and implementation of a programme of improvements to unmade and unadopted roads residential roads to improve quality of life and environment for local residents.
  13. Congestion caused by school runs needs to be addressed.
  14. The strategy needs to take account of low car ownership in Wear Valley.

### **Public Transport issues to be address/ included in LTP2**

15. Support for community based and innovative approaches to local transport (including such things as community bus transport schemes and demand responsive schemes) in the following areas of particular need as expressed in community appraisals:
  - Coundon
  - Dene Valley
  - Tow Law and the Hill Top Villages
  - Weardale.
16. Integration of public transport facilities (linking community based solutions with Weardale railway and other main stream services)
17. Integration of all aspects of community/public transport, including making better public use of school and health transport activities.
18. Better information at public transport nodes, in Crook and Bishop Auckland.
19. Measures to deal with the environmental impact of public transport (buses in Newgate Street Bishop Auckland).
20. Attention to bus punctuality is essential in rural areas such as Wear Valley.
21. Support/encouragement to rail operators to integrate timetabling to increase usage on the branch line.

### **Specific Schemes to be addressed/ included in LTP2**

22. Improvements to remove current weight restriction on Cockton Hill Railway Bridge to provide better access to Bishop Auckland town centre.
23. Need to address car parking issues in residential streets in areas of particular concern, Bishop Auckland, Crook, Wolsingham and Stanhope.
24. Further consideration of local LTP1 schemes currently protected in development plans (including Howden-le-Wear bypass, Latherbrush Bridge scheme in Bishop Auckland) and the development of alternative solutions if schemes are to be deleted from LTP2.

## REGENERATION COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2005

### Report of the Director of Regeneration **WEST DURHAM RURAL PATHFINDER**

#### **purpose of the report**

1. To provide members with an update on progress to date on the implementation and agree potential content of the West Durham Rural Pathfinder.

#### **background**

2. As reported at the meeting of the Special Policy & Strategic Development Committee on 13 April 2005, the West Durham Rural Pathfinder (WDRP) is one of eight national pathfinders established to experiment with and test:-
  - ways of achieving **more joined up delivery of services** in rural areas, addressing economic, social and environmental issues;
  - where practicable, **innovation in rural development and delivery of services** in rural areas, building as appropriate on existing best practice; and
  - **better prioritisation of existing resources**, in line with local priorities, towards areas, communities and people with the greatest needs.
3. The WDRP covers the geographic areas of Teesdale and Wear Valley District Council boundaries.
4. The eight pathfinders were officially launched on 14 March 2005 by Alun Michael the then Minister for Rural Affairs. The North East pathfinder was delayed by the referendum but has made good progress to catch up with the other regions which have been operational since Autumn 2004. The pathfinder will run until 31 March 2007 but the successful effects should roll on beyond that date and should inform delivery beyond the boundaries of the pathfinder both regionally and nationally.
5. Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership is key to the Pathfinder. It has a clear role in influencing and advising the development of the Pathfinder. The Pathfinder will provide an opportunity to raise awareness of local needs at a County, Regional and National level and to test possible new ways of working and to help address the gap between regional policy and local needs.

## progress

6. It was recognised that with only two years of the project the Pathfinder cannot tackle the entire rural agenda. Following an independent consultative study 4 cross-cutting themes were identified:-
  1. Building community capability and strengthening social enterprise
  2. Skills and enterprise for sustainable tourism
  3. Health and quality of life of young people
  4. Development of the knowledge economy locally.
7. The WVLSLSP Board at their meeting on 12 April 2005 agreed that the WVLSLSP economic thematic group the 'Forum for Business' should start the debate to identify the possible issues/topics to be addressed under each theme.
8. The Forum for Business met on 12 May 2005 and following debate have produced an issues/topics '**short list**' based on the community plan where the Group felt delivery needs to be improved. These priority issues/ topics also demonstrate fit with Modernising Rural Delivery and Pathfinder objectives, (see Annex 4).
9. On 28 June 2005 a workshop was to be held at Hamsterley Village Hall with the WDRP Steering Group and representatives of both Teesdale and Wear Valley LSP Boards. The workshop was also attended by the North East Region's Modernising Rural Delivery Strategic Group and Executive, led by GO-NE, which includes representatives from the following, North East Assembly; Environment Agency; Natural England; Voluntary and Community sector; Business sector; Sub Regional Partnerships and one District each sub region.
10. The workshop discussed the tasks and issues identified in Annex 4. The results are currently being written up by GONE. It is proposed that the '**Tasks**' will be developed by the Thematic Groups/new Task Groups and WDRP Steering Group who will jointly:-
  - identify the improvements that it would like to see achieved;
  - identify current barriers to improvement;
  - identify options for overcoming these barriers;
  - map existing provision and/or gaps in provision where useful;
  - explore with the relevant agencies how barriers can be overcome and improvements can be achieved;
  - identify success criteria by which these improvements can be measured;
  - where planned improvements do not fully achieve the anticipated success, identify any outstanding barriers and means of overcoming them;
  - highlight and disseminate examples of success as well as identifying issues that may need to be addressed by others within the Modernising Rural Delivery process.

## **conclusion**

11. The rural pathfinder provides an excellent opportunity for innovative ways of working to tackle the social, economic and environmental needs of Wear Valley, ensuring better linkages between local needs and County, Regional and National Policy.

- RECOMMENDED**
- 1 The committee endorse the work to date on the implementation of the pathfinder in Wear Valley.
  - 2 Further update reports are made as appropriate.

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## 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

REGENERATION COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2005

Report of the Director of Regeneration  
**NORTHERN WAY WORKLESSNESS PILOT PROJECT**

**purpose of the report**

1. To inform members of the outcome of a bid for funding through the Northern Way Worklessness Pilot Project.
2. For members to consider and agree proposed action following failure of the bid.

**background**

3. Worklessness is an important issue for Wear Valley District. Worklessness, is defined by the Government's Social Exclusion Unit as people who are unemployed, that is not working but looking for a job, and people who are of working age but economically inactive and neither working or looking for work, for example on Incapacity Benefit.
4. Causes of worklessness are complex but can include:- physical and mental health issues that prevent people from working; accessibility, childcare and other caring responsibilities, attitudes to enterprise, institutional issues that may make it difficult for people to move from benefits; low wages and lack of basic and key skills that are essential for employment.
5. There are a number of areas in the North East with high levels of worklessness. This impacts upon individual quality of life and the regional economy. It has been estimated that Incapacity Benefit alone costs the region £8.5 million per day in lost revenue, benefit costs, support and administration. In Wear Valley there are significant concentrations of worklessness with around 12% of the population on Incapacity Benefit, which is coupled with low employment growth and widespread employment deprivation affecting 86% of the district. Between 1997 and 2002 Wear Valley had only 0.4% growth in employment compared to 7.7% for County Durham and 8.2% in England. Most striking is the reduction in employment in the manufacturing sector, which has reduced by 29% in just 5 years.
6. A regional Strategic Direction Group has been established under the auspices of Regional Skills Partnership to raise awareness of the issue of worklessness and aims to improve the co-ordination of existing initiatives, identify gaps and promote good practice. Within the content of the Northern Way Development Plan, the group is developing pilot approaches to enhance measures to enable people to move from incapacity benefit to work. At a county level a

group is being established within the Skills Framework Partnership to look at worklessness and possible responses.

7. In Wear Valley the Forum for Business, the economic theme group of the LSP, has been charged with leading the response, although it is recognised that this is a cross cutting theme. The group has been looking at different ways of tackling worklessness. This has included a discussion with the Director responsible within Government Office North East, Department for Work and Pensions, Wear Valley Action Team for Jobs, and the Durham Dales Primary Care Trust. An Action Plan has been agreed to take forward issues identified. The July meeting of the Forum for Business is to again focus on worklessness and includes a presentation on the Pathways to Work programme from Job Centre Plus.

#### **northern way worklessness pilot project bid**

8. The Forum for Business was invited to submit a bid to take forward one of the Northern Way Worklessness Pilot projects. The purpose of these was to test new approaches to meeting the needs of people in order to inform future mainstream programme development. The bid included a range of projects that focussed on voluntary and community based interventions:-
  - building upon the GP referral project launched by the Wear Valley Action Team for Jobs operating in GP surgeries
  - facilitate confidential mediation between employers and their employees on long term sick leave to explore possible solutions to enable a return to work
  - extension of intermediate labour market projects to include less physical sectors
  - developing an entrepreneurial pathway to encourage the long term unemployed and people on incapacity benefit to consider self employment.
9. The bid was deemed strong by One NorthEast, but rejected on the grounds that although Wear Valley has a high rate of Incapacity Benefit, the scale was 'relatively modest' in terms of the regional picture. The successful bids were from South Tyneside, Sunderland and Easington. One NorthEast did recognise however a need to look at the issue of worklessness in more remote rural areas.
10. In meetings and correspondence we have both taken issue with the view of worklessness in Wear Valley being seen as 'modest' and have argued that the issues faced in Wear Valley are different from those of other areas. One NorthEast have now agreed to explore how we can work together to address the issue of worklessness in rural areas and the city regions that are not being addressed through the Northern Way Worklessness Pilot projects.

## **conclusion**

11. Worklessness is a significant issue for Wear Valley and one that needs to continue to be addressed through the Forum for Business.
12. There is a need for One NorthEast and the Worklessness Strategic Direction Group to acknowledge the particular needs of the more rural areas outside the Northern Way city region areas. Wear Valley should continue a dialogue with One NorthEast to ensure that this happens.

**RECOMMENDED**                      1            That Committee note the content of the report and endorse the course of action being undertaken.

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**Officer responsible for the report**

Robert Hope  
Director of Regeneration  
Ext 264

**Author of the report**

John Parnell  
Principle Economic Development Officer  
Ext 307

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## REGENERATION COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2005

Report of the Director of Regeneration

### REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY (RES) CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

#### purpose of the report

1. For members to consider and agree for consultation the 2005 update of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) Consultation Document for the North East of England - "Leading the Way".

#### consultation background

2. On 6 June One NorthEast launched its formal consultation on the draft RES Consultation document. This will run for a period of just over twelve weeks, with the consultation closing on Tuesday 30th August. The RES will then be revised in the light of consultation responses during September and October and submitted to the Department of Trade and Industry in mid November. (The Consultation draft is tabled).
3. This is the 3rd RES and is different from the previous 2 in the way that it reflects the views of the region as articulated through the Shaping Horizons in the North East (SHINE) process, which identified the key opportunities and threats facing the region through a scenario planning process. SHINE took place during 2003 and 2004 as a consultative process with regional economic stakeholders.
4. The key regional priorities identified in SHINE have formed the basis of the revised RES, which will aim to achieve sustainable, inclusive economic growth through prioritised action against the SHINE themes. Building on the results of SHINE, these themes have been used to underpin the revised RES as outlined below:-
  - **Leadership:** To encourage strong, open and effective leaders who are committed to the future strategic direction of the Region.
  - **Enterprise and Business Support:** To create an enterprising, risk taking culture across all sectors underpinned by a fit for purpose support network.
  - **Sectoral and Global Networks:** To foster productive sectoral relationships within the Region, and with other parts of the UK and world.
  - **Innovation and Creativity:** To establish an innovative, creative environment through collaboration and competition.
  - **Skills:** To develop a skilled, adaptable, healthy and motivated workforce, which meets the present and future needs of the Region.

