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Iain Phillips Chief Executive

27th February 2007

Dear Councillor,

I hereby give you Notice that a Meeting of the **REGENERATION COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, CROOK** on **WEDNESDAY 7th MARCH 2007** at **6.00 P.M.**

AGENDA

	Page No.
1. Apologies for absence.	
2. To consider the Minutes of the last Meeting of the Committee held on 10 th January 2007 as a true record.	Copies previously circulated
3. To consider the 3 rd Quarter Monitoring information and an update on activity within the Environment and Regeneration Department during the period October to December 2006.	1 - 11
4. To consider the Customer Care Improvement Plan.	12 - 19
5. To receive an update regarding proposals for Auckland Castle Park.	20 - 26
6. To receive an update on progression made regarding the Durham Coalfield Programme and receive an outline of the next stages in the process and required actions.	27 - 37
7. To consider the SRB Final Evaluation report.	38 - 74
8. To receive an update on the Capital Programme 2006/07.	75 - 81
9. To consider Wear Valley District Council Local Development Framework: Local Development Scheme – (Version 2).	82 - 96
10. To consider the Wear Valley District Local Plan: Saved Policies.	97 - 107
11. To consider such other items of business which, by reason of special circumstances so specified, the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.	

Yours faithfully



Chief Executive

Members of this Committee: Councillors Bailey, Mrs Brown, Dobinson, Ferguson, Grogan, Hayton, Mrs Jones*, Laurie, Mews, Mowbray, Murphy*, Nevins, Perkins, Mrs Seabury, Stonehouse, Townsend and Zair.

*Ex-officio, non-voting capacity

Chair: Councillor Townsend

Deputy Chair: Councillor Mowbray

TO: All other Members of the Council for information
Management Team

REGENERATION COMMITTEE

7 MARCH 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration

3RD QUARTER MONITORING UPDATE

purpose of the report

1. To provide 3rd quarter monitoring information and to update Members on progress against the Department Service Plan for 2006/07 during the period October to December 2006

background

2. The Regeneration Committee endorsed the Service Plan on 24 May 2006. In order to inform Members a quarterly review has been undertaken on implementation of the plan in respect of the three main service areas of the department: development and building control; planning and environmental policy; and economic regeneration. Summarised in Annex 1 to this report are measures of our performance against key targets and indicators. The indicators show performance against target (where this can be measured) in the quarter and an indication of service improvement.
3. Attached in Annex 2 is a review of planning appeals and complaints received in the quarter.

development and building control

development control

4. All three key performance indicators have been exceeded in the third quarter (1 October 2006–31 December 2006) of the Service Plan Period and for the second quarter of the Planning Delivery Grant (DPG) period (1 July 2006-31 March 2007).
5. 189 applications were determined in the quarter. Over a 12 month period the average number of applications processed by one case officer is 156. The recommended workload is 150 applications per case officer. To keep the workload for individual case officers at an acceptable level we continue to employ agency staff to help with the processing of applications. The Service Plan requires me to prepare a staff recruitment/retention policy and the recent vacancies in the section have further highlighted the need for a policy. Proposals for Members consideration will be submitted in the near future.

6. The performance is as follows:-

	2006/07 Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q1/Q2/Q3 %	Target (set nationally)	July 2006 – 31 March 2007 Delivery Grant Period
Major	92	67	73	80	60% in 13 weeks	70%
Minor	78	86	80	82	65% in 8 weeks	84%
Other	93	88	92	91	80% in 8 weeks	90%

7. The percentage of applications determined in Q3 through delegation to officers was 89%.

8. A triennial customer satisfaction survey was carried out for the period 1 April 2006 – 31 December 2006. 10% of all applicants/agents were sent a questionnaire. 83% of those who returned a questionnaire were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the development control service (target 75%). 234 questionnaires were returned (57% response rate).

appeals

9. During Q3, 3 appeal decisions were received (see Annex 2). 2 appeals were dismissed and 1 was allowed.

enforcement

10. During the quarter a total of 64 complaints were received. 34 complaints received in the quarter were resolved (53%). The number of complaints received in 2006 was 402. 315 of these were resolved (78%). 100% of all complaints were responded to within 15 working days. 5 enforcement notices (3 material change of use and 2 operational development) were served (Annex 3 exempt information).

complaints

11. Three Stage 1 complaints were received in the quarter. None of these went on to Stage 2. A Stage 2 complaint and a Stage 3 complaint were received. These are detailed in Annex 2.

ombudsman cases

12. In Q3 one Ombudsman decision was received. This is detailed in Annex 2 and reports “No or insufficient evidence of maladministration”.

building control

13. In Q3 the building control team determined 123 full applications.

14. 50.4% of full plans applications were vetted and approved within 5 weeks (target 75%).

15. The percentage of inspections undertaken in one working day was 100% (target 100%).

economic development

16. WEAR VALLEY ECONOMIC FUTURES - Phase II of the work to develop a longer-term economic strategy for the district is nearing completion. A further meeting was held with the Forum for Business and other key regional players, at Auckland Castle in December to refine the vision and strategy. The report should be available in March
17. EASTGATE RENEWABLE ENERGY VILLAGE - Completion of pre-planning works, including completion of the revised master plan for the redevelopment allows the proposal to move into the third and final pre-development phase with the appointment of the technical specialists required to prepare the proposed hybrid planning application for submission in early Autumn 2007.
18. A skills and employment action plan is being developed in light of the Eastgate redevelopment with the LSC, JCP and local schools an element of which is to consider the development of a pilot GCSE in Environmental Science – Renewable Energy.
19. TACKLING WORKLESSNESS - Working with the Forum for Business, other LSP thematic Groups and the Wear Valley Employability Working Group a comprehensive Programme of activities has been developed under the 'Choices' Programme to improve employability in Wear Valley. The coordinated, partnership working demonstrated by the 'Choices' programme has been cited as an example of best practice by DCC Overview and Scrutiny Committee-Worklessness Working Group.
20. MARKET TOWN PROGRAMME - Funding for the Crook Market Town Programme has been secured to allow time to develop and establish a sustainable exit strategy with Crook Community Partnership. Funding has been secured for Stanhope to continue the Programme to 31 March 2008 to allow time to develop proposals aimed at securing One NorthEast support post 2008, taking into account the redevelopment proposals at Eastgate.
21. LEGI – the Council continue to play full and active part in development of new initiatives for implementation through LEGI programme across 4 areas. Significant development work has taken place over recent weeks and the commencement of new innovative activity will be commissioned shortly. Current activity includes:
 - EMERGE - Business support programme to encourage new business starts.
 - New Entrepreneurial Scholarship - Support for individuals to become more entrepreneurial.
 - Retail Centres - Support for retail businesses in Bishop Auckland town centre.
 - Enterprise Education - Pilot programme with Bishop Auckland College to encourage construction students to consider self-employment.

22. WEST DURHAM RURAL PATHFINDER – Lack of broadband provision in West Durham was highlighted as a barrier in the development of the “knowledge economy” as part of the Pathfinder process. Following advice from One NorthEast, ADIT was appointed to carry out a mapping exercise to identify where we had gaps in broadband provision. (ADIT is an agency set up to advise the public sector on broadband infrastructure and have already carried out similar work in Northumberland). This mapping exercise is now complete and ADIT is to report the findings of their work to the next Forum for Business meeting.

brownfield land

23. During the quarter 136 houses were completed. 67.65% of these were built on previously developed land (target 65%).

conservation areas

24. The application submitted to English Heritage regarding part funding for an in-house Conservation Officer has been approved. The post has recently been advertised and short listing of candidates for interview is currently taking place.

private sector housing

25. BVPI 64 is now monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure targets are being met. The scheme was previously an NRF funded scheme with 2 dedicated officers focussing all of their time in bringing empty properties back into use. Over the three quarters we have successfully ensured that 19 properties have been brought back into use. It is unlikely that we will achieve our target due to having a very limited staff resource. However to address this we have submit a growth bid for a dedicated Empty Property/Landlord Accreditation Officer.
26. To date we have spent 77% of our budget for Major Repair Grants and Public/Private Disabled Facility Grants. This is a good position to be entering into Quarter 4, the budget for the rest of the year is now fully committed. The customer need for Major Repair Grants and Disabled Facility Grants over the last year continues to increase at a rapid pace.
27. The Renewal Scheme at Eldon Lane continues to have a focus on Spencer Street, this scheme is scheduled for completion in March 2007.
28. A Housing Strategy has been developed which has achieved the highest classification by Government Office as being 'Fit For Purpose' this is an excellent achievement and one of the first in the North East to be given this high classification.

RECOMMENDED

1 Members note the progress towards meeting the BVPI's.

Officer responsible for the report

Robert Hope
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Ext 264

Author of the report

David Townsend, Sue Dawson, Richard
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Ext 270; 305; 514; 538

REGENERATION COMMITTEE

7 MARCH 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration

CUSTOMER CARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

purpose of the report

1. To consider an improvement plan to address concerns about the way the development control service is delivered to the public.

background

2. In 2003 a 100% survey was conducted of agents and applicants. This showed that 93% were satisfied with the service in processing planning applications. A similar survey is currently being conducted. The returns show 81% of agents and applicants were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the service (target 75%) which is nationally in the top quartile.
3. Trevor Roberts Associates (TRA) examined complaints affecting development control between July 2002 and July 2004. A total of 38 complaints were received in the period. The majority of the complaints related to the impact of permissions granted and/or being implemented which neighbours regarded as unacceptable. TRA concluded that the complaints record did not indicate any extensive procedural deficiencies.
4. TRA also examined complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman. TRA commented that the number of cases was about "*par for the course*" or less in relation to the workload. In many of the cases the complainants were dissatisfied with the outcome of development control or enforcement decisions, and attempted to seek redress through the Ombudsman.
5. Following the publication of the Trevor Roberts report there have been significant changes to the staffing of the development control team, and to the workload. In particular, a significant number of inexperienced staff have been recruited. The number of complaints received increased in 2005 but in 2006 it reduced to the previous level. In 2005 over 80% of the complaints were made by neighbours, most being related to the impact of permissions granted and/or being implemented or about enforcement issues, see table 1.

Table 1

Complaints about the development control service made under the Council's Complaints Procedure						
07 2002 to 07 2004			2005		2006	
Total	38		33		22	
Neighbour	28	74%	27	82%	16	73%
Applicant/ Agent	10	26%	6	18%	6	27%

6. Also there was a significant increase in the number of complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman in 2004/5 (20 complaints). In 2005/6 this fell to 14 and the Local Government Ombudsman could identify no general causes for concern. So far in 2006/7 there have been 9 complaints to the Ombudsman, see table 2.

Table 2

Complaints to the Ombudsman in respect of the development control service			
2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7
8	20	14	9

7. In response to concerns about the number of complaints being received all staff have attended customer care training facilitated by an external trainer. He concluded that most complaints arise because people do not understand how the process works and he suggested that the team needs to market itself better. He was very impressed with the attitude of the team. He observed that they genuinely care about their customers and are committed to giving good service. He commented that he heard many examples of excellent service the team gives on a daily basis to its customers.
8. In one of the exercises staff were asked to look at things from the customer's point of view and suggest improvements to the service.

improvements suggested by staff

9. Tabled below are the suggestions made by staff to improve the service.

1	The team needs to market its services internally and externally, better. Customers need a better understanding of the planning process. This could be achieved in a number of ways using brochures, articles, websites and done in a simple, graphical way. Better knowledge of the process would increase customer awareness and help reduce misunderstandings and complaints.
2	The layout and information on application forms could be simplified and made more user friendly. The current forms were written by planners for planners (and follows the national template).
3	When customers come into the Civic Centre they are able to meet with representatives from the department. The team felt they should proactively offer to help with filling in the forms rather than waiting for the customer to ask.
4	Offer appointments to customers rather than having 2 members of staff permanently situated in reception. This would improve the service to people calling in by phone and most customers would be happy to agree to an appointment.
5	The team recognises the need to be more efficient at returning telephone calls from customers.
6	The team recognises the need to be more proactive in keeping customers informed of progress and build in systems to phone or e-mail progress reports.
7	The second group that was trained on day 2. Suggested revisions/additions to existing customer service standards, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Site visit to happen within 5 working days of the application b) Advice on progress after 3 weeks c) Certificate sent within 2 days of the decision being made d) Applicant and any objectors to be informed at the same time e) Customer queries answered within 1 day f) Invalid applications. Customer to be informed within 2 days.
8	Applications to be made available online in reception.
9	Greater training for reception staff on the planning process and customer care.
10	Scan files to create more space.

improvement plan

10. Following on from these suggestions, an improvement plan has been prepared.

a) focus groups

To establish a number of focus groups to further explore customer service and standards from the needs of the customers. It is proposed that 4 focus groups be held:-

- (i) agents;
- (ii) successful applicants
- (iii) unsuccessful applicants, and
- (iv) objectors.

For each focus group 8 people will be invited and paid £25 per person to cover the cost of travel and for taking part – total cost £880 (including cost of hiring St Catherine's Community Centre).

b) existing written material

There is a wide range of standard letters, advice notes, policy statements, etc. These have been written by planning officers and it is proposed that with the help of the Marketing and Communications Manager and the Desk Top Publishing Officer these will be reviewed and where found necessary revised to make it easier for the public to understand.

c) information provided on the Council's website

There is limited advice and information on development control provided on the Council's website. The wording and range of advice will be reviewed with the help of the Marketing and Communications Manager, and changes will be made/further information added.

d) publicity

In the past little publicity has been given to the services offered by the development control team or, for example, how a planning application is processed. It is proposed to review, revise and extend the range of publicity, with the help of the Marketing and Communications Manager and Desk Top Publishing Officer, to raise public awareness and reduce misunderstandings. Recently a feature was included in Wear Valley Matters about submitting a planning application on-line. Other features are planned.

e) appointments

It is proposed to encourage customers to make appointments before visiting the Civic Centre by giving greater emphasis in all written material to the advantages of making arrangements in advance to meet the case officer. Also the advantages of making an appointment will be publicised on the Council's website and a facility to request an appointment will be available on-line.

- f) develop new service standards for dealing with customers

With the help of the focus groups and the Performance Improvement Manager it is proposed to review the Customer Charter and develop new service standards for dealing with customers and enquiries (including telephone calls). These standards will be publicised in a variety of ways, including on the Council's website, so that customers will know what level of service to expect from the development control team.

- g) customer progress/update system

It is recognised that we need to be more proactive in keeping applicants, agents and objectors informed about the stages reached with a planning application. There is limited information on the Council's website. With the help of the Performance Improvement Manager and the IT Manager it is proposed to develop and implement a structured system to inform customers about progress made with an application.

- h) training for reception staff

In many cases the first contact a member of the public will have with the development control team is through one of the Department's customer service assistants who work at the reception desk. Because of staff turnover some of the existing assistants have not received any specific training in development control and so they are only able to answer a limited range of enquiries. With training they could provide the public with much more assistance.

conclusion

11. The improvement proposals are set out in Annex 4. The proposals have been prepared in consultation with staff. Following the completion of the Focus Group meetings the comments received are likely to result in further actions being proposed. A report of the meetings is at Annex 5.

RECOMMENDED

1. It is recommended that the Improvement Plan be implemented in accordance with the identified timescales.
2. A further report is made to members following the first round of focus group meetings.
3. Members will receive regular updates on progress towards implementing the Improvement Plan.

Officer responsible for the report

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Author of the report

David Townsend
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REGENERATION COMMITTEE

7 MARCH 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration

BISHOP AUCKLAND TOURISM RENAISSANCE UPDATE

purpose of the report

1. To update Members in relation to proposals for Auckland Castle Park as an integral part of the Bishop Auckland Urban Renaissance project and seek endorsement for the submission of a funding application to Heritage Lottery Funding.

context

2. Members will recall at the previous meeting a report was presented outlining the Bishop Auckland Urban Renaissance Project and the work to secure investment for improvements in the Fore Bondgate / North Bondgate / Market Place areas. Included within this programme of activity are proposals to invest in Auckland Castle Park to help increase the visitor and tourism appeal of the town.
3. The Auckland Castle Park is a prestigious asset within the town that is currently under-utilised. It is included in English Heritage's national register of "Historic Parks and Gardens". This project to restore and improve the park is integral to the overall masterplan for the town and the investment will help to achieve the transformational interventions required to improve the economic fortune and prosperity of the town and the surrounding area.

background

4. Casella Stanger (now called Bureau Veritas) were appointed in 2005 by Wear Valley District Council to undertake comprehensive feasibility work to enable the submission of an application for Heritage Lottery Funding through the Urban Parks Programme.
5. Since this contract was issued there have been changes to the distribution of Lottery Funding and the replacement of the Urban Parks Programme with a new Parks for People Programme. Unfortunately, this has meant a change in the operation of the programme and has led to more information being required as part of the application process, which has led to delays in completing this feasibility work to meet the new requirements.
6. However, this work is now nearing completion and the proposal being finalised, enabling comments and views to be sought.

the proposal

7. To be eligible for consideration the proposal needs to show that:-
 - The community values the park as part of their heritage
 - The Park meets local social, economic and environmental needs, and
 - The Park actively involves local people.
8. In this context Auckland Castle Park represents a strong proposal, especially given the integration of the project into wider activities within the town centre.
9. In order to be successful the proposal needs to meet all of these 5 outcomes:-
 - Increase the range of audiences,
 - Conserve and improve the heritage value,
 - Increase the range of volunteers involved,
 - Improve skills and knowledge through training,
 - Improve management and maintenance.
10. The proposal for Auckland Castle Park which will form the basis of our application contains a number of elements which can be categorised as:-
 - Restoration and interpretation of key archaeological features
 - Improving access and amenity within the parkland
 - Ecological protection and enhancement
 - Increase accessibility and interpretation for educational purposes.
11. To achieve this creating a visitor centre with interpretation and education facilities is essential to the bid being successful and has been one of the key difficulties to overcome.
12. Further details about the proposal including plans and drawings are attached at Annex 6 and will be displayed at the Committee meeting.
13. The proposal being developed would appear to meet all the requirements of the Heritage Lottery Fund and given the important historic nature of the park, together with the socio-economic strategic context presents a relatively strong proposal.
14. A period of public consultation, together with an event with key stakeholders is also planned and will take place immediately prior to the date of committee. Although the full analysis will not be complete there may be the opportunity to highlight any key issues raised through this process.

next stages

15. The next deadline for submissions for the Heritage Lottery Fund Parks for People Programme is the end of March. Failure to meet this deadline will lead to a deferral until applications are invited in September.

16. Following the submission of a stage 1 application, the Heritage Lottery Fund will take up to 6 months to consider the application and if successful will commit to funding the project and set aside funding for further development work to enable a more comprehensive stage 2 submission to be made for final approval.
17. Given this lengthy two-stage application process it is anticipated that work will not be able to commence on any implementation of the proposals until 2009 at the earliest.

financial implications

18. The feasibility work to date to enable the preparation of the stage 1 submission has cost around £70,000, of this ONE Single Programme has contributed £40,000. If successful at this stage Heritage Lottery Funding resources will be made available to Wear Valley to contribute towards the funding of the development costs of the stage 2 submission. Additional resources will be sought from ONE and a contribution from WVDC, through the proposed Urban Renaissance programme of major investment in the town.
19. The funding bids also allow for a contribution towards the long-term maintenance costs for the park as part of the overall funding application. Significant further development work is required prior to a stage 2 submission to enable this to be finalised as part of the Management and Maintenance Plan.

legal implications

20. The Council has a 28-year lease of the park (commencing in 1994) from the Church Commissioners which secures public use. As part of the lease the Council have repair and maintenance responsibilities for the park with the exception of the Deer House, Jock's Bridge and the boundary walls. The HLF bid requires an extension of the lease for 30 years. A further report will be presented to members, as work progresses, on the need to change the lease arrangements for the Park.

conclusion

21. The attraction of visitors and tourists to Bishop Auckland is a key strand and opportunity within the Urban Renaissance programme. The restoration of key features and improvements to make the park more accessible could provide a strong joint offer with Auckland Castle, which could have major benefits on the fortunes of the town.
22. The Heritage Lottery Funding is essential to the implementation of this project given the relatively large amount of funding potentially available from this source. Being able to secure match funding from the public sector including ONE NorthEast funding is also equally essential and it is important to see this project as part of a major investment programme in the town.

23. There is a good deal of work still to do with this project but the submission of a stage 1 application is an important milestone in being able to implement the proposals

RECOMMENDED

1. That members support the proposal and endorse the submission of the stage 1 funding application.
2. That members receive a further report on legal implications of the scheme progress reports in due course.

Officer responsible for the report

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Ext 264

Author of the report

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REGENERATION COMMITTEE

7 MARCH 2007

Joint Report of Strategic Directors of Environment & Regeneration and Strategic Communities

PROGRESSION OF DURHAM COALFIELD HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL PROGRAMME

purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to:-
 - provide an update on progress made to date in respect to the Durham Coalfield Programme and
 - Outline the next stages in the process and required actions.

background

2. The Durham Coalfields Partnership was established in 2002 in response to the establishment of the National Coalfields Programme. The group is working alongside English Partnerships who runs this £365.5 million national programme. It comprises of all local authorities (with the exception of Teesdale DC) in County Durham, some RSLs, English Partnerships, GO NE and the Housing Corporation. It is a vehicle to intervene in local housing markets suffering decline through a programme of strategic investment generated through capital receipts from land sales, and supported through additional funding from English Partnerships National Coalfields Programme. This process mirrors the process of the Housing Pathfinder Programme.
3. Initially priority settlements needed to be identified and a case built to justify funding approval from the Treasury for monies from the Programme. Therefore at an early stage in the process the Council identified Coundon as being a priority area that should be targeted by the programme, being a former coalfield settlement subject to significant in decline. Tow Law was identified as a second such priority for focus in a second phase of intervention. This decision was evidenced through an assessment of economic, social and environmental need, the Housing Stock Condition Survey and district wide Sustainability Appraisal.

progress so far

4. The strategic context and background to the County Durham programme was provided in the report by Jacobs Babtie. As a result of the validation report the Durham Coalfield Partnership agreed that selected settlements should be looked at more comprehensively and that "Durham Coalfield Communities

Partnership Sustainable Settlement Validation” commissioned by English Partnerships. This was endorsed by Council in August 2005. Area Development Frameworks (ADF) should be completed to examine the need for and the opportunities available for the implementation of regeneration schemes in a number of settlements in the County, initially including Coundon and Leeholme. This step in the process was aimed at determining ‘priority’ settlements within the County that would benefit from intervention and Market Renewal monies and to justify such intervention. In February 2006 English Partnerships subsequently requested this be broadened out to include second phase settlements that had been identified within the County, which from a Wear Valley perspective includes Tow Law.