- **Economic Inclusion:** To ensure a fully inclusive Region, which enables everyone to make a contribution and reduces inequalities.
  - **Infrastructure and Built Environment:** To invest in a sustainable future.
  - **Image and Cultural Assets:** To build upon the distinctive image of the North East, based on the people, places and cultural assets that can be celebrated and enjoyed within and outside the Region.
5. These replace the previous objectives, which were:-
- Creating Wealth by Raising the Productivity of all businesses;
  - Establishing a new entrepreneurial culture;
  - Creating a healthy labour market;
  - Recognising our universities and colleges at the heart of the regions economy;
  - Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> century transport communication and property needs; realising the renaissance of our rural and urban communities.
6. The RES recognises that whilst there has been some achievements over the last 10 years the region still has one of the slowest growing economies in the UK and levels of prosperity are amongst the lowest in the country.
7. The importance of maintaining a focus upon the rural economy is recognised and a need to strengthen rural service centres. The Market Town programme is seen as a likely priority as is the inclusion of the key market towns in Wear Valley. The proposals for the redevelopment of the former Lafarge site at Eastgate are also specifically mentioned. However, it is also a move towards more prioritised investment decisions focussing on fewer bigger investment opportunities that will deliver the biggest return on investments. In order to reflect the new guidance on Regional Economic Strategies issued by the DTI, a number of principles to underpin the RES were developed. These are that the RES:-
- Is designed to achieve a high quality of life through sustainable, inclusive economic growth;
  - Supports the long term sustainable development of the Region through the prioritisation of strategic projects and interventions;
  - Integrates with the Northern Way Growth Strategy and articulates relationships with other regional strategies, particularly the Regional Spatial Strategy, Regional Housing Strategy, Regional Transport Strategy, Regional Cultural Strategy, Integrated Regional Framework and the Strategy for Success;
  - Reflects and articulates the Region's role and offer within a global context;
  - Is based on how best to build on the North East's strengths through prioritising key actions for maximum regional impact; and
  - Clearly defines the role of partners and stakeholders within the Region in helping to deliver the RES vision and projects.
8. The RES consultation document concentrates on setting out the overarching economic development objectives for the Region and how these might best be realised through activity against the eight themes above. The draft that has been produced for consultation purposes seeks to prioritise action against

key challenges. These priorities will need further development over the consultation period in order to reflect for example, the emerging city region development programmes. The final version of the RES also needs to go significantly further than this in clearly articulating how these ambitions will be achieved and the contribution that stakeholders will make in this respect. A key part of the consultation exercise will therefore be to identify with stakeholders what activities under these themes they can lead.

The Key challenges and priorities include:-

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Priorities</b>
Moving towards a culture that supports, values and celebrates strong leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building strategic leadership capacity</li> <li>- Cross regional collaboration</li> <li>- Taking prioritised investment decisions</li> </ul>
Creating a major attitudinal shift towards entrepreneurs and a more targeted and tailored approach to business support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raising young people's aspirations</li> <li>- Start up businesses</li> <li>- Attracting and retaining entrepreneurs</li> <li>- Promoting e- business</li> <li>- Access to finance</li> </ul>
Moving businesses up the value chain and closing the productivity gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhancing significant sectors</li> <li>- Increasing manufacturing and service productivity</li> <li>- Encouraging exports</li> <li>- Attracting investment</li> <li>- Embedding companies in the region</li> </ul>
To identify a few focussed areas where there is potential for the region to develop truly globally competitive R&D and design base industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Energy and the environment</li> <li>- Healthcare and health sciences</li> <li>- Process Industries</li> <li>- Newcastle Science City</li> <li>- Design and creativity</li> </ul>
Alter the profile of skills available in the region to compete in the global economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Joining together demand and supply for skills through the Regional Skills Partnership</li> <li>- Young people's participation and attainment in education</li> </ul>
Ensuring that transport investment is designed to support increased economic activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effective use of national, pan regional and local investment</li> <li>- Internal connectivity – city regions, roads and rural transport</li> <li>- External connectivity – rail, air and maritime services</li> </ul>
Ensuring we exploit the regions relatively good broadband connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete current infrastructure investment</li> <li>- Horizon scanning of new technologies</li> </ul>
Achieving the right portfolio of commercial and industrial property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overcoming market failures</li> <li>- Delivering an enabling planning system</li> </ul>
Maximising the economic impact of public sector investment by focussing on a few key spatial priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- City Region Development Programmes</li> <li>- Developing a strategic approach to rural service centres and rural assets</li> <li>- Appropriate remediation of brown land</li> <li>- Building regeneration delivery capabilities</li> </ul>
Meeting the needs and aspirations of workers in a knowledge based economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Housing market restructuring</li> <li>- New housing</li> </ul>

## proposed response

9. The RES is an important document providing the framework for the economic development and regeneration of the region and provides a basis for accessing funds to achieve implementation.
10. The RES needs to provide greater clarity on how it is to be delivered at the local level.
11. The District has a crucial role to play in implementing the strategy. The Wear Valley LSP will also be a key delivery mechanism for both implementing the strategy and subsequently influencing the content of the strategy.
12. Although the recognition of the need to support the development of a diverse and growing rural economy is welcomed, the consultation document also highlights a move towards more prioritised investment decisions focussing on fewer bigger investment opportunities that will deliver the biggest return on investments. There is a concern that this approach could affect Wear Valley's ability to access funding from the Single Programme especially when set within the context of the Northern Way Growth Strategy and this should be highlighted in the Council's response to the consultation document.
13. Greater clarity is needed on how rural areas will interface with the City Regions and a greater acknowledgement that rural areas can be contributors as well as beneficiaries.

<b>RECOMMENDED</b>	1	That Committee note the RES Consultation Document;
	2	Endorse the proposed response to the consultation deadline which is 30 August 2005.

## background Information

RES Consultation Document.

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### Officer responsible for the report

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### Author of the report

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Principle Economic Development Officer  
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## REGENERATION COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2005

### Report of the Director of Regeneration **LOCAL ENTERPRISE GROWTH INITIATIVE**

#### **purpose of the report**

1. To inform members of the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative and for members to agree a response to the questions raised in the consultation document.

#### **background**

2. The Chancellor, Gordon Brown announced proposals to establish a Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) in his budget on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005. LEGI will be worth £300m over 3yrs; £50m in 2006/2007, £100m in 2007/2008 rising to £150m by 2008/2009, subject to confirmation in the 2006 spending review. The programme is to be launched during 2006/07 and will be targeted at around 30 Local Authorities to boost enterprise in deprived areas.
3. Local authorities in NRF areas will be able to apply for LEGI funds to implement long-term proposals for enterprise growth, in partnership with business and the wider community. Successful authorities could receive anything between £2-10m.
4. The aim of the LEGI is *“To release the productivity and economic potential of our most deprived local areas and their inhabitants through enterprise and investment – thereby boosting local incomes and employment opportunities”*.
5. Three outcomes of the programme are to:-
  1. Increase **total entrepreneurial activity** among the population in deprived local areas.
  2. Support the **sustainable growth** – and reduce the failure rate – of locally owned business in deprived local areas.
  3. Attract appropriate **inward investment and franchising** into deprived areas, making use of local labour resources.
6. The Government intends to provide £10m during the summer of 2005, divided between all Local Authorities designated as NRF Areas, to pump-prime the development of local proposals.

7. A consultation document 'Enterprise and Economic Opportunity in Deprived Areas', on the proposals for the LEGI has been published, which includes a number of questions on which responses are invited. The consultation was due to end on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2005 but has been extended because of the general election. The questions and proposed responses are listed and Annex 5.
8. The results of the consultation are to be published in the summer of 2005. A decision on the timing of a bid will be made once details of the bidding process, timetable and further guidance is available. It is possible that there would be advantages in tying this in with the completion of the Economic Futures study 'Wear Valley 2020' and the further development of the West Durham Rural Pathfinder proposals.

### **conclusion**

9. LEGI is an initiative that has the potential to provide significant funds to help promote and remove barriers to enterprise in deprived areas. It can contribute to the economic development of these areas by increasing employment, productivity and growth, improving the physical environment and investing in the community and social capital.
10. The details of the application process and timetable are as yet unclear but in the meantime the Council should respond to the questions asked in the consultation document.

<b>Recommendation</b>	1	Members note the LEGI proposals as set out in the consultation document
	2	Members endorse the proposed response to the consultation, detailed at Annex 5 of the report.

### **background Information**

LEGI Consultation Document.

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<b>Officer responsible for the report</b>	<b>Author of the report</b>
Robert Hope Director of Regeneration Ext 264	John Parnell Principle Economic Development Officer Ext 307

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## LEGI Questions and Proposed Responses

Question	Response
1 Are the suggested indicators for the LEGI the right ones – are there others to consider? What can be, or is already, measured at the local level that can be used in this way?	Increasing the profile of enterprise should be linked with raising aspirations and releasing peoples' potential. Other local indicators could be:- increase the number of social enterprises; reduce differences in ease of access to finance between disadvantaged areas and other areas; increase take up of business support
2 In areas without Local Area Agreements, what is the best way to ensure that the LEGI is integrated with and generates leverage from other programmes?	Through the LSP
3 What is the best way of involving local partners in developing local LEGI proposals? How could the Local Strategic Partnerships ensure sufficient business involvement in the development of local proposals for enterprise development and growth?	The LSP provides the best mechanism to ensure local partners are involved, they can use their economic theme groups to ensure businesses and business support agencies are engaged.
4 How can the LEGI best co-ordinate and consolidate evidence and lessons learnt from the resources used?	As LEGI is relatively long term there should be opportunity to publish best practice. This should be done proactively around key themes. There should also be regular opportunities for conferences/seminars as the initiative progresses.
5 How can we ensure the LEGI creates the right balance between indicators, actions and targets?	The primary focus should be upon outcomes linked to indicators, actions and targets that flow from these and are relevant and specific.
6 What is the best way to ensure that the LEGI is integrated with and generates leverage from other related programmes?	Focus upon LSP's should enhance cross programme activity
7 How detailed should local targets be, and to what extent should they include timed, output measures?	The focus should be on outcomes rather than the outputs. Timed measures should be limited and restricted to a few key indicators
8 How long should funding be available for? How can we ensure that support is time-limited in an effective way that allows local authorities the ability to plan beyond the life of the LEGI?	Funding should be available for a minimum of 5 years and be based upon a realistic timescale to allow programmes to be delivered.
9 What is the critical mass of funding required to make a difference to enterprise in deprived areas? Bear in mind that the greater the level of funding to individual authorities, the less areas can be supported.	Whilst there does need to be a critical mass of funding, is there a need to be prescriptive? Levels of funding should be linked to need – if you ask for programmes starting at £10 million you'll get bids for £10 million!
10 Is application guidance necessary and if so, what sort of issues should it cover?	There needs to be sufficient guidance to allow a sensible assessment of bids to be made but these should be firmly linked to need so that a 'beauty parade' is avoided.
11 What elements should form the basis of a fair selection criterion at the regional level?	Selection should be strongly based upon need and deliverability against the 3 key outcomes, sustainability, value for money and leverage.
12 What are the common aspects of funding of this sort that create unnecessary bureaucratic burdens that the LEGI should try to avoid?	There needs to be flexibility within budgets to allow programmes to be managed effectively otherwise it can be very time consuming gaining agreement to variations to agreed plans, impacting upon ability to spend budgets

## REGENERATION COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2005

Report of the Director of Regeneration

### **EASTGATE REDEVELOPMENT – CONSULTATION PROGRAMME**

#### **purpose of the report**

1. To provide members with an outline programme for the consultation on the redevelopment plans for the Eastgate Cement Works.