5. From a Wear Valley District’s perspective Llewelyn Davis Yeang consultancy (LDY) was subsequently commissioned by the Council to prepare ADFs for Coundon and Tow Law. The resulting ADF for Coundon was informed by public consultation which was carried out through the Coundon and Leeholme Community Partnership. With respect to the Tow Law ADF involvement of representatives of Tow Law Town Council and Tow Law Community Partnership was secured. The resulting ADFs seek to identify justify and address housing market renewal needs and potential in these two former coalfield settlements.
6. In August 2006 the Area Development Frameworks for both Coundon and Tow Law were completed. A number of influencing factors together with the strengths and weaknesses of both settlements have been identified through this process. These factors have a large influence on any proposals. This analysis is attached as Annex 7. The proposals contained within the Coundon and Tow Law ADFs is summarised later in this report.
7. To promote joint working and to increase the strategic capacity and voice of County Durham, it was agreed by the Durham Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership to establish an operational team to take a number of ADF schemes forward and to devise the sub regional Housing Strategy. David Siddle from the Housing Development section within Government Office for the North East (GONE) has been seconded as Director of this group for a period of 6 months. The principal remit of his team is to actively progress the Durham Coalfield Programme. This team will be at the heart of the project and the infrastructure is established to enable such direction and progression of the programme to implementation. This will include:-
 - Building upon the vision and associated strategic plans to identify and implement sustainable interventions in the housing markets
 - Developing a comprehensive programme of consultation and engagement.
 - Developing appropriate and innovative delivery mechanisms
 - Ensuring that the Programme is linked to other strategic investments that impact upon the housing market and economic vitality of the County.
 - Project managing the Programme.

8. Internally a working group of officers from the Environment & Regeneration and Strategic Communities Departments has been set up to progress the requirements of the programme from a Wear Valley perspective. The outputs of this group will be fed back to the wider partnership.

overview of adf proposals

9. The ADF's have now been finalised and highlight how the future sustainability on Coundon and Tow Law can be secured. With reference to Coundon a vision has been encapsulated, this is;

'Rationalisation of the existing housing stock and provision for future housing growth through strengthening the settlement core and enhancements to the existing public and private sector stock.'

10. The main proposals set out in this ADF are summarised below:-

- Proposed improvements to housing stock and the mix of housing types in Coundon;
- Environmental improvements to central Coundon, including Collingwood Street;
- Group repair works to the retained terraced stock at Howlish, Cleveland View, Church Street and Frederick Street;
- Reconfiguration of the Tottenham and Grays estates to make better use of public and private space and improve connectivity to the rest of the settlement, including Leeholme;
- Improved access into and through the industrial estate and environmental improvements to act as a catalyst for further investment;
- Opportunities for further housing development in the longer term on settlement fringes.

11. The investment required for the proposals at Coundon and Leeholme are in the order of £22.5 million.

12. With regard to Tow Law a vision has also been capsulated:-

'Making the High Street the lively, vibrant, and attractive heart of a small town which offers better services, jobs and leisure opportunities to its residents and appeals to visitors travelling through the area.'

13. As with Coundon a number of key proposals were identified for Tow Law to meet the needs of the village, these are:-

- Creation of a new Village Square at the heart of the High Street creating a focal point for residents and visitors. New surfacing along the key nodes will give greater definition to demonstrate that the High Street is an active shared and thus breaking up the dominance of the traffic;

- The creation of new pedestrian and cycle routes from the High Street along the north western edge of the village and from the industrial estate towards Inkerman enhancing permeability across the settlement;
- Environmental improvements, resurfacing, parking and planting to existing terraced areas at Harrison Street, Campbell Street, and Ridley Terrace to create more attractive neighbourhoods;
- Proposed remodelling of Alpine Way estate (net gain of 1 dwelling) creating a newly designed neighbourhood that benefits from attractive frontages, more defined private spaces and improved active public routes into the High Street;
- Opportunities for small infill housing in the longer term at Harrison Street, Ridley Terrace and Campbell Street (range of 24 new family/affordable properties);
- Improvements to the environment, access and layout of industrial estate offers the potential to provide local employment opportunities to encourage a more varied economic base away from manufacturing industries of which Tow Law is highly dependant on;
- A new gateway feature is proposed with improved road, car parking and siting of a new small kiosk which will perform a small scale tourism facility for visitors and a catalyst for further tourism related investment in the future at Inkerman;
- Improvements to existing sports centre with a new multi-use pitch and additional gym facilities.

14. The investment required for the Tow Law proposals is in the order of £20.8 million.

next steps

15. At the Durham Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership meeting on the 2nd January 2007 it was agreed that each local authority should carry out a number of tasks to take the scheme forward. These are detailed below:-

- **Prioritisation of settlements**

At a strategic level there is a need for the Partnership to agree the settlements that have sufficient projects to be implemented in years 1 to 3 that should be prioritised for intervention within that period.

In view of this there is a need for the Council to identify and prioritise those projects, within Coundon and Tow Law that could be advanced in the first three years of a programme starting in 2008/09. This work needs to be completed by late February 2007 in order that it may be fed back to the Partnership for agreement in time for its inclusion as part of the Single Housing Investment Pot 3 (SHIP3) process in the draft Co. Durham Sub Regional Housing Strategy by the end of March 2007.

Coundon and Tow Law are still considered to be the priority settlements for focus within the District. Having had regard to the respective ADFs the projects that offer the potential to be delivered over the first 3 years of the programme are set out in Annex 8 of this report. Whilst a 3 year programme has been identified this is still to be the subject of an economic appraisal as detailed below.

- **Economic considerations.**

In order to improve the value for money and reduce the net costs of the programme overall it is necessary for all partners to undertake a review of land values upon which their ADFs are based to establish if they are reasonable and realistic in respect of changing markets as interventions advance.

There is a need to consider whether individual Local Authority land assets identified in the respective ADFs as being suitable for development are capable of generating capital receipts, and that these have been reflected in the net cost figures for the respective ADF area. These assessments will need the input of the District Valuer and will need to be completed as a matter of urgency.

There is also a need for each Council to estimate the level of local authority capital expenditure that can be identified from land receipts and other ADF area related funding, to improve the value for money and reduce the net costs to the public sector. This economic appraisal needs to include confirmation of each Council's financial contributions to the Programme and has to have been completed by May 2007. This work will be compiled into an economic appraisal for the whole Coalfields programme scheduled to be submitted to English Partnerships by the end of July 2007.

16. It is anticipated that the NERHB will make decisions on SHIP3 and the Coalfields Programme Economic Appraisal by early 2008. The recruitment of a programme delivery team, establishment of a Special Purpose Vehicle to oversee programme delivery and development work with first phase communities, namely Coundon and Leeholme from a Wear Valley District perspective, should be underway by Spring 2008. The full programme of expenditure is expected to be committed by Spring 2009.

conclusion

17. It is evident that considerable progress has been made over the past 2 years in developing a comprehensive Coalfield regeneration scheme. This scheme is now at its pinnacle and will rapidly build up momentum over the next 12 months and thereafter. Wear Valley District Council are well positioned in that the ADF's are in place, priority settlements are established and there is one strategic direction of intervention.
18. There is now a need to work towards the 'next steps' outlined above and to ensure these targets and issues are addressed. The thrust of the next phase of work is to ensure that a robust economic appraisal is completed by May 2007.

RECOMMENDED

1. CMT re-approve Coundon and Tow Law as priority settlements.
2. That the report be referred to the next Housing and Regeneration committees.
3. That the Strategic Directors for the Community and Environment & Regeneration submit appropriate bids.

Officers responsible for the report

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REGENERATION COMMITTEE

7 MARCH 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration

SRB FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

purpose of the report

1. To inform Members of the production of the final draft evaluation report into the SRB5 and SRB6 programmes implemented in County Durham.

introduction

2. Wear Valley benefited from the SRB5 programme focused on Crook and Willington and the SRB6 focusing on Bishop Auckland and surrounding areas. In total these packages were valued at £5.8m. These are listed in Annex 9. In addition the District also benefited from participation in the Thematic Package, which was a package of projects delivered County-wide, and therefore benefited from a share of a £15.3m programme.
3. A copy of the report is attached for information (Annex 10). The report concludes that the SRB programme has supported many disadvantaged people and communities across the County and has made a real difference, which has been part of an ongoing process of cultural change.
4. Across the County the scheme achieved a number of outputs which contributed to key Strategic Objectives, and more importantly it paid for things that mainstream budgets wouldn't normally fund and therefore did not duplicate existing provision.
5. Many people did not recognise SRB as the funding source but they recognised the additional activities which took place. In summary the SRB scheme is recognised as helping to:-
 - Improve the lives of socially excluded people
 - Improve living conditions and the environment
 - Improve community facilities
 - Built regeneration capacity
6. Importantly a number of schemes have been able to secure succession funding to enable the work, or elements of, to continue after the end of SRB funding.

7. Whilst SRB has not been replaced by a new funding regime – as often happened in the past – the success of the programme have led to elements being incorporated into new initiatives with many agencies and organisations delivering projects through SRB, now actively involved in other programmes.
8. NRF and LEGI funding is helping to fund new initiatives in policy areas such as employability, enterprise and health – key themes in the SRB programme. The re-orientation of mainstream resources in support of regeneration through initiatives such as Local Area Agreements are promising developments.

conclusion

9. The SRB programme has had a significant impact upon many disadvantaged people, neighbourhoods and communities across the County, including the target areas of Wear Valley.
10. There is still significant issues of deprivation, disadvantage and social inclusion across parts of the County including Wear Valley but the SRB programme has provided a strong base on which new developments can build.

RECOMMENDED

1. That Members note the report.
2. That the results of the evaluation will be fed into future policy and arrangements for project implementation.

Officer responsible for the report

Robert Hope
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Author of the report

Alan Weston
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REGENERATION COMMITTEE

7 MARCH 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006/7

purpose of the report

1. To update Members of the progress made in the delivery of the Capital Programme 2006/7 at the end of quarter 3 and seek agreement to some minor changes to the programme.

introduction

2. The regeneration department has a substantial capital programme for 2006/7. Below is the progress made on each scheme during quarters 1 to 3 to the period April to December 2006. For each of the projects the revised budget is shown, progress towards securing additional external resources to deliver the scheme (where appropriate) and finally the risk of the deliverability of the project and whether spend will be achieved during 2006/7.

C001 – Renovation Grants		Richard Roddam	
2006/7 Budget Total	£200,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£192,000
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£192,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£192,000
Partly externally funded	N	Duration of scheme	On-going
Funding secured	n/a	Spend @ 31.12.06	£112,453

3. We are currently well underway with carrying out Renovation Grants, the budget is fully committed and a large amount of work is at present underway. It is envisaged that the budget will be fully spent by end of year.

C003 – Disabled Facilities Grants		Richard Roddam	
2006/7 Budget Total	£225,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£225,000
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£90,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£90,000
Partly externally funded	Y	Duration of scheme	On-going
Funding secured	Y	Spend @ 31.12.06	£127,325

4. The Disabled Facility Grant Budget is fully committed and a number of jobs are not being completed. The budget will be fully spent by the end of year. We currently have one major job totalling £50,000 that has recently commenced and as such will ensure the budgets are fully spent.

C014 – Eldon Lane Renewal Area		Richard Roddam	
2006/7 Budget Total	£430,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£430,000
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£430,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£430,000
Partly externally funded	N	Duration of scheme	On-going
Funding secured	n/a	Spend @ 31.12.06	£267,915

5. The current spend as at 16th February 2007 is currently £340,231. The Environmental Facelift scheme at Spencer Street is well underway and the remaining budget is fully committed under this scheme.

C059 – Contaminated Land

Ian Bloomfield

2006/7 Budget Total	£96,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£40,000
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£96,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£40,000
Partly externally funded	N	Duration of scheme	Yr 1 of 1
Funding secured	n/a	Spend @ 31.12.06	£560

6. This budget is chiefly required for the remediation of contaminated land situations. The budget has been revised to a lower figure and it is unlikely, at present, that the full amount will be spent in this financial year, though emergency circumstances could instigate an immediate spend.

C065 – Wolsingham Business Park

Sue Dawson

2006/7 Budget Total	£1,100,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£0
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£50,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£0
Partly externally funded	Y	Duration of scheme	Yr 1 of 3
Funding secured	N	Spend @ 31.12.06	£0

7. There still remain issues in relation to the planning applications submitted for the housing and industrial developments on this site. This is a pre-requisite to developing a project to create the necessary industrial and commercial workspace on this site. In this context it is not going to be possible to secure the external funding within 2006/7.

8. It is hoped that the situation will be clearer in the early part of the 2007/8 financial year and therefore consideration is requested to carry forward this resource into the next financial year to implement this project.

C066 – Bracks Farm

Sue Dawson

2006/7 Budget Total	£145,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£145,000
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£145,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£145,000
Partly externally funded	N	Duration of scheme	Yr 1 of 1
Funding secured	n/a	Spend @ 31.12.06	£0

9. Legal discussions between Priority Sites and the authority have been finalised and the legal agreement has been produced. This is currently awaiting exchange between the two parties although it is anticipated this will be achieved within quarter 4 and therefore spend will be achieved within the current financial year. Construction is then anticipated to start on the new development in April.

C077 – Car Park Improvement Programme

Peter Dunn

2006/7 Budget Total	£92,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£92,000
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£92,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£92,000
Partly externally funded	N	Duration of scheme	Yr 1 of 3
Funding secured	n/a	Spend @ 31.12.06	-£43

10. Refurbishment of West Road and New Road car parks in Crook have been completed, excepting the commissioning of the street lighting. Works to the South Terrace car park in Bishop Auckland will be completed by end February 2007. It is anticipated that all of the budget will be spent.

C082 – Innovation House Extension

Alan Weston

2006/7 Budget Total	£58,006	2006/7 Revised Budget	£547,238
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£58,006	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£58,006
Partly externally funded	Y	Duration of scheme	Yr 2 of 2
Funding secured	Y	Spend @ 31.12.06	£44,773

11. The contract for outstanding works left from the MMP contract has been let and construction substantially completed early in quarter 4. There remains a small amount of work in relation to fixtures and fittings to finalise the project and make the building available for letting. The revised budget reflects delays to the scheme and therefore delays in claiming match funding. The scheme will still be achieved within the original WVDC contribution of £58,006.

C083 / C109 – Eastgate Stage 2

Sue Dawson

2006/7 Budget Total	£623,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£300,000
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£48,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£48,000
Partly externally funded	Y	Duration of scheme	Yr 1 of 3
Funding secured	Y	Spend @ 31.12.06	£53,902

12. The completion of works relating to Eastgate Stage 2 was achieved early in quarter 4, on target and on budget. Claims are currently being made to Single Programme for the outstanding monies and the project being finalised.
13. Also early in quarter 4 £951,000 of Single Programme resources were secured for the implementation of Phase 3 which includes all the necessary work to enable the submission of the planning application in summer / autumn.

C087 – Crook Commercial Renaissance

Alan Weston

2006/7 Budget Total	£580,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£204,613
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£100,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£100,000
Partly externally funded	Y	Duration of scheme	Yr 3 of 3
Funding secured	Y	Spend @ 31.12.06	-£47,931

14. This project has been substantially complete for some time, although work is still on-going with Durham County Council as partners to the scheme to resolve a number of queries and finalise the bill of quantities for the work. It is anticipated that this will be realised within the fourth quarter.
15. At the finalisation of this account it is anticipated there will remain a small amount of resources for the implementation of some small scale additional works. However, it is unlikely these can be commissioned until 2007/8.

C088 – Low Willington Business Park**Alan Weston**

2006/7 Budget Total	£51,615	2006/7 Revised Budget	£420,441
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£51,615	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£101,615
Partly externally funded	Y	Duration of scheme	Yr 2 of 2
Funding secured	Y	Spend @ 31.12.06	-£46,907

16. Following approval of additional contributions from WVDC for this scheme at the last Committee, additional external funding has been secured and working in partnership with Durham County Council the contract has been let early in quarter 4 to allow construction work to recommence.
17. Scheduled completion for this project is now August and a significant amount of expenditure is now forecast in 2006/7 which will be split between the respective funders to maximise the money available.

C089 – South West Crook Industrial Extension**Sue Dawson**

2006/7 Budget Total	£249,406	2006/7 Revised Budget	£45,000
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£249,406	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£0
Partly externally funded	Y	Duration of scheme	Yr 1 of 1
Funding secured	Y	Spend @ 31.12.06	£0

18. Delays in agreeing the section 106 agreement for this project have meant that this project has not been able to proceed as originally envisaged. The revised budget reflects the NRF funding which has been secured for the feasibility work for this project.
19. Significant resources will be needed to acquire the land and provide site servicing and infrastructure but this is not achievable within the current financial year from the current position. Consideration is therefore requested to transfer this resource to this scheme in 2007/8 financial year.

C092 – Bishop Auckland Tourism Renaissance**Alan Weston**

2006/7 Budget Total	£1,187,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£12,000
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£12,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£12,000
Partly externally funded	Y	Duration of scheme	Yr 3 of 3
Funding secured	N	Spend @ 31.12.06	£-1,166

20. Work is still on-going to enable the submission of a funding application to the Heritage Lottery Fund – Parks for People Programme by the end of March (see separate report). The WVDC money allocated to this project has been committed to the feasibility work required to support the submission of this application.

C093 – West Auckland Improvement Scheme **Carole Dillon**

2006/7 Budget Total	£320,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£30,000
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£60,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£30,000
Partly externally funded	Y	Duration of scheme	Yr 1 of 3
Funding secured	Y	Spend @ 31.12.06	£0

21. There will be limited spend on this scheme in 2006/7. Working in partnership with Durham County Council a substantial amount of work has been carried out in relation to design and facilitation of this improvement scheme but as yet implementation has not been able to commence.

22. The WVDC resource is an important contribution to the funding package to help DCC secure the English Heritage resources to this scheme. Agreement is therefore sought to carry forward any underspends in relation to this project into 2007/8.

C124 – Fieldon Bridge Development – Phase 1 **Sue Dawson**

2006/7 Budget Total	£20,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£0
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£20,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£0
Partly externally funded	N	Duration of scheme	Yr 1 of 3
Funding secured	n/a	Spend @ 31.12.06	£0

23. It was agreed at the previous committee to reallocate the 2006/7 resources from this scheme to the Low Willington project – see above.

C125 – Wear Valley Building Enhancement Scheme **Sue Dawson**

2006/7 Budget Total	£298,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£180,000
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£48,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£10,000
Partly externally funded	Y	Duration of scheme	Yr 1 of 2
Funding secured	Y	Spend @ 31.12.06	£0

24. There are a significant number of expressions of interest from private sector developers in relation to this scheme and it is anticipated that grant offers can be issued and resources committed to a number of these by the end of 2006/7 with the grants being paid early in 2007/8

C126 – Positional Accuracy Tool **Carole Dillon**

2006/7 Budget Total	£20,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£20,000
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£20,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£20,000
Partly externally funded	N	Duration of scheme	Yr 1 of 1
Funding secured	n/a	Spend @ 31.12.06	£0

25. The order for this upgrade has been placed in quarter 4. This is initially a pilot to test the compatibility of the system prior to the full upgrade. The pilot will be completed within the current financial year and if successful work will have started on the full upgrade.

C127 – Economic Development Fund **Bob Hope**

2006/7 Budget Total	£30,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£0
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£30,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£0
Partly externally funded	N	Duration of scheme	On-going
Funding secured	n/a	Spend @ 31.12.06	£0

26. It was agreed at the previous committee to reallocate the 2006/7 resources from this scheme to the Low Willington project – see above.

C128 – Bishop Auckland Town Centre Management		Alan Weston	
2006/7 Budget Total	£100,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£0
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£100,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£0
Partly externally funded	Y	Duration of scheme	Yr 1 of 3
Funding secured	N	Spend @ 31.12.06	£0

27. Delays to securing the ONE NorthEast funding for this project have delayed the initial phase of implementation. It is now anticipated that agreement will be reached within quarter 4 to enable some Single Programme money to be spent to begin the detailed feasibility work and employ a dedicated project manager. Significant spend has been identified within 2007/8 to begin the implementation of the proposals.

C527 – Public Sector Adaptions		Richard Roddam	
2006/7 Budget Total	£189,000	2006/7 Revised Budget	£191,500
2006/7 Budget WVDC	£174,000	2006/7 Revised WVDC	£176,350
Partly externally funded	Y	Duration of scheme	On-going
Funding secured	Y	Spend @ 31.12.06	£163,677

28. There is a large demand for Public Sector Adaptations which has increased dramatically over the last year. The budget is fully spent as at 16th February 2007. However there may be cases up until year-end that require attention. We project that there may be an overspend of around £4,000 on this account, however it is impossible to estimate what emergency jobs may require attention.

conclusion

29. Significant progress has been made on implementing a number of these key schemes over the year to date. There are a number of the schemes which have unfortunately not progressed as planned due to delays securing legal agreements or securing additional external funding.
30. There are a number of schemes were, as things currently stand, it is unlikely that delivery will be able to commence in 2006/7 and consideration is therefore requested to carry the resource identified into 2007/8 to enable the continuation of the development work on these schemes.

RECOMMENDED

1. That Members note the report and continue to receive an update report at the end of the year on further progress.
2. To the Policy and Strategic Development Committee that the request to transfer the £50,000 contribution towards the Wolsingham Business Park project into 2007/8 to allow further project development be approved.

3. To the Policy and Strategic Development Committee that the request to transfer the £249,406 contribution towards the South West Crook Industrial Estate project into 2007/8 to allow further project development be approved.
4. That Members agree the request to transfer the £30,000 identified as the WVDC contribution to the West Auckland Improvement Scheme into 2007/8 to maximise the other external funding available to the scheme.

Officer responsible for the report

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REGENERATION COMMITTEE

7 MARCH 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration

WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME – (VERSION 2)

purpose of the report

1. To seek Member's approval of proposed revisions to the Wear Valley District Council Local Development Scheme, approved by Council in April 2005.

background

2. As Members will be aware, the Council has a statutory requirement to prepare a new-style development plan, called the Local Development Framework. The project plan for the preparation of the Local Development Framework is known as the Local Development Scheme.
3. The outcome of the Council's second Annual Monitoring Report, for the period 1st April 2005 to 31st March 2006, was submitted to the Government Office for the North East in December 2006. This Annual Monitoring Report identified that the Council has experienced slippage from the adopted timeline and as such recommended that the Local Development Scheme be revised. The revision of the Local Development Scheme, which is the subject of this committee report, will be the second such version. The need to revise the work programme contained in the Local Development Scheme has also provided the opportunity to revise other aspects of the document in light of circumstances which have changed since the adoption of the current Local Development Scheme.
4. The Local Development Scheme is described in government guidance as '*a public statement of the local planning authority's programme for a three year project plan*'. The intention is to enable the public and other interested parties to see what documents the planning authority will be preparing, how these relate to each other and the preparation timetable.
5. The Local Development Scheme has to set out certain information:-
 - a brief description of all the local development documents to be prepared, their content and geographic coverage;
 - an indication of which documents are to be Development Plan Documents;

- in the transitional period from the existing to the new system, a statement to show which existing District Plan policies will be retained ('saved') and which will be replaced by new local development documents;
 - an explanation of the relationship between local development documents – particularly between the 'core strategy' and others;
 - a statement of which documents will be prepared jointly with other local authorities (joint working is encouraged where this has clear benefits);
 - a planned timetable for each document and key milestones to be achieved; and
 - arrangements for monitoring and review of progress.
6. The issues regarding resources, evidence, community and stakeholder involvement and a risk assessment also need to be addressed within the Local Development Scheme.

policy context

7. Under the provisions made by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the Council has a statutory requirement to prepare a Local Development Framework, which will transitionally replace the old-style development plan. The Local Development Framework is a portfolio of documents; the Local Development Scheme is a statutory element of the Local Development Framework.
8. The Council's current Local Development Scheme was endorsed by Members in February 2005 and was subsequently adopted in April 2005. As indicated above the Council has experienced some slippage from this version of the Local Development Scheme, which can not be remedied without reprogramming work. It has therefore been necessary for the Council to prepare a second version of the Local Development Scheme and submit it to Government Office for approval; version 2 of the Local Development Scheme (which is the subject of this report) has therefore been prepared in liaison with Government Office for the North East.
9. The Annual Monitoring Report identified that a lack of staff resources within the report period was the reason for the slippage; the current Local Development Scheme identified that 2 ½ professional officers will be working full time on the preparation of the Local Development Framework, in reality, until August 2005 there was only one professional officer, and from August until the end of February 2006, there were only two officers. There is now a full compliment of officers within the Forward Plans Team, which should reduce the risk of slippage from the revised Local Development Scheme. A further reason for the slippage was the lack of Sustainability Appraisal expertise; although preliminary work was undertaken by the Forward Plans Team, this work could not be completed until a Sustainability Team was appointed. In a joint working arrangement between Sedgfield Borough and Teesdale District Councils, the Council appointed a Sustainability Team, consisting of two officers, who commenced work in May 2006.