#### **background**

2. As reported to members previously the Weardale Task Force, made up of representatives from Wear Valley District Council, Durham County Council, One NorthEast, Lafarge Cement UK, Councillor John Shuttleworth and chaired by John Hamilton OBE, has been driving forward the redevelopment plans for the Eastgate cement works site following the successful outcome of the community consultation exercise 'Renewing Weardale – The Way Forward' during the summer of 2003. The consultation established a clear mandate for the Task Force to take forward the proposed strategy and to deliver the projects outlined.
3. One of the seven key flagship projects identified in the strategy, which received 66.1% support from the consultation process, is the redevelopment of the Eastgate Cement works as a major UK attraction. This could take the form of a 'Unique Village' linked to the generation of renewable energy, providing high-spec mixed-use development including recreation, tourist and housing projects, and a centre for renewable energy generation.
4. Feasibility works carried out to date have confirmed that the site offers the opportunity to generate and utilise, on-site, an unparalleled range of renewable energy; wind power; biomass; hydro-electricity; solar power and most significant of all geothermal energy, utilising hot water from the hot Weardale granite rocks that lie beneath the site. The site has the potential to be both a national demonstrator for renewable energy and an exemplar in rural regeneration.
5. Consultants appointed by Lafarge Cement UK, David Lock Associates, have been refining the redevelopment plans for the site following the successful outcome of the geothermal assessment. The draft proposals are contained within the consultation leaflet, included at Annex 6. This will be subject to a separate presentation to members of the Council.

## consultation programme

6. The attached programme (see Annex 7) produced by Wear Valley District Council on behalf of the Weardale Task Force is intended to consult with local communities, local and regional agencies on these draft redevelopment plans and is an attempt to ensure the widest possible consultation within the timescale and available resources.
7. The consultation is to end on 30 September 2005, the final redevelopment plans will then be refined to incorporate the feedback from this consultation process and it is proposed to submit an outline planning application by early 2006 to be followed by a detailed planning application if the principle is accepted.

## conclusion

8. It is hoped the proposed consultation programme will enable members of the community, local and regional agencies, to engage fully in the consultation process in order that their views are reflected fully in the final redevelopment plan for the site.

## RECOMMENDED

1. That members endorse the proposed consultation programme, detailed at Annex 7, on the draft redevelopment plans for the Eastgate cement works.
2. That Members receive a presentation on the draft proposals for the Eastgate Cement Works site and receive further reports on progress of the redevelopment in due course.

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**Officer responsible for the report**

Bob Hope  
Director of Regeneration  
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**Author of the report**

Sue Dawson  
Head of Economic Regeneration  
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**EASTGATE REDEVELOPMENT - CONSULTATION PROGRAMME**

1. Prepare consultation leaflet for issue mid July 05 (copies to be made available for committee meeting on 13 July 05)
2. Issue press release and press pack to local and national newspapers, by mid July 05.
3. Item for WVDC web site with 3D image of redevelopment proposals by mid July 05.
4. Article for Wear Valley Matters for issue 29 August 05
5. Display in the Durham Dales Centre; Barrington Hall, & the Post Office, St John's Chapel Post Office, Wolsingham Library, Civic Centre, Crook and Bishop Auckland Town Hall - to start 5 September 05 until 30 September 05.
6. Consultation events during September 05 to discuss the redevelopment plans, using an independent facilitator:-
  - To cover Weardale - hosted by Weardale Community Partnership/Stanhope MTI Steering Group
  - Eastgate residents
  - Crook/Willington area
  - Bishop Auckland area
7. Meetings to be held during July 05 with:-
  - Stanhope Parish Council
  - Wolsingham Parish Council
8. Stakeholder Presentation to be arranged at site with:-
  - North Pennines AONB Partnership
  - Weardale Environmental Trust/Durham Wildlife Trust
  - Natural England/Countryside Agency
  - Government Office for the North East
  - Wear Valley LSP Environment Thematic Group
  - West Durham Rural Transport Partnership
  - County Durham Economic Partnership
  - Environment Agency
  - One NorthEast Directors
  - WVDC
  - DCC

## REGENERATION COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2005

### Report of the Director of Regeneration **AREA TOURISM PARTNERSHIP**

#### **purpose of the report**

1. To update the Committee on the development of the Area Tourism Partnership (ATP) for Durham and consider what implications there might be for Wear Valley.

#### **background**

2. In March 2004, Northumbria Tourist Board (NTB) was transferred to One NorthEast. This coincided with the transfer of strategic responsibility for tourism from the English Tourism Council to the UK's regional development agencies. The re-structure meant that One NorthEast is responsible for both the strategic direction and delivery of tourism across the region. An extended period of uncertainty in the tourism sector ensued whilst the regional tourism strategy evolved, which has only recently been published. Members received a report on the Regional Tourist Strategy in March this year.
3. Following the change consultants were appointed to review the delivery structures and this concluded that it should comprise:-
  - A regional team, responsible for regional strategy, major marketing campaigns, running and supporting the network.
  - Four Area Tourism Partnerships (ATP's) responsible for tourism development and managing the visitor experience.
4. The regional team is now in place. Work to establish an ATP in Durham has begun, led by the Tourism Framework Steering Group. The intention is to establish a private sector led Task Group to oversee this work prior to the formation of a board. An officers group is helping with the significant amount of work that is needed to develop the management and business plan for the ATP.
5. There is to be a comprehensive consultation exercise that will include discussion with local authority Chief Executive Officers, although this has yet to be timetabled.

#### **area tourism partnerships – core functions**

- **Leadership:** be responsible for destination management planning through producing and getting buy-in to the Area Tourism Management Plan.

- **Engaging businesses:** develop and maintain relations with individual tourism businesses; and represent their interests. Encourage networking among businesses in their areas.
- **Product development:** Encourage development of new facilities and services in line with the Area Tourism Management Plan and advise the Sub-Regional Partnership (SRP) and ONE NorthEast on tourism investment proposals of significance to their areas.
- Develop and/or attract events within the context of the developing North East Events framework.
- Work with Business Link and local training providers to deliver appropriate training and business support.
- **Local marketing and visitor servicing:** Undertake local marketing, promoting places within their area and providing information for visitors. Agree with Local Authorities the best way to run Tourist Information Centres and deliver visitor information, within a regional framework of standards.

### **principles of funding**

6. One NorthEast will provide support funding to help establish the new network through providing independent consultancy assistance and via sub regional partnerships. This will include core funding for the ATP for the first 3 years. This is on the understanding that One NorthEast is not the sole or necessarily the majority funder of the network.
7. The primary route for One NorthEast funding for tourism projects and investments will, in future, flow through the network towards the opportunities identified in the Regional Tourism Action Plan and Area Tourism Management Plans. It is intended that One NorthEast will not agree to invest in tourism projects outside of this process except in extraordinary circumstances.
8. All funding towards priorities will require significant public and or private sector leverage dependant upon the focus of the intervention.
9. Investment by One NorthEast will also be made at regional level towards the priorities of the regional tourism strategy and action plan and core funding to support the regional tourism team.

### **principles of governance for atp's**

10. Management Councils/Boards of ATPs should be no less than six and no more than 10 persons, appointed on ability and best person for the job using Nolan type principles.
11. Management Councils will include public and private sector interests, on the basis that they are giving a public or private sector perspective not an individual or representative view.

12. The legal basis for each partnership is a matter for each sub region to assess. Whatever ATP structure is agreed in each sub region it must be able to demonstrate how it will integrate activities on investment with key partners including the sub regional partnership, regional and pan regional initiatives.
13. Management Councils will have clearly defined terms of reference and be focussed on delivering the objectives and targets laid out in the Area Tourism Management Plan and business plan.
14. Local Authority funding will be through a service level agreement not by representation on a management committee by right, although Local Authority representatives will have an equal opportunity to apply.
15. Funding from Local Authorities will be worked out individually, dependent upon the priorities of the Destination/Tourism Area Management Plan and business plan in negotiation with each Local Authority.

### **key issues**

16. LA's will be expected to provide funding/resources through a service level agreement, but will not have automatic representation on the committee/board of the ATP.
17. As yet it is not clear what funding or staffing resource the LA will be expected to provide. It will be worked out individually, dependent upon the priorities of the Area Tourism Management Plan and business plan in negotiation with each LA.
18. It is the intention for ATP's to be private sector led, although it is not clear from where this leadership will materialise.

### **financial/human resource/legal implications**

19. Not known at this point.

### **conclusion**

20. The establishment of ATP's will provide a County Durham perspective to the tourism infrastructure being created under ONE NorthEast. Whilst the structure and organisation remains unclear at present, it is proposed that the Council seeks clear and strong representation on the ATP to help promote and develop the tourist economy of the District.

### **RECOMMENDED**

That Members endorse the approach.

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**Officer responsible for the report**  
 Robert Hope  
 Director of Regeneration  
 Ext 264

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**Author of the report**  
 John Parnell  
 Principal Economic Development Officer  
 Ext 307

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## REGENERATION COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2005

Report of the Director of Regeneration

### **ELDON LANE, COUNDON GRANGE AND BRIDGE PLACE DECLARED RENEWAL AREA**

#### **purpose of the report**

1. To update members on the ongoing work on the Eldon Lane, Coundon Grange and Bridge Place declared renewal area.

#### **background**

2. As Members are aware the Council applied to the Secretary of State to declare Eldon Lane, Coundon Grange and Bridge Place as a designated renewal area. This application was accepted in 1999 and since that time major works have been undertaken on properties and the environment. The declared renewal area lasts for a total of 10 years and ends in 2010.
3. The previous 2 years saw a limited amount of work to the area but over the last year the pace has picked up and a major environmental facelift scheme at Randolph Street was seen as a high priority.
4. At the beginning of 2005 the Council through its consultants 'Accent Regeneration' began the process of looking at what the area needs to develop it in to a sustainable area. It was highlighted through consultation and research that a facelift scheme seemed the best way forward. Committee agreed to the implementation of this scheme, which involved a number of measures to increase the visual appearance of the area.
5. A number of works were highlighted to go ahead for Randolph Street, these included:-
  - New boundary walls and iron work
  - Brick cleaning and re-pointing to properties
  - Renewing rainwater goods
  - Painting of doors and window frames
  - Fitting of security lights to front and rear of properties
  - Car parking provision to front of property
  - Renewal of fascia boards
  - Repair works to 4 Randolph Street – Council Owned Property
6. In March 2005 Vest Construction won the contract to carry out the environmental work to the area.

7. Accent Regeneration were commissioned to complete a Mid Term Review, the purpose of this review was to evaluate the work that has been completed to date and to highlight through consultation where efforts and resources should be focussed for the remaining of the Eldon Lane Renewal scheme.

### **progress to date**

8. The Council and Vest construction have made excellent progress on the Randolph Street Environmental Facelift Scheme.
9. An instant visual impact to the area has been achieved, Randolph Street now looks regenerated and this is having a positive impact to the whole of the renewal area. The scheme has produced press coverage that has praised the ongoing work and praises the Council's commitment to the renewal area.
10. The facelift scheme was a 10 week contract that has now successfully ended on time and within budget.
11. The car parking provision is to be completed in partnership with the Groundwork West Durham Trust and this scheme will be completed over the next few months.
12. Committee members are urged to view the Randolph Street Scheme to fully appreciate the work and positive visual impact that the street now has.
13. The Final Mid Term review has now been received from Accent Regeneration, the report is attached as Annex 8. The report praises the ongoing work on the scheme and has highlighted where resources should be directed over the next 5 years to make a significant impact to the scheme.
14. The report has highlighted that both Accent Regeneration and customers would like this year's programme to focus on the High Street in Eldon Lane. I agree that this would be a sensible step and would give a good visual appearance to the main street.
15. To fully maximise the budget this year's scheme will be completed in conjunction with John Burns Associates Quantity Surveyors. John Burns Associates have worked with us over the last year and have proven to be a key player in the process.

### **financial implications**

16. The Council allocates £300,000 per annum to the Renewal Area, this allocation has been made for this year and enables the next phase to be developed.

### **legal implications**

17. There are legal implications when entering into a large contract of this sort, Wear Valley District Council's Legal section has been kept on board with the scheme.

### **crime and disorder implications**

18. The crime and disorder implications have been considered in a joint meeting between Wear valley District Council and Durham Constabulary. A monitoring approach has been developed to ensure instances of theft and anti-social behaviour are monitored.

### **monitoring**

19. The Eldon Lane Renewal Scheme is constantly monitored and managed by the Principal Housing Strategy Officer, this arrangement will continue throughout the scheme.

### **conclusion**

20. The Randolph Street scheme has now been completed and has proven to be very successful; this has paved the way to continue on our success.
21. The Mid Term review is now in place and should form the basis for further discussions and decision making, in addition it evaluates the work done to date. The report highlights that the High Street in Eldon Lane should be the next to benefit from funding and resources.
22. The relationship with consultants Accent Regeneration has worked well over the past year. However the Council must always seek to achieve best value and any future work should be considered in light of this. It may be that cost reductions in fees can be achieved by undertaking work in-house. These issues will be covered in a future report to Committee.

### **RECOMMENDED**

1. It is recommended that Committee note the progress and success of the Randolph Street environmental facelift scheme.
2. Committee note the contents of the mid term review and agree that the High Street will see the next phase of work.
3. Council gives further consideration to the delivery of the scheme.

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**Officer responsible for the report**

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**Author of the report**

Richard Roddam  
Principal Housing Strategy Officer  
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**REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**13 JULY 2005**

Report of the Directors of Housing Services and Regeneration – Referred from Housing Committee on 12 July

**DURHAM COALFIELD COMMUNITIES HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL PARTNERSHIP**

**purpose of the report**

1. To provide information in relation to the progress made by the Durham Coalfields Housing Market Renewal Partnership.
2. To agree a memorandum of understanding for the Durham Coalfields Communities Housing Market Renewal Partnership (see Annex 9).
3. To consider the recommendations arising from phase 2 of the Jacobs Babtie report commissioned by English Partnerships 'Durham Coalfield Communities Partnership, Phase 2, Sustainable Settlement Validation' and agree a preferred option to progress the work to a standard appropriate for an economic appraisal submission by English Partnerships to the Treasury (Key Findings and Executive Summary attached at Annex 10).
4. To consider supporting the establishment of a joint staffing unit to progress the initiative.

**background**

5. As a result of the work undertaken by the Coalfields Task force and in recognition of the severe housing demand problems in particular parts of County Durham, English Partnerships have encouraged partners to bring forward an effective partnership solution to the prevailing issues. Although the problem was identified as predominantly a low demand housing market issue the expected solutions will cut across the full range of regeneration disciplines (transport, planning, economic, housing, education, environment, health, crime) and localities within the sub region. The manner in which interventions take place may also differ from locality to locality. For example it may well be more appropriate to invest in environmental improvements and transportation initiatives to support the future sustainability of a settlement or an option to invest in housing improvements or redevelopment. This will depend on a range of determining factors that consultants are currently supporting the partnership to explore.

6. In 2003 District housing organisations in County Durham were given 2 very clear messages by Government Office North East (GONE). These were –
  - There would not be a second round of Housing Market Restructuring Pathfinders. Newcastle/Gateshead would be the only one in the North East. The next priority is to be Tees Valley rather than County Durham. In addition, County Durham's former coalfields communities needed extensive market restructuring and therefore creative approaches to securing the resources required would need to be explored;
  - Any 'Pathfinder' type initiative would have to be arranged by housing organisations in County Durham using resources from themselves, English Partnerships (EP), ONE, GONE, the private sector and others where available. This approach could include the option to develop a cross boundary model of working.
7. By early 2003 a number of local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) met informally to discuss the best way to position County Durham to maximise resources in a realistic way. Since those informal meetings in 2003 the Durham Coalfields Housing Partnership Group has been established and progressed its understanding of the issues. This Committee previously agreed to participate in work in partnership with others in this area.

#### **current position statement and options appraisal**

8. Since the Durham Coalfields Housing Partnership was established a significant amount of work has been undertaken to gain a better understanding of the issues within the Durham Coalfield Sub Region. This has, to varying degrees, included work to understand the issues at the neighbourhood level within some of the Durham Districts.
9. The feasibility work that has been undertaken to date has included: -
  - CURS Report (David Cumbernauld Study) – Identifying areas at risk of low demand across the sub region.
  - DTZ Piedad Study 2003/04 – Considered priority settlements within the 5 Districts of Derwentside, Durham City, Easington, Sedgefield and Wear Valley. This work recommended that local master planning exercises should be undertaken in priority areas to establish a better understanding of local conditions (baselines) and opinion.
  - Local master planning exercises have commenced in some of the priority areas within Easington, Sedgefield, Wear Valley and Derwentside. At present this work has progressed most comprehensively in Easington and Sedgefield.
10. English Partnerships have more recently commissioned (early 2005) Jacobs Babbie and Genecon Consultants to achieve the following: -

- Establish a strategic context in relation to housing investment and a sub regional settlement pattern
  - Validation of previous studies undertaken by DTZ Pidea and CURS
  - Establish Area Development Frameworks for agreed study areas to determine proposed local interventions and establish costs and intervention methods.
11. This will be with the aim of producing a spatial economic assessment that is robust enough for scrutiny by English Partnerships, the Treasury and the ODPM to enable the allocation of resources for the proposals.
  12. The timetable for the above process is that completion of the study is due by mid Autumn 2005. This, however, is optimistic and also dependent on a number of critical factors. These primarily being, the requirement for the Sub Regional Housing Market Assessment to inform the economic appraisal and the requirement for Area Development Frameworks to be established for those settlements that is agreed to be approved within a first phase bid to support an implementation programme. As the timetable is already slipping it would be more realistic to assume that completion of this exercise will be towards the end of 2005/early 2006. Irrespective of the completion date of the work it is not expected that significant resources will be obtained until satisfactory scrutiny of the proposal either from agencies such as English Partnerships in consultation with the ODPM and the treasury or Government Office North East in relation to the work of the Regional Housing Board. It might be the case that this work will be subject to consideration as part of the Government's next Comprehensive Spending Review.
  13. This has determined the need for English Partnerships to commission Jacobs Babbie and Genecon consultants to undertake a study that will inform an economic appraisal for the sub region in relation to its former coalfield communities.
  14. Therefore the primary purpose of the current study is to assist English Partnerships in developing a spatial rationale, which confirms the long - term role and function of settlements within a sub-regional context. This strategy will include validating the existing list of priority intervention settlements, which have been identified on housing need only, and the function of the 12 principle main towns contained in the County Durham Structure Plan. To complete this validation, it is necessary to assess the existing main towns within the context of all the coalfield settlements.
  15. Once accepted by the Partnership, the validation study will be used as a basis to identify the scale of specific interventions within each of the agreed prioritised settlements. These interventions will then be taken forward for economic assessment. The study will be used as a process to agree areas that require a completed Area Development Framework (ADF) in the first instance. The ADF's will aim to provide a template for securing public and private sector investment in settlements. The purpose of ADFs is to establish the role and function of settlement (vision), settlement requirements to fulfil such a function successfully, settlement development patterns (physical

concepts), and priorities for investment. The content of which is required to be based around land and property values, numbers and conditions of properties, housing needs and environmental uses. This content will ultimately inform a proposed investment programme for settlements.

16. It is clear that the regional organisations within the partnership expect that the 'establishment of a strategic context in relation to sub regional settlements' is undertaken with the agreement of all of the Local Authorities within County Durham, irrespective of the delivery models and phasing of interventions that arise from future work. (This is reflected in the revised Memorandum of Understanding within Annex 9). Given that an increasing level of resources are to be distributed from regional partners based around regional policies, it would appear that an inclusive approach to sub regional housing issues is a necessity. Such an approach is also confirmed in the recently issued guidance on development of proposals for consideration by the Regional Housing Board, where the expectation is that proposals should be submitted on a sub regional partnership basis, linked to strategic policy themes within the Regional Housing Strategy.

### **wear valley implications**

17. In relation to how this work relates to the local context there are several implications that are outlined below: -
  - Throughout the feasibility studies that have taken place, Wear Valley settlements have demonstrated some of the strongest requirement for change in terms of need.
  - It was identified within the work undertaken by DTZ Piedad (2003/04) that local area frameworks for priority settlements would be required to be established to justify investment.
  - The emerging work (phase 1 and 2) of the Jacobs Babbie study has validated a number of priority settlements across the County, with the objective of becoming more balanced and sustainable in terms of their role and function. Other settlements within the County that are regarded as priorities in terms of but each might require different types and kind of intervention as outlined in the executive summary (see Annex 10). It is anticipated that the resulting methods to address housing market change may require reinvestment of values from one area to another across the Durham Coalfield programme area in a strategic manner. This is also likely to include investment from each of the participating Authorities. However, clarity in these principles would be ascertained through the final stages of the study work and the findings of the ADFs.
18. The ADFs are critical to this process and ultimately in securing resources from the Government sources of funding. The timescales are also critical and if a submission is to inform the forthcoming spending review the additional information required will need to be completed within six months from now. Currently the local authority partners are exploring the possibility of extending a contract that Sedgefield Borough Council have currently under commission to establish ADFs in areas where additional work needs to be progressed. DTZ Piedad is currently undertaking this with Llewellyn Davies on a partnership basis, both of which have extensive experience in housing consultancy work

as well a knowledge of the local context within which this initiative is operating.

19. This commission would have the potential benefits of establishing consistency to the approach across District areas, provide economies of scale and better value, provide flexibility to build upon existing work, provide a greater capacity to manage the commission and provide continuity of understanding from consultants. A brief for this additional work to deliver two ADF statements will be drawn up to ensure that the process is closely managed and supervised.
20. The end result of an agreed ADF will provide both settlements with a framework for delivery for the future that will be set within a strategic context and therefore hopefully attract and better use resources and future investment.
21. As a consequence of this work, Council officers are mindful of ensuring that timetables are aligned as far as possible to achieve the required outcomes. Being cognisant of the timescales in relation to the work of the Housing Market Assessment (HMA) is vital, as this work will inform the details within the Area Development Frameworks, which in turn are integral to the Economic Appraisal. The HMA for County Durham is to be commissioned in the near future with an anticipated timescale of approximately six months for completion. ADF's are currently at different stages of development across the sub-region. The degree to which Authorities can complete this work within the timescales of the Jacobs Babbie/Genecon work is of concern, yet will need to be completed as fully as possible within the agreed deadlines. The critical path of this work is a matter that partnership members wish to keep under continual review.