10. The outcome of the initial examinations of Local Development Framework policy documents raised grave concern; the advice from the Planning Inspectorate and Government Office was to ensure that the evidence base for the Local Development Framework was robust and up to date, as these were common failings of the initial documents examined. The results of these examinations also highlighted the need to ensure that the options presented within the documents at the early stages were strategic, deliverable and alternative and based upon sound evidence. For these reasons additional work has had to be undertaken to inform the preparation of the Issues and Options papers for both the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies documents. Failure to present suitable and evidenced options may result in the document being found 'un-sound' at examination; the work undertaken by the Forward Plans Team to minimise this risk further compounded the slippage incurred.
11. The Department for Communities and Local Government is concerned at the significant number of Council's who have incurred slippage in their Local Development Framework work programme. In response to this the Department of Communities and Local Government are seeking to improve the reliability of Local Development Schemes as programme management documents. The intention is for the Local Development Scheme to become a definitive programme management document, to be departed from only in exceptional circumstances, or following annual monitoring. They have made it clear that all local planning authorities should revise their current Local Development Schemes to reflect this. Furthermore, Government Office have stated that, although it is still unclear what will replace Planning Delivery Grant, any future reward scheme is likely to include a plan making element, and the key milestones against which performance would be measured will be those in the April 2007 Local Development Scheme. It is therefore imperative that local authorities have revised their Local Development Schemes, in accordance with the appropriate regulations, before 1st April 2007.

proposal

12. The revision to the content of the Local Development Scheme has predominantly been in three key areas, which are detailed below:
 - **Documents proposed in the Local Development Scheme**
13. As identified in the Annual Monitoring Report for 1st April 2005 to 31st March 2006, there is currently a sufficient supply of housing land, with planning permission, to fulfil the District's housing apportionment contained within the Regional Spatial Strategy (Submission Draft); for this reason it is not considered prudent to prepare a Housing development plan document. It is considered that preparing a Major Allocations development plan document, which could also potentially allocate new housing sites, would be a more efficient use of resources. It would also cover a wider range of land use allocations. Annex 11 contains a profile of the proposed document which replaces the previous commitment to preparing a Housing document. In brief the proposed land-uses to be covered by the Major Allocations document are:
 - Employment and Industry;
 - Town Centres;

- Housing;
- Tourism;
- Community Facilities;
- Leisure and Recreation, including open space; and
- Renewable Energy.

14. In July 2006 Members endorsed the Council's commitment to preparing two supplementary planning documents in conjunction with the North Pennines AONB. These are called the North Pennines AONB Planning Guidelines and North Pennines AONB Building Design Guidance; the profile for each of these documents is contained in Annex 12. For a local planning authority to adopt any Local Development Framework document it must be prepared in accordance with the adopted Local Development Scheme; it is therefore imperative that these documents appear in the revised Local Development Scheme.

15. The North Pennine AONB is the lead authority for the preparation of the documents and have also secured adequate funding and as such there are no human resource or financial implications for the Council relating to the preparation of these documents. The only currently known costs associated would be the publishing costs; for the Council it is therefore a resource efficient/saving way of preparing these documents.

- **Revised timeline**

16. A fundamental aspect of the Local Development Scheme is the work programmes for the production of the various Local Development Framework documents; these are usually illustrated by way of a GANTT chart together with a written profile of each document. The revised timeline for the production of the Local Development Framework is contained in Annex 13.

17. The timeline has also been amended reflecting recent advice from Government Office for the North East, which emerged following the findings of the first few examinations of Local Development Framework documents. Their advice is that work on site specific policy documents should not be undertaken until the Core Strategy is well underway. This is to ensure the site allocations and Area Action Plans are in conformity with the Core Strategy. Furthermore it is considered that, due to the current level of resources dedicated to the preparation of the Wear Valley District Local Development Framework, it would not be possible or feasible to prepare four policy documents alongside one another, as currently set out in the Local Development Scheme. For these two reasons it is considered necessary to re-programming the preparation of the Major Allocations document (previously the Housing document) and the South and East Area Action Plan document, until the final draft of the Core Strategy has been submitted; this change has also been reflected in the GANNT chart contained in Annex 13.

18. These timescales, contained in Annex 13, were developed following guidance from and subsequent consultations with Government Office for the NorthEast and reflecting known staffing and resource issues.

19. The only key issue to bring to the attention of Members, with regard to the timescales, is the resource available in terms of the Sustainability Appraisal work and the potential impact it may have on delivering the work programme set out in Annex 13. Given the Joint Working Arrangements between Sedgefield Borough Council, Teesdale District Council and this Council, with respect to the Sustainability Appraisal resources, the timescales have been developed bearing in mind the work programmes of the other two authorities; the three authorities have worked together to try and co-ordinate the Sustainability Appraisal resource. After discussions, it was evident that there would be no conflict on any of the work programmes in 2007. The demands of the work programmes in 2008 however pose potential times of conflict between the demands of the three authorities; this could be compounded by slippage from the work programmes by any one of the authorities. It will therefore be imperative that the situation, in terms of slippage from work programmes and the resource within the Sustainability Appraisal team, is carefully monitored. The contingency plan would be to, where appropriate and necessary, buy in consultants to undertake discrete elements of the Sustainability Appraisal work. This would however have financial implications.
20. There are a growing number of European Directives which have an influence on the plan preparation process; the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive and the Habitats Directive are two such directives which require additional work to be carried out to inform policy formulation. Government guidance advocates combining the requirements of the SEA Directive into the Sustainability Appraisal process; this is the route currently being undertaken by the Council. The Habitats Directive requires local planning authorities to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of all proposals which may impact upon internationally designated sites; it must be noted that these sites may fall outside the district boundary. This requirement relates to both the development control and development plan preparation processes.
21. The Appropriate Assessment is a detailed study of the impact the proposal may have on the flora and fauna which comprise the features of interest which are protected through European legislation. This requires detailed ecological knowledge; due to the specialist knowledge required it will be necessary to commission consultants to undertake this work. The Appropriate Assessment of the Core Strategy and Generic Development Control Policies documents will then inform the policy formulation at the preferred options stage. The time required to undertake this work has been reflected in the timeline contained in Annex 13.
22. The Council can only set the dates in the plan preparation process prior to the submission of the final document to Government Office; the dates following the submission of the document, such as the date for examination and the publication of the Inspector's Report, are dictated by the Planning Inspectorate.
 - **Risk Assessment**
23. As indicated above the Department for Communities and Local Government require Local Development Schemes to become definitive programme management documents. For this reason, the time scales adopted within the Local Development Schemes should only be deviated from in exceptional

circumstances, or as a result of annual monitoring; it is therefore necessary to identify and assess all potential risks which could result in deviation from these timescales. It has therefore been necessary to enhance the existing risk assessment section of the existing Local Development Scheme. The Planning Advisory Service, in conjunction with the Department for Communities and Local Government, has prepared a leaflet detailing guidance on what should be included within the Risk Assessment; this has informed the amendments made to this section of the Local Development Scheme. The relevant section is contained within Annex 14.

- **Boundary revision to the South and East Bishop Auckland Area Action Plan**

24. It is considered necessary to extend the area to be covered by the South and East Bishop Auckland Area Action Plan to include West Auckland, given the Council's success in securing funding to carry out a partnership scheme in conservation areas in respect to West Auckland. The area also falls within the South and West Durham Heritage Corridor and is therefore eligible for additional funding. The inclusion of the area within the Area Action Plan will also give the Council and community, as the Area Action Plan will have to undergo meaningful community engagement, a structured approach and mechanism to influencing development within the area. The map contained in Annex 15 depicts the current and proposed boundary of the Area Action Plan.

- **Other Alterations**

25. Other than the above mentioned revisions to the current Local Development Scheme only minor alterations in the wording of the document have been made. These were necessary to bring the document up to date to reflect current circumstances and to reflect the progress made to date.

financial implications

26. As indicated above, the Government Office for the North East have stated that, although it is unclear what will replace Planning Delivery Grant, any future award criteria will have a plan preparation element; this element will be assessed against the time scales adopted in the Local Development Scheme. Failure to perform in accordance with the milestones set out in the adopted Local Development Scheme could result in the Council not qualifying for the plan preparation element of the new style planning award grant. It is therefore imperative that the timescales proposed in the Local Development Scheme are realistic and based upon a firm understanding of resource availability.

equality, diversity and access to service

27. Community and stakeholder engagement plays a vital role in the new-development plan system; as indicated above the Local Development Scheme is a public statement of the Council's programme for plan preparation. For this reason the Council is required to make the document available in a number of formats. It will therefore need to be displayed on the Council's website and available for reference at a number of public buildings throughout the District. The Council will also make the document available in languages other than English and in other formats upon request. Furthermore it is intended that a summary leaflet be prepared alongside the Local

Development Scheme detailing the key points of the document. The Council has, by adopting the Statement of Community Involvement, given an undertaking to producing Local Development Framework documents which are written in plain, clear English; this is to ensure the documents are user friendly and understandable. The Local Development Scheme has therefore been written in a manner which reflects this undertaking.

other considerations

28. There are no human resources, IT, Health and Safety, crime and disorder or value for money implications related to the Local Development Scheme.

consultations

29. Once the Local Development Scheme has been formally adopted by the Council all consultees contained on the 'Local Development Framework Consultee database' will be notified of the adoption and provided with a leaflet summarising the content of the Local Development Scheme. This is to ensure that all those who have expressed an interest in being involved in the plan preparation process are aware of the revised timescales.

timescale

30. The Council is required to submit the revised Local Development Scheme to the Government Office for the North East before 31st March 2007, for their approval.

monitoring

31. As stated above, the Council has a statutory requirement to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report which details the Council's performance against the adopted Local Development Scheme and the effectiveness and performance of the development plan policies. The Council's performance against the timescales established within the Local Development Scheme will be monitored through this mechanism and subsequently reported to Members.

conclusion

32. The Annual Monitoring Report identified that the Council has slipped from the adopted timescales for preparing the Local Development Framework. Furthermore, the Department for Communities and Local Government require Local Development Schemes becoming definitive programme management documents for the production of the Local Development Framework. For these reasons it has been necessary to prepare a second version of the Local Development Scheme. The body of the Local Development Scheme has remained substantially the same as the current version with only four major alterations, namely: the commitment to preparing a Major Allocations policy document and two supplementary planning document relating to the AONB; the revised timeline, as contained in Annex 13; the amendments to the risk assessment, as contained in Annex 14; and the extension of the South and East Bishop Auckland Area Action Plan boundary (Annex 15).

33. The timescales proposed for the production of the Local Development Framework have been developed based upon guidance from and subsequent consultation with the Government Office for the North East, and taking consideration of known staffing and resourcing issues. Due to the change in the status of Local Development Schemes and their forthcoming role in the new award scheme compounded with the statutory requirements demanded of Local Development Framework preparation, it would not be feasible to further reduce the proposed timescale for producing the Local Development Framework.

RECOMMENDED 1 That Members approve the revisions to the Local Development Scheme.

background information

- Creating Local Development Frameworks
- Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks
- Wear Valley District Council Local Development Scheme (Adopted April 2005)
- Wear Valley District Council – Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2005-2006

Officer responsible for the report

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REGENERATION COMMITTEE

7 MARCH 2006

Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Regeneration

WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN: SAVED POLICIES

purpose of the report

1. To seek Members endorsement of those Wear Valley District Local Plan policies which are to be 'saved' beyond 27th September 2007.
2. To seek Members endorsement of those Wear Valley District Local Plan policies which are to be deleted as of 27th September 2007.

background

3. As Members will be aware the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a new-style of development plan, called the Local Development Framework, which will transitionally supersede the current development plan, namely the Wear Valley District Local Plan (adopted 1997). The new planning system made provision for existing development plan policies to be 'saved' for an initial three-year period, to ensure that they remained a material consideration for the determination of planning applications and to safeguard against a policy vacuum. This initial three-year period expires on 27th September 2007; the deadline to request the policies to be saved beyond this date is 31st March 2007.
4. Local authorities intending to save their policies beyond this initial three year period must seek the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government's (hereinafter referred to as the Secretary of State) approval; a direction will then be issued to 'save' the identified policies. The Department for Communities and Local Government have produced a protocol for local planning authorities which, expanding on national policy guidance, sets out the criteria against which every development plan policy must be assessed. The performance of each policy against these criteria determines whether it is possible or feasible to continue to save the policy, or whether it is necessary to delete it. The Forward Plans Team has completed this assessment for all 150 Local Plan policies; the results of this assessment are the subject of this committee report.

policy context

5. Due to the incremental nature of the Local Development Framework it was necessary for the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to make provisions which would allow for development plan coverage whilst the new-style development plan was being produced. These provisions are known as the transitional arrangements and were contained in Part 2 of the Act. The

objectives underlying these transitional arrangements are: to move as quickly as possible from the old development plan system to the new-style development plans; to maintain continuity in the development plan system as a framework for development control; and to minimise transitional costs.

6. The Transitional Arrangements allowed all development plan policies to be saved for an initial three-year period, which, as indicated above, expires on 27th September 2007. However, in an attempt to afford local planning authorities policy coverage beyond this date the Transitional Arrangements allow local planning authorities apply to the Secretary of State to 'save' their development plan policies, for a further limited period. The conditions of this further extension are set out in Planning Policy Statement 12, the national policy statement relating to the preparation and content of Local Development Frameworks, which states that, for policies to be extended they should comply with the following criteria:
 - i) Where appropriate, there is a clear central strategy;
 - ii) Policies have regard to the Community Strategy for the area;
 - iii) Policies are in general conformity with the regional spatial strategy or spatial development strategy;
 - iv) Policies are in conformity with the core strategy development plan document (where the core strategy has been adopted);
 - v) There are effective policies for any parts of the authority's area where significant change in the use or development of land or conservation of the area is envisaged; and
 - vi) Policies are necessary and do not merely repeat national or regional policy.
7. Part One of the Wear Valley District Local Plan, which sets out the strategy for the Local Plan, is considered to fulfil the requirement of criteria i) above. It must be noted that the Council currently does not have an adopted Core Strategy, as such a standard statement reflecting this position was as justification in relation to criteria iv) above.
8. The Department for Communities and Local Government published a protocol which must be used when applying to 'save' development plan policies under the Transitional Arrangements. The protocol confirms that, in addition to six criteria above, the government will have particular regard to:
 - i) Policies that support the delivery of housing, including unimplemented site allocations, up to date affordable housing policies, policies relating to the infrastructure necessary to support housing;
 - ii) Policies on Green Belt general extent in structure plans and detailed boundaries in local plans;
 - iii) Policies that support economic development and regeneration, including policies for retailing and town centres;

- iv) Policies for waste management, including unimplemented site allocations;
 - v) Policies that promote renewable energy; reduce impact on climate change; and safeguard water resources.
9. It must be noted that as points ii) and iv) above are not relevant to the content of the Local Plan or the District, they have not been included within the assessment.
10. The protocol requires all local planning authorities to submit two lists of policies to the Secretary of State; one detailing the policies to be saved and the second detailing the policies to be deleted, together with the justification for the Council's decision, based upon the above criteria.

proposal

11. The assessment identified that, in order to safeguard against a policy vacuum, 94 (63%) of the 150 Local Plan policies should be 'saved' beyond 27th September 2007; a list of these policies is contained within Annex 16. These policies will be saved until they are replaced by an appropriate development plan document; the time scales for their replacement is contained in the revised Local Development Scheme, which is presented in item 9 of this agenda.
12. The remaining 56 (37%) Local Plan policies performed poorly against the criteria established in the protocol. These policies have either become out of date, conflict or repeat national or regional policy or have been fully implemented through the Local Plan, and as such are no longer necessary. It is not possible to save these policies under the transitional arrangements, and as such the policies will, in effect, be deleted after the 27th September 2007. Annex 17 presents a list of the policies which should be deleted along with a summary for each detailing its performance against the above criteria and thus justification for deletion. It should be noted that a number of the policies identified in this list were highlighted as they directly repeat national or regional policy guidance; in these instances, and in an attempt to prevent a policy vacuum, the appropriate policy or section of national guidance has been referenced. It is intended that these references be used in place of the Local Plan policy.
13. It must be noted that the Secretary of State has the power to amend either of these lists; any such changes made by the Secretary of State will be binding on the Council. The final decision of the Secretary of State will be reported to Members once her response is received. Members may also be interested to learn that Durham County Council, in conjunction with the North East Assembly, are preparing similar lists for the Structure Plan policies.

legal implications

14. Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that all planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless other material considerations dictate otherwise. The development plan therefore has a fundamental and statutory role in the development control process.
15. Due to the legal status of the development plan, it is imperative that it is kept up to date. The transitional nature of preparing the new-style development plan may result in the lifespan of a number of the Local Plan policies being extended for some years into the future; these 'saved' policies will still comprise part of the development plan. As new development plan documents are adopted by the Council the list of 'saved' Local Plan policies will need to be reviewed, and amended to ensure that the correct policies are used. The proposals map will also need to be amended to reflect these changes. Failure to maintain an up to date development plan and proposals map could result in unsound decisions being made, in complaints being lodged and potentially ombudsmen investigations.
16. It is important to note that, after the 27th September 2007 once the Local Development Framework policy documents evolve, the Local Plan will no longer be the sole comprehensive development plan. Instead, the policies that have been saved, together with their justification, will become one component of the development plan and will complement other emerging Local Development Framework policy documents. To ensure full policy coverage in this transitional time, it is imperative that national and regional planning policy is referred to in the determination of development control applications. For ease of use, where Local Plan policies have been deleted as they conflict with or repeat national or regional policy, the appropriate sections or policies have been referenced. The new development plan framework emphasises the importance of using national and regional policy on a frequent basis during the determination of development control applications; national and regional policy should be used in conjunction with the 'local element' of the development plan.
17. It is imperative that during the determination of all planning applications and when providing pre-application advice, the Council refers to the results of this assessment. This includes both the policies which have been saved, and the policies and policy statements which have replaced appropriate deleted policies. Furthermore, any party interested in submitting a proposal or planning application to the Council should, in place of the Local Plan, use the results of this assessment to assess their proposals.
18. It is also intended that the final list of saved and deleted policies will be set out in a user-friendly reference document.

other considerations

19. There are no financial, human resources, IT, health and Safety or crime and disorder implications of this piece of work. Furthermore, due consideration has been given to risk assessment, value for money and equality and diversity; no such issues arise from this work.

timescale

20. The two lists of Local Plan policies must be submitted to Government Office for the North East before the 31st March 2007, to allow the Department for Communities and Local Government to consider the Council's proposal. If the Secretary of State considers it appropriate she has the power to amend the content of either of these lists. The Secretary of State then has the power to issue a direction to 'save' the identified policies, resulting in those on the list to be deleted, no longer having development plan status. The subsequent direction will come into force on 27th September 2007.

monitoring

21. As Members will be aware the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires Local Planning Authorities to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report for each financial year. The purpose of the Annual Monitoring Report is to monitor the Council's performance in relation to plan preparation and the effectiveness and performance of development plan policies, including any policies 'saved' under the Transitional Arrangements. The Annual Monitoring Report should also identify any 'saved' policies which have been replaced by a new policy contained within the Local Development Framework. This is the mechanism by which the status of the 'saved' Local Plan policies will be monitored.

conclusion

22. The Council is still in the early stages of preparing its Local Development Framework. In an effort to prevent a policy vacuum and to ensure the continued smooth functioning of the development control service the Council must 'save' the identified Local Plan policies. This report sets out which policies comply with the protocol set out by central Government and can therefore be 'saved' under the Transitional Arrangements. It also identifies those policies which have become out of date, or have been fully implemented, and as such must be deleted from the current development plan. It is intended that 63% of the Wear valley District Local Plan policies will be saved.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 Members approve the list of policies the Council intends to 'save' beyond 27th September 2007.
- 2 Members to endorse the list of policies the Council intends to delete as of the 27th September 2007.

background information

- Wear Valley District Local Plan (adopted March 1997)
- Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Framework
- Protocol for handling proposals to save adopted Local Plan, Unitary Development Plan and Structure Plan policies beyond the 3 year saved period

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PERFORMANCE AGAINST BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE AND LOCAL INDICATORS

Development and Building Control

Indicator	Description	Target 06/07	Performance		Achievement 2006/07				Variance from target/comment	
			2004/5	2005/6	Q-1	Q-2	Q-3	Q-4		
BV109(a)	Major applications determined within 13 weeks	60	64.71	60.71	92.30	66.67	72.72			☺
BV109(b)	Minor applications determined within 8 weeks	70	57	72.42	78.13	86.42	80.33			☺
BV109(c)	All other applications determined within 8 weeks	80	73	88.35	92.64	88.19	92.31			☺
BV111	Percentage of applicants/agents satisfied with the service received	75	No survey undertaken	66	No survey undertaken	No survey	83			☺
BV204	Percentage of appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse planning applications	25	43	44.44	0	57.14	33.33		Target not achieved. Small number of appeals.	☹
BV205	Quality of service check list	88	83	88	88	88	88			☺
LP-R5	Percentage of householder applications determined within 8 weeks	85	77	90.67	93.80	91.13	96.47			☺
LP-R8	Percentage of industrial/economic applications determined within 8 weeks	80	65	77.78	78.57	77.78	72.72		Target not achieved due to complexity of applications	☹
LPI 6	Percentage of applications vetted and approved within 5 weeks	75	56	59		53.5	50.4		Staff vacancies causing problem.	☹
LPI 7	Percentage of inspections undertaken in 1 working day	100	100	100	100	100	100			☺
LP-R12	Percentage of alleged breaches responded to within 15 working days	100	69	83.47	100	100	100			☺

Economic Regeneration

Indicator	Description	Target 06/07	Performance		Achievement 2006/07				Variance from target/comment	
			2004/5	2005/6	Q-1	Q-2	Q-3	Q-4		
BV-EC2	Proportion of the working population who are unemployed and claiming benefit	2.8%	3.1%	3.3%	-	-	-		Reviewed Annually	
BV-EC17(a)	Total number of investment enquiries dealt with per annum	120	107	158	27	36	23			😊
BV-EC17(b)	Number of re-locations and re-investments annually as a result of "inward investment"	10	8	8	1	1	1		Target not on course.	
BV-EC17(c)	Number of jobs created and safeguarded from firms moving to or re-locating within the area following "inward investment" enquiries	60	37	78.5	4	14	3		Target not on course.	
BV-EC19	Number of new business start-ups assisted/receiving financial assistance	16	8	20	3	1	8			😊
LPI 1	Responded to workspace enquiries within 3 working days	100%	90%	100%	100%	98%	95			😊
LPI 2	Process grant applications within 8 weeks	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%			😊
LPI 3	Jobs created through business grants and other assistance	60	217	110.5	44	2	37			😊
LPI 4	Occupancy rates of WVDC (or jointly owned) factory units & workshops	90%	85%	85%	85%	85%	80%			😊
LPI 5	Issue at least 10 press releases	18	16	23	11	4	12			😊

Planning and Environmental Policy

Indicator	Description	Target 06/07	Performance		Achievement 2006/07				Variance from target/comment	
			2004/5	2005/6	Q-1	Q-2	Q-3	Q-4		
BV64	Number of private sector dwellings that have been vacant for more than six months as at 1 st April 2006 that are returned to occupation during 2006/07 as a direct result of action by the local authority.	30	56	53	13	0	6		Reviewed Annually	
BV106	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land.	65%	48.5%	55%	50%	62.38%	67.65%			☺
BV200(a)	Has a development plan been adopted in last 5 years or proposals on deposit to adopt in next 3 years?	No	No	No	No	No	No		See reports on LDF	
BV200(b)	If 200(a) is "no" are there proposals on deposit for an alteration or replacement, with a published timetable for adopting those alterations or the replacement plan within three years?	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No		See reports on LDF	
BV200(c)	Did the local planning authority publish an annual monitoring report by December of the last year?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		New indicator 2006/07	
BV216(a)	Number of 'sites of potential concern' within the local authority area, with respect to land contamination.	534					534		New indicator 2006/07	
BV216(b)	Number of sites for which sufficient detailed information is available to decide whether remediation of the land is necessary, as a percentage of all 'sites of potential concern'.	0					0%		New indicator 2006/07.	
BV219(a)	Total number of conservation areas in the local authority area.			20	20	20	20		New indicator 2006/07.	
BV219(b)	Percentage of conservation areas in district with an up-to-date character appraisal.			0%	0%	0%	0%		New indicator 2006/07.	
BV219(c)	Percentage of conservation areas with published management proposals.			0%	0%	0%	0%		New indicator 2006/07.	
LP-ES9	Private sector housing adaptation expenditure as at 31 March 2005 as a proportion of the Council's budget for the service.	100	109.92	100	19	55	77		Target to be met.	
LP-ES10 (old)	Number of private sector housing adaptations awarded.	100	70.27	69	34		N/A		Deleted.	
LP-ES10 (a) (new improved definition)	Number of Disabled Adaptations Completed within the Public Sector	80				64	156		Target exceeded.	
(b)	Number of Disabled Adaptations Completed within the Private Sector	40				26	38		Target exceeded.	