### **staffing arrangements**

22. The Partnership has considered how the momentum of this work can be carried forward in a more resourced manner. This is with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of the Partnership in addressing the issues that it faces. There has been a consensus within the Partnership that recruiting dedicated staff support progress would be beneficial. County Durham Single Programme funds have been made available to support this in the first instance and agreement has been reached that Sedgefield Borough Council would be the employing authority of a Programme Director with administration support. Both posts would be accountable to the Partnership for their direction. In kind support or a direct financial contribution may well be required from Authorities within the partnership to demonstrate commitment and establish the required degree of leverage stipulated by the appraisal process of the Single Programme. The host Authority is currently drawing up the Single Programme appraisal, Job Description and Person Specification. Initially staff will be employed over the single programme period 05/06 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 08. It would be the responsibility of the Director to establish an agreed business plan and to secure resources to drive forward the implementation of the housing programme across identified settlements or neighbourhoods.
23. The manner in which the staffing arrangements are configured has also been considered and although proposals have been based around the model of

Tees Valley Living it is proposed that only a Project Director and administrative support are appointed initially. The Sub Regional Economic Partnership has allocated single programme funds for the period 05 / 06 to March 2008. This is to the value of £100k p.a. to support this approach. It is expected that this resource will contribute significantly to the salaries and overheads of the staff team.

### **options appraisal**

24. It is of regional and sub-regional importance to agree a spatial context across the County for the future role and function of settlements. It is important to remember that establishing and agreeing an inclusive approach to such work is imperative due to a number of factors. These being outlined below: -
25. The alignment with other emerging strategic policy documents and decisions, including the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Regional Economic Strategy, the Northern Growth Strategy, the Local Transport Plan, Local and Area Development Frameworks, the Building Schools for the Future Programme, the Housing Market Assessment, County Durham Housing Allocations, Investment Policies of other Public Agencies and others.
26. The priority that regional bodies are prepared to give Local Authorities within the County Durham sub region may diminish if an inclusive approach is not undertaken. This would not only give rise to issues of credibility for the partnership in terms of progressing the Coalfield Housing agenda but could also seriously compromise the level of investment that may be provided to County Durham Authorities for other housing or regeneration initiatives.
27. It is not considered therefore that anything other than a fully inclusive approach from all Authorities should be undertaken to establish a strategic settlement framework for the sub region.

### **memorandum of understanding**

28. The latest draft of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been amended to reflect the approach required outlined in the above section. It also needs to be recognised, however, that the MOU would be reviewed once delivery options are agreed upon to reflect the most appropriate arrangement.
29. The purpose of the MOU is to ensure that the partnership has adequate governance arrangements for its purpose. Initially this will be in the form of an agreed approach to joint working arrangements for the development stages of the strategic context and submission of the delivery proposals. It is expected that further revisions would arise as the process is expected to be dynamic in terms of establishing delivery processes in the future and is anticipated to change over time. This will involve all Authorities within County Durham in the first instance until a point where future delivery arrangements are established. It is also envisaged that wider stakeholders of the partnership will sign up to the agreement once Authorities have agreement. These arrangements will promote a commitment to addressing a common goal and support commitment to the processes of addressing low demand housing issues within the County.

## **economic appraisal and area development frameworks**

30. Progressing the study to the stage of reaching the required standard for the Treasury to economically appraise proposed interventions raises some issues, namely: -
- The capacity of District Authorities to establish ADFs in the required timescales
  - The timescales involved in aligning the HMA work for the County
  - Addressing the current position, whereby the District Authorities are all at various stages of bringing forward ADFs for settlement options.
31. There are several options available to redress this:-
- i) Allow Districts to progress ADFs within their own current capacities;
  - ii) Work to the pace of the slowest Authority in establishing ADFs;
  - iii) Commission consultants jointly to undertake the work; and
  - iv) Commission consultants jointly to undertake the work whilst also negotiating and reviewing how future phasing of interventions may take place within the partnership (preferred option).
32. Option iv) will enable all the District authorities to progress work relating to producing ADFs appropriately to their circumstances without jeopardising the process of submitting an economic appraisal within the required timescales. This process will require careful negotiation with English Partnerships, consider the views of the consultants in satisfying the requirements of the economic appraisal and provide the required flexibility to progress the development of the intervention programme.
33. The options available to the Authorities are obviously numerous. However, the main considerations that have been undertaken by the Partnership are outlined below: -
- i) Support the Partnership with existing staff from its members
  - ii) Request contributions from Partners to establish a core team
  - iii) Resource a core team from Single Programme Funds in the first instance to support the partnership in ascertaining a clear direction, whereby only a nominal contribution from Local Authorities maybe required (preferred option).

## **financial implications**

34. The direct financial implications associated with this report relate to the financial requirements that may arise from contributions to staffing costs. It is anticipated that this is could possibly be up to but not exceeding 20% of the total staffing costs for all Authorities (approximate contribution - £3 - 4k p.a. of in kind or direct contributions per authority). It is unlikely that Authorities will be expected to contribute significantly during the 05/06 period due to the length of the recruitment process, although a degree of commitment may well

be necessary to cover any required leverage associated with the submission. Final costs will be made available on the development of staffing and overhead budgets and completion of the single programme appraisal.

35. The financial implications that affect investment into the sub-region have been outlined in the report and although resources will not be allocated directly to this initiative until a full economic appraisal has been undertaken, English Partnerships, GONE, the Regional Housing Corporation and Sub Regional Housing Associations are all willing to invest significant resources if a full sub-regional partnership approach can be demonstrated.
36. Resources to complete the requirements of an Area Development Framework via consultants are to be sourced from the existing Strategic Housing Investment Programme Funding (SHIP 2005/06) and are anticipated to be in the region of £65 - £70,000 plus VAT for the work required within Wear Valley District.
37. It is reasonable to expect that future financial commitments/commitments will be expected from the Authority nearer to the time a programme of action is forthcoming, this would be considered in future reports when appropriate.

#### **legal implications**

38. There are no legal implications in relation to this report, although future legal implications may arise in relation to the initiative. This would be reported at the appropriate juncture.

#### **procurement implications**

39. There are no procurement implications other than to agree a joint commissioning approach of consultants where it is appropriate for the Authority to do so (option iv). Any resources required to progress this work would be subject to a further report due to the specific nature of each Authorities position in formulating ADFs. It is envisaged that a joint commission of consultants is the most effective way of progressing ADFs within the timescales available. An extension of the existing contract that Sedgefield Borough Council is currently managing with a partnership of consultants would provide an immediate vehicle to progress this work. The partnership currently includes DTZ Piedad and Llewellyn Davies, both of which have had experience within the Coalfield Housing Renewal Area and Area Development Framework preparation. Individual authorities will need to identify the appropriate resources to support the work that is required within their localities.

#### **community safety implications**

40. The prioritised settlements have higher rates of crime linked to poor environment. The project will assist with the overall aims of the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CRDP).

## RECOMMENDED

1. Committee agrees that the Council formally commits itself to the Partnership Memorandum of Understanding and supports the undertaking of establishing a strategic settlement assessment.
2. Committee agrees that the Council support the Partnership approach to commissioning consultants whilst also negotiating and reviewing how future phasing of interventions may take place within the Partnership (option 4). Resources to complete the requirements of an Area Development Framework via consultants are to be sourced from the existing Strategic Housing Investment Programme Funding (SHIP 2005/06) and are anticipated to be in the region of £65 - £70,000 plus VAT for the work required within Wear Valley.
3. Committee agrees that the Council contributes to the development of a staff team to support the development of the Partnership's work and progress the implementation of any future work of low demand coal field housing across the sub-region (option 3).

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**DRAFT****Commercial and in Confidence****County Durham Coalfields Housing Programme****Stakeholders  
Memorandum of Understanding****Parties to the MOU (Signing parties)**

Durham County Council  
Sedgefield Borough Council  
Durham City Council  
Derwentside Council  
Chester le Street Council

District of Easington Council  
Wear Valley District Council  
English Partnership  
ONE NorthEast

**The purpose of the MOU**

This memorandum of understanding is a statement of intent, which forms a solid and proactive commitment by the signatories to tackle the severe housing problems in the former Coalfield Settlements of County Durham. It aims to promote joint working and collaborative endeavour between the signatories. This document sets out the main principles, the ongoing work needed to progress this initiative and the intentions for interim arrangements.

The MOU is not intended to be legally enforceable, to create any legal right or obligations of any of the parties hereof and recognises that individual local authorities will seek to proceed at a pace which reflects local circumstances.

**Common Understanding**

- To deliver the required identified regeneration of each community, by providing a safe, functional and quality environment.
- To address a number of housing market failures, with the main aim of creating a sustainable future for the settlements.
- To improve local economic conditions for the communities, through quality homes of greater value, additional wealth being attracted to the area and a wider housing market to cater for people of all ages.
- To promote best practice and excellence in Neighbourhood Management.
- To promote the economic efficient and effective use of resources.

**Stakeholder Approach**

- Develop a comprehensive Business Plan, which will detail the priorities for action.
- The Business Plan will identify and address the issues relating to development funding, local housing strategies, allocation methodology and the required skills and resources from each stakeholder.

- In conjunction with this Business Plan an economic impact assessment will be progressed to clearly identify the economic and social outputs from this initiative against tested value for money criteria.
- Establish a Partnership Board to deliver the initiative with
- A balanced and fair representation of stakeholders to work in partnership with the public bodies e.g. Housing Corporation, RSL's, the private sector and community organisations to deliver the Coalfield Initiative.
- The Partnership Board will provide leadership and vision with a range of skills, knowledge and experience to provide both strategic direction and delivery solutions (*as appropriate*).
- Reviewing this Memorandum to ensure its continuing relevance.

### **Interim Arrangements**

The existing Coalfields Housing Regeneration Steering Group will act as a Shadow Partnership Board and will continue to lead the initiative and represent stakeholder organisations.

The Steering Group will appoint staff, with the first appointment being a Programme Director. The Programme Directors key duties include:

- Take a lead role in progressing the Business Plan and Action Plan and work with Partners to establish an agreed delivery mechanism.
- To ensure the Partnership Board is fully engaged in this work.
- Maintain effective community engagement and consultation.
- Provide leadership and direction to other staff to ensure smooth operation of the initiative.

The financial implications of these staffing arrangements will be addressed by funding from the County Durham Economic Partnership (Via ONE North East's SRP allocation) the local authority partners and English Partnerships.

English Partnerships  
Durham Coalfield Communities Partnership  
**Key Findings and Executive Summary**

**DRAFT**

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**May 2005**

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## 1.0 Key Findings and Recommendations

- 1.1 This report provides an Executive Summary of the findings of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Durham Coalfields Community Partnerships Coalfield Settlement Study.