(c)	Number of Major Housing Repair Grants Completed	30				15	19		Target now exceeded	
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QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

APPEALS

Appeal	Decision	Reason
3/2005/0938 28 Kirkham Way, Bishop Auckland	Dismissed	The appeal was made against the refusal of planning permission for the erection of a garden fence 1.8 metres high (retrospective). The Inspector considered the main issue to consider was the effect the proposal had on the character and appearance of the street scene. The Inspector found the fence did not reflect favourably the generally high standard of open and well landscaped land next to highways in the surrounding area. The Inspector concluded the proposal to be out of keeping with and significantly detracted from the character and appearance of the street scene. The appeal was dismissed. The fence has been removed.
3/2006/0180 Land adjacent to Springfield House, Willington	Dismissed	The appeal was made against the refusal of outline planning permission for six two storey dwellings with garages. The Inspector considered the indicative layout was cramped and would result in a lack of outlook for residents. Furthermore the Inspector commented that there would be little room for the retention of the protected trees within the site. The Inspector also commented that the possibility of development on the adjoining site could not be ignored. The proposed development on the appeal site, in the Inspector's opinion, would be prejudicial to the proper development of the adjoining area. The Inspector concluded that the development of both sites should be co-ordinated in a way that ensures that acceptable schemes are achieved on both sites. The Inspector dismissed the appeal.
3/2006/0332 Site at former Site of Leyland House Motor Repairs, Tindale Crescent	Allowed subject to condition.	<p>The appeal was made against the refusal of planning permission for amendments to an existing planning approval for Blocks 4 and 5 of a residential development. The Inspector considered that there was no possibility of the windows facing the Tindale Crescent Working Men's Club being harmful to the privacy of the Club site. If the Club site was ever redeveloped a condition could be applied requiring the windows to be obscurely glazed. A condition could be applied restricting the opening of the windows.</p> <p>The Inspector did not think occupiers of the flats would suffer noise disturbance from the Club, given modern standards of double-glazing.</p> <p>The Inspector did not think the flats would prejudice the possible redevelopment of the Club site.</p> <p>The Inspector allowed the appeal subject to a condition requiring the windows to be obscurely glazed and fitted with restricted opening mechanisms and thereafter to be so</p>

		retained.
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COMPLAINTS

Origin of Complaint	Allegation	Response
1. Stage 1 Applicant	The complainant questioned why planning permission is required for the development she was proposing to carry out at her property. She felt she was being 'punished' for enquiring whether planning permission is required. She knew of others who had carried out the same type of development without first seeking planning permission.	The Principal Planning Officer replied, explaining why planning permission is required and offered to arrange a meeting with the Design and Conservation Officer to find an acceptable form of development.
2. Stage 1 Applicant	The complaint arose following the decision to refuse planning permission for a two storey extension. The complainant challenged the reasons for refusing the application.	The Principal Planning Officer replied by inviting the complainant to a meeting to discuss revisions to the proposals with a view to submitting a new application. (A meeting subsequently took place, a revised application was submitted and planning permission has now been granted).
3. Stage 1 Applicant	The complainant was aggrieved that a land search had revealed an enforcement notice was in place against the property requiring the demolition of a boundary wall. She also complained that planning permission had been refused for change of use to a day nursery.	The enforcement officer replied that the enforcement notice was no longer necessary. The Principal Planning Officer replied that the decision to refuse planning permission was made following careful assessment of the proposal against the adopted local plan and national planning guidance. (An appeal has now been made to the Planning Inspectorate).
4. Stage 2 Applicant	The complainant had received 3 enforcement notices and was concerned that originally he had not been informed the land was protected open space. He alleged he had been informed the excavations could be undertaken. Also the complainant complained about the length of time taken to determine his application. He alleged he had not been given information he had requested. He sought to recover costs incurred in submitting planning applications and making an appeal against the enforcement notices, and wanted the Council to pay for	An apology was made for the failure to initially inform the complainant that the land was protected open space. There was no record of any advice being given about the excavations. It was agreed that the length of time taken to determine the application was unacceptable. The requested information was provided. It was not agreed that the costs should be reimbursed. The works carried out required planning permission and so the costs of submitting two applications could not be avoided. The complainant had carried out development without planning permission. Indeed most of the development had taken place after the refusal of planning permission. The costs of making an appeal could not be reimbursed nor could the costs of reinstatement of the land.

	reinstatement of the land.	
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Origin of Complaint	Allegation	Response
<p>5. Stage 3 complaint. 2 Residents</p>	<p>The complainants submitted identical complaints to stage 1 and stage 2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A planning application was processed in spite of the fact that not all the relevant information had been received. • The application was reported to Committee even though the plans were inaccurate and contained conflicting information. • Relevant history was not presented to Committee. 	<p>No decision was made until Members considered they had sufficient information. The development is being built in accordance with the approved plans. The Committee was given enough information to determine the application.</p>

OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS

<p>2 Residents of Arthur Terrace, Stanley, Crook</p> <p>Alleged a conservatory had been built without planning permission and the Council is not prepared to do anything about it. They complained that the conservatory adversely affects their amenity.</p>	<p>An application for retrospective planning permission was submitted for the conservatory, which was reported to the Development Control Committee. The complainant objected to the proposal and addressed the Committee. Members considered the conservatory was acceptable and granted planning permission. The Ombudsman concluded there was "No or insufficient evidence of maladministration".</p>
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ANNEX 4

Action	Timescale	Lead	Cost	Outcome Proposed
Focus Groups	End of January 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Development & Building Control Marketing and Communications Manager 	£880	Learn from customers what changes they would like to see made to the service.
Existing written material	End of March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Development & Building Control Marketing and Communications Manager Desk Top Publishing Officer 	-	All written material made easier for the public to understand.
Information on the Council's website	End of January 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Development & Building Control Planning Information Officer 	-	Achieve the level of information provided on website that is required to qualify for PDG.
Publicity	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Development & Building Control Marketing and Communications Manager Desk Top Publishing Officer 	-	The public to have a better understanding of the planning process/services offered by the development control/planning enforcement teams.
Appointments	End of February 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Development & Building Control Planning Information Officer 	-	Increase in the number of applicants/agents/general public making an appointment before visiting the Civic Centre.
Develop New Service Standards	End of March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Development & Building Control Performance Improvement Manager 	-	Customers have a clear understanding what service they should receive from the development control/planning enforcement team.
Customer progress/update system	End of April 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Development & Building Control Performance Improvement Manager 	-	Customers are kept informed of progress with applications/enforcement complaints.
Training for reception staff	End of March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Officer Principal Planning Officer 	-	Reception staff trained on the planning process/ customer care/ able to provide the public with more information/ advice.

FOCUS GROUPS

purpose of report

To report on the results of the four Focus Group meetings held in December 2006/January 2007.

introduction

The four Focus Group meetings comprised:-

1. Agents.
2. People who had comments on/objected to planning applications.
3. Applicants who had received planning permission.
4. Applicants who had had their applications refused.

Focus Group 1 – Agents

The agents considered that the service had greatly improved over the last 12 months and they welcomed the introduction of support officer who they find to be very helpful, and provide useful information. To validate applications in a fair and transparent way. They will telephone for more information or send emails so provide a quick service.

1. Planning Officers are very busy and it is difficult to get to speak to them at reception or on the telephone.
2. Although the situation has greatly improved some telephone calls are not returned.
3. The turn around of planning officers has resulted in experienced staff leaving to be replaced by inexperienced officers.
4. It is not easy to predict their reaction to a submission. Some of the more experienced planning officers work part – time which causes a problem in speaking to the officers/receiving feedback from them. Dealings are costly.
5. The target led system causes problems: often asked to make amendments in short space of time or withdraw and resubmit at a later date. It is sometimes difficult to have a pre-application meeting. Often asked to write in/submit plans if want to receive comments before making an application.
6. They would prefer planning officers to email or telephone them to request more information or amendments. It is a quicker way to communicate than by letter and gives them more time to address any issues.
7. They would use planning portal but they find it difficult to get access.

Focus Group 2 – Residents.

Whilst they found the Council's website generally easy to use some things were hard to find. There are few internal links. The staff they spoke to were very helpful and gave lots of good advice. The information on the back of the notification letter is very helpful. Downloading the local plan from the website took a very long time. They appreciated that officers had to consider many things to consider in each case. They received all the information they needed about progress of the applications.

The following suggestions were made:-

1. More time should be allowed for people to speak at Committee.
2. Speakers should be able to bring their own presentations electronically.
3. There should be a right to reply for speakers.
4. Evening planning surgeries should be held i.e. up to 7PM.
5. Information surgeries should be held.
6. Details should be provided of planning aid.
7. Information could be made available on the website about effective objections, i.e. what are relevant planning matters.
8. Information should be given as to where people can get free internet access.

Focus Group 3 – Successful Applicants

They had sought pre-application advice. They had called into the Civic Centre without appointment. Officers had been very helpful. The applications they submitted were valid (i.e. no need for more information/plans and no problems with the application forms or fee). When the case officer visited the site the officer had been very helpful. When they had enquired about the progress of the application staff had been very helpful. Everything went smoothly. The letters and all written material they received were easy to understand.

The suggestions that can out of the meeting were:-

1. Publicise the website more.
2. Provide more advice on the website.
3. When receipt of the application is acknowledged provide more written information about the stages the application will go through before a decision is made and time scales for these different stages.
4. Keep the applicant informed about progress with the application (e.g. telephone, email, information on the website).
5. Explain in writing whether building regulations approval is required.
6. Produce a leaflet of frequently asked questions/answers and make it available at reception.

Focus Group 3 – Unsuccessful applicants.

Those who had sought pre-application advice found it difficult to get a response (i.e. slow). They did receive clear advice. Their applications were valid on submission. Letters sent to them were easy to understand.

They had a mixed experience after submitting their applications. Some received no contact from the case officer. Others were informed there were problems with the proposal and were asked to withdraw and submit an amended application. It had not been explained that following the refusal of the application a new application (for an amended scheme) could be made within 12 months without having to pay an application fee. One had his application refused by Committee, contrary to officer recommendation and he found it hard to understand how councillors could over rule the officer.

None of them knew they could see planning applications on the Council's website.

They suggested a workshop should be held outside normal officer hours to make it easier to speak to a planning officer.

One had tried to use the website but could not find his way around it and so gave up.

ANNEX 7

<p>Coundon Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Low house prices compared to the wider District and Region; ◆ Limited housing mix with low levels of detached and semi detached properties with associated low turnover levels; ◆ An over-dominance of terraced housing, demonstrated by low house prices and clusters of private rented stock suffering from low levels of investment and voids; ◆ Vulnerability of much of the terraced stock to market trends; ◆ Danger of an increase in private rented terraced properties if prices remain at the same level or decline, thus further eroding the quality of this stock; ◆ Significant proportion of local authority housing suffering form operational problems such as poor connectivity and access. With the exception of flatted units this stock is largely occupied, although many residents have been moved from outside of the area; ◆ Limited private sector development interest within existing settlements including areas of cleared terraces; ◆ Fragmented village centre at Coundon and poor connectivity between the settlements; ◆ Areas of environmental degradation including the public sector rented areas and open spaces. 	<p>Coundon Opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Coundon's proximity to Bishop Auckland, and its strategic location within the 'South and Eastern Bishop Auckland' corridor, presents the opportunity to provide competitively priced housing to serve employees within the economic corridor and build on existing travel to work patterns; ◆ Good levels of connectivity to Bishop Auckland and nearby Spennymoor by road and public transport; ◆ Existing service centre at Coundon offering health services, education, library, post office and Sainsbury's store with potential to improve existing retail offer; ◆ Good recreational facilities at Leeholme with recent Groundwork improvements to open space at Coundon; ◆ The historic layout of Coundon presents an attractive village layout that could be strengthened and enhanced through further residential development in the centre; ◆ Proximity to the open countryside and attractive views out of the settlements; ◆ Allocated housing sites available for development with evidence of market interest at the edge of settlements; ◆ Existing industrial estate at Coundon with potential for more intensive development and new accommodation for business start-ups; ◆ Existing community initiatives offering support, training and activities to the local community with a history of successful delivery of regeneration projects.
<p>Tow Law Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The under-performing local housing market; despite the price increases that have occurred over the last 4 years, prices are still low compared to the district and region; ◆ Lack of housing mix, choice and quality within the first time buyers market; ◆ High proportion of Housing Association Stock (RSL) within Tow Law in comparison to the rest of Wear Valley; ◆ Some weaknesses in the current housing stock including environmental degradation; ◆ Wider environmental problems such as poor quality of built environment and public realm; ◆ Service provision and shops are diluted over a predominantly linear settlement with poor connections and axis across the town to the fringe areas; and ◆ Concerns over the high dependency on manufacturing industry with a high proportion of residents employed within a narrow economic base; and ◆ Prevailing high unemployment rates within the town and a distinct lack of diversification within the local economy. 	<p>Tow Law Opportunity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Attractive surrounding open countryside and its prime location on the A68; ◆ Tow Law could conceivably become a small visitor/stop over location – connecting up to more established tourist centres in the district; ◆ The settlement is served well by open space and community/recreational facilities notably the community centre and Tow Law Town Football Club; ◆ Potential to improve on existing local services; ◆ Decent mix of housing stock and quality although terraced predominantly; ◆ Small "infill" private housing developments will create more choice and quality within the settlement; ◆ Existing industrial estate at Tow Law with potential to encourage small entrepreneurial indigenous business to help diversify the local economic base; and ◆ Existing community initiatives offering support, training and activities to the local community and a strong community partnership, which is committed to contributing to the continued regeneration of the settlement.

PRIORITY PROJECTS – COUNDON & LEEHOLME

Table 1 below identifies the projects identified in the ADF which could be brought forward in the first 3 years of the programme.

Table 1

Project/Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Short Term Spend	Short Term Income
Central Coundon				£6.63m	£8.28m
Acquisition					
Works					
Greys and Tottenham				£5.3m	£4.35m
Acquisition					
Works					
Howlish and Cleveland View				£4.21m	
Acquisition					
Works					
Frederick Street & Church Street				£2.73m	
Acquisition					
Works					
Industrial Estate					
Acquisition					
Works					

Table 2 below provides justification for priority projects listed in table 1 and potential issues which may impact upon their delivery.

Table 2

	Why is it a priority	Issues for Delivery
The Central Area	The central are of Coundon includes the historic settlement structure. The potential exists to build upon this layout to strengthen the settlement core through infill development of larger properties to diversity the housing offer and create an attractive environment to the benefit of the wider settlement.	Interventions require negotiation with a number of owners and private sector landlords and may require the use of CPO powers.
The Tottenham Estate	The public sector housing stock suffers from problems of connectivity and poor usage of public spaces. It currently acts as a barrier to wider movement through the settlement.	The land is predominantly within public sector ownership that should facilitate delivery of the proposed interventions.
The Grays Estate	The area suffers from the same issues as the Tottenham Estate. Its proximity to the edge of the settlement offers the opportunity for improved connectivity to any new residential development on its fringes to link the settlement together.	Development proposals for land to the south of the Grays Estate are well progressed and there may be limited opportunity for intervention.

Table 2 (cont)

	Why is it a priority	Issues for Delivery
Howlish and Cleveland View	There is evidence of a relatively high proportion of private rented properties and voids that contributes to a poor quality environment.	The properties are in private sector ownership so interventions will require significant financial input in the early stages.
Frederick Street and Church Street	This area experiences the same issues as Howlish and Cleveland View in terms of private sector rental properties and poor environment at a prominent location at the entrance to the settlement.	Again, joint venture arrangement required with significant financial input at the early stage.
Leeholme	Leeholme suffers from poor connectivity to essential services in Coundon and fragmented settlement structure due to demolition works.	Improved connectivity can be easily resolved subject to agreement by private landowners. Infill housing development is likely to be a longer-term priority once housing market renewal has been addressed in Coundon, subject to restrictions on housing numbers.
The Industrial Estate	Whilst current evidence of empty and under-utilised sites and experiencing poor means of access into and through the estate it offers the potential to provide local employment opportunities.	Provision of an improved access will require negotiation with a number of owners and may require CPO as ownership details unknown. Public sector funding is, however, available through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund for further employment-related development.
Future Residential Opportunities	The potential exists to develop further sites on the edge of the settlements in the longer term, once the priority sites within the settlement have been addressed. These sites could serve those employed within the economic corridor to the west	Release of further housing sites may be restricted by regional policy on housing numbers.

PRIORITY PROJECTS – TOW LAW

Table 3 below identifies the projects identified in the ADF which could be brought forward in the first 3 years of the programme.

Table 3

Project/Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Short Term Spend	Short Term Income
New Village Square / High Street Improvements				£2.1	
Acquisition					
Works					
The Industrial Estate				£0.15m	
Acquisition					
Works					
Alpine Way Estate				£10.1m	
Acquisition					
Works					
Inkerman Gateway feature				£0.15m	
Acquisition					
Works					

Table 4 below provides justification for priority projects listed in table 3 and potential issues which may impact upon their delivery.

Table 4

	Why is it a priority	Issues for Delivery
New Village Square / High Street Improvements	The A68 presently dominates Tow Law. The opportunity to create a new large centre “village square” style of central public realm exists. This will form the heart of the settlement and provide a high quality area of public space within the centre of Tow Law, thus creating a focal point for existing residents and potential visitors to enjoy. The new square is located where the High Street intersects Church Lane, leading into Dan’s Castle. New surfacing along key nodes will give greater definition to demonstrate that the High Street is an active shared use and thus break up the dominance of the traffic.	Proposals would cause some disruptions within the short term to the High Street and traffic along the A68. The square may be restricted to original proposals unless agreement can be made with the developer or the Mart site to amend consent and allow some houses on the edge of the High Street to be built further back, thus allowing a larger area of new realm to be achieved.

Table 4 cont'd

<p>The Industrial Estate</p>	<p>The existing estate is under-utilised and does not foster future business development. Improvements to be environment, access and layout offers the potential to provide improved employment opportunities to encourage a more varied economic base away form the manufacturing industries of which Tow Law is highly dependant on.</p>	<p>Provision of an improved access will require negotiation with a number of owners. There are concerns over the existence of underground cables in close proximity to the estate. Further investigation work may have to be undertaken to ensure ground conditions are conducive to the proposed improvements.</p>
<p>Alpine Way Estate</p>	<p>This area suffers from a highly dysfunctional layout typical of the Radburn design. The proposed interventions will create a newly designed neighbourhood that benefits form active frontages, more define private spaces and improved active public routes into the High Street thus creating improved vista's into the town centre. This high level option ultimately creates new streets and permeable networks both within the new neighbourhood and into the settlement core.</p>	<p>Interventions require negation with a number of owners and private sector landlords and may require the use of CPO powers.</p>
<p>Inkerman Gateway feature</p>	<p>At the Inkerman site, a new gateway feature is proposed with improved road and car parking and siting of a new small kiosk which will perform small scale tourism facility for visitors and a catalyst for further tourism related investment in the future at Inkerman.</p>	<p>Any future proposals would need to take cognisance of current proposal by HJ Banks for a residential and nursing home at Inkerman.</p>

SRB5 Projects 1999 - 2005:		
Themes	Project	Organisation
Learning	A Learning Community (Phase 1 & 2)	Workers Education Association
	Intermediate Labour Market	Groundwork West Durham
	Vocational Training	Bishop Auckland College
	Educational Capacity Programme	Bishop Auckland College
Health	Healthy Living Initiative	Wear Valley District Council
	Hands on Health	Durham Rural Community Council
Business	Enterprising Community	Durham Co-operative Development Association
	Business Support and Personal Development	Wear Valley Development Agency
	Crook Business Centre Improvements	Wear Valley District Council
	Business Support Project	Wear Valley District Council
Community Development	Community Capacity Development	Wear Valley District Council
	Community Environmental Improvements (Phase 1 & 2)	Groundwork West Durham
	Community Development Fund	Wear Valley District Council
Community Activity	Youth Outreach and Support Programme (Phase 1 & 2)	Durham Community Education Services
	Youth Outreach and Support Programme	Wear Valley District Council & Durham Community Education Services
	Youth Outreach and Support Programme	Wear Valley District Council
	Dene Valley Community Garage	Dene Valley Community Transport Ltd
	Mobile Wellness Centre	Wear Valley District Council
	Community Police	Durham Constabulary
	Homesafe	D.I.S.C.
	Safe as Houses	Wear Valley District Council
	Home Composting Scheme	Groundwork West Durham
	Fire Safety in the Home	Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service
	Disability Access	Wear Valley Disability Access Forum
Physical Development	St Catherine's Hall Improvements	St Catherine's Community Association & Wear Valley District Council
	Willington Town Centre Refurbishment	Wear Valley District Council & Durham County Council
	Crook Town Centre Refurbishment	Wear Valley District Council & Durham County Council
	Eclipse Site	Durham County Council
	Low Willington Industrial Development	Durham County Council
	Dene Estate Refurbishment	Persimmon Homes
	Willington & Villages Shop Front Improvement Scheme	Groundwork West Durham
	Crook Commercial Building Improvement Grants	Wear Valley District Council & Durham County Council
	Tow Law Rejuvenation	Groundwork West Durham
Administration/ Management	Management and Administration	Wear Valley District Council
	Publicity and Evaluation	Wear Valley District Council
	Community Appraisals	Wear Valley District Council
	Mid-term Evaluation	Wear Valley District Council

SRB6 Projects 2001 - 2007:

Themes	Project	Organisation
Learning	Community Training	Bishop Auckland College
	Sure Start	Sure Start
	Lifelong Learning	Wear Valley Learning Partnership
Health	Sports Action Zone	Wear Valley District Council
	Healthy Living – Wear Walking for Health	Wear Valley District Council
	Ageing Well	Age Concern
	Mobile Wellness	Wear Valley District Council
Business	Business Support Programme	Wear Valley Development Agency
	Dene Valley Community Garage	Dene Valley Community Garage
	Business Learning Centre	Bishop Auckland College
	Business Support Phase 2	Wear Valley District Council
	Town Centre Management Initiative	Wear Valley District Council
Community Development	Community Development	Wear Valley District Council
	Small Projects Fund	Wear Valley District Council
	One Stop Shop 1 (Dene Valley)	Dene Valley Community Partnership
	One Stop Shop 2 (Coundon Sure Start)	Durham County Council (Sure Start)
Physical Development	Neighbourhood Shop Front Improvements	Groundwork West Durham
	Four Clocks Refurbishment	Bishop Auckland Community Partnership
	Townscape Heritage Initiative	Wear Valley District Council
	Newgate Street Pedestrian enhancements	Durham County Council
	Town Centre Commercial Buildings Improvement Grants	Wear Valley District Council
	Coundon Streetscape Improvements	Durham County Council
	Gateways and Routeways (Bishop Auckland)	Groundwork West Durham
	Bridge Place Streetscape (Dene Valley)	Wear Valley District Council
Administration/ Management	Countywide Evaluation	Wear Valley District Council

INTEGRATED REGENERATION IN COUNTY DURHAM SRB5 AND 6 SCHEME

Final Evaluation Report

1. INTRODUCTION

Since 1999, a major regeneration scheme has been underway in County Durham, supported by investment of nearly £45m from the Government's Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). This scheme, called '**Integrated Regeneration in County Durham**', combines funding from two consecutive rounds of the SRB programme (SRB5 and 6) and comes to an end in March 2007. It has supported hundreds of projects which have aimed to improve the quality of life in disadvantaged communities throughout the County.

This report presents an independent assessment of this SRB scheme, and draws together the findings from our ongoing programme of continuous evaluation. Since December 2001, a team of evaluators led by Professor Fred Robinson of St Chad's College, Durham University, has been undertaking an evaluation of the scheme on behalf of the County Durham Regeneration Partnership. The evaluation has examined management and implementation, advised on structures and processes across the scheme as a whole, and has involved the detailed assessment of a selection of individual projects. Altogether, the evaluators have reported on over 40 projects, looking at their methods and achievements, and identifying opportunities for improvement. Most of these projects have been assessed two or three times. A principal aim of the evaluation has been to feed back findings and lessons which could be used to strengthen and develop the scheme and its constituent projects. Our reports on processes, project evaluations and consultations can be found on the SRB website (www.ircd.co.uk) and on the County's regeneration practice website (www.mobilisingknowledge.co.uk). In addition, a DVD film about the work of the SRB scheme was produced in 2004.

This report is the culmination of the evaluation and marks the ending of the scheme. It is based on our experience over the past five years and also on interviews with regeneration staff and a synthesis of documents and data. The aims of this Final Evaluation Report are:-

- to acknowledge and celebrate achievements – outputs and outcomes
- to examine what has been done, and how – and identify what has worked and what hasn't worked
- to look to the future – the lessons, the legacy and outstanding issues and priorities

This report is being submitted to the Regional Development Agency, One NorthEast, to meet their requirement for an end-of-scheme evaluation. But it is written for a much wider audience – indeed, for everyone interested in the regeneration of County Durham.

2. OVERVIEW: DEVELOPMENT, MANAGEMENT AND SCOPE OF THE SRB SCHEME

Development

The introduction of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) in the mid-1990s offered an important new opportunity for County Durham to secure funding for regeneration. SRB brought together Government resources into one regeneration fund, which was available not only to inner city areas but also to other places experiencing economic change and deprivation. SRB was allocated through an annual process of bidding for resources. Easington and Durham City both received funding in the first bidding round (SRB1), and the County Council was subsequently successful in bidding for resources for an educational support scheme under SRB3. However, both of these schemes were relatively small scale, with modest SRB funding.

By the fifth round, the Government was keen to encourage larger and more comprehensive bids which were likely to have greater impact. In County Durham – and also in Northumberland – local authorities were asked to develop county-wide proposals involving both the County and District Councils. Securing co-operation between authorities in this two-tier system can be difficult, but it was clear that Government Office North East, then managing the SRB regime, required a composite bid and the local authorities had to find a way forward. Consequently, they agreed effectively to share responsibility for the potential funding, between the County Council and the District Councils; that split has been a key feature of the scheme since its inception.

SRB5. An SRB5 entitled ‘Integrated Regeneration in County Durham and Darlington’ bid was submitted by the then County Durham and Darlington Regeneration Partnership in April 1999. It proposed a new, co-ordinated approach to the area’s economic problems and, ‘for the first time, integration between strategic and local approaches to regeneration, together with effective community participation’. The bid was structured around seven Strategic Objectives covering such themes as worklessness, competitiveness, community capacity, rural accessibility and health. Some project ideas in outline form had already been drawn up and were noted in the bid. Proposals for managing and delivering the scheme were put forward, with a distinction made between the county-wide ‘**thematic**’ projects and **local projects** managed by District-based partnerships. Initially, over £30m SRB5 funding had been sought but, on the advice of Government Office, that had been reduced to £26.25m; that was agreed when the bid was accepted.

SRB6. As the SRB5 scheme was getting underway, Government Office encouraged the Partnership to submit a further bid for the next – and final - funding round, SRB6. That bid was presented as building on the SRB5 programme and would be delivered through the same arrangements. The SRB6 bid was titled ‘Promoting Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities in County Durham’. It gave particular emphasis to ‘addressing the needs of marginalised and disadvantaged young people’ and also to ‘achieving effective community participation from the outset’. There were four Strategic Objectives, concerned with increasing competitiveness, lifelong learning and routes to employment, healthy communities and environmental sustainability. As for the preceding programme, the SRB6 bid contained both thematic and local components and, again, proposed projects ideas were outlined. A total of £22m SRB6 funding was sought.

The SRB6 bid envisaged combining the two schemes into a single, merged scheme and that arrangement has been in place since April 2001. Also, at that time the Darlington element was separated out from the scheme, since Darlington had then become a Unitary Authority.

The combined SRB5 and 6 scheme took the title of the initial SRB5 bid: ‘Integrated Regeneration in County Durham’. Its overarching ‘Strategic Vision’ is:

‘To achieve sustainable improvements in the overall social well-being, environmental quality and economic competitiveness of the area, enabling a full and satisfying quality of life for the people of County Durham’.

To progress towards realising that Vision, the combined SRB scheme has a programme of projects and initiatives based on five Strategic Objectives:-

1. To achieve greater co-ordination between strategic and local approaches to regeneration and the effective involvement of local communities
2. To improve the competitiveness of businesses and the local economy
3. To encourage a culture of learning and aspiration to underpin local competitiveness and personal prosperity
4. To improve the health and general quality of life for the residents of disadvantaged communities and socially excluded groups
5. To create more sustainable environments so as to make County Durham a better place to live and work

Both of the SRB bids had sought to target the scheme on disadvantaged areas, including: areas identified by the Coalfield Task Force; the designated Rural Development Areas; places affected by factory closures; and electoral wards identified by deprivation indices. The SRB6 bid cast the net wider than the SRB5 bid, and the subsequent combined scheme includes 140 of the County's 152 electoral wards – covering just over 90% (445,000) of County Durham's population. Over a third of the population covered by the scheme live in wards which are amongst the 10% most deprived nationally, as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2000). Only a few relatively prosperous wards, in Durham City and Chester-le-Street, are outside the scope of the SRB scheme.

The SRB5 component of the programme ran until March 2006, and remaining SRB6 projects are due to end by March 2007 – when the national SRB programme comes to an end.

By 2007, expenditure of SRB **5 and 6** funding will have amounted to just under £45m. The majority of SRB funding is **revenue**, to pay staff salaries and other costs incurred in running projects (£29.5m) and to pay for administration and management of the scheme (just over £2.0m). SRB **capital** expenditure amounts to £13.3m. At the outset of the scheme, the local authorities agreed how the SRB funding would be shared between them. 40% of the funding has gone to the thematic projects and 60% to the local package projects. Within the allocation to the local packages, the distribution of funding to each District was based on its share of the County population within the deprived wards. Hence, Easington, with its relatively large population and extensive deprivation received the largest share, while rural Teesdale District got the smallest share.

In addition to the SRB funding, it is forecast that over £48m will have been invested by other public sector sources such as the local authorities, FE colleges and European funding, in support of projects and initiatives. And over £21m will be invested by the private sector. **Total spending** on this major regeneration programme over the period 1999-2007 will thus amount to over £114m.

Partnerships and Management

This SRB scheme is disparate and complex: hundreds of projects, millions of pounds, and split between thematic and local initiatives. The structures set up to implement the scheme reflect that complexity.

All SRB schemes are funded by the Government and are overseen by the Regional Development Agencies – in this region, One NorthEast. (Until 2001, Government Office NorthEast had that responsibility, and it was the Government Office which had negotiated the original SRB5 and SRB6 bids). One NorthEast ensures that SRB partnerships adhere to the proposals and spending plans which they specify in annual Delivery Plans, and achieve their forecast outputs. The Agency also has to make decisions about larger projects which would involve expenditure above the partnership's delegated limit of **£250,000**.

The whole of the combined SRB5 and 6 scheme is overseen by the County Durham Regeneration Partnership. (The Partnership also had responsibility for the pre-existing SRB3 scheme). This Partnership has strategic responsibility for directing and delivering the scheme and has to formally agree the Delivery Plan. The Partnership Board has members from the local authorities and from many other agencies, and also has community representatives. It previously met quarterly, but in the later stages of the scheme has met twice a year. Durham County Council supports the Partnership, acting as the 'accountable body', responsible for handling funding and ensuring financial probity. It has been agreed that the Partnership will formally disband in September 2007.

Below that level, arrangements become more complicated - and have changed over the lifetime of the scheme. There is a Technical Steering Group, principally comprising officers from both the County and District Councils involved in running the scheme; this group keeps track of progress, considers draft delivery plans and prepares reports for the Partnership Board. Up until 2003 there was a Thematic Partnership which met to consider proposals for county-wide thematic projects, but that was disbanded once most of the thematic projects had got underway; it was recognised as having outlived its usefulness. In its place a Thematic Project Approval Panel can be convened, to consider and approve thematic projects.

'PACKAGE' STRUCTURE OF THE COMBINED SRB5 & 6 SCHEME

Thematic Package (total SRB expenditure: £15.3m)

County-wide projects administered and managed by the Partnership's **Regeneration Team** based at Durham County Council (ends March 2007)

City of Durham Local Package (£1.9m SRB)

Comprised SRB5 scheme covering the Lower Deerness Valley villages (Bearpark, Ushaw Moor, New Brancepeth), and the SRB6 scheme supporting twelve villages across the District

Derwentside Local Package (£5.7m SRB)

Comprised SRB5 & 6 scheme **mainly** covering areas in and around Consett and Stanley

Chester-le-Street Local Package (£2.0m SRB)

Both SRB5 & 6 focused on Chester West ward; SRB5 also included the villages of Pelton Fell and Sacriston

Easington Local Package (£7.7m SRB)

SRB5 focused on Dawdon and Parkside; SRB6 covered the whole District. (The Easington SRB Partnership is now merged into the Easington Strategic Funding Group, part of Easington's Local Strategic Partnership)

Sedgefield Local Package (£5.3m SRB)

SRB5 (Sedgefield Competitiveness Partnership) was concerned principally with business development, focusing on the Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor areas; SRB6 has centred on lifelong learning and physical improvements.

Wear Valley Local Package (£5.8m SRB)

SRB5 was focused on Crook and Willington; SRB6 on Bishop Auckland and adjacent areas.

Teesdale Local Package (£0.6m SRB)

Both SRB5 and 6 programmes concentrated attention on Cockfield and Evenwood, with some selected rural settlements also included under SRB6. Both programmes managed by the Cockfield and Evenwood Partnership

Each District set up its own local SRB partnerships which have been given delegated power by the main Partnership Board to develop their own programme of projects. There have altogether been 10 of these local partnerships. Some Districts set up separate partnerships for each of the programmes, while others have had just one partnership managing both their SRB5 and SRB6 programmes. Some of the local partnerships are still functioning in the final year of SRB – but, now that the scheme is about to end, meet only occasionally and can struggle to be quorate. Some may continue after SRB funding ends. In some cases they have been, or will be, amalgamated with other bodies such as Local Strategic Partnerships.

The local SRB partnerships vary in terms of composition and formality, but all have responsibility for developing and managing the local, District-based component of the SRB scheme. Each local group of projects managed by those partnerships is known as a 'local package'. Most of these packages have a distinct geographical focus, concentrating on the most disadvantaged areas within each District Council area.

Management of the scheme, involving the administration of project appraisals, budgets, monitoring, and so on, is undertaken by officers within a central co-ordination team (Regeneration Team) based at the County Council, together with officers ('local package managers') at the District Councils. The central team is responsible for managing, implementing and co-ordinating the overall delivery of the whole scheme and also has responsibility for the county-wide thematic projects.

Scope: objectives and projects

It is not easy to produce a coherent picture of the whole of this SRB scheme. The scheme's Strategic Vision, which refers to 'social well-being, environmental quality and economic competitiveness' indicates the considerable breadth of the agenda. That is followed through in the broad scope of the Strategic Objectives – and, consequently, the diversity of projects within the programme.

The scheme's objectives were related to a general analysis of problems facing the County, as set out in the original bid documents. Both SRB bids identified problems associated with the decline of the Durham coalfield, rural issues and job losses from several recent factory closures. It was recognised that regeneration would have to tackle a long list of interrelated issues – such as high unemployment, social exclusion, ill health, poor community infrastructure, degraded environments, poor housing, disaffection, low educational attainment, insufficient business development, rural isolation and decline and job losses in manufacturing industry.

When the bids were being developed, various proposed projects were put forward by local authorities, public agencies and the voluntary sector. Later on, more were added. All the projects have been grouped under the five Strategic Objectives, and these Strategic Objectives give shape to the whole programme.

Strategic Objective 1. *To achieve co-ordination between strategic and local approaches to regeneration and the effective involvement of local communities.*

This heading covers the **organisational infrastructure** needed to run the SRB scheme: the countywide and local partnership boards, management, monitoring and administration, and also co-ordination, publicity, conferences, training for project staff and evaluation. It has also included initiatives to support community involvement in the SRB process and to foster **community development and capacity-building** at local level. **A County Participation fund was set up as a countywide project to support and encourage the involvement of local residents in SRB partnerships.** Total SRB expenditure on Strategic Objective 1 is expected to amount to £4.4m over the lifetime of the scheme, to March 2007. Virtually all of this is revenue expenditure.

Strategic Objective 2. *To improve the competitiveness of businesses and the local economy.*

This Strategic Objective covers nearly 50 thematic and local initiatives aimed at **encouraging people to start up businesses and to help existing businesses to develop** through the adoption of new technology and through networking (eg Business Forums). Some local packages have supported town centre improvements and have offered grants to businesses. Sedgefield's SRB5 programme was wholly focused on business development and support.

In the later years of the SRB programme, funding for economic projects became available from One NorthEast through its 'Single Programme' funding regime. Elements of this Strategic Objective were therefore transferred into the Single Programme, effectively freeing up SRB resources for social regeneration.

Total SRB expenditure on this Strategic Objective is forecast to amount to £5.2m by the end of the programme, in March 2007. Most of this (£4.0m) is revenue expenditure.

Strategic Objective 3. *To encourage a culture of learning and aspiration to underpin local competitiveness and personal prosperity.*

Under this Strategic Objective, a considerable range of projects has been undertaken to **promote and encourage learning at all levels and by all groups** – children at school, families, young and older people both in work or without work. Thematic projects have included the Widening Participation project offering less traditional learning opportunities, often to new or 'fragile' learners in community settings; Family Learning projects throughout the County; and the Primary Inclusion Project which offers innovative support in schools. Information Technology (IT) facilities have also been developed at community venues across the County. There has been a project offering learning opportunities to service users in mental health settings, and various youth work projects. Some of the work in schools aimed at improving the educational attainment of disadvantaged young people extended initiatives which had been pioneered in the SRB3 programme.

Derwentside's local package included projects to develop engineering skills, while Sedgefield has supported a 'buddy' scheme to support people going into employment, an ILM (Intermediate Labour Market) project, and 'Learning Shops' as part of the Sedgefield Learning Borough project.

Education and lifelong learning have been key elements in the programme – almost 100 projects have been supported. SRB expenditure on this Strategic Objective is forecast to reach a total of £12.8m by 2007, most of which has been revenue expenditure (£10.8m).

Strategic Objective 4. *To improve the health and general quality of life for the residents of disadvantaged communities and socially excluded groups.*

This is the largest component of the SRB programme, with 130 projects covering a wide range of concerns. This Strategic Objective includes several projects promoting **healthy lifestyles** – for example the Ageing Well project in Bishop Auckland; the Passport to Health Allotments project, which is within the Sedgefield package; and support for healthy living centres in Easington. There have been several projects combating substance misuse, in association with the Drug Action Team, and a project specifically supporting parents of drug users.

There have been several **community safety projects**, tackling crime and the fear of crime, through interventions such as target hardening and victim support. This Strategic Objective has also had projects to promote **social inclusion** – for example, innovative work to extend opportunities to young people with disabilities. In Easington District, much of the activity under this Objective has centred on **regeneration and redevelopment**, involving partial demolition and remodelling of the former colliery village of Dawdon and the nearby council estate at Parkside.

In addition, SRB funding has been used to **strengthen the voluntary and community sector** – supporting the sector's infrastructure organisations (One Voice Network, the Voluntary Sector Academy, and local Councils for Voluntary Service) and also local community facilities (village halls and community centres). In Derwentside, a Community Resource Network was set up, which has given small grants to local community initiatives, and in Durham City an arts project was developed to foster community involvement. **This Strategic Objective also included a countywide Community Project development Fund. This thematic project comprised a grants pool to support the development**

of community-led projects – for example, contributing towards meeting the costs of feasibility studies and fees for technical assistance to help local groups develop and kick-start their projects.

Total SRB expenditure on this Strategic Objective is forecast to reach £16m by 2007 (£10.5m revenue, £5.5m capital).

Strategic Objective 5. *To create more sustainable environments so as to make County Durham a better place to live and work.*

Much of the work under this Strategic Objective has entailed **small scale environmental improvements** in towns and villages throughout the County. Examples include grants for small projects in the former mining villages around Durham City; schemes in Ferryhill and Dean Bank; town centre regeneration in Bishop Auckland; physical improvements in Dawdon and Parkside; and schemes to enhance business premises.

Tackling **accessibility issues** has also been an aspect of this part of the SRB programme. That has included public transport improvements and a substantial thematic project to extend ICT broadband infrastructure.

In the Chester-le-Street local package, a furniture recycling scheme has been supported by SRB funding – that was seen as making a contribution to sustainability, as well as having a social support dimension.

Total SRB expenditure on environmental projects over the lifetime of the scheme is forecast to amount to £6.2m. Much of that, some £4.5m, has been spent on capital projects. Nearly 50 individual projects were funded under this Strategic Objective.

Altogether, hundreds of projects have been supported through the SRB scheme. Some have been large scale, others small scale and very modestly funded. Some have been countywide, while others have only operated locally, down to the neighbourhood level. There are projects which received SRB funding for only a year, and others which were funded for five or six years. Much of the SRB funding has been revenue expenditure, to meet the costs of running projects delivering services to communities. SRB expenditure rose to a peak of more than £9.4m in 2003/04, subsequently tailing off to only £1.7m in the final year, 2006/07 (see Appendix 1).

As the scheme built up over time, more and more projects were added. By 2003, halfway through the scheme, some 245 projects were in operation, comprising 41 thematic projects and 204 local projects managed through the seven local (District) packages. Over the whole seven years of the scheme, there have been about 400 individually-funded projects.

The implementation of all these projects has involved many agencies as ‘project sponsors’. As well as local authority departments, various other public sector agencies have delivered projects – for example, schools, FE colleges, Primary Care Trusts, the Drugs Action Team, Durham University, Business Link and the Police and Fire Services. Many voluntary and community sector organisations have run projects – organisations such as Groundwork, the Workers’ Education Association, DISC, Age Concern, Durham Rural Community Council, the Councils for Voluntary Service and One Voice Network. Private sector involvement has been limited; the most prominent example is Persimmon Homes, responsible for redeveloping part of the Parkside Estate in Easington District.

To summarise, this SRB scheme is complex, multi-faceted, made up of many projects implemented by many partners. It has principally been concerned with social and community regeneration – with improving the quality of life and strengthening communities. Key themes are education and lifelong learning, community development, health, local economic development and local environmental improvements. The rest of this report assesses how it has been delivered, how it has made a difference and the lessons to be learnt.

3. EVALUATION: STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

From the outset, there was a considerable emphasis on structure and processes in the design of this SRB scheme. The first of the scheme’s Strategic Objectives was concerned with achieving ‘co-ordination between strategic and local approaches to regeneration and the effective involvement of local communities’. The intention was to find ways of delivering this complex scheme in a coherent

way – and with input from local people. This objective has proved to be challenging. Nevertheless, the scheme has been well managed: problems have been overcome, targets met, and projects delivered.

Partnership structures

The overall direction and governance of the whole SRB scheme has been the responsibility of the Board of the County Durham Regeneration Partnership, while local District-level partnership boards were formed to oversee the local 'packages'. This two-tier system – mirroring local government – has proved somewhat cumbersome and, in some respects, unsatisfactory.