### Background

- 1.2 The Durham Coalfields Partnership is seeking to progress a programme of interventions to address failing housing markets in former coalfield communities.
- 1.3 The Partnership recognises that housing market renewal must not be considered in isolation and should be aligned with wider regeneration, sustainability and planning strategy. They also acknowledge that future intervention should contribute towards a clear settlement role and function and tackle the underlying causes of housing market failure such as physical isolation, access to employment and services and net out migration. Intervention should also be aligned with the main Durham towns and the broader spatial principles of the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy.
- 1.4 Jacobs Babbie was commissioned by the Durham Coalfields Partnership in November 2004 to undertake the following three phase study:
- **Phase 1:** Establish the planning, sustainability, housing, economic and regeneration context of the former coalfield communities with an emphasis on emerging spatial policy and existing and emerging intervention strategy;
  - **Phase 2:** Assess the functional relationship between coalfield settlements, main towns, the city regions and key economic areas. Review the coalfield settlement prioritisation and set out a rationale for intervention 'beyond housing needs' in spatial development terms; and
  - **Phase 3:** Recommend the broad range and type of strategic interventions which will help to create more sustainable communities and identify the aspects of change which would have the greatest impact on housing markets. This will provide a platform for developing more local and community based intervention, including housing intervention.

### Key Recommendations from Phase 1

- 1.5 **The Phase 1 report** set out the overall planning, sustainability, housing, economic and regeneration context for the Durham Coalfield Communities. Key conclusions from this report are:
- The problems faced by former coalfield communities include population decline and changing age profiles, poor economic performance, lower educational attainment, poorer health, low housing demand in some settlements and poorer transport accessibility and availability of services in some areas;
  - Existing strategic interventions are seeking to tackle some of the fundamental causes of housing market failure such as poor accessibility and poor economic performance;
  - Local interventions are seeking to renew communities and improve them as places to live;
  - The Consultation Draft RSS intends to pursue a stock reduction programme as a mechanism to reduce vacancy rates in the region in line with ODPM targets. Stock reduction is a short to medium term solution to manage housing supply and demand but needs to be supported by other measures to create communities which have a long term role and function;
  - The key challenge is to address this housing imbalance in a way that meets social need and provides the right type of stock for retaining and attracting new people to the sub-region. Housing renewal activity must be aligned with other initiatives which tackle the underlying causes of settlement failure. Replacement and new stock must meet the future needs of the region and complement economic strategies and meet long term need. To this end, the type and location of new housing will be a critical issue as, not only should it facilitate more sustainable and vibrant communities, it should provide for changing aspirations and support economic growth;

- The David Cumberland report, completed in May 2004, recommended a strategy of stock reduction in the Coastal Strip and to increase the number of dwellings in the Net Park Villages, Wider Ferryhill and Southern Arc. DTZ identified 11 priority settlements based on housing policy and need. The OPDM has also identified housing market renewal 'hot spots' within the Durham Coalfield Communities;
- The regeneration of East, North West and South Durham is a core principle of the overall policy strategy of the Adopted Structure Plan. These locations are also identified as regeneration areas in emerging RSS with the main towns identified for regeneration. **The emerging RSS provides a policy framework for intervention in the Durham Coalfield Communities in that the main towns are identified for regeneration and principal service centres and the surrounding areas are identified for regeneration. However, it is considered that the spatial strategy would benefit from a clearer presentation of the objectives for the coalfield communities in terms of how they can support the main towns and the city region.**
- The review of spatial policies identified a clear need to establish the role and relationships between settlements. Planning policy provides the mechanism to develop Coalfield Communities, which have the greatest potential to support the main towns, major centres and economic areas and to provide sustainable patterns of development. An assessment of the potential to enhance the role of the main towns is also necessary given that they are identified as principal functional centres and areas of opportunity;
- Funds and strategies aimed at tackling low demand in areas outside the Pathfinder are at an early stage of development given that the majority of activity has, so far, been focused on the Pathfinder. **It is important that the causes of low demand are understood and that a strategic framework for further intervention in the Durham Coalfield Communities is provided.** This will provide the strategic evidence base to support further appraisal of specific interventions within the Durham Coalfield Communities; and
- The creation of sustainable communities requires a holistic and co-ordinated approach to housing, transport, education and health, jobs, social opportunities, services and the physical environment.

## Key Recommendations from Phase 2

- 1.6 The settlements of the County Durham exhibit a range of positive opportunities. There is a reasonable level of accessibility for all settlements, with some ideally located on major transport routes i.e. A1 (M) and A19. There are a number of attractive areas within settlements and significant signs of investment within the communities, which is producing a change in settlement image, improving the quality and range of services and resulting in revitalisation of the centres.
- 1.7 Whilst there is general alignment between the potential for sustainable change and housing renewal, it is a clear finding of this study that housing renewal will only be successful if the strategic framework for overall regeneration and new opportunities is in place. Without this strategic framework, many communities will witness further decline with limited opportunities for stabilisation and/or reversal.
- 1.8 **The key findings and main recommendations from phase 2 of the study are:**
- Easington District and Derwentside have the strongest employment relationships with the Tyne and Wear City Region;
  - The Tees Valley City Region is also a significant employment destination for the residents of Easington, Sedgfield and Wear Valley with the strongest employment links from Sedgfield Borough;
  - Durham City has high inflows from all the other Durham Districts. This comprises of Derwentside (4717), Sedgfield (3427), Wear Valley (2386) Easington (2298) and Chester le Street (3649);
  - Sedgfield Borough is also a key employment destination with high flows from Wear Valley (3141), Durham City (1849) and Tees Valley (2328);
  - Wear Valley has the strongest links with Teesdale District and Sedgfield Borough (outflows of 3141) and inflows (2518). Wear Valley has the least strong employment

relationships with either the Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley City Region;

- With the exception of Durham City, all the districts are net exporters of labour to other areas. The main conurbations (with perhaps the exception of high flows between Sedgefield Borough and Wear Valley) and Durham City are the main recipients of these outflows. Therefore, the further development of strategic employment opportunities will help to increase self sufficiency and boost economic performance is also consistent with the objectives of the Northern Way. Strategic economic development should therefore remain as a key focus for regeneration activity;
- Durham, Peterlee and Bishop Auckland represent the principal retail and service centres within the study area based on multiple floorspace (source Experian Major Centres Study-May 2004). On-site assessments carried out as part of this study confirm that these centres provide a principal service function. This principal role should continue to be maintained and where appropriate, enhanced;
- Newton Aycliffe, Seaham and Stanley are smaller centres but are subject to major town centre regeneration schemes which improve and increase their function. Onsite assessments carried out as part of this study have confirmed the need for both qualitative and quantitative improvements to diversify existing uses and improve existing activity in these town centres. This would provide a stronger functional focus to their main town role and provide a stimulus for other wider regeneration;
- Crook town centre provides a mainly local retail function which supports this settlement and the surrounding communities. Although it will continue to benefit from qualitative intervention and diversification, comprehensive functional improvement is unlikely to be viable given its limited population base, catchment and location. Similarly, although Shildon is a main town the town centre has a limited retail function which mainly meets local needs. Given that the restructuring of Newton Aycliffe town centre is proposed and the proximity to Bishop Auckland, significant functional change of Shildon Town Centre is not considered to be appropriate. Spennymoor town centre provides a reasonable range of provision but would benefit from improved vitality and quality.
- Consett town centre has already benefited from significant qualitative and quantitative intervention with an increase in retail provision in the town;
- The main towns of Seaham, Peterlee, Bishop Auckland, Newton Aycliffe and Stanley should provide the principal focus for new strategic activity. This should be supported by investment and renewal in the neighbourhoods and surrounding communities which have the potential to support their main town role and which have the potential to provide sustainable regeneration.
- Ferryhill should also be planned for as a main town. There is significant potential for regeneration in Dean Bank, FerryHill Station and to a lesser extent Chilton to support this role.
- As Shildon is a smaller town located between Bishop Auckland and Newton Aycliffe, it is considered that this should principally be a focus for local activity and self sustainability rather than strategic change. It should provide a supporting role to strategic functions located in Bishop Auckland and Newton Aycliffe. There is potential for Newton Aycliffe, Shildon and Bishop Auckland to be developed as a main town corridor
- Whilst Willington is a joint main town for structure plan purposes, it has a small population base and is unlikely to fulfil a main town role. Therefore, it should be a focus for local intervention and further regeneration rather than significant functional change.
- Crook, Consett and Spennymoor will continue to benefit from the implementation of further regeneration initiatives. Their roles as main towns are important in the district context but less so in a sub-regional or regional context. Therefore, they should continue to be a focus for self-sustainability rather than strategic change and growth.
- A number of coalfield communities have the physical potential to support growth and

are capable of providing sustainable regeneration which will compliment and support the main towns and major centres. These should be the principal focus for strategic interventions both in terms of housing, services, retail improvement and accessibility. The communities which have significant potential to benefit from regeneration and provide sustainable growth are identified as Easington Colliery, Tow Law and the surrounding communities, Bowburn, Coundon and Chilton West.

- Focusing strategic opportunities and restructuring in the main towns and facilitating regeneration and growth opportunities in the most sustainable surrounding settlements is consistent with planning policy. This study has identified the main towns which should be a focus for strategic change and the neighbourhoods and communities which are considered to be the most sustainable places for regeneration and growth to support this change. The future role of settlements has been considered in the wider spatial and functional objectives for the main towns and city regions.
- Not all of the settlements identified as a housing priority by DTZ and David Cumberland are identified for strategic change within this study. By definition, strategic change cannot be applied to all settlements given that resources and capacity are not infinite. Many of the former coalfield settlements included in the study area would benefit from qualitative improvement and local based intervention but are not necessarily sustainable locations to focus strategic change or additional housing. Where growth in smaller coalfield settlements is likely to be less sustainable, these should be a focus for local and community based intervention to improve their quality. These settlements have been identified for significant local intervention. Stock reduction may also be appropriate in some of these settlements.
- Some settlements contain pockets of failing areas but by and large perform reasonably well. These will require locally based area regeneration rather than significant strategic change. They are identified for local and more limited regeneration only.
- Other communities have a small population base and do not require significant intervention. They have been identified as having limited potential for intervention.
- The principal focus for strategic employment opportunities should be Seaham, Peterlee, Newton Aycliffe, Bishop Auckland and Durham City. These should act as major employment centres for the sub region and provide opportunities which support the surrounding communities.
- As new towns, policy options for accommodating growth in Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe are restructuring of the existing fabric, urban extension or through encouraging growth in surrounding settlements which have urban capacity and the potential for sustainable regeneration.

## 2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 Many of the sub-regionally important sites are located close to the main strategic road corridors (A19 and A1) and are concentrated in Sedgefield Borough, Duham City and Easington District. Proposed sub-regionally important strategic employment sites include Heighington Lane West, Net Park, the road rail interchange facility and the South of Seaham reserve site.
- 2.2 The study has reviewed and validated the role of each of the main towns. This has included a detailed analysis of service provision, housing, transport accessibility and economic activity and relationships. The function of each main town is summarised below:
  - **Durham, Peterlee and Bishop Auckland** are considered to provide a primary retail role and have good accessibility. These towns are also a focus for district-wide activity in terms of the catchments and communities which they support. Although providing a significant service role, Peterlee and Bishop Auckland do not currently provide a particularly strong employment base whereas Durham City provides a major sub-regional employment focus;

- **Seaham** and **Newton Aycliffe** currently provide a more limited retail role but are subject to town centre regeneration schemes. Neither of these settlements is likely to support a particularly wide retail catchment beyond the major centre boundary. However, both provide an existing strategic employment role and planned activity will strengthen their future importance as key sub-regional and regional employment destination;

- **Consett** has benefited from significant intervention to its retail, employment and service base. It supports a number of rural settlements and is an important service hub and a key focus for strategic activity for Derwentside District;

- **Stanley** has a limited employment and retail role and probably supports fewer surrounding communities than Consett. Its proximity to the Tyne and Wear City Region, the Metro Centre and Chester-le-Street also mean that it competes with other centres in terms of service provision;

- **Crook** and **Spennymoor** provide a reasonable level of service and retail provision and both are fairly self sustaining and less reliant on other areas. Crook has a small population base and the level and choice of retail activity reflects this. Crook benefits from the fact that the main Wear Valley District Council offices are located in the town. Spennymoor is a fairly large town centre providing a reasonable range of retail provision;

- **Willington**: Although considered to be a joint Main Town with Crook for Structure Plan purposes, on its own Willington has very limited retail provision and has a small population base. As Willington is physically separated from Crook and retail provision in this settlement is fairly limited, the residents of Willington may travel to Bishop Auckland or Durham rather than to Crook;

- **Ferryhill** is identified in the Structure Plan Review as a single main town with Spennymoor. Ferryhill exhibits many of the characteristics of a Main Town and is considered to be fairly self sustaining. It also supports the surrounding neighbourhood of Dean Bank and Ferryhill Station. Therefore, it is considered that Ferryhill should be considered as a main town but further strategic change may be required to support this role;

- **Shildon**: Whilst it is a fairly self sustaining settlement its service role is primarily locally focused. It is also located between Newton Aycliffe and Bishop Auckland, both of which currently have a wider functional role and offer significant future opportunities for town centre development. Therefore, Shildon is considered to provide a more limited functional role particularly when compared to the other main towns.

## **Potential Type and Level of Intervention in the Main Towns and Durham Coalfield Communities**

2.3 The reason for the type of change and potential level of intervention in each settlement is summarised below.

2.4 **Bishop Auckland** is identified as a strategic focus for intervention and functional improvement to enhance its role as a main town and to support local regeneration activity. It has the capacity to accept change and its good accessibility also means that it is a sustainable place to focus activity, which will attract people from a wider catchment. An enhanced role would provide a stronger service and economic base for the Wear Valley settlements and provide a strategic focus for activity and opportunities which the regeneration of surrounding communities can support and benefit from.

2.5 **Bishop Auckland Neighbourhoods**: There is significant opportunity to renew and regenerate neighbourhoods such as Woodhouse Close and St Helens, both of which are identified as low demand hot spots by ODPM. This represents a significant opportunity in terms of maintaining and supporting the role of Bishop Auckland as a main town and providing sustainable regeneration.

- 2.6 **Stanley** is identified as a focus for intervention to enhance its role as a main town and to support regeneration. This would provide more opportunities for people living within the settlement and surrounding communities and improve the physical environment. As there are strong functional links with the Tyne and Wear City Region, there is the potential for increased self containment in terms of improving the economic and retail base, whilst also recognising that Stanley acts as a commuter town for the City Region and that this is a potential opportunity. Stanley is identified by OPDM as a potential 'low demand' hot spot.
- 2.7 **Peterlee** should be a focus for future intervention strategy to support its role as a main town and to provide more strategic opportunities. This will not only support the viability of Peterlee as a major centre but also provide opportunities, which can maintain and improve the long-term viability of the surrounding coalfield communities. The type of activity should include an enhanced employment role and the maintenance and enhancement of its existing service base. There are also likely to be opportunities for qualitative intervention and restructuring to the existing stock particularly in terms of neighbourhood regeneration in areas such as Eden Hill. There is also significant potential for the restructuring of Peterlee to be supported by housing potential new housing opportunities in other nearby settlements.
- 2.8 **Horden** is well located in terms of strategic transport provision and has good links to Peterlee and other major centres. Although it is a separate settlement, its proximity to Peterlee means it also acts as a neighbourhood of this main town. It already has a reasonable range of service provision and has high potential to be a reasonably self sustaining neighbourhood which supports and benefits from the main town status of Peterlee.
- 2.9 **Seaham** has close links to Sunderland. It is already subject to significant intervention action with more planned or in the pipeline. The combination of both strategic and more local intervention is already beginning to realise significant change and further planned improvements in its employment and retail function will further enhance its role as a main town. The town also has significant potential to provide housing growth which will also support its strategic role as a main town. As the implementation of regeneration strategy is already at an advanced stage, significant further intervention may not be required once existing proposals are progressed although further local intervention, such as improving links between the train station and the town centre may be appropriate.
- 2.10 **Dawdon:** Seaham has close links to Sunderland but as a main town supports fewer settlements. From this perspective, it is important that it has attractive neighbourhoods, which support the maintenance of the existing population base and where new people are attracted to it. Dawdon (with Parkside) is therefore identified as a strategic focus for intervention as it has the potential to support the main town role of Seaham and would be a sustainable location to focus regeneration activity. It is already subject to masterplan activity and has been identified by Easington for an Area Action Area in the LDF. This neighbourhood has also been identified as a low demand hot spot by ODPM.
- 2.11 **Newton Aycliffe** should be the focus of a future intervention strategy to strengthen its role as a main town. The town centre does not currently act as a key focus for activity and has significant potential to support an increased functional role within the District. Its town center should be the focus of intervention to enhance the existing retail and service base. The regeneration of its town centre is identified as a key priority by Sedgefield Borough Council, which should be progressed via an action plan and more detailed proposals. Improved links and integration with its rail station would improve accessibility to other settlements in the County. There is opportunity for housing intervention in a number of its existing estates west of the town centre and the focus for new opportunity should be to restructure existing urban areas and to intensify and diversity activity where this is possible. Its good accessibility to the strategic transport network also means that the settlement has significant potential to provide an enhanced employment role which provides both local and sub-regional opportunity.

### **Strategic Coalfield Settlements to Support the Role of Main Towns**

- 2.12 **Coundon:** There are significant opportunities for sustainable regeneration through creating a more diverse and attractive settlement which provides for the day to day needs of residents. There is significant potential for the settlement to support the main town role of Bishop

Auckland due to its good public transport links to this town. Intervention in Coundon could include continuing to invest in the local retail and service role and qualitative intervention and restructuring of the existing housing stock where this is appropriate.

- 2.13 **Tow Law:** It is more isolated than other communities and would benefit from qualitative and small scale functional intervention. It has the potential to support Crook and Durham and possibly new activity in Wear Dale if accessibility was improved. Crook/Stanley is identified as a housing market renewal hot spot by ODPM and this may include Tow Law. A next step may be to investigate the potential for intervention in Tow Law and the surrounding communities as significant intervention is not planned at present.
- 2.14 **Easington Colliery:** An increase in the population, through further additional housing development, has the potential to enhance local retail and service provision. Further qualitative intervention would also support the continued regeneration of the settlement. The justification for intervention can be aligned to a clear functional role to support the main town role of Peterlee (and potentially other destinations due to its proximity to the A19 Corridor) although public transport access would need to be improved. The settlement is identified as a low demand hot spot by English Partnerships/ODPM.
- 2.15 **Ferryhill Station and Dean Bank:** These two communities are considered to be neighbourhoods of the Ferryhill settlement. Intervention within these areas has the potential to provide sustainable regeneration as it will support the wider role of Ferryhill and help to support the viability of this settlement. They also have good transport accessibility and have the potential to support and benefit from new economic opportunities located along the main transport corridors. Masterplan activity is already well advanced in these settlements.
- 2.16 **Chilton West:** Proposals for Chilton West should be considered within the wider context of Chilton and the potential to provide housing support to the main towns of Newton Aycliffe and Bishop Auckland. Intervention should concentrate on qualitative intervention and neighbourhood restructuring. The construction of the A167 (T) Chilton Bypass will also mean that there is the potential for environmental enhancement within the town.
- 2.17 **Bowburn:** There is potential to create a village centre. This should be focused within the existing residential areas to ensure it is accessible by a variety of modes of transport. The justification for intervention can be aligned to its proximity to the A1 (M) and good public transport links to other major centres. The designation in the City of Durham Local Plan for a Prestige Industrial Estate and the potential construction of the inter-modal freight interchange on the south western periphery of the current urban area would increase the profile and potential role that Bowburn would have within the County. There is also currently a lack of housing choice within Bowburn with limited availability of modern housing. Overall, there is significant potential to provide sustainable regeneration and enhance the functional role of this settlement.

### Validation against Planning Strategy

- 2.18 The policy review undertaken in the phase 1 report identifies a clear need to establish the role and relationships between settlements. Planning policy provides the mechanism to develop Coalfield Communities, which have the greatest potential to support the main towns, major centres and economic areas and to provide sustainable regeneration and development.
- 2.19 To promote sustainable patterns of development in the North East Region Draft RSS 1 has focused on conurbations in the Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley City Regions for major development, regeneration and investment. The County Durham Structure Plan provides a development focus based on the 12 main towns. Emerging RSS identifies these towns as regeneration towns and a focus for economic and service activity to complement the city regions. Therefore, focusing strategic opportunities on the main towns (both in functional terms and for regeneration) is a core principle of emerging spatial strategy.
- 2.20 The County Durham Structure Plan identified that it may be appropriate to focus new development in smaller coalfield settlements which have good access to the main towns and a reasonable level of service provision. The communities which have the most potential to provide sustainable growth through maintaining and enhancing local service provision,

enabling community based regeneration and taking advantage of good accessibility are considered to be sustainable places for development.

- 2.21 Many of the areas considered in this study are neighbourhoods or nearby communities of the main towns. As the regeneration of main towns will only be viable if it is supported by vibrant neighbourhoods and supporting communities, the continued restructuring of supporting communities is consistent with the role of the main towns.
- 2.22 Focusing strategic opportunities and restructuring in the main towns and facilitating regeneration and growth opportunities in the most sustainable surrounding settlements is therefore consistent with planning policy. This study has identified the main towns which should be a focus for strategic change and the neighbourhoods and communities which are considered to be the most sustainable places for regeneration and to support this change. They are also considered to be locations which meet the wider spatial and functional objectives of the main towns and city regions.
- 2.23 New industrial development would enhance the sub-regional employment role and increase the self-sufficiency of the County Durham sub-region. This would contribute towards the regional objective of boosting economic performance and creating a stronger economic base. **The study had identified significant potential for the main towns and supporting communities to compliment and support strategic economic growth.**

**REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**13 JULY 2005**

Report of the Director of Regeneration  
**IMPLEMENTATION OF IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN**

**purpose of the report**

1. To inform the Committee about what progress has been made in implementing the improvement action plan (see Annex 11) which was agreed following the inspection of the Planning Service carried out by the Audit Commission in October 2004.

**financial implications**

2. The cost of implementing any of the outstanding matters will be reported at the appropriate time.

**legal implications**

3. Any proposals put forward will enable the Council to undertake its statutory duties in relation to planning and related regulations in a more efficient and effective way, which will reduce the risk of legal challenge or complaints.

**human resource implications**

4. Any proposals for additional staff will be reported to Committee separately.

**conclusions**

5. Much progress has been made on implementing the improvement action plan. Outstanding matters will be addressed in due course and reported on.

**RECOMMENDED**

That members agree the actions taken.