The County Durham Regeneration Partnership has struggled to fulfil its strategic role. In the early years, before its membership was rationalised and reduced, the board had over 80 members as a result of the amalgamation of SRB schemes – far too many members to operate effectively. Many of its responsibilities had been delegated to the local partnerships and to the former Thematic Partnership, effectively curtailing its role. There was limited scope for debate or development of strategy, and relatively little real decision-making. Meeting only quarterly (latterly, just twice a year), members of the Partnership could be unclear about the issues and the Partnership's purpose. It was often left to the officers to keep meetings on track. Some of the community representatives had real difficulties in keeping abreast of the business and making a contribution – and many of the other members, especially those who joined later, were in a similar position. The board meetings were regarded by many as just a 'rubber stamping' exercise. The Partnership had been important in structuring the scheme at the start but its value soon declined when most of the funding had been allocated and key decisions had been taken.

The local partnerships, however, generally proved to be reasonably effective. Their focus, on much more local concerns, fostered more debate and more involvement. Regeneration activities and project proposals were discussed, and tended to be grounded in local concerns and experiences. Several of those partnerships did, however, struggle to engage and recruit community representatives. There has been very little involvement of young people or people from BME communities on these partnerships and lack of consistency in selecting people from local communities to serve on these boards. Many of these partnerships also had little representation from the business community.

One issue of concern is that the various partnership boards – at all levels – had many members from organisations and agencies which were running projects and thus receiving SRB funding. That could lead to difficulties in terms of debating proposals and projects and even potential conflicts of interest.

The two tier partnership structure made it more difficult to give coherence to this large and disparate SRB programme. Local partnerships tended to have little interest in thematic projects or, for that matter, other parts of the programme outside their local area. Likewise, the County Regeneration Partnership board meetings received relatively **limited** information about local packages.

Management processes

In spite of the fragmentation of the scheme, management processes operated well. Officers in the **Regeneration** Team at County Hall set up effective systems to manage the whole scheme and the Thematic Projects, while officers at the District Councils also established systems and processes to manage their local packages of projects. In the initial stages of the scheme there were certainly tensions between the County and District Councils. Subsequently, however, relationships between officers from the two administrative levels became generally co-operative and supportive. Systems worked: projects were appraised, approved and then monitored. The annual cycle of Delivery Plans and scheme reviews was established and became routine. In particular, yearly spending targets, the budgets agreed in Delivery Plans, were achieved – an important indicator of effective scheme management.

In the early years, there had been difficulties in managing the Scheme. Then, securing approval for projects could take a long time because there was a queue of submitted project proposals, systems were still developing, and larger projects could be held up awaiting approval from One NorthEast. Several projects found themselves struggling to catch up after a late start. However, such problems necessarily diminished, once the bulk of projects had been through the approvals process and the scheme moved towards maturity.

Achieving targeted spend was certainly not easy in the early years. But that was helped by introducing 'over-programming' and by having projects in reserve which could be brought forward if needed.

Programme officers had to cope with events outside their control, such as the collapse of a key project owing to the demise of the Durham Co-operative Development Agency, and persistent delays affecting the large housing renewal scheme at Parkside. Having reserve projects, reconfiguring spending profiles across the different packages – made more possible by virtue of the scale of the programme - and a good relationship between the Partnership's officers and One NorthEast all helped to manage and alleviate these problems.

The structure of this SRB scheme, divided into one thematic and seven local packages, can be seen as both a strength and a weakness. A structure which some have called 'an unholy funding alliance' was politically necessary, since all the local authorities wanted their share of the funding and their own projects. It can be argued to have been a strength, in that District Councils and local partnerships were well placed to identify and respond to local needs. It also helped to build local regeneration capacity. On the other hand, in relation to managing the scheme, it was inefficient – it led to duplication and dissipated expertise. For the projects, particularly in the voluntary sector, the two tier bureaucracy could mean long delays in receiving payment – and, therefore, real cash flow problems. **Small organisations were disproportionately affected because they often did not have alternative sources of funding.** The structure generated many meetings, a large amount of bureaucracy and a lot of paperwork, especially in the earlier phases of the scheme.

Moreover, this package structure consistently frustrated efforts to make linkages and exploit synergies within the programme. In particular, some projects failed to reap the benefits which could have been gained from working jointly with others and learning from others. A Co-ordination Project was set up to try to enhance awareness and forge links across the programme, especially between local and thematic projects. **As well as attending Local Package meetings and reporting on the wider scheme, Co-ordination Project officers developed a website of information and contacts for all projects, organised conferences to disseminate good practice and provided training for projects on how to cope with the end of SRB funding.** But **genuine collaboration proved difficult to achieve** and it had only limited success. And this fragmentation, coupled with the diversity of the programme, made it hard to promote the scheme as a whole – as 'integrated regeneration'. This was one of the main reasons why the scheme had a remarkably low profile; it was difficult to promote and it was 'undersold'.

The systemic inflexibility of the SRB regime in general also affects efficiency and effectiveness. In particular, the requirement to commit much of the spending – agree many of the projects – at an early stage of a long programme produces inflexibility. It is then very difficult to make changes or respond to new priorities. Furthermore, the SRB regime was so tied to achieving specified outputs, so rule-bound and bureaucratic, that experimentation and innovation could be stifled. Even so, despite these constraints, management of the scheme worked well. Relationships between the officers managing the scheme and project staff **improved over the course of the scheme.** Considerable efforts were made to help projects be successful but, when necessary, action was taken to change or terminate projects which were not working. Overall, the scheme was managed in a flexible and responsive way.

4. EVALUATION: OUTPUTS, THEMES AND PROJECTS

Scheme performance: outputs

The measurement and tracking of outputs was a central feature of SRB and has been an important way of judging performance. In every SRB scheme, each project proposal had to specify expected outputs, drawn from a long list of nationally-determined SRB output categories. Achievement of outputs was then monitored on a quarterly basis and reported to One NorthEast. The initial expected outputs, or original targets, would subsequently be reviewed and updated in the course of the project, and new projected outputs specified. All outputs, from all projects, were then aggregated into a single schedule in the annual Delivery Plan, which would have forecast (projected) outputs for each category for the coming year. Durham's SRB programme had over 70 specified output categories.

The full list of programme outputs is given in Appendix 2. By mid-2006, some 68% of the output categories had already exceeded original lifetime targets; 11% were deemed on target; and 21% were below target.

Table 1 highlights the most relevant and meaningful output measures. This shows that, generally, the programme has performed well in terms of attaining key outputs. Performance has been particularly good in relation to training (outputs 1C and 1E), provision of business advice (2D), dwellings with upgraded security (5B(i)), land improved or reclaimed for open space (6A), and support given to voluntary and community organisations (8A(i) and (ii)). In respect of all these output categories, original output targets were exceeded before the end of the lifetime of the programme, and expectations (projections) were raised over the course of the SRB scheme.

Performance was less good in some output categories. The number of jobs created (1A(i)) is expected to fall short of the original target – though not by a substantial margin. The number of new business start ups (2A) is well below the original lifetime target, but that partly reflects the transfer of some activities from SRB to Single Programme funding. The amount of land improved or reclaimed for development (6B) is considerably less than originally expected, owing to changes in the portfolio of projects.

TABLE 1: KEY PROGRAMME OUTPUTS 1999-2006/07

SRB Code	Output description	Original Lifetime Targets	Actual Achieved to Sept 06	Projected Lifetime to March 07
1A(i)	Jobs created	2,424.50	2,275.96	2,289.32
1C	People trained obtaining qualifications	5,840	9,653	9,679
1E	Training weeks	55,583	64,440.25	64,469.87
2A	New business start ups	584	391	391
2D	Businesses advised	2,373	4,690	4,690
5B(i)	Dwellings with security upgraded	2,833	4,079	4,079
6A	Land imp/rec – for open space	112ha	326.98ha	327.98ha
6B	Land imp/rec – for development	34.65ha	10.34ha	11.55ha
8A(i)	Voluntary orgs supported	356	2,462	2,462
8A(ii)	Community orgs supported	699	2,536	2,544

Source: SRB **Regeneration Team**, Durham County Council

There is a widespread recognition that output figures can present a very partial and limited picture. Some outputs are difficult to define and measure. In some cases, output targets may be set too low – so they do not serve to promote achievement; in other cases, they can be set too high, are over-ambitious and unattainable. Moreover, quantitative outputs often give little sense of the quality of either the programme or its constituent projects. Looking at the output records for an individual project gives only a partial indication of its performance. And outputs are often really a means to an end; it is the ultimate impacts or outcomes which really matter. That said, output measures are a starting point for a wider, qualitative evaluation.

The evaluation therefore now reviews the main themes of the programme and points to the work and qualitative achievements of projects which SRB funding has supported.

Business and economy

Issues

County Durham has experienced economic difficulties over many years and there is a continuing need to strengthen and develop the local economy. More jobs are needed to help reduce high levels of worklessness and dependence on benefits in the County. There is a relatively low stock of businesses in County Durham and self-employment rates are well below the national average. There is scope to create new businesses and foster self-employment.

The second Strategic Objective of the SRB scheme expressed a broad commitment to raising the competitiveness of businesses and the local economy. That has involved both support to develop existing businesses and also encouraging new start-ups. One NorthEast's Single Programme is now the main economic development programme in the County, but the SRB programme has had a significant economic component, and it has contributed to implementation of the Regional Economic Strategy.

Achievements

Improving the competitiveness of existing businesses. Various projects have worked with local businesses to enhance their efficiency, develop new markets and new products. SRB has helped to fund and develop business advice services offered by Business Link, the local authorities and other agencies. Business Link's 'Improving Competitiveness' thematic project provided tailored advice to SMEs on marketing and other issues, while in Teesdale UTASS, funded by SRB and other sources, helped farmers through the Foot and Mouth Disease crisis. More specialist advice was provided by

Durham University's Agility project which helped businesses in Sedgefield and Derwentside improve efficiency by, for example, reconfiguration of production processes. The Digital Factory, in Newton Aycliffe, had SRB funding to help businesses improve the technological skills of their workforce, and also offer consultancy services such as design support, software evaluation and rapid prototyping, enabling businesses to develop new product ideas.

Improving the business environment. Within several of the local SRB packages, projects were developed to improve the operating environment and foster mutual support and interaction. In Bishop Auckland, Spennymoor and Newton Aycliffe town centre management schemes were set up, while in Wear Valley and in the Durham City District retailers could apply for grants to upgrade their shop fronts and improve their premises. More generally, a wide range of small scale environmental schemes can be said to have contributed to the attractiveness, and competitiveness, of local businesses. In both Derwentside and Sedgefield, active and successful Business Forums have been established. These bring local businesses together to exchange best practice, access support and also develop trading links between local businesses. In Chester-le-Street, a Commercial manager was appointed to represent the interests and concerns of businesses and enable their involvement in the regeneration process.

Establishing new businesses. Several projects have been particularly aimed at promoting new business start-ups. As well as generic business advice services, some specialist enterprise support services were funded through SRB. The Derwentside local package included the 'Emerge' project to facilitate specifically 'e-business' start-ups through a skills development programme, including mentoring and funding support for software and equipment. One of the largest projects within this theme, Business Link's BEPICT project (Business Enterprise and Promoting ICT), was also aimed at new start businesses, helping them to obtain and use relevant ICT. And another thematic project, the 'High Growth Business Creation' project, was concerned with helping to set up new high growth businesses, then helping them to survive. In Sedgefield, a package of advice and financial support was developed which helped generate new start businesses.

Establishing community businesses. From the start of SRB, there was an interest in fostering the development of co-operatives and, more broadly, community businesses. The County Durham Co-operative Development Agency set up a thematic project to support the formation of community businesses, but the Agency subsequently went into liquidation. After that, Business Link re-established this, running the 'Community Enterprise Support' project which provided training and capacity building for local groups. There have also been community business support projects in the local SRB packages. It is fair to say that these initiatives have had limited success. However, a handful of community businesses have started up, notably the 'Chester-le-Street Furniture and Fabric Recycling Project', which has been supported through the Chester-le-Street local SRB package.

Education and lifelong learning

Issues

Educational underachievement is an important issue in County Durham. It has certainly been recognised as a key regeneration priority – hence, the previous SRB3 programme had focused on education. There is a considerable gap between educational performance in County Durham and in the rest of the country, and even lower attainment in the SRB target wards. Amongst adults, there are problems of poor literacy, numeracy and low skill levels, resulting in weak economic performance, disadvantage and worklessness. The SRB programme acknowledged that these issues were bound up with cultural attitudes; hence the third Strategic Objective was expressed in terms of the need to 'encourage a culture of learning and aspiration'. The projects have sought to do that.

Achievements

New learning opportunities. A key achievement of projects under this theme is the provision of new opportunities for people to engage in learning and to benefit from that. Most of those learning opportunities have been *additional* – not available through existing provision and unlikely to have been developed without SRB funding support.

Several of the projects have been aimed at groups of people who are under-served by existing provision, and some might be deemed 'hard-to-reach'. The SRB scheme took a refreshingly open-ended approach to education and learning, and supported a range of projects which offered formal

and informal, accredited and non-accredited opportunities. This was very much in line with the aim of 'encouraging a culture of learning'.

Making learning accessible. A key characteristic of the projects was accessibility of provision, particularly through the use of community centres, libraries and other local venues. The Integrated Access via IT project is a good example. That initiative invested in IT resources in local libraries with tutor support enabling individuals and local community groups to learn how to use IT, including remote access to services such as careers advice. In Spennymoor and Newton Aycliffe, town centre 'Learning Shops' were set up to provide both learning opportunities and advice on local educational provision. There were some small scale, locally focused projects: for example, youth projects in Cornforth and Chester-le-Street supporting the educational and personal development of young people. Several SRB projects boosted community education provision, supporting extension of courses in the community offered by FE Colleges and others. The projects recognised barriers to learning and, in particular, the Widening Participation project provided a framework for the provision of accessible learning opportunities in local communities throughout the County. That project made the case for valuing 'non-accredited' learning and supported new local provision in community venues.

Supporting learning. Projects have recognised the need to support learners, particularly disaffected school students at risk of exclusion and adults engaging with education for the first time since school. Funding from this SRB scheme supported a thematic project called Education for Social Inclusion which built on and extended good practice developed through two preceding SRB3 projects. The project has supported young people at risk of exclusion from school, working closely with young people themselves, parents, schools and a range of relevant agencies. SRB funding has also been used to provide additional support staff in schools and to establish peer-mentoring schemes. At Spennymoor School, for example, SRB funded two staff working with students to improve their attendance and educational attainment. The Family Learning Project, one of the biggest SRB-funded projects, has provided support to families to enable them to support and develop their child's learning and also to raise aspirations; that project has firmly established the concept of family learning across the County. A 'Family Learning through Football' project further developed this approach. Following a review of commitments and priorities in the latter stages of the SRB programme, substantial funding was allocated to a new project, the Primary Inclusion Project, run by the County Council. Early intervention is being targeted at younger children and their families to help develop their confidence and social skills, promote learning and also develop parenting skills.

Responding to needs. The SRB-supported community learning projects have generally sought to uncover, and respond to, local needs. In Crook and Willington, for example, local groups have been encouraged to express their needs and those have been met through local provision. The Integrated Access via IT project provided courses tailored to the personal development needs of individuals and also to the requirements of local community organisations. Within Derwentside's local SRB package, there has been an emphasis on responding to employers' skill needs, and SRB capital funding has helped establish the Centre for Engineering Enterprise at Derwentside College to train engineers for jobs in local companies. Also in Derwentside, the Training for Industry Unit was set up to upskill local businesses and their workforces.

Opportunities for progression. An underlying theme in many of these projects has been the concept of progression – for example from an initial positive experience of learning, through to obtaining qualifications, then perhaps into employment. The viability of such processes of progression – now becoming more established through new Government initiatives tackling 'worklessness' – was partially explored through this SRB programme. For example, a Next Steps Co-ordinator was placed in schools to help pupils with routes into training, work and further education. In Sedgefield, the Work Buddy Mentoring Scheme provided a 'buddy' to help individuals overcome barriers, enabling them to participate in training and employment. In addition, there have been several Intermediate Labour Market schemes, notably in Easington, Wear Valley, Derwentside and Sedgefield, combining training with work experience – leading onto employment in the mainstream labour market. A substantial thematic project, called Preparation for Adult and Working Life, has offered schools and their pupils opportunities to explore options for employment, including developing work-related learning and employability skills, and the provision of business ambassadors and mentors. That project has now evolved, leading to the establishment of a dedicated facility, the Industrial Learning Centre, in Newton Aycliffe which will offer work experience and promote employability.

Building partnerships. A feature of many of the projects in this theme has been partnership working. Most of the original project proposals involved inter-agency arrangements and new partnerships have also been developed. The Sedgefield Learning Borough project, for example, has involved the

development of extensive partnerships to deliver learning opportunities to communities, centred on local 'Learning Shops'. Among the most notable partnerships is County Durham Learning, a new partnership stimulated by the Widening Participation project, which has helped provide a structure for community learning provided by a variety of organisations. That should help sustain much of the activity within this theme.

Health and quality of life

Issues

County Durham has very substantial problems of chronic ill-health and premature mortality, linked to a wide range of factors including the legacy of heavy industry, unemployment, deprivation and unhealthy lifestyles. Life expectancy in County Durham is several years below the national average.

The fourth Strategic Objective of the SRB programme was concerned with improving health and also with the 'general quality of life for the residents of disadvantaged communities and socially excluded groups'. This part of the programme therefore also relates to crime and community safety, community development and tackling social exclusion.

Crime rates are relatively low in County Durham – well below the national average for most categories of crime; there is, nevertheless, considerable fear of crime. Substance misuse is a big problem, which has impacts both on health and crime. Local communities are less cohesive than they might be – or perhaps used to be – and some groups are evidently 'socially excluded'. There is certainly scope for community development interventions and initiatives to foster inclusion.

Improving health and quality of life has involved a wide range of projects and this is the largest component of the programme.

Achievements

Promoting healthier lifestyles. The SRB programme supported several projects aimed at tackling issues such as smoking, physical inactivity and obesity. In Teesdale, a healthy eating course was funded by SRB; Wear Valley had a 'Mobile Wellness Centre' and an 'Ageing Well' project; Easington developed a Healthy Living initiative which included courses such as 'Get Active' and 'Stress Busters'. Chester-le-Street had a Gateway to Health 'Cultural Change Worker'. Both Easington and Sedgefield have had local projects which focused on allotments – a traditional pastime which can combine exercise with healthy eating (Easington's 'Eat Well, Grow Well' project and the Fishburn allotments, part of Sedgefield's 'Passport to Health'). Such projects have fitted well with the increasing emphasis on healthy living, with many other initiatives and interventions operating alongside the SRB programme.

Tackling substance misuse. Over the past few years, more comprehensive services have been established to tackle the County's drug and substance misuse problems. SRB has contributed funding for the development of services provided by the new Drug Action Teams – services such as counselling for users. The Easington Substance Misuse Project (ESMI) has established a multi-agency centre in Peterlee, which helps to provide easier access to a wide range of support. Outreach is clearly important. In Chester-le-Street substance misuse services have been brought to local young people by using a touring information and advice bus ('ERIC') and in various locations throughout the County, detached youth workers from the 3D project have been working locally to bring advice and services to young people. In recognition of the fact that substance misuse can profoundly affect families, a Parents Support for Substance Misuse project has also been established; that project has focused on ensuring that parents of drug users have better information and are therefore more able to deal with the problems they face.

Helping to tackle crime. A few projects have been developed on this theme. In Chester-le-Street, Neighbourhood Watch was rejuvenated and some target hardening measures were implemented. The Victim Support service was also partly funded through SRB. In Sedgefield, a co-ordinator was appointed for services to deal with Domestic Violence; services include a helpline and also outreach support for victims. Easington has operated a community safety grant scheme and used SRB funding to support an Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group and a Violence Task Group. The Intergenerational Project run by Age Concern was originally conceived as a way of reducing fear of crime by enabling older people to meet young people in a learning context. It is encouraging that that project later

developed much broader aims – concerned with mutual learning and understanding, rather than focused on tackling mistrust.

Building community capacity. Many projects within this SRB programme are, in various ways, about building the ‘capacity’ of local communities. One approach is through the provision of ‘community chest’ funds to support small locally developed projects. A substantial thematic project, the Community Project Development Fund, has proved a valuable source of initial funding, enabling local communities to develop project ideas which may then be put forward for major funding from other sources. Within the local packages, the Derwentside Community Resource Network provided small grants which are allocated by local ward-based partnerships, while Teesdale has sought to strengthen local facilities and capacity through its Village Halls Development Programme. In Easington, funding from the local SRB package was invested in the development of Dawdon’s new Youth and Community Centre and in Seaham’s Surestart centre. Wear Valley provided SRB funding to support work at Bishop Auckland’s Four Clocks resource centre. And in the Durham City area, SRB funding supported a project on Developing Community Involvement through the Arts.

Strengthening support for the voluntary and community sector. Some parts of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in County Durham are weak and in some areas support for the sector has been inadequate. SRB funded a substantial thematic project to develop One Voice Network, which provides services to the VCS throughout the County and helps raise the sector’s profile. Linked to that is the Voluntary Sector Academy, which has promoted training in the VCS, brokered additional provision and improved service delivery. There has also been work and funding to strengthen local Councils for Voluntary Service, both through One Voice Network and the local packages. In particular, Chester-le-Street’s SRB programme has given considerable support to the local CVS/Volunteer Bureau, enabling it to become better established and to acquire new premises (Bullion Hall).

Promoting social inclusion. Social inclusion is one of the programme’s overarching concerns, a key aspect of many projects. This fourth Strategic Objective has several projects specifically focused on inclusion. In particular, the ‘Social Inclusion Project’ is an important thematic project, which has successfully promoted inclusive pre- and out of school play, recreation and leisure activities with disabled children and young people, and their families. That project has established new activities, approaches and local partnerships across the County. A thematic project was also set up to improve opportunities within the Deaf Community, through provision of BSL courses and research. The WEA’s Mental Health, Learning and Employment Project brought educational courses into drop-in centres for mental health service users – in many cases for the first time. Age Concern’s Intergenerational Programme sought to overcome barriers by enabling younger people to learn from older people – and vice versa. Exclusion can take many forms and derives from a variety of circumstances. This part of the programme has also included support for welfare rights advice on an outreach basis through Citizen’s Advice Bureaux in Durham and Chester-le-Street; tackling financial exclusion through supporting Credit Unions; a community transport scheme to help reduce geographical exclusion; and a strategic organisation to help address problems of youth homelessness.

Youth Work. There was a considerable emphasis in the whole of this SRB programme on supporting young people. The fourth Strategic Objective included several youth work projects. There were substantial outreach and detached youth projects in Derwentside and Wear Valley, as well as a thematic, multi-agency project called ‘3D’ which operated in successive target areas.

Regeneration of Parkside and Dawdon. This Strategic Objective also included a major capital project in Easington, involving substantial investment in the physical regeneration of Dawdon and the adjacent Parkside estate. In Dawdon environmental works, selective demolition, housing refurbishment and community development initiatives have helped stabilise and sustain this former pit village. At Parkside, SRB grant supported extensive refurbishment of social housing together with clearance and redevelopment. New private sector housing at Parkside has sold well, helping to secure the area’s longer term future. In fact, the success of the private sector development is such that the SRB grant to gap fund the scheme is subject to ‘clawback’ provisions.

Environment

Issues

For many years, County Durham has been tackling the environmental consequences of industrialisation and de-industrialisation. Throughout the County, pit heaps and derelict industrial sites have been reclaimed, landscapes restored and waste land brought back into use. But although a great deal of progress has been made, there are still many examples of outdated environments and eyesores.

The fifth Strategic Objective was couched in terms of creating more 'sustainable environments so as to make County Durham a better place to live and work'. That has involved environmental improvement schemes to help make places more attractive and therefore more sustainable in the longer term. In addition, it also linked to ecological issues such as conservation and recycling.

Achievements

Improving the physical environment. The SRB programme has supported many environmental improvement projects, including landscaping small derelict sites, community gardens and allotments, restoring parks, developing play areas, installing public art, and improving 'gateway' sites. In the former pit villages surrounding Durham City, for example, the 'Improving the Heart of the Villages' project funded numerous small scale initiatives, in many cases dealing with eyesores identified by local residents. Similar work was undertaken in Wear Valley, for example at Crook and Willington and, in the Sedgefield District, at Dean Bank and Ferryhill. Many of these environmental works have involved the County's two Groundwork organisations and several of them have been linked to ILM schemes, providing opportunities for unemployed people. In Easington District, environmental improvements were an important component in reviving Dawdon and the Parkside estate, where much has been achieved in rebuilding confidence, restoring demand, and thus securing the long term sustainability of these areas.

Improving and enhancing business premises. Businesses have benefited directly from SRB support for improvements to their premises. For example, grants were available for improvements to shop fronts and business accommodation in Crook and Bishop Auckland and environmental improvement has been an element of town centre management schemes in Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor. SRB funding has also supported the Green Lane Industrial Estate renewal scheme in Spennymoor.

Supporting sustainability. SRB funding proved valuable in supporting the development of a more ecologically responsible approach. Teesdale Conservation Volunteers implemented a very successful community composting programme. Also in Teesdale, the Groundwork Youth Project has worked with marginalised young people in Cockfield and Evenwood, supporting their involvement in local environmental regeneration projects. A similar project, called 'Young Voices' has operated in Wear Valley. And in Chester-le-Street, the furniture and fabric recycling scheme has demonstrated considerable potential.

Sustainable transport. Under this Strategic Objective, SRB has supported public transport improvements. A thematic project, 'Public Transport Access in County Durham', was included in the programme and there have also been some local package projects, for example the South Derwentside Bus Link and the Weardale Nursery Bus and Community Transport in Easington.

ICT Broadband. One of the biggest projects in the whole scheme has been investment in development of ICT infrastructure through the broadband network, enabling easier access to information and virtual services.

5. LESSONS: LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

There are certainly important lessons to be learnt from the experience of designing, managing and implementing this SRB scheme and its constituent projects. This large scheme has provided many opportunities to try out different approaches and methods – and establish what works and what doesn't. Here we draw out ten lessons which have general applicability and relevance. It is to be hoped that these lessons will help to shape future regeneration programmes in County Durham.

1. **Regeneration programmes should exploit potential linkages, developing opportunities for supportive relationships between agencies, projects and programmes.**

It is now widely understood that complex and interrelated problems require an holistic approach, and that much more can be achieved by agencies working together, in partnership. That was recognised in the initial design of this SRB programme, but integration has only partly been achieved. Certainly, some of the projects have exploited potential linkages, successfully drawing together different agencies and interests, to tackle neighbourhood problems, for example, or refurbish community buildings. Some of the most effective projects were those which co-ordinated the work of similar organisations, in order to help them plan and direct their services better. **Several project managers stated that running an SRB project had stimulated partnership working, and that this had proved a lasting benefit.**

But opportunities to link local and thematic projects were often missed, as were opportunities to share experiences and lessons. One of the drawbacks of the SRB regime is that, **with limited and changing staff resources**, there tends to be such an emphasis on getting projects up and running that co-ordination may get left until later and not accorded sufficient priority. Several conferences and training events were organised to bring project workers together, the evaluation programme has included the organisation of several 'round table' seminars, and two practitioner websites have been developed. But there were, nevertheless, instances of projects 're-inventing the wheel', failing to take advantage of potential synergies and also there were some inter-agency rivalries. The most effective projects identified which partners they should work closely with and made an effort to engage well with them.

As well as difficulties with integration within the SRB programme, there were insufficient links to other programmes involved in regeneration, such as European programmes, One NorthEast's Single Programme, and the Rural Development Programme. **It would have been useful to have** a countywide regeneration strategy, which had been drafted but was not completed or agreed, probably held back the development of such linkages. Nevertheless, there have been examples of effective linkages. In Seaham, for example, SRB-funded projects tied into a larger process of regeneration involving a variety of projects and partners.

One of the lessons from this SRB programme is that considerable effort needs to be invested in developing structures and processes to encourage and support integration, collaboration, partnership and synergy.

2. Community involvement in regeneration programmes needs to be thought through, built into the programme and given substantial support.

Community involvement is an essential ingredient of successful regeneration programmes. It is especially important in schemes – such as this one – which have a strong emphasis on community development and social change. Effective community regeneration is much more likely to be achieved when communities are able to articulate their needs, can help shape programmes and projects, and are involved in review and scrutiny processes. And engagement needs to be sustained right through the programme – and beyond.

The County Durham SRB scheme included a stated commitment to community involvement, but the structures and processes to deliver that should have been more fully developed. Many of the District Councils, as well as the County, had limited experience of community development and lacked either appropriate staff or an internal culture that promoted listening and community engagement. Practice was uneven – for some there was a steep learning curve.

There was limited direct community involvement in drawing up the SRB bids. Most decisions about funding the thematic projects had little input from the community; those decisions were mainly taken by the local authorities and other partner agencies. However, most of the local package partnership boards had some community representation which helped to shape those locally focused programmes. Durham City, for example, established the Twelve Villages Community Network, comprising community representatives from across the District, which has significantly influenced the direction and composition of the SRB6 programme. Easington's SRB partnership later turned into the funding strategy group of the Local Strategic Partnership. **In Derwentside a network of ward-based community partnerships was created to make decisions on small community grants, and this subsequently helped in the establishment of a Community Network.** At the project level, some projects did manage to involve local residents in various ways, by serving on steering groups or providing structured feedback. In other cases, communities tended to be only consumers of services, not involved in shaping or delivering them.

Over the second half of the SRB programme, more effort was put into trying to develop community involvement. For example, attempts were made to find people who would serve as community representatives on the overarching SRB partnership board, some officer support was provided for them, and their expenses reimbursed. That had limited success – but by the final year, both the chair and vice-chair were community representatives.

The lesson from experience is, essentially, that community involvement has to be designed into a regeneration programme from the start – and then followed through with appropriate and effective support.

3. Diverse programmes can serve diverse needs – but can consequently lack coherence and profile.

In County Durham, SRB was used to fund many things, to plug gaps and tackle a wide range of problems. That can be seen as a strength, in that it was able to reach many different needs and many communities. Since this was the first large-scale countywide regeneration programme in Durham, it was understandable that the 'jam should be spread thinly'. It can be argued that greater impact might have been achieved through greater concentration of resources, but that would almost certainly not have been politically realistic or acceptable.

The key point, however, is that a diverse programme such as this one can lack coherence and that makes it difficult both to develop connections and give it clear sense of direction and purpose. While some of the local packages had an evident focus and identity, the scheme as a whole did not. Consequently, the scheme had little profile, little visibility. That was not helped by poor publicity at all levels. There was, therefore, no clear 'message' that the County was undergoing this process of regeneration. There was limited scope to promote the idea of change and progress – and such a message can be valuable in generating both optimism and renewal, and can encourage both communities and agencies in their efforts to make regeneration work.

4. Monitoring and evaluation can be used to improve projects and programmes – as well as just keeping track of outputs.

The 'output culture' of SRB has produced a somewhat bureaucratic approach to performance, and can result in excessive emphasis on delivering agreed quantitative outputs. That can mean that the programme managers overseeing the scheme end up having a limited role, primarily 'policing' projects to secure outputs and so meet government requirements.

In the County Durham scheme, there has been a strong focus on monitoring outputs, but package managers did help projects to develop their activities and improve performance. They sought to combine the two roles of 'policing' and 'enabling'.

Some projects had little appreciation of the value of monitoring and evaluation as tools to improve their practice. Monitoring outputs was regarded by some as something that had to be tolerated but was not really of much practical use. But others developed systems to capture both quantitative and qualitative outputs and outcomes, and engaged positively in evaluation and reflection. They recognised that it was important to assess what they did – for example, find out whether they were reaching their target clients and meeting needs effectively, and whether their interventions were having a longer term impact.

The overall SRB evaluation project was used by the central co-ordination team to help review the programme and its management. The evaluation project also brought together assessments from individual project evaluations with the aim of disseminating good practice. A number of the projects worked closely with the evaluators, taking the opportunity to learn from external assessment. However, both monitoring and evaluation could have been further developed, and linked to a more explicit effort to encourage learning from practice within the SRB programme.

5. Good projects are well-designed, aim to meet well-researched needs, are accessible, and have committed staff.

Over the course of the evaluation, it became increasingly clear that there were certain ingredients for success common to many of the most effective projects. These ingredients do not, of course, guarantee success and are not the only factors – but they are important and helpful.

The design of a project is evidently important; it needs to be thought through in relation to aims, objectives and delivery mechanisms. While some things can be anticipated and planned for, once the project is underway it may become apparent that it needs to be changed. It may be overtaken by events, perhaps as a result of wider policy changes. It may turn out that the project's approach to a problem is the wrong one, and does not work. Re-designing a project on the basis of experience and feedback is sometimes necessary. The best projects evolve; they keep aware of external changes and respond to challenges. They can be opportunistic, but also act strategically. In the County Durham scheme, some projects certainly did revise their plans – acknowledging, for example, that output forecasts set at the start were no longer appropriate, or that there needed to be a change of focus because other agencies had become involved in the area of activity.

Along with good design, there should be clear understanding of what is needed. Building on previous experience will be helpful, as will research and feasibility studies. Community involvement and input can also be invaluable.

It is especially important to ensure that services are accessible, and community projects often need to be locally-based. County Durham is characterised by dispersed settlement, relatively low car ownership, limited and expensive public transport, and a degree of parochialism. Accessibility can also mean recognising and removing barriers, by ensuring ease of access for disabled people, tailoring services to individual needs and requirements, and offering services in buildings which are familiar and non-threatening. Lifelong learning projects, for example, have needed to use venues which are welcoming, not off-putting, and which are not too reminiscent of school.

And good projects have good staff and management – people committed to the project, who are competent and knowledgeable. Continuity is helpful as well; high staff turnover can undermine projects. Where services are provided to local communities, it is evidently important that staff are welcoming and are seen to value their clients. Building up credibility and trust is also important, especially where there has been local experience of short-term, perhaps ineffective, projects in the past.

6. Small projects are risky – but can make a big difference.

There are particular risks inherent to small projects. Small scale projects are highly dependent upon their staff – in some cases, only one individual. If staff become ill or leave, the whole project can be in serious difficulty. Some small projects are very ‘personality dependent’, their success stemming primarily from the enthusiasm, commitment and know-how of a key person. Such projects can fail if that key person leaves. Staff working in these projects can also be very isolated and feel unsupported. In addition, the SRB regime is not particularly well suited to small organisations, not least because payment of SRB grant in arrears can create major cash flow problems in organisations without considerable financial resources.

But it is also apparent that small scale projects and small organisations can make a big difference. Small projects can be very suited to meeting particular needs. Neighbourhood healthy living initiatives, for instance, can reach specific communities and be very responsive. Another example is a project, delivered by only one worker, which successfully promoted and co-ordinated changes in the way services are delivered to disabled children and their carers. Small projects can represent very good value for money. It is important, however, to be realistic about what a small project can achieve. It is also important to ensure that lone workers, in particular, have good organisational and professional support, networking opportunities, and also access to training and to national good practice. Small projects often work best when embedded in a larger organisation with the capacity to provide management and administrative support, and provision to cover for absences or staff changes.

Small projects and initiatives should be accommodated within regeneration programmes. This SRB scheme has done that, not just by supporting small, single projects but also through community chest grants which have been able to reach the smallest community organisations operating at the neighbourhood level. (The Appendix of evaluation reports includes several smaller projects that have proven their value).

7. Geographical targeting makes sense – but can create problems and can have unintended consequences.

The County Durham SRB scheme was targeted on deprived areas. Even though that actually meant that most of the County’s wards were included in the scheme, the exclusion of a few wards created some difficulties. For example, at least one thematic project offering lifelong learning opportunities had to spend a great deal of time collating and monitoring the addresses of participants on its courses to establish exactly how many were from the ‘eligible’ wards. Some projects, such as those providing training or employment opportunities, had to resolve difficulties arising from people, perhaps with unsettled lifestyles, who risked being ‘dropped’ by projects because they moved out of a target area. Furthermore, targeting on particular areas can mean excluding disadvantaged people who happen to live in less deprived areas. It can also mean that provision is not made in more affluent areas – central Durham City, for example – even though that provision may serve disadvantaged individuals.

Most of the local packages were targeted on just parts of their District Council areas, on particular wards or villages. While that had some justification, principally in terms of concentrating resources to maximise impact, it could be regarded as unfair – excluding areas and individuals also having considerable problems and needs.

The structure of the scheme could generate conflicts about resource allocation. Districts voiced some concerns about whether they were receiving their ‘fair’ share of activities undertaken by some thematic projects – and it was sometimes necessary to resist claims for small and unviable activities in specific areas.

The lesson here is, simply, that both the advantages and disadvantages of geographical targeting need to be considered when designing a regeneration programme.

8. The SRB programme provided opportunities for innovation and experimentation, but in practice those opportunities were quite constrained.

The SRB regime has often been presented as an opportunity to test out new ideas, do things differently, be innovative and possibly change accepted practice. In County Durham the scheme was used to fund projects which differed from the mainstream and involved some risk. But from the start it was clear that the scheme must deliver the agreed output targets – and that would inevitably limit risk-taking. That could also mean a tendency to fund larger statutory sector projects rather than small projects from the voluntary sector which could be perceived as carrying greater risk. A further

constraint was the inflexibility of the programme, especially the fact that most of the decisions about projects are taken at the start, leaving little scope for later experimentation or responsiveness to emerging needs and challenges.

Thus, the lesson here is perhaps that regeneration programmes need to strike a balance between taking risks, being innovative, and undertaking more conventional projects which are very likely to deliver the outputs.

9. Things often take longer than expected.

This lesson is probably widely understood but nevertheless needs to be acknowledged and restated. Many regeneration programmes have found that capital schemes, in particular, can take much longer than expected and planned. In the County Durham SRB scheme that was especially evident in relation to the housing development project at Parkside, Dawdon, which had to contend with serious delays as a result of changes to funding regimes, legal challenges and processes, some local opposition, and the takeover of the original developer. It was fortunate that this SRB scheme as a whole lasted long enough, and was big enough, to deal with those delays, ultimately delivering a successful development. But capital building schemes do not fit easily with a scheme like SRB which places great emphasis on meeting annual spending targets.

Delays are not just confined to capital projects. As some of the revenue projects found, appointing staff can take a long time, and that process can be extended when criminal records checks are also needed. Appointing staff can not only delay the start of projects but also, later, cause significant disruption during the lifetime of a project. Limited life projects have particular difficulty recruiting and retaining high quality staff, especially towards the end of their funding when staff tend to leave to secure future employment.

10. Projects need to plan ahead – as early as is practicable – for exit or succession.

Some regeneration projects come to a natural end: a building is completed, a need has been met, or perhaps the project has not been particularly successful and should end when SRB funding ceases. In many other cases, however, it is desirable, even necessary, to try to continue projects because they are still needed.

On the whole, the County Durham SRB scheme has dealt with these issues reasonably well. Where projects closed down, exit arrangements have generally been efficiently undertaken, with orderly closure of operations. In other cases, succession arrangements have involved sponsor organisations mainstreaming and maintaining the work of a project, or projects have sought new external funding in order to continue. In the last two years of the scheme, the SRB Co-ordination Project assisted projects with planning exit/succession, both through training sessions and advice to individual projects.

The main lesson from experience is that projects need to plan ahead – take decisions about exit or succession and identify funding sources. That should be done as early as is practicable, so as to reduce, if at all possible, some of the uncertainty which can undermine projects. If the intention is to continue, project staff should develop realistic business plans and also gather evidence to support continuation, build alliances with partner agencies, and explore funding options. Projects need to be enterprising, agile and responsive to new opportunities. Succession is most likely to be secured where projects have been well integrated and embedded into the work of their sponsor agencies and their contribution has been visible and acknowledged, and they are well positioned in relation to the current policy context. However, it has to be recognised that time-limited programmes such as SRB will produce disappointments, and some valuable projects will be lost when funding ceases.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Impacts and legacy

This SRB scheme has supported many disadvantaged people and communities and has made a real difference. It will leave a legacy of improvements in people's lives and better service provision. Longer term, it can be seen as part of a wider and ongoing process of 'cultural change' in County Durham.

The scheme has sought to realise the vision set at the start, and the projects generally fitted the Strategic Objectives. It was well managed and most output targets were achieved. SRB paid for things that needed doing which were not likely – perhaps were not able to be – funded from mainstream budgets. Some of those interventions were innovative. It did not duplicate existing provision. At times, however, SRB funded things which, arguably, should have been funded from mainstream sources.

Funding was spread across many projects and many places, and an attempt was made to tackle a very wide range of problems and issues. That has meant that impacts have been widely distributed across the County. It has touched the lives of many people, one way or another – though many of those benefiting will have been quite unaware of SRB as the source of funding. The scheme may have lacked coherence, but fragmentation did help to make it sensitive to local needs, able to support very small scale initiatives and reach excluded, marginalised individuals and communities. To summarise, this SRB scheme has:

- Improved the lives of socially excluded people. Examples of that include ILM projects helping to bring people back into the labour market, and initiatives which have helped people to learn new skills, develop their interests and gain confidence.
- Improved living conditions and the environment. Examples include environmental schemes, housing improvement and renewal, and community safety initiatives.
- Improved community facilities, such as community centres, local schools, sports and leisure facilities, helping to make them operate more effectively and enhance their sustainability.
- Built regeneration capacity. Through SRB, the local authorities, other public agencies and the voluntary sector have learnt about delivering regeneration, working together and co-ordinating their activities. Community capacity and involvement in regeneration has also developed.

Having proved their worth, a number of projects have secured succession, and their work has continued (or will continue) after the ending of SRB funding. Examples of thematic projects which have developed further and have continued to operate include:

- Family Learning projects – now well established; expected to continue with mainstream LEA funding support.
- Developing the Capacity of the Voluntary Sector – One Voice Network has continued, with Change-Up funding; the Voluntary Sector Academy is well established, with **Learning and Skills Council** funding.
- Parent Support for Substance Misuse project – is to be mainstreamed and incorporated into the work of **Drug and Alcohol Action Team**.
- Widening Participation project – continues, with co-financing support from the European Social Fund.
- Preparation for Adult and Working Life – this project has now developed further, and has led on to the establishment of a new Industrial Training Centre.

Some Local Package projects have also secured succession. In Derwentside, for example, the Government's new LEGI scheme (Local Enterprise Growth Initiative) is expected to help fund various business initiatives such as the Engineering Forum and ICT incentives for small firms. The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is being used to provide small grants, continuing the work of the Community Resource Network. In Easington, Healthy Living Centres have been mainstreamed by the Primary Care Trust, Groundwork has developed new environmental projects, building on work previously funded by SRB, and the Community Transport project is still operating. In Chester-le-Street, CVS projects have obtained continuation funding as has the outreach work of Victim Support, and the Furniture and Fabric Recycling Scheme is also still running. In Durham City, community development and regeneration work begun under SRB has been mainstreamed and extended across the whole District. In Sedgefield District, town centre management arrangements have been mainstreamed and financial support for business, which was previously funded by SRB, has been continued, with local authority funding. In addition, environmental projects, refurbishments of community facilities and business premises, and other capital schemes, are of lasting benefit – no

longer needing the support of 'projects', but maintained as part of the lasting legacy of the SRB scheme.

Looking to the future

The Strategic Vision of this SRB scheme expressed the need to 'achieve sustainable improvements in the overall social well-being, environmental quality and economic competitiveness of the area'. There are indications that many of the improvements brought about by SRB can, and will, be sustained beyond the ending of SRB. Over the longer term, those improvements not only need to be sustained but also built on and further developed.

There is still a great deal to be done. County Durham has experienced substantial improvements in recent years, benefiting from national economic growth and from public policy initiatives, including this SRB scheme. But the County is still disadvantaged relative to much of the country, with problems of worklessness, a low skill and low wage economy, and poor health. It has many of the same problems now as it had when SRB began – but real improvements have been made.

The SRB programme should be seen as a part – an important part – of a process. County Durham is continuing to undergo a process of economic adjustment, renewal and regeneration. The overarching aim can be conceived as bringing about a change in the culture of the County to deliver sustainable development, promote opportunity and – in the words of the SRB Strategic Vision – to enable 'a full and satisfying quality of life for the people of County Durham'. That cultural change has many components and dimensions, including the development of a learning culture, a more enterprising culture, healthier lifestyles, greater community involvement and changes in institutional cultures.

Some of the structures are in place to maintain the momentum and deliver regeneration in the future. All the Districts have LSPs and there are also local community networks in some areas and local partnerships. But the strength and quality of those arrangements varies – generally best developed in the more disadvantaged Districts where LSPs have access to funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. There is a County Strategic Partnership and, at that level, also a partnership body overseeing the delivery of the recently introduced Local Area Agreement. In addition, there is a great array of partnership arrangements covering many different issues and interests. It can be said that SRB helped develop partnership approaches in County Durham and that now, several years on, that way of working is reasonably well established.

SRB has not been replaced by a new funding regime – as often happened in the past when time-limited schemes came to an end. Many agencies and organisations do miss SRB, which had been a valuable additional resource that could be tapped relatively easily and was especially useful for funding small, local initiatives. And there are concerns that the public policy agenda has shifted away from social and community regeneration and towards a more narrow focus on economic development. However, in some parts of the County at least, NRF and LEGI funding is available and government has funded new initiatives in areas such as worklessness, employability and public health – key themes in the SRB programme. Furthermore, there has been a move towards the re-orientation of mainstream funding in support of regeneration, through neighbourhood management schemes and, most notably, the Local Area Agreement. These are promising developments which can help tackle issues of deprivation, disadvantage and social inclusion, building on the work and experience of the SRB programme.