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**Officer responsible for the report**  
Robert Hope  
Director of Regeneration  
Ext 264

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**Author of the report**  
David Townsend  
Head of Development & Building Control  
Ext 270

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## High Level Improvement Plan

Issue from Report	Planned Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Action Taken
<p><b>Community Plan</b> The Community Plan is still in draft. It is not clear that the aims are realistic or that the implications are owned by the Community. Until the community plan is agreed the regeneration strategy and LDF will not be able to properly reflect community aspirations</p>	<p>The Community Plan is currently being revised for consideration by the Council and the LSP before consultation</p>	<p>Draft for comment to LSP late Nov-early Dec.</p>	<p>MSU/LSP</p>	<p>Community Plan publication agreed by LSP on 27 June 2005 for consultation.</p>
<p><b>Quality Assurance</b> Process and procedures do not include a quality assurance (QA) system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement agreed elements (process improvements) of consultants report</li> <li>• Develop system to monitor qualitative and quantitative performance targets, including quality of life targets.</li> <li>• Assimilate into service balanced scorecard.</li> </ul>	<p>April 2005</p>	<p>Director of Regeneration / Head of Development and Building Control / support from MSU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Most of the agreed changes have been implemented.</li> <li>▪ Checklist monitoring achievement of targets and compliance with procedures.</li> <li>▪ A draft list of new indicators has been prepared and is to be discussed with MSU.</li> <li>▪ A revised balanced scorecard has been incorporated in the Department's Service Plan.</li> <li>▪ A system of sample checking of decisions and quality of decisions/developments is to be introduced.</li> <li>▪ A tour of approvals for Committee and members is to be introduced on an informal basis.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Access to service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning service is not fully e-enabled (applications cannot yet be submitted on-line)</li> <li>• Access to the service is limited to office hours at the Civic Centre</li> <li>• Documents are not available in languages other than English.</li> <li>• No attempt is made to analyse customer response whether different sections of the community experience the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement electronic delivery of service action plan (funded 2004/05 by Planning Delivery Grant)</li> <li>• Undertake review/feasibility of area based service delivery and/or access.</li> <li>• Publicise availability of translation services.</li> <li>• Implement proposals for a users/customer</li> </ul>	<p>Commence October 2004 Complete April 2005</p>	<p>Head of Development and Building Control / ICT Section (for electronic delivery implementation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Portal have been informed the Department will be able to receive planning applications electronically from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005.</li> <li>• SX3 have to make a few adjustments to Public Access and once completed it will be possible for the public to view on-line the Planning Register, applications and to make comments.</li> <li>▪ Software has been received recently which will enable Building Regulation applications to be submitted on line.</li> <li>▪ In the months since the Inspectors published their report the development control team has experienced major staff changes and high workloads. During this</li> </ul>

Issue from Report	Planned Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Action Taken
<p>service differently or have differing needs which service needs to consider</p>	<p>panel</p>			<p>time it has found it difficult to maintain the duty officer system whilst striving to meet targets. It was not a realistic proposition to put a further burden on the team to send staff to satellite offices on a frequent basis. The team is too small to cope with this demand, when sickness and holidays have to be accommodated. Although the Council may have vacant office space at Old Bank Chambers in Bishop Auckland and at Stanhope Town Hall, no investigation has been made into the feasibility of using the buildings, the cost of doing so, a risk assessment of basing staff in these buildings, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extended hours would also be difficult with current resources.</li> <li>▪ Translation services are available on request. Service to publish availability.</li> <li>▪ Plan to set up user/customer panel soon.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Role of Councillors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors giving undue weight to non-material planning considerations may reduce the level of confidence in the service.</li> <li>• Informal contact arrangements between officers and Councillors are not always efficient – lack of a protocol.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member/ officer protocol already in existence.</li> <li>• Continued programme of training for members on planning matters</li> <li>• Raise awareness within staff of content and operation of the member/officer protocol</li> <li>• Develop summary officer and member guidance notes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member training on-going.</li> <li>• Staff awareness training commence October 2004 Complete December 2004.</li> <li>• Guidance notes by Apr 05.</li> </ul>	<p>Head of Development and Building Control / MSU / Committee Section</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Protocol on Planning agreed 31 March 05 that sets out the role of members and officers in the planning process.</li> <li>▪ Training has been arranged for 11 July 2005 and there will be further training in September.</li> <li>▪ Officers have been provided with copies of Protocol. A briefing is planned.</li> </ul>

Issue from Report	Planned Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Action Taken
<p><b>RSS Conflicts</b> A major issue is to resolve the conflict between community aspiration and the emerging RSS, around which there has been little community or political debate</p>	<p>Continue representative role within RSS Management Group and seek to influence the content of the draft. Co-ordinate the views of other Durham districts in this process. Produce full response to the consultation draft RSS at the appropriate time.</p>	<p>Commence consultation December 2004 / January 2005.</p>	<p>Director of Regeneration</p>	<p>Response made on behalf of the Council and Durham Districts. Formal consultation on RSS to be undertaken by GONE in July/August/September 2005.</p>
<p><b>Quality of Life Indicators</b> Whilst overall monitoring of PI's is good, the overall impact of the service on quality of life is not measured systematically.</p>	<p>Expand current BVPI performance monitoring to develop and include set of quality of life indicators. Draw on national best practise to agree set of indicators.</p>	<p>Commence October 2004. Include within draft Service Plan by end of October 2004.</p>	<p>Director of Regeneration / Heads of Service / MSU</p>	<p>The list of indicators has been reviewed. There are no quality of life indicators on the Audit Commission web site for development control. Consideration is being given to corporate indicators.</p>

## SUPPORTING PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

Issue	Recommended Action	Target Dates	Responsibility	Action Taken
<p><b>Affordable Housing</b> The Council is not following Government policy, which advocates integrating affordable housing into all the larger housing development schemes to achieve balanced communities.</p>	<p>Review of policies to be undertaken in production of LDF.</p>	<p>Draft for core LDF strategy April 2005</p>	<p>Head of Planning and Environmental Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Priority given to the production of a Housing DPD within first round of documents to be produced as part of the LDF which will seek to address this issue.</li> <li>▪ Commencement of joint working with other Durham Districts to carry out a Housing Market Assessment to inform policy preparation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Section 106 Agreements</b> Section 106 agreements are taking too long to prepare and agree.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to prepare S106 agreements concurrently with the determination of planning applications.</li> <li>• Undertake review of resources considered necessary for S 106 workload.</li> </ul>	<p>April 2005</p>	<p>Head of Development and Building Control, and Head of Legal Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At present resources are adequate. However, the situation will have to be reconsidered when the Head of Legal Services leaves the authority.</li> <li>▪ Protocol to be prepared (Aug 2005) to ensure Head of Legal gets all documents/info required on time.</li> </ul>

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Recommended Action</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
<b>Enforcement Activity</b> Enforcement activity is still reactive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement agreed elements of consultant's report.</li> <li>Seek additional resources for enforcement work (growth bid being prepared for consideration in Council budget process).</li> </ul>	April 2005	Director of Regeneration / Head of Development and Building Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The agreed elements of the Trevor Roberts report have been implemented. Disruption caused when AB/AJ left. More resources agreed by Council 28 April 2005. New enforcement officer took up post in June 2005.</li> </ul>
<b>Customer Satisfaction</b> Customer surveys do not include consultees and other users of the service (Only includes applicants)	Continuous survey of applicants/ users of the service be undertaken	Commence April 2005	Head of Development and Building Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surveys to commence but staffing resources remain a problem.</li> </ul>
<b>Performance Information</b> Performance information on Development Control is not available to customers to reflect the Customer Charter	Develop information system to publicise performance on Customer Charter	Commenced September 2004 Implemented from April 2005	Head of Development and Building Control / IT Section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer Charter revised and tabled.</li> <li>New indicators to be measured and it is proposed to publicise information on the Council's website, in Wear Valley Matters and in reports to Regeneration Committee.</li> </ul>
<b>Population Growth</b> Politicians and community have not considered the implications of population growth.	Implementation of the Council Plan	Early 2005.	MSU / Corporate Management team	Work completed by MSU on determinants of population trends May 2005.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Recommended Action</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
<p><b>Recruitment</b> There remains fragility around the council's ability to recruit and retain staff.</p>	<p>Monitor staff turnover. Full implementation of PDP and resulting training programme. Growth bid for additional resources for training being prepared for consideration in Council budget process.</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Director of Regeneration / Heads of Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff turnover remains a problem. The Principal Planning Officer (DC) and the Planning Officer (Policy) have left the Council. Recruitment processes now complete.</li> <li>• Training needs have been identified in PDP's and implementation of training has begun.</li> <li>• On 28 April 2005 an additional 4 posts were agreed. Interviews have been held and the posts have been filled. It is anticipated that staff will be in place within 2 months. In the interim agency staff have been engaged.</li> <li>• The bid for additional funding for training was not successful. It is proposed to recommend that some of this year's PDG be used to increase the Department's training budget.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conservation Resources</b> Resources for work on conservation aspects of the service have not increased to take account of increased number of applications.</p>	<p>Undertake review of conservation work and resources in the Council. Potential growth bid for expansion of the service to be included for consideration in the Council budget process.</p>	<p>Commence October 2004. Conclude December 2004.</p>	<p>Director of Regeneration / Head of Planning and Environmental Policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A bid for an additional Conservation Officer was not successful.</li> <li>• The possibility of jointly funding a Conservation Officer with Durham County Council and other District Councils is under consideration. Also I am considering whether to recommend that a full time post be funded out of the PDG.</li> </ul>

**REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**13 JULY 2005**

Report of the Director of Regeneration  
**COLOUR PLAN PRINTER AND SCANNER**

**purpose of the report**

1. To seek approval from members to purchase a colour plan printer and scanner.

**background**

2. The Department has begun to prepare a Local Development Framework for Wear Valley. It is a requirement of the new legislation to keep the development plan up to date. Accordingly there will be a requirement to produce plans on a frequent basis. Previously when the Wear Valley District Local Plan was prepared plans were prepared and procured externally on at least 2 separate occasions. The cost was about £20,000 to produce coloured plans. If a colour printer were purchased it would not only be easier and quicker to produce plans but also there would be cost savings.
3. In response to the E-Government agenda the Department has acquired software to enable Building Regulation and Planning applications to be submitted on-line, and the public will be able to view the public register and planning applications on the Council's web site, and also make comments. To ensure that the information that the public sees on the web site is of the highest quality it is necessary to purchase a colour scanner. The scanner will also enable the Council to archive historic files in-house, staff resources permitted. The lack of space to store files is a severe problem within the Department.

**proposal**

4. It is proposed to seek three quotations for a colour printer and colour scanner.

**financial implications**

5. The Council has been awarded a Planning Delivery Grant by the Government. Of this 25% is expected to be used for capital expenditure and the purchase of a colour printer and colour scanner would be classed as capital expenditure. It is estimated that the cost will be in the region of £25,000/£30,000. There will be an annual maintenance cost. One potential supplier has quoted a figure of £1,274 per annum. This can be met by existing resources.

## human resource implications

6. The existing forward plans staff would be responsible for the production of the plans associated with the LDF.
7. The existing administration and development control support staff would be responsible for the scanning of plans.

### **RECOMMENDED**

1. That members agree to the purchase of a colour scanner and colour printer.
2. That members agree to include this purchase in the departmental capital budget.

### **background information**

PDG grant, IEG agenda, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

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**Officer responsible for the report**

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**Author of the report**

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