SRB FUNDING PROFILE 1999-2007									
	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	Total
Capital	400,572	1,520,461	3,357,994	3,038,357	2,799,420	1,269,929	578,527	233,362	13,198,622
Revenue	432,988	2,383,882	4,649,281	5,692,219	6,259,745	5,227,822	3,585,227	1,271,245	29,502,409
Admin	76,281	222,293	333,331	390,321	364,756	320,842	246,194	201,555	2,155,573
Total	909,841	4,126,636	8,340,606	9,120,897	9,423,921	6,818,593	4,409,948	1,706,162	44,856,604

APPENDIX 2

CODE	OUTPUT DESCRIPTION	LIFETIME Original Commitment	LIFETIME Actual up to and including Q2 2006-07	LIFETIME Projected outputs at 31st March 2007
1A(i)	Number of jobs created	2,424.50	2,275.96	2,289.32
1A(ii)	Number of jobs safeguarded	458	545.45	545.45
1A(iii)	Number of jobs : construction weeks	22,000	13,055.30	13,055.30
1B	Number of pupils benefiting from projects designed to enhance/improve attainment	2,131	22,890	23,412
1C	Number of people trained obtaining qualifications	5,840	9,653	9,679
1D	Number of residents of target areas accessing employment through training, advice or specially targeted assistance	1,102	1107.5	1109.5
1E	Number of training weeks	55,583	64,440.25	64,469.87
1F(i)	Number of trained people obtaining jobs	293	456	456
1F(ii)	Number of these who were formally unemployed	198	163	163
1G(i)	Number of people entering self employment	46	495	499
1G(ii)	Number of unemployed people entering self employment	50	135	135
1I	Number from disadvantaged groups being targeted who obtain a job e.g. the disabled	52	98.6	98.6
1J	Number of young people benefiting from projects to promote personal and social development	16,239	52,893.65	54,143.65
1K(i)	Number of employers involved in collaborative projects with education to improve student performance	264	565	565
1K(ii)	Number of students involved in collaborative projects	5,925	56,762	56,762
1L(i)	Numbers of teachers on placements into business	35	89	89
2A	Number of new business start ups	584	391	391
2B(i)	Area of new business/commercial floorspace	2,300	9,571	9,571
2B(II)	Area of improved business/commercial floorspace	6,810	12,063	12,063
2C(i)	Number of new Businesses Supported	583	349	349
2C(ii)	New Businesses that survive 52 weeks	387	148	148
2C(iii)	New Businesses that survive 78 weeks	266	69	69
2D	Number of businesses advised	2,373	4,690	4,690
3A(i)	Number of private sector dwellings completed	565	73	73
3A(ii)	No of private sector dwellings improved	227	326	326
3A(iii)	No of local authority dwellings completed	7	0	0
3A(iv)	Local authority houses improved	300	255	255
3A(v)	No of housing association completed	0	12	12
3C(i)	Homes with reduced costs	438	795	795
3C(ii)	Number of dwellings subject to energy efficiency initiatives	317	233	233
3D	No of empty dwellings brought back into use	25	118	118
3E	Reduction Diff to let dwellings	545	338	338

CODE	OUTPUT DESCRIPTION	LIFETIME Original Commitment	LIFETIME Actual up to and including Q2 2006-07	LIFETIME Projected outputs at 31st March 2007
5A(i)	Total number of beneficiaries of Community Safety Initiatives	23,420	95,150	95,150
5A(ii)	Number of total aged over 60	3,455	65,504	65,504
5A(iii)	Number of total who are females	6,050	12,114	12,114
5B(i)	Number of dwellings where security is upgraded	2,833	4,079	4,079
5B(ii)	Number of commercial buildings where security is upgraded	25	48	48
5C	Number of community safety initiatives	110	441	441
5D(i)	Number of youth crime prevention initiatives	41	315	315
5D(ii)	Numbers attending youth crime prevention initiatives	3,475	6,872	6,878
6A	Hectares of land improved/reclaimed for open space	112	326.98	327.98
6B	Hectares of land improved/reclaimed/serviced for development	34.65	10.34	11.55
6C	Number of buildings improved and brought back into use	140	134	134
6D(i)	KM of road built	2.16	0.5	0.5
6D(ii)	KM of roads improved	3.18	6.98	6.98
6E	Number of traffic calming schemes	19	18.5	18.5
6F	Waste management / recycling schemes.	15	5	5
6G	Env.impr projects	6	35.5	36.5
6H	Action Plan for env. project	6	14.5	14.5
7A(i)	Number of local people given access to new health opportunities/facilities	11,090	21,101	21,779
7A(ii)	Number of people with access to new sports facilities	7,686	7,935	7,935
7A(iii)	Number of local people given access to new cultural opportunities/facilities	7,686	67,177	67,177
7A(iv)	Number of new health facilities	9	50	50
7A(v)	Number of new sports facilities	3	2	2
7A(vi)	Number of new cultural facilities	13	11	11
7B(i)	Numbers using improved health facilities	628	796	796
7B(ii)	Numbers using improved sports facilities	800	13,405	13,405
7B(iii)	Numbers using improved cultural facilities	83,750	11,079	11,079
7B(iv)	Number of community health facilities improved	2	72	72
7B(v)	Number of community sports facilities improved	3	22	22
7B(vi)	Number of community cultural facilities improved	34	38	38

CODE	OUTPUT DESCRIPTION	LIFETIME Original Commitment	LIFETIME Actual up to and including Q2 2006-07	LIFETIME Projected outputs at 31st March 2007
8A(i)	Number of voluntary organisations supported	356	2,462	2,462
8A(ii)	Number of community groups supported	699	2,536	2,544
8C	Numbers of individuals employed in voluntary work	2,666	6,903.65	7,115.65
8D	Number of local employers with employee volunteering schemes	5	76	76
8E	Number of Community Enterprise Start ups	36	60.5	62.5
8F	Capacity Building Initiatives	702	1546	1563
10A	Number of new child minding / child care places provided	463	966	967
11A	The number of people benefiting from community transport scheme	139	28,735.70	28,735.70
11B	Number of residents of target area receiving careers information, advice and guidance	0	1,364	1,364
12A	Number of school clusters supported.	1,200	2	2
13A	Number of additional credit union members	150	0	0
14A	No of ICT Broadband nodes established	11	11	11
15A	Feasibility Study Completed		1	1

Major Applications Profile

Major Allocations DPD		
DOCUMENT DETAILS.		
Role and Subject	The document will set out the specific locations for major developments, including housing, employment, retail, recreation, tourism, community facilities and renewable energy. This will include specific requirements for each site.	
Geographic coverage	The whole of Wear Valley District area minus the Area Action Plan area.	
Status	<i>Development Plan Document</i>	
Conformity	General conformity with national Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes, the Regional Spatial Strategy and the District's Community Plan and <i>Core Strategy</i> .	
TIMETABLE.		
* Including Key milestones.	Dates	Stage
	April 2008	<i>Commencement of DPD production. *</i>
	Dec 2008	Preparation of issues & alternative options and initial Sustainability Appraisal report
	Nov 2009	<i>Engagement on preferred options and formal SA report. *</i>
		Consideration of representations & discussions with community & stakeholders
		Preparation of Submission document and amendments to Sustainability Appraisal report
	July 2010	<i>Submission of DPD to Secretary of State & Sustainability Appraisal report. *</i>
	July 2010	Public consultation on submission DPD & Sustainability Appraisal report
	Nov 2010	Pre examination consideration of representations
	Jan 2011	<i>Pre examination meeting. *</i>
	Mar 2011	<i>Commencement of examination. *</i>
	Dec 2011	Receipt of binding Inspectors report.
Feb 2012	<i>Adoption & publication of document & revised proposals map.*</i>	
	Lead organisation	Wear Valley District Council Forward Planning Team
	Management Arrangements	LDF Project Management Board will report to Members of Wear Valley District Council Regeneration Committee.
	Evidence	Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes; Council Plan; Community Plan and associated background work including community appraisals; Urban Capacity Study; Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; Housing Needs Study; Housing Stock Condition Survey; Strategic Housing Market Assessment; Durham Coal Field Housing Study; Retail Study; County Durham Employment Land Study; Economic Strategy; Employment Land Review; Open Space Strategy; Census; District Demographics; Community Facility Survey, Contaminated Land Study, Local Transport Plan; Conservation Area Character Appraisals; Landscape Character Assessment and associated strategy; Biodiversity Action Plan; North Pennine AONB Management Plan.
	Resources	Wear Valley District Council's Forward Planning Team, including SA Officers and the provision of GIS technical assistance/administrative support. Expertise from the Development Control and Economic Regeneration Sections and cross-departmental working with Community Departments will be required. Consultancy assistance in relation to the Conservation Area Character Appraisal, Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Housing Needs Study and Open Space Strategy required. Printing, consultant & consultation costs.
	Community and Stakeholder Involvement	Major Allocations DPD will be produced in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement. Particular interest groups and sub groups of the Local Strategic Partnership will also be involved.
POST PRODUCTION.		
Monitoring	To be monitored through the <i>Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)</i>	
Review	Where a need is highlighted through the <i>AMR</i> or every Five years, whichever is earlier.	

North Pennines AONB SPD profiles

North Pennines AONB Planning Guidelines		
DOCUMENT DETAILS		
Role and Subject	The SPD will provide guidelines for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty and character of the North Pennines AONB.	
Geographic coverage	The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	
Status	<i>Supplementary Planning Document</i>	
Conformity	General conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy, the District's Community Plan, <i>Core Strategy</i> and national Planning Policy Statements & Guidance.	
TIMETABLE		
* Including Key milestones.	Dates	Stage
	Oct 2006	<i>Commencement of SPD production. *</i>
		Preparation of draft Supplementary Planning Document and Sustainability Appraisal Report.
		<i>Engagement on preferred options and formal SA report. *</i>
		Consideration of representations & discussions with community & stakeholders
		Preparation of Submission Draft of Supplementary Planning Document <i>Adoption & publication of document & revised proposals map.*</i>
ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRODUCTION.		
Lead organisation	North Pennines AONB Partnership Planning Guidelines Steering Group and the Council's Principle Forward Planning Officer.	
Management Arrangements	The North Pennines AONB Partnership and the LDF Project Management Board which will subsequently report to Members of Wear Valley District Council Regeneration Committee.	
Evidence Resources	North Pennine AONB Management Plan Community Plan	
Community and Stakeholder Involvement	To be produced in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement. Particular interest groups and sub groups of the Local Strategic Partnership will also be involved.	
POST PRODUCTION.		
Monitoring	To be monitored through the <i>Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)</i>	
Review	Where a need is highlighted through the <i>AMR</i> or every Five years, whichever is earlier.	

NB – All the partners need to adhere to the same timetable. The dates were still under discussion with partner authorities at the time of preparing this report.

North Pennines Building Design Guidance

DOCUMENT DETAILS		
Role and Subject	The SPD will provide detailed advice and guidance on the design of new buildings, agricultural buildings and conversions of existing structures in the North Pennines AONB, to help ensure that they contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the character of the area.	
Geographic coverage	The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	
Status	<i>Supplementary Planning Document</i>	
Conformity	General conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy, the District's Community Plan, <i>Core Strategy</i> and national Planning Policy Statements & Guidance.	
TIMETABLE		
* Including Key milestones.	Dates	Stage
	<i>Oct 2007</i>	<i>Commencement of SPD production. *</i>
		Preparation of draft Supplementary Planning Document and Sustainability Appraisal Report.
		<i>Engagement on preferred options and formal SA report. *</i>
		Consideration of representations & discussions with community & stakeholders
		Preparation of Submission Draft of Supplementary Planning Document
		<i>Adoption & publication of document & revised proposals map. *</i>
ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRODUCTION.		
	Lead organisation	North Pennines AONB Partnership Planning Guidelines Steering Group and the Council's Principle Forward Planning Officer
	Management Arrangements	The North Pennines AONB Partnership and the LDF Project Management Board which will subsequently report to Members of Wear Valley District Council Regeneration Committee.
	Evidence	North Pennines AONB Management Plan, North Pennines AONB Building Design Guide [Good Practice in the Design, Adaption and Maintenance of Buildings] and North Pennines AONB Agricultural Development Design Guide
	Resources	North Pennines AONB Partnership Core Staff, the Council's Forward Planning Team and potentially consultants
	Community and Stakeholder Involvement	To be produced in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement. Particular interest groups and sub groups of the Local Strategic Partnership will also be involved.
POST PRODUCTION.		
Monitoring	To be monitored through the <i>Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)</i>	
Review	Where a need is highlighted through the <i>AMR</i> or every Five years, whichever is earlier.	

NB – All the partners need to adhere to the same timetable. The dates were still under discussion with partner authorities at the time of preparing this report.

Risk Assessment

Potential constraints on progress with Local Development Documents

The main areas of risk in preparing the Local Development Framework are likely to be:

- **Staff Resources**

Staff turnover has increased and a regional problem is arising in finding good calibre, experienced staff to fill posts. If key experienced staff cannot be retained or recruited there would be serious repercussions on delivering the programme set out in this document. Long term-sickness of staff within the Forward Plans Team could also impact upon the delivery of the Local Development Framework. The ways in which these issues could be minimised are through collaboration with neighbouring authorities and, where appropriate and necessary, the appointment of consultants. Additionally, due to the nature of the process, there may be 'peaks and troughs' with regard to manpower required; this may allow the Council to use existing staff resources in a more flexible manner.

- **The capacity of the Planning Inspectorate, other statutory consultees and key partners**

Any such lack of capacity is outside the local authority's control but this national problem has been identified and other agencies are aware of the ramifications. Failure by key partners to deliver in accordance with the programme is another potential risk. Examples include the reliance upon other Council departments and partners for information or slippage in the production of key strategies and programmes which are required to inform the content of local development documents. The Council intends to ensure that the Local Development Scheme is circulated to all relevant bodies in the interests of effective programme management for all involved.

- **Robustness of the development plan documents**

A new system has been introduced and it is imperative that the local development documents are well founded and solidly based on good information with adequate public involvement. To avoid legal challenge the Council will need to work closely with GONE and other partners to ensure that subjects are thoroughly covered and meet statutory requirements. It will also be imperative to ensure that public consultation is undertaken in accordance with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

- **Programme slippage**

The Council has a statutory requirement to prepare an annual monitoring report for each financial year; this is the mechanism by which slippage from the Local Development Scheme will be formally identified; it will also identify any actions required to get back on track. In these instances robust arrangements will have to be set out in a recovery plan to ensure the targets and timescales for examination of the documents are met. In exceptional circumstances, where major slippage has occurred it may be necessary to revise the local development scheme. Effective project management should be able to identify areas where slippage is likely to occur before hand and subsequently allow action to be taken at the earliest possible stage.

- **Level of interest**

There is a risk that should public and stakeholder interest significantly increase under the new arrangements the Planning Policy Team will be too small to cope. It may be necessary to tap into resources and expertise assistance from within the wider Council, the voluntary sector and consultants.

- **Outcome of the emerging RSS**

This is pertinent particularly in respect to housing issues. Liaison with the North East Assembly and GONE will be critical in order that any slippage and ramifications of such slippage may be identified at the earliest possible time so as to avoid abortive or inappropriate work. Furthermore, as the Local Development Framework must be in general conformity with the RSS the content of the final draft of the document could have implications for the options chosen in the Local Development Framework. To minimise the potential risks associated with this it is necessary to keep abreast of the discussions and consultations on the RSS, so it can inform the preparation of the LDF.



**Geographical coverage of South and East Bishop Auckland
Action Area Plan Development Plan Document
WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

Policies to be Saved beyond 27th September 2007

POLICY	POLICY TITLE	PROPOSED STATUS
General Development Criteria		
GD1	Generic Development Criteria	SAVE
Natural Environment		
ENV1	Protection of the Countryside	SAVE
ENV2	The North Pennines Area of Outstanding natural beauty	SAVE
ENV3	Area of Landscape Value	SAVE
ENV4	Historic Parkland Landscapes	SAVE
ENV5	Landscape action areas	SAVE
ENV6	Reclamation	SAVE
ENV10	Sites of Special Scientific Interest	SAVE
ENV11	Sites of nature conservation importance and local nature reserves	SAVE
ENV16	Community Forests	SAVE
Built Environment		
BE1	Protection of Historic Environment	SAVE
BE4	Setting of a Listed Building	SAVE
BE5	Conservation Areas	SAVE
BE6	New development and alterations in Conservation Areas	SAVE
BE8	Setting of a Conservation Area	SAVE
BE10	Roller shutters in Conservation Areas	SAVE
BE14	Open spaces within built up areas	SAVE
BE15	Scheduled Ancient Monuments	SAVE
BE16	Education and Archaeology	SAVE
BE17	Areas of Archaeological Interest	SAVE
BE19	New Agricultural Buildings	SAVE
BE20	Conversion of buildings in the Countryside	SAVE
BE21	Farm Diversification	SAVE
BE22	Environmental Improvements	SAVE
BE23	Provision of Public Art	SAVE
Housing		
H3	Distribution of development	SAVE
H5	Allocated sites in the main towns	SAVE
H12	Removal of Occupancy Condition	SAVE
H16	Exceptions Policy	SAVE
H17	Housing for the elderly, handicapped and disabled	SAVE
H18	Sub-division of premises	SAVE
H19	Living over the shop	SAVE
H20	Alternative uses within residential areas	SAVE
H21	Public Open Space Within Residential Areas	SAVE
H22	Community Benefit	SAVE
H23	Taxi businesses within residential areas	SAVE
H24	Residential Design criteria	SAVE
H25	Residential Extensions	SAVE
H26	Backland Development	SAVE
H27	Residential caravans and Mobile Homes	SAVE

H28	Gypsy Sites	SAVE
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POLICY	POLICY TITLE	PROPOSED STATUS
Industry		
I1	Availability of land for industry	SAVE
I2	New Industrial Allocations	SAVE
I3	Business/Office Sites	SAVE
I4	Prestige Industrial Sites	SAVE
I5	General Industrial Sites	SAVE
I6	Local Industrial Sites	SAVE
I7	Office/Workshops in Crook	SAVE
I8	Bulky Goods Retailing	SAVE
I9	Service Industrial Sites	SAVE
I10	Commercial Sector	SAVE
I13	Extensions to Industrial Premises in the Countryside	SAVE
I15	Notifiable Installations	SAVE
Tourism		
TM1	Criteria for Tourist Proposals	SAVE
TM2	Tourism within the AONB	SAVE
TM3	New Tourist Facilities	SAVE
TM4	Hotel Allocation	SAVE
TM6	Redevelopment of Caravan Parks	SAVE
Shopping		
S1	Town Centres	SAVE
S2	Newgate Street North Shopping Area	SAVE
S6	Retailing in Crook	SAVE
S7	Growth Areas	SAVE
S8	Local Shopping Areas	SAVE
S9	Cockton hill Local Shopping Area, Bishop Auckland	SAVE
S11	Hot Food Takeaways	SAVE
S12	Retailing from Industrial Estates	SAVE
S13	Shops in the Countryside	SAVE
S14	Petrol Filling Stations, Garden centres and Car Showrooms	SAVE
S15	Shop Fronts	SAVE
S16	Expansion of Existing Retail Properties	SAVE
Recreation		
RL1	New Provision	SAVE
RL2	Protection of existing provision	SAVE
RL5	Sport and Recreation Target	SAVE
RL6	Recreation Allocations	SAVE
RL7	Dual Use of Existing Recreational Areas	SAVE
RL8	Improvement to existing open spaces	SAVE
RL9	Allotments	SAVE
RL11	Opportunities for recreation provision	SAVE
RL13	New Recreational Routes	SAVE
Community Facilities		
C2	Health Centres	SAVE
C3	St Cuthbert's School, Crook	SAVE

POLICY	POLICY TITLE	PROPOSED STATUS
Transport		
T1	General Policy	SAVE
T5	Road Haulage	SAVE
T6	Land safeguarded for railway purposes	SAVE
T7	Taxi ranks	SAVE
T8	Development of Car Parks	SAVE
T9	New Parking Provision	SAVE
T12	Non-operational parking provision in Bishop Auckland and Crook	SAVE
T13	Parking Opportunities in the commercial sector, Bishop Auckland	SAVE
T15	Garages	SAVE
Minerals and Waste		
MW2	Development on Landfill Sites	SAVE

POLICY	POLICY TITLE	PROPOSED STATUS
Natural Environment		
ENV7	Protection of Agricultural Land	DELETE
ENV8	Phasing of Agricultural Land	DELETE
ENV9	Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation	DELETE
ENV12	Creation of new sites for nature conservation	DELETE
ENV13	Protection of species and their habitats	DELETE
ENV14	Tree preservation Orders	DELETE
ENV15	Ancient Woodlands	DELETE
Built Environment		
BE2	Listed Building Demolition	DELETE
BE3	Listed Buildings; Change of use and alterations	DELETE
BE7	Demolition in Conservation Areas	DELETE
BE9	Tress in Conservation Areas	DELETE
BE11	Advertisements in Conservation Areas	DELETE
BE12	Advertisements outside Conservation Areas	DELETE
BE13	Directional signs not on the Highway	DELETE
BE18	Excavation and Recording	DELETE
Housing		
H1	Housing Requirement	DELETE
H2	Phasing of Housing Provision	DELETE
H4	Criteria for infill development	DELETE
H6	Allocated sites in villages identified for regeneration	DELETE
H7	Allocated sites in the sub-areas	DELETE
H8	Renewal of Housing Permissions	DELETE
H9	Housing allocations with related infrastructure provision	DELETE
H10	Relocation of existing uses	DELETE
H11	New Housing in the Countryside	DELETE
H13	Extensions to Houses in the Countryside	DELETE
H14	Range of Housing Types	DELETE
Industry		
I11	Industry in built up areas	DELETE
I12	Industry in the Countryside	DELETE
I14	Industrial allocations requiring related infrastructure	DELETE
I16	Developments near to Notifiable Installations	DELETE
Tourism		
TM5	New Tourist Accommodation	DELETE
TM7	New Caravan and Chalet Sites	DELETE
TM8	Occupancy Conditions for Static Caravans, Chalets and Self Catering Accommodation	DELETE
Shopping		
S3	Newgate Street South/ Fore Bondgate shopping area	DELETE
S4	Market Place	DELETE
S5	Retail/Office opportunity Sites	DELETE
S10	Outside Shopping Areas	DELETE

POLICY	POLICY TITLE	PROPOSED STATUS
Recreation		
RL3	Targets for Open Space Provision	DELETE
RL4	Children's Playing Space Target	DELETE
RL10	Recreation in the Countryside	DELETE
RL12	Public Rights of Way	DELETE
RL14	Coast to Coast Recreational Route	DELETE
Community Facilities		
C1	General Hospital Development	DELETE
Transport		
T2	Environmental Impact of Roads	DELETE
T3	Traffic Calming	DELETE
T4	Land safeguarded for road proposals	DELETE
T10	Joint use of private car parks in Bishop Auckland	DELETE
T11	Operational and Non –operational parking spaces	DELETE
T14	Disabled Access	DELETE
T16	Rear Servicing and Access Ways	DELETE
T17	Cycling – New Provision	DELETE
T18	Telecommunications	DELETE
Minerals and Waste		
MW1	Safeguarding Minerals Reserves	DELETE
MW3	Renewable Energy	DELETE
MW4	Renewable Energy Allocation	DELETE
MW5	Methane Gas	DELETE
MW6	Development of Contaminated Land	DELETE
MW7	Water Treatment and Sewage Works	DELETE

Total Policies = 150
Saved policies = 91 (61%)
Deleted policies = 59 (39%